



AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT

Building a 21st Century American Indian Community



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



WE DEDICATE THIS BLUEPRINT TO THE URBAN AMERICAN INDIAN
COMMUNITY OF THE TWIN CITIES. THEIR DEDICATION AND
STRENGTH MAKE THIS ENDEAVOR POSSIBLE.

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INTRODUCTION

The urban American Indian community of the Twin Cities envisions a vibrant, healthy, and balanced community where there are economic opportunities for American Indian people and where American Indian cultures are celebrated, honored, and shared with the greater metropolitan community. This American Indian Community Blueprint establishes a **community-development framework** for asset-based, solution-oriented strategies designed to advance American Indian interests and opportunities.

This is a living document. Not every strategy here will be attempted, and the list of goals and strategies is by no means exhaustive. Rather, the Blueprint constitutes a realistic, achievable set of ideas that, like the community itself, will grow and change over time. Success will come through a partnership of community members with organizations, businesses, friends, local residents, and other members of the greater urban community.

The urban American Indian community of the Twin Cities has developed the content of this Blueprint. It is important that their vision, ideas, and solutions be honored, valued, and implemented. Community input and engagement is essential to the ongoing success of this initiative in order to work collaboratively and implement these community-defined strategies. The Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) has worked to collect and synthesize the information in this Blueprint for the benefit of the entire community.



The overall purpose of the Blueprint is threefold:

- To synthesize and summarize community-based research and planning around community improvement;
 - To articulate the vision of community members for the future of the Twin Cities urban American Indian community;
 - To identify strategies for community advancement towards the vision.
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In the past, development efforts have fallen short because they were often disconnected from American Indian community members. Decision-making often flowed from the top down, and lacked the grassroots participation that would create success. Another common concern has been limited results from the extensive studies conducted by and upon the community as typified in the Healthy Nations 1993-2000 evaluation document:

Along with the increasing data came subtle and erosive community concerns. These concerns focused on a perceived imbalance between action in the community and the gathering of information. Such a reaction reflected the historical outcome of many initiatives started in these communities. Some community members concluded that much would be known but little would be done.

The approach here is the reverse. From the start, community members have been actively involved at every stage of the process, building from within to create an enduring, self-sustaining structure. This process honors the previous research that has been conducted in the community and moves to implementation strategies.



CONTEXT

With the promise of jobs and opportunity over 70,000 American Indian people left reservation communities for cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver, Portland, and Minneapolis through the Federal Relocation Act of 1956. The reality of these cities for Indian people often did not match the promises: jobs and decent housing opportunities were scarce. As a result, the new and growing urban American Indian community of the Twin Cities organized to create its own support structure. Minneapolis became the home of many “firsts” such as the first urban Indian Center, the first urban Indian health board, the first Indian-preference housing project, the first Indian-controlled survival school, and was the birthplace of the American Indian Movement. Along with these organizations, a strong sense of community was developed among American Indian

people in the city. Much of this activity took place in south Minneapolis in and around Franklin Avenue. The legacy of this period is still evident today, as American Indian organizations cumulatively, are the largest land-owner in the Franklin Avenue area. However as these organizations have matured and increased in number, the overall quality of life for American Indians in the urban area has not significantly improved. As a result, community members have stated that a new direction for collaboration is necessary. Bold and thoughtful community transformation visions and strategies have been articulated by community members, understanding that participation of all community members is essential to addressing challenges and achieving the positive future the community desires.

COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT PROCESS

The development of this Blueprint owes the credit to the American Indian community. The urban American Indian community of the Twin Cities has been speaking about its goals and vision for many years. Multiple community documents have been created through community input from hundreds of individuals and incorporated into this Blueprint. A list of these documents is included in Appendix A. This information has been combined with additional community engagement work to summarize the experience and wisdom of this community to define its future direction.

LONG-RANGE COMMUNITY VISION

American Indian people have long valued visioning and planning. The concept and practice of looking seven generations into the future requires careful reflection and consideration before action. Decisions are not made just for us at this moment, but must include those that will follow. The values every person brings to this community shape common aspirations for the future. Summarized here, in the words of our families, friends, and neighbors is a vision for a vital urban American Indian community:

Community Wholeness

- American Indian people are spirituality nourished; value their cultures and traditions; pass these practices on to younger generations; and foster respect, honor, and understanding by all people
- American Indian people live healthy lifestyles and have access to high-quality and affordable health care

Community Economic Vitality

- American Indian people inspire and grow their own entrepreneurs and small businesses, creating a vibrant local business district and economy with regional prominence
- American Indian people have living-wage jobs that build assets and eliminate barriers to success, creating economic self-sufficiency
- American Indian people have strong schools, educational programs, and training opportunities to prepare for 21st century jobs
- American Indian people have access to quality, affordable housing for all people with an emphasis on home ownership

Community Prosperity

- American Indian people live in a community that builds and nurtures leaders from within, and the urban Indian community has a strong voice in local, state, and national politics
- American Indian people have a geographic home in the Twin Cities that provides a strong sense of community pride and lasting relationships
- American Indian people are served by an efficient and collaborative social service network that reduces dependency and fosters self-sufficiency
- American Indian people have a safe urban community where they feel welcome, secure, and valued
- American Indian people have access to a world-class transportation and transit system



“[We need] more accessible community activities that are related to a variety of areas – culture and other things, health and wellness, creation, exercise, etc. (Youth) need supportive, chemically free, safe places to go, not just after school, with interesting things to do.”

- American Indian community member



COMMUNITY WHOLENESS

Community is not merely physical space; it is formed with shared values, traditions, cultures, and practices of the people within. A communal sense of wholeness –spiritual and physical well-being –depends on holding up and respecting these elements in all decisions. It is critical that we cultivate this wholeness; pass it along to younger generations; and foster respect, honor, and understanding among all people.

“My vision for community is to see that our children will be able to grow up in a healthy way, with no violence, no failures in our academics. I see the day when our elders will once again assume the position of wisdom, leadership and strength. I see the day when our community will one day return to the natural strengths of our culture, our language, our music, our sacred ceremonies – the ways that our people have kept alive for years. This is my dream; my work and I will support it.”

– American Indian community member



“I think we need to find holistic approaches to meeting the needs of our clients and community; that we address all things of wellness in a spiritual way. We need to address bringing back more cultural ceremonies, teachings, beliefs and values free of spiritual and political exploitation.”

– American Indian community member



Community Wholeness

Implementation Strategies

Vision:

American Indian people are spirituality nourished; value their cultures and traditions; pass these practices on to younger generations; and foster respect, honor, and understanding by all people

Strategies:

- o Create places for ceremonies, both indoor and outdoor
- o Provide support for places of worship, prayer, thanksgiving
- o Increase the availability of spiritual training
- o Develop the means to increase understanding of American Indian spirituality in medical facilities, schools, and organizations
- o Provide opportunities for youth and elder interaction to enable the passage of spiritual and cultural traditions to youth
- o Foster respect for and dialogue with all spiritual beliefs
- o Create a regional American Indian Cultural Center/Museum/Performance/Arts Center
- o Support and expand opportunities for native language learning and speaking
- o Develop culturally-based opportunities for intergenerational interaction/learning, namely youth, parents and elders
- o Position the Minneapolis American Indian Center as a prominent cultural center with activities and events
- o Create permanent pow-wow grounds in the Cultural Corridor neighborhood
- o Develop American Indian-owned restaurant(s) featuring traditional native foods
- o Increase the number of art galleries and the amount of artist studio space available for American Indian artists
- o Support the development and location of stores featuring authentic Native products
- o Create a planetarium for indigenous cosmology and star knowledge
- o Develop active American Indian programming in local public schools
- o Ensure American Indian cultural identity is evident on Franklin Avenue through:
 - Design
 - Businesses
 - Public Art
 - Murals
 - Gateways
 - Streetscape and signs (including digital signage)
- o Develop an urban American Indian assets conference
- o Create and implement an American Indian tour of Twin Cities

Vision:

American Indian people live healthy lifestyles and have access to high-quality and affordable health care

Strategies:

- o Promote integration of native health and wellness into the urban lifestyle
- o Develop a 21st century American Indian health care business model and system with an emphasis on wellness, healthy lifestyles, and preventative care
- o Ensure access to affordable and high-quality health care
- o Develop training opportunities for health care careers
- o Ensure a high-quality, affordable community clinic is available in south Minneapolis
- o Expand the availability of healthy food options at restaurants and grocery stores
- o Develop a fitness center and health and wellness classes geared towards American Indian people
- o Increase community connections to metropolitan hospitals and medical facilities:
 - Collaborations between community, community clinics, pharmacies, and other non-native medical facilities
 - Create pathways to job opportunities
- o Develop a Native Liaison positions to the urban health care facilities
- o Maintain and expand accessible drug and alcohol treatment options and after-care
- o Increase the availability of healthy cooking and lifestyle classes
- o Develop Indian-specific youth and adult sport activities and leagues





“Training and owning businesses are key activities to shift the emphasis to entrepreneurship. Historically more Indians were in the trades. Some went into professions but very few went into business. We need this new emphasis on entrepreneurship if we are going to make a substantial change.”

- American Indian community member

“Educate. My grandma taught me education is the key. Learn, learn, learn. That was the tool. She was proud when everyone graduated. She couldn’t write, read. We should all take responsibility as individuals, as people.”

- American Indian community member



“I like [his] idea about land and land ownership. What if organizations pooled their money and created a revolving loan funds for Indian business development?”

- American Indian community member

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC VITALITY

No progress is possible without a strong economic foundation. A well-functioning American Indian economy within the metropolitan economy will provide living-wage jobs, business creation, and a range of housing opportunities for different income levels. Improving the local economy, particularly associated with the American Indian Cultural Corridor, will provide direct and tangible benefits to community.

Implementation Strategies

Vision:

American Indian people inspire and grow their own entrepreneurs and small businesses, creating a vibrant local business district and economy with regional prominence

Strategies:

- o Create an American Indian Business and Finance center to house community business services, training and technical assistance
 - Services include:
 - a community development financial institution (CDFI), bank, and/or other financing opportunities to support American Indian business development
 - Career skill-building programming that includes: computer, resume, interview, and public speaking
 - American Indian small business and entrepreneurship classes
 - Knowledge of all resources available to Indian-owned small businesses ie. A business information clearinghouse
 - Database of available commercial properties for lease and purchase
 - Technical assistance and computer center with business and accounting software, search engines, tutorials
 - Small business incubator
- o Develop a native-owned hotel and conference center within the Cultural Corridor
- o Create an American Indian marketplace at the Minneapolis American Indian Center
- o Provide support and assistance for a strong Cultural Corridor neighborhood business association
- o Increase availability of small business loans
 - Both capital and operating
 - Façade improvement grants
- o Maintain/create space for light industrial
- o Create American Indian youth entrepreneur opportunities
- o Promote green business and planning
- o Foster the creation of a vibrant American Indian business district along Franklin Avenue with a diversity of locally owned businesses and services
- o Develop or recruit American Indian-owned bank(s) to locate in the Cultural Corridor
- o Ensure ongoing community engagement and participation in the development of the Cultural Corridor
- o Create a land acquisition fund and vehicle to increase American Indian business and organizational land ownership



Community Economic Vitality

Implementation Strategies

Vision:

American Indian people have living-wage jobs that build wealth and assets and eliminate barriers to success, creating economic self-sufficiency


Strategies:

- o Foster the creation of American Indian owned businesses, particularly within the American Indian Cultural Corridor
- o Align, support, and expand strong training and apprenticeship programs that prepare American Indians for viable 21st century jobs that fill market niches
- o Build partnerships with employers in south Minneapolis to increase the number of American Indian employees
- o Create a community financial center and/or a community development credit union
 - Services include:
 - Financial literacy classes
 - Financial planning services
 - 1st time homebuyer classes/technical assistance
 - Low interest loan pool for homebuyer assistance
 - Classes/assistance to build/repair credit history
- o Advocate to increase foundation investment in the urban Indian community, namely in long-term community vitality and sustainability strategies (asset-based vs. needs based)

Vision:

American Indian people have access to quality, affordable housing for all people with an emphasis on home ownership

Strategies:

- o Expand and support housing opportunities for American Indian people including rental, for-sale, and co-op/land trust options
 - o Create and preserve elder housing options within the Cultural Corridor area
 - o Develop and implement 1st time homebuyer classes within the Cultural Corridor area
 - o Ensure accessible finance opportunities and services including credit repair
 - o Increase availability of resident support services at rental housing locations with American Indian residents to assist with connections to job training, child care, neighborhood organizations, financial options, support towards home-ownership
 - o Recruit and provide support for American Indian community-based realtors/brokers
- 

Vision:

American Indian people have strong schools, educational programs, and training opportunities to prepare for 21st century jobs

Strategies:

- o Increase the availability of early childhood school readiness programs and childcare
- o Develop a new K-12 school with emphasis on innovation, creativity, and 21st century opportunities for American Indian youth
- o Increase wraparound student support that includes both the family and parents and the school staff and administration
- o Develop opportunities for youth supplemental learning/experience programs
- o Increase availability of tutoring services
- o Develop a strong American Indian youth mentorship program
- o Develop an after-school youth learning laboratory with a focus on 21st century jobs and innovation
 - Media center, entrepreneurship clubs, fine arts, music and dance, science and technology labs, language centers
 - Sports programs, youth leadership and service programs
 - Provides connections to additional experiential learning opportunities and programs
- o Develop and expand active training programs within high growth sectors of the economy
- o Advocate and expand American Indian higher education/post-secondary scholarship programs
- o Foster American Indian community relationships with metropolitan colleges such as:
 - Develop departmental partnerships to host activities and programming in the neighborhood
 - Arrange undergraduate and graduate school internships
 - Develop higher education outreach office in community
 - Maintain emphasis on connections to high growth sectors
- o Create an American Indian education research institute to document best practices and proven methods





"Community is when everybody stands together."

- American Indian community member





COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

Strong communities have a sense of shared experience, goals, and challenges. In order to face these opportunities and challenges together, the urban American Indian community needs to work collaboratively both within the community and with other communities to achieve success. It is imperative that the American Indian community continues to foster a sense of belonging and participation amongst community members.



“Community development tries to build community through transportation, housing, education, recreation, business-elements that sustain a community, this is how community development happens all the time.”

- American Indian community member

Realizing ways agencies can work together, it reduces duplication of services. It develops a sense of community.”

- American Indian community member



Community Prosperity

Implementation Strategies

Vision:

American Indian people live in a community that builds and nurtures leaders from within, and the urban Indian community has a strong voice in local, state, and national politics

Strategies:

- o Foster active, engaged American Indian community citizenship
- o Maintain a geographic base to the community in south Minneapolis with population density that provides a center of political power and influence
- o Promote and increase the number of American Indians running for and holding political office
- o Build strong community relationships with governmental institutions
- o Build strong connections to tribal governments
- o Increase community understanding of the political process
- o Develop a Franklin Planning Council with strong American Indian representation
- o Increase American Indian grassroots political involvement
- o Develop a prominent regional American Indian political caucus
- o Increase the visibility of the American Indian community in the region

Vision:

American Indian people have a safe urban community where they feel welcome, secure, and valued

Strategies:

- o Foster a healthy relationship between community members with police and other city departments
- o Foster culturally aware and sensitive police officers, including greater recruitment of Indian police officers
 - Build a relationship with the Minneapolis police department to create a pipeline for American Indians to police jobs
 - Maintain an active community safety center in the Cultural Corridor
- o Strengthen American Indian involvement in neighborhood watches
- o Utilize building and community design that encourages safety
 - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles: adequate lighting, no blind corners, etc.
 - Safe and attractive pedestrian improvements under Hiawatha/LRT underpasses that are at a human scale
- o Develop ex-offender programs to support re-entry to work after incarceration
- o Foster positive police and youth interaction
- o Foster a sense of community pride and ownership that does not tolerate crime



Vision:

American Indian people are served by an efficient and collaborative social service network that reduces dependency and fosters self-sufficiency

Strategies:

- o Encourage collaboration among American Indian and other non-profit organizations
- o Promote the efficient use of resources and the reduction of redundant overhead costs in American Indian organizations by sharing office space, instituting collaborative purchasing contracts, sharing staff, and other strategies
- o Foster a sense of shared purpose and goals amongst organizations
- o Increase dialogue with and oversight from American Indian community members in program development and implementation
- o Develop all programming with an asset-building approach that develops participant self-sufficiency and discourage program dependency
- o Eliminate redundant programming and support successful programming

Community Prosperity

Implementation Strategies

Vision:

American Indian people have a geographic home in the Twin Cities that provides a strong sense of community pride and lasting relationships

Strategies:

- o Implement the American Indian Cultural Corridor
- o Create and maintain spaces and places for the American Indian community to gather such as:
 - Outdoor space/parks
 - Meeting space
 - Event space
 - Performance space
 - Ceremony space
- o Strengthen relationships between tribal and urban Indian communities
- o Develop and present year-round cultural activities in the Cultural Corridor and throughout the metropolitan region
- o Ensure regular community-based neighborhood planning and continuous community engagement during the planning and implementation process in the Cultural Corridor
- o Maintain and expand American Indian participation in neighborhood organizations
- o Create and support citizen groups such as block clubs
- o Increase community cooperation with adjacent neighborhoods/organizations to the Cultural Corridor
- o Build ties with other ethnic and cultural groups and partner on projects
- o Focus on internal and external relationship building in the community
- o Increase the production and distribution of American Indian media content
- o Develop a community digital signage system to compliment the American Indian Cultural Corridor
- o Position the Franklin Library as a center within the County library system for information on American Indian culture and history
- o Market the Cultural Corridor as a desirable place to live, work, and shop





Vision:

American Indian people have access to a world-class transportation and transit system

Strategies:

- o Advocate for safe, convenient, attractive, and frequent public transit options for the metropolitan region
- o Advocate for maintaining access from the Cultural Corridor area to the regional roadway system
- o Plan and support the development of bike lanes
- o Develop and implement high-quality pedestrian paths and streetscaping in the Cultural Corridor that accurately reflects American Indian cultures
- o Promote land-use and density that supports urban transit





“The people who are affected by the program... People who are helped by programs should be included in decision making on what they need.”

- American Indian community member





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Central to the American Indian Community Blueprint is civic participation. Community involvement at all stages of the development and implementation of the plan is necessary to realize the vision the community has identified for its future. This ensures that future development meets the goals of the community, not just developers and other outside actors. However, the community's vision of civic participation goes even further, to building involved citizens that are active in their communities and advocate for those communities.

Through the development of this Blueprint, community members indicated that community-based organizations do not always provide the services they want or need. The community desires responsive organizations that seek and utilize community input in their decision-making. The process of community transformation for the 21st century will require citizen-led efforts to remake organizations to meet the true needs of the community.

Community engagement can take many forms. The following are examples of engagement activities that are applicable to the urban American Indian community:

- Citizen advisory/issue committees
- Community member seats on organizational boards
- Community meetings
- Residents' meetings
- Business association meetings
- Community safety walks
- Community plantings/gardening
- Community trash clean-up
- Community-based restorative justice
- Community mediation
- Neighborhood Pow-Wows
- Professional networking
- Speaker series
- Symposia

Through these types of events, community participation and community ownership will be built. All of these events will allow community ideas to be solicited, encouraged, and implemented.

The following vehicles for distributing community information should also be utilized:

- Direct person-to-person organizing
- Websites
- Online video/YouTube
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter
- Online message boards
- Blogs
- Listservs
- Community newspapers
- Radio
- Neighborhood signage/posters/flyers

All organizations and community members have a stake in the implementation of this plan and as a result the success of the Community Blueprint depends on active participation by all. The community created this Blueprint, and it will only succeed with the active participation of the community.





THE AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURAL CORRIDOR

Great cities celebrate the diverse peoples that call them home. New York’s Little Italy, San Francisco’s Chinatown, and other ethnic communities cultivate their heritage and enrich the urban fabric. Such districts are sources both of pride and of prosperity, drawing visitors to their unique stores, businesses, and cultural attractions.

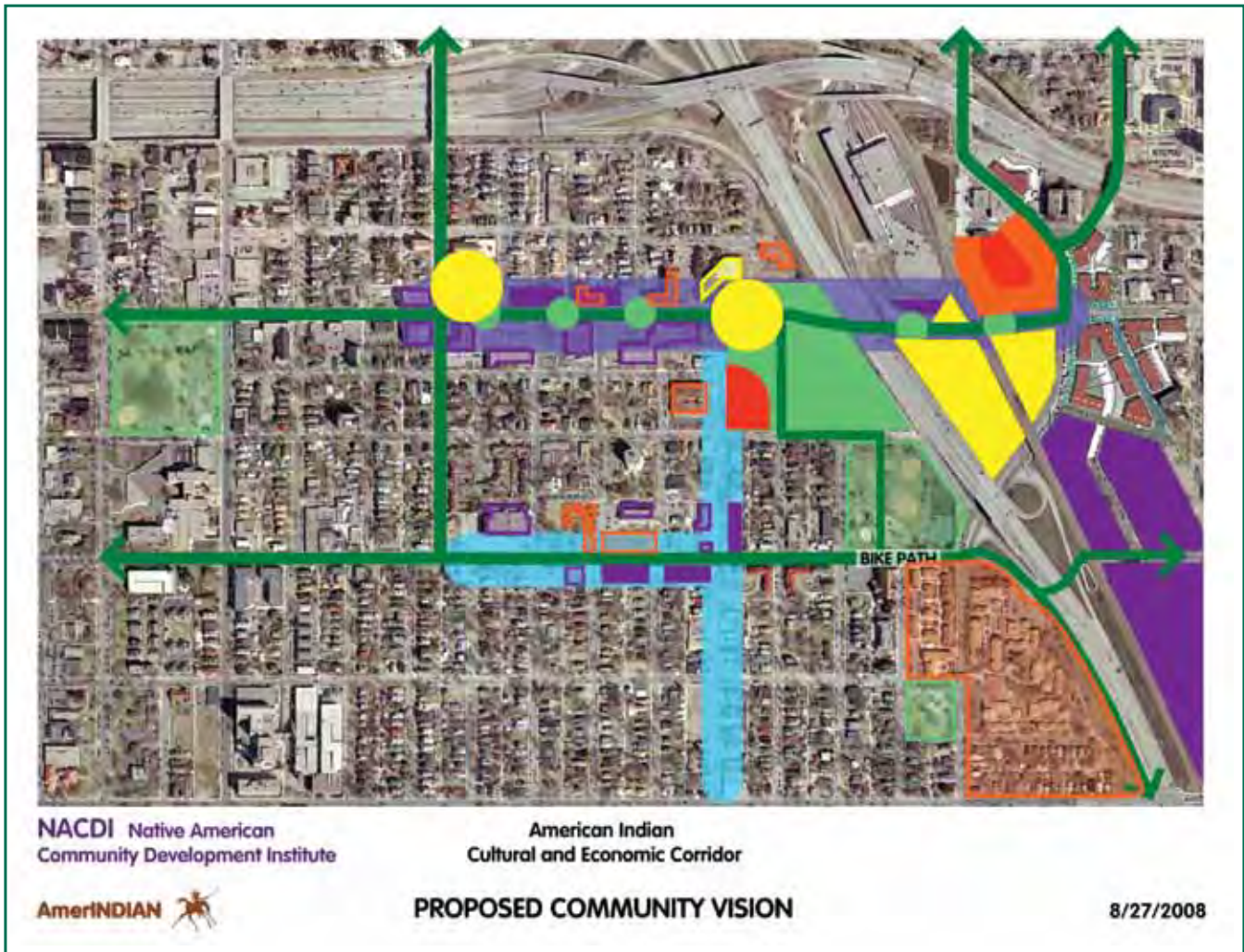
The American Indian community is well positioned to inaugurate such a district in the heart of Minneapolis. Over time, the homes and businesses along East Franklin Avenue have become focal points of American Indian cultures. With the energy, determination, and creativity of community residents, it has developed an identity all its own. American Indian community members have envisioned continuing to develop a corridor that will be the economic engine for the urban American Indian community, providing jobs and opportunity for American Indian people and also sharing authentic American Indian culture with the region.

This American Indian Cultural Corridor is critical to the success of the Blueprint due to the concentration of people and organizations in the corridor area. With this concentration of population and energy, it is critical that efforts be focused on south Minneapolis, because changes in this area have regional impact for American Indian people. The American Indian Cultural Corridor is the nexus of this plan. It is the physical space where the community vision is to be realized.

“When I first drove into the community down Franklin Avenue, I was so happy to see Indian people walking down the street and how refreshing that was and how proud I was. It is a place of identity and belonging. My definition of a community is a visible role that encompasses a group of people who are seeking a common identity and belong to one family. I see that with our homeless people, hanging out in one area because they like being by us—I love seeing that. To build the community we need to rebuild the lives of the individuals in it. I would like to see that our lives are rebuilt, even starting with the physical, as it gives a sense of pride. It’s as simple as rehabilitating our homes, cleaning the streets and having trash cans, but also just being proud of where you’re from, even if it is Phillips. I would like to see Franklin Avenue area as our own little Indian village, so people will know that that’s the Indian part of town, and also that all of us can be proud to say ‘yes, it is.’”

– American Indian community member

THE CORRIDOR VISION



- Legend:**
- Yellow - Cultural Anchors
 - Light Blue - Social Services and small business
 - Red - Education and Training
 - Orange - Housing
 - Purple - Retail, Service, and Biz Tech
 - Light Green - Greenspace
 - Light Purple - Retail Corridor with regional scale businesses
 - Dark Green - Bike Path

Combined plan:
 What came forward in this process was the desire to see Franklin Avenue established as a regional cultural and economic corridor tied to the LRT. This corridor would be anchored on the east end with a cultural and performance center, in the middle with an enlivened Indian Center, and on the west end with a planetarium for indigenous cosmology. Franklin Avenue itself would be established as a regional destination for Indian-owned businesses. Social service agencies, would be reoriented along Bloomington Avenue and 24th Street. Franklin Avenue surrounding the LRT station would be

streetscaped with trees, lights, banners, and planters to create connections to the American Indian Cultural Corridor and Seward neighborhood, with a particular emphasis on improving the pedestrian experience underneath the LRT and Hiawatha bridges. Additional greenspace including space for ceremonies and pow-wow grounds would be created along with an expanded network of bike paths. A better connection would be developed to reach Franklin Avenue and the LRT station from Little Earth. The ends of the corridor would be marked with public art or other forms of identifiable gateways.



Further elements identified in the planning process:

- Inclusion of sustainable design principles in all buildings
- Inclusion of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED) Principles
- Development of an Indian-owned hotel and conference center near the Franklin LRT station
- Development of a new K-12 education center/school within the area
- Creation/expansion of facilities for job training and business services within the corridor
- Development of neighborhood signage and identity
- Creation of an American Indian marketplace at the Indian Center
- Creation of American Indian murals in the corridor
- Development of housing of different types and affordable to different income levels
- Creation of American Indian owned small businesses

Participants also noted the types of businesses they would like in the Cultural Corridor, noting that there should be a diversity of businesses to serve persons of different income levels as customers and employees:

- American Indian-owned Hotel and conference center
- Cultural Center/museum
- Planetarium for Indigenous cosmology
- Tribal Embassy
- Performance Space
- Artist gallery space, studio space, and housing
- Community Greenhouse
- American Indian marketplace
- Restaurants featuring Native foods
- Bookstores
- Café/Coffee shop
- Native foods grocery store
- Youth business incubator
- American Indian dentist
- Computer study center
- Game center for youth
- Entertainment Venues
- Green businesses
- Light industry
- Shoe shop
- American Indian radio station
- Automotive services
- Native language center
- Native clothing store
- Bingo hall

Opportunity/Focus Sites

To further develop the community plan, a number of opportunity or focus sites were identified throughout the corridor for redevelopment potential. Drawings were developed that represent an example of what could be built based on current zoning. The buildings shown are generic in nature; they do not represent specific proposals. The drawings are meant to be illustrative of what is possible for various sites throughout the corridor. Actual redevelopment projects will only move forward if they are financially feasible, and uses will be determined in the feasibility process.

“Community development reminds me of the places people gather. There are natural connectors for families or communities so it’s the notion of gathering. There is also the notion of place – architecture or natural places. I think of a corridor – a place for Indian expression and commerce. I’m influenced by the idea of an Indian center that is more than a building.”

– American Indian community member



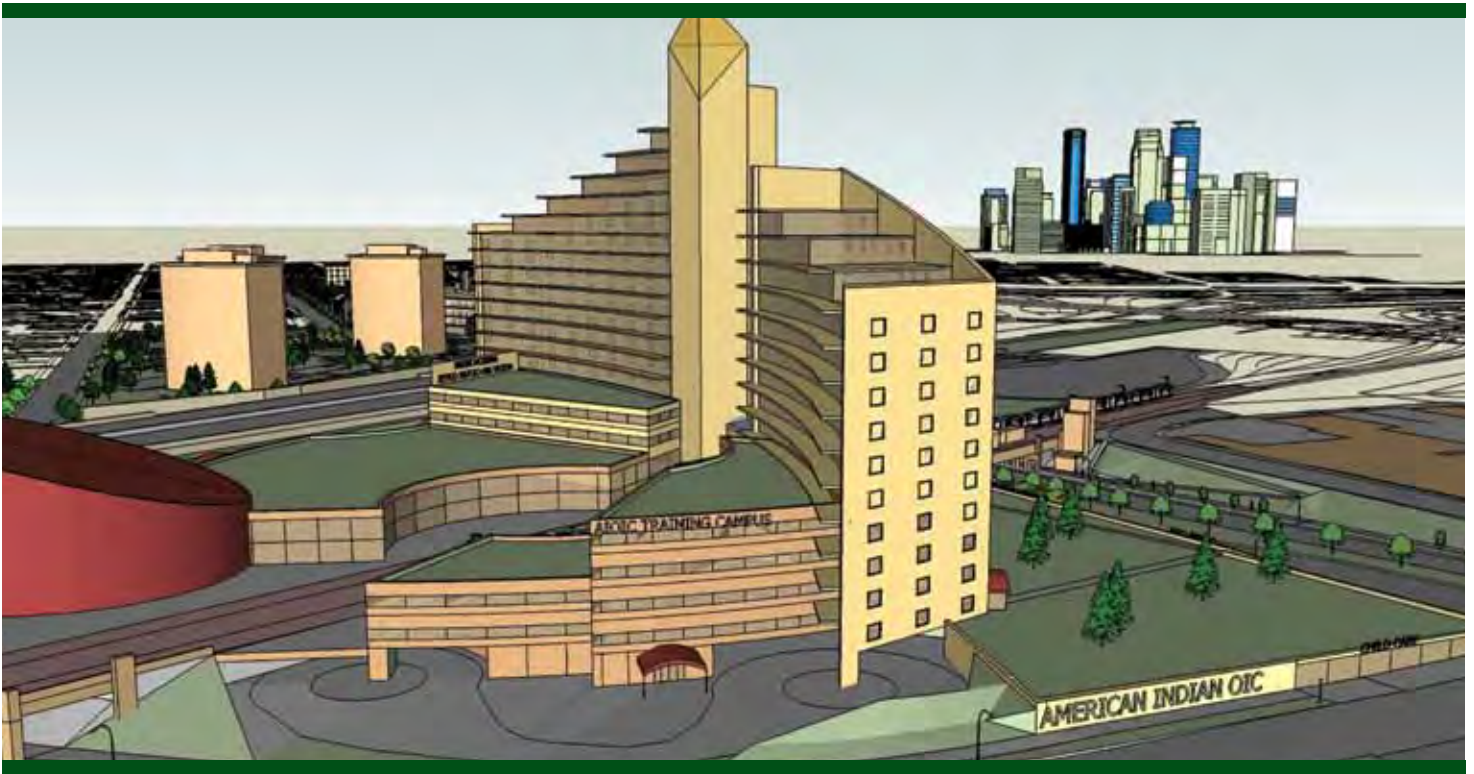
CEDAR BOX/AMBLES:

The Cedar Box/Ambles site adjacent to the Franklin LRT station is extremely isolated. The site contains a portion of Old Cedar Avenue that has been disconnected from the rest of Cedar by road reconstructions and grade separation. The site has direct platform level access to the LRT station; fronts Franklin Avenue; and is very visible from the LRT, bicycle trail, and from Hiawatha Avenue. When considered in conjunction with the Old Cedar Avenue Right of Way, it is an extremely large site. As it currently sits, the site is particularly pedestrian unfriendly. The existing industrial uses are unattractive and the area does not appear safe to pedestrians, even though this block is the primary

access route from the East Phillips neighborhood. The American Indian community has identified this parcel as extremely important to the long-term success of the Cultural Corridor. Providing pedestrian activity at this location will help to drive pedestrians further into the Cultural Corridor. The site is a possible location for a cultural center/museum and/or American Indian-owned hotel and conference center. The challenge caused by the grade separation of the Franklin LRT station from Franklin Avenue also presents a great opportunity for LRT platform-level access to this development parcel. Further, a skyway link to new development on the AIOIC site is also possible.

“We should invest in development along the light rail. A lot of Indian land is along or proximate to the light rail. We are not behind this development. The cultural corridor is a wonderful idea and we need to tell our story.”

- American Indian community member



AIOIC:

The American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center (AIOIC) is located on a key parcel. It forms the east gateway to the American Indian Cultural Corridor and has the opportunity to be a catalyzing development. It has both street-level access to Franklin and Cedar Avenues as well as platform-level access to the Franklin LRT station and bicycle path. It is a large site, but the current building is set far back from the street and leaves substantial open space for surface parking. There is the possibility to accommodate a larger building with additional uses on the site. In addition to the physical characteristics of the site, the AIOIC training programs are one of the cornerstones of the Cultural Corridor. Job training is one of the most important aspects to human capacity development and the improvement of the economic wellbeing of neighborhood residents. The programming provided by AIOIC is a vital asset to the community and should be preserved, expanded, and calibrated to 21st century jobs and high-growth sectors. The current building is

full to capacity, and it is an appropriate time to consider a facility expansion for the AIOIC. The 2001 Franklin LRT Master Plan did not include redevelopment of this site, and the 2005 Implementation Plan advocated for relocating the training facility from this site to another parcel. However, the community and AIOIC have indicated that having the training facility proximate to the LRT provides easy access for students increases the viability of additional uses that can provide revenue to AIOIC and support the operations of the training facility. The site is large enough to accommodate an expanded training facility and related spaces, street-level retail, and a mid or high-rise tower that could accommodate office space or housing. The rendering above is an example indicating what current zoning will allow on the site. With utility relocations the buildings could be built all the way out to Franklin and Cedar Avenues. Critical to these utility relocations is moving the high-tension electrical lines that traverse the eastern side of the property.



MNDOT RETAINING WALL:

During the reconstruction of Hiawatha Avenue in the 1990s, a sound wall was installed west of Hiawatha and south of Franklin Avenue. This sound wall provides sound protection from the fast-moving traffic on Hiawatha Avenue for the residents of three public housing high-rises, however as constructed, it eliminates development potential for nearly an entire city block along Franklin Avenue just west of Hiawatha. This extends the pedestrian impediment of the Hiawatha bridge itself for pedestrians into the heart of the Cultural Corridor. Through the workshop process, the American Indian community indicated that the wall should be cut back or removed to facilitate development on this site and improve the pedestrian experience. The concept drawing shows how a building could be sited that maintains access to the bike path behind the building along Hiawatha. This drawing also indicates a desire to make improvements to the pedestrian environment underneath the Hiawatha bridge.

CUHCC SITE:

The Community University Health Care Clinic owned and operated by the University of Minnesota, is a major medical facility within the Corridor area. In addition to Indian Health Board of Minneapolis and the Native American Community Clinic, it provides health care for many low-income neighborhood residents. In the late 1990s, the clinic tore down buildings fronting Franklin Avenue and adjacent to the clinic to build a parking lot. This parking lot is unsightly, and is a disincentive to walk from the LRT station further into the Cultural Corridor neighborhood. Redevelopment of this parcel could include a new facility for the clinic, or an entirely new mixed-use development. The community desires transit supportive higher-density urban development on this site.





MINNEAPOLIS AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER:

The Minneapolis American Indian Center opened in 1975, and has been a cornerstone of the urban American Indian community since that time. The building has been well used by the community, through providing space for art galleries, athletics, a café, elder programming, youth programming, sports, sobriety assistance, and many other programs and services. However the building is showing its age. Peeling paint, dark windows, and unclear circulation from outside to inside pose challenges for the building. Further, over the years the Center has evolved away from its original role as a cultural and community center and now mainly houses social service organizations. Reorganizing the

programming available at the building and undertaking a major interior and exterior renovation could renew the Indian Center. The Indian Center's greatest asset is its space. It is large with many different types of spaces that can provide flexibility for future uses. For instance, the building has the potential to host an American Indian marketplace, where American Indian goods, crafts, and food could be sold with low overhead costs for vendors. Additionally the American Indian Center is another possible location for an American Indian cultural center/museum. Open space adjacent to the Indian Center could accommodate community pow-wow grounds.





FRANKLIN BUSINESS CENTER:

The Franklin Business Center was originally developed by the American Indian Business Development Corporation. At the time it was developed, retaining industrial jobs in the neighborhood was viewed as extremely important. However the development of a suburban-style light industrial building with street-facing parking undermined the creation of a pedestrian friendly district. Even after the Franklin Avenue streetscaping project that was completed on Franklin in the early 2000s, this building creates a barrier for foot traffic from the LRT station. This site has now moved from American Indian ownership to a private real estate company, reducing American Indian control over the site. Concept drawings were created for a redevelopment of this parcel to include more active uses along Franklin. Because a number of streets have been removed, a large development or developments could occur on this parcel.



WEST GATEWAY:

The west gateway of the American Indian Cultural Corridor is currently a mix of uses. Roger Beck Florist and Maria's Café are located in buildings that are pedestrian friendly and provide some urban density. However other sites at this end of the corridor are more challenging to pedestrians such as the majority of the Ancient Traders Market, and the lot owned by Trinity First Lutheran Church. The Ancient Traders Market provides many goods and services that are important to the community, and is much improved

property after renovations completed in the early 2000's. However, further redevelopment could make the property even more pedestrian friendly, and add density to the corridor. The parcel that is owned by Trinity First Lutheran has enough street frontage to provide a number of stories of housing above space for business. The community has indicated that this end of the cultural corridor should include a cultural anchor that will drive pedestrian traffic from the Light Rail station all the way to this end of the corridor.



CONCLUSION

The American Indian Community Blueprint lays out a bold vision for the Twin Cities urban American Indian population. It sets a framework for community advancement, but provides enough space to adjust strategies as time continues. The American Indian community has been involved at every stage of the development of this Blueprint, and it will only be successful with their continued involvement. It is important for community members to be the drivers of community change, and this Blueprint is a tool for community members to work collaboratively towards that goal.

NACDI is deeply appreciative of the immense effort the community has put in to the development of this plan, and is committed to putting these strategies into action.



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