

**NorthWay Plan for  
Poverty Reduction  
And  
Wealth Creation  
In North Minneapolis**

Prepared by:  
The Collaboratory for Community Support  
7423 Hickory Ridge Drive  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197-9487  
734-623-4952  
[www.comnet.org/collaboratorycs](http://www.comnet.org/collaboratorycs)

Submitted by:  
The New Planning Work Group  
P.O. Box 22475  
Minneapolis, MN 55422  
612-529-8828  
February 2002

# NorthWay Plan for Poverty Reduction and Wealth Creation in North Minneapolis

## Executive Summary

North Minneapolis, located just west and north of downtown Minneapolis, is a community of thirteen neighborhoods and home to about one-fifth of the city's population. While challenged with one of the largest concentrations of the lowest-income residents in Minnesota, North Minneapolis is also rich in ethnic and racial diversity and in community commitment to improve the quality of life here. Hundreds of North Minneapolis residents have been involved in developing the following "NorthWay Plan for Poverty Reduction and Wealth Creation."

The essence of the NorthWay Plan is found in its focus on the inter-connectedness of the community. A fundamental principle of this effort is that poverty is not just a lack of financial resources but an overall reflection of community well-being. Any efforts to reduce poverty must be holistic, addressing the economic, physical, emotional, and spiritual health of individuals and families as well as connections among community members and conditions in the community. Another fundamental principle of this effort is that solutions to reduce poverty in North Minneapolis must come from within the community. Therefore, the NorthWay Plan emphasizes widespread participation and an ongoing effort to include and engage the community's diverse members.

The NorthWay Plan has been designed to achieve the following vision: **North Minneapolis is a welcoming community where people of diverse backgrounds and experience sustain and continue to develop their economic, physical, relational, and spiritual well-being.**

The mission of NorthWay is **to reduce poverty and increase the wealth, health, and well-being of the community by creating systems to engage and empower its residents.**

This mission is manifest in our overarching, concrete goal **to reduce poverty by building the assets and wealth of individuals and families whose household earnings place them in the lower quartile economically.**

After embracing a complex definition of poverty and a comprehensive theory of change, we have realized that North Minneapolis will need to take a systemic, community-wide, sustained approach to reaching our mission and goal.

To facilitate this approach and ensure ongoing community engagement, we will establish a "community support organization" known as the **NorthWay Community Trust**. A community support organization serves as an impartial, skilled, local intermediary dedicated to fostering the success of collaborations and systemic reforms in order to improve the way the community solves problems. The central point of focus for the services of the NorthWay Community Trust (NWCT) will be on the various collaborative and partnership efforts in North Minneapolis that leverage and support progress on our long-term strategies. The day-to-day tasks of the staff of the NWCT will include recruiting diverse participation in community efforts, convening

community meetings to ensure productive and meaningful collaborative work, managing information, and developing and managing the tools for systemic improvement.

Community input has been and will continue to be a critical ingredient for our work in North Minneapolis and the efforts of the NorthWay Community Trust. To ensure that the Trust is serving the community's vision, it will be designed as a membership organization, with the membership known as **The Alliance**. One of the first tasks of the NorthWay Plan is to conduct extensive outreach, communications, and community-organizing efforts to encourage North Minneapolis residents to become familiar with and join The Alliance before its first annual meeting.

With our focus on interconnectedness, systems, and comprehensive solutions, the NorthWay Community Trust and North Minneapolis will pursue the following four long-term strategies:

- I. Build Connection & Capacity.** Strengthen social connections among residents that enhance trust and collective efficacy, and lead to mutually beneficial relationships among residents, faith communities, businesses, schools, agencies and other organizations.
- II. Build Community Wealth.** Reduce personal debt, increase household income, and foster the accumulation of assets by low-income residents of North Minneapolis through employment programs, strategic use of financial tools, educational campaigns, and business partnerships.
- III. Create Truly Affordable Housing.** Direct resources to increase the supply of housing affordable to people who earn 50% or less of the City of Minneapolis median income, and ensure safe occupancy of affordable housing in North Minneapolis through educational initiatives.
- IV. Address Health Disparities.** Direct resources to address health disparities through education and prevention campaigns, by creating new access to affordable health care, and by intervening in community affairs in ways that enhance health and reduce risk behaviors for all members of the North Minneapolis community.

The four long-term strategies will be integrated into the work of the community through the following activities. Each activity was chosen based on its ability to contribute to interconnectedness and systemic work, usually by helping to pursue more than one of the four strategies.

- A. Organize the Alliance
- B. Create the NorthWay Community Trust
- C. Establish the Community Partnership and Resource Committee
- D. Build Capacity—Community, Organizational, Personal
- E. With the NWCT serving as catalyst and technology hub, develop knowledge and communication clusters throughout the community that create, capture, and share learning inside and outside the community.

- F. Create an environment that produces and sustains safe, clean, healthy, and stable neighborhoods.
- G. Determine degree to which an intentional and coordinated delivery system for housing access across the full range of needs exists in North Minneapolis and foster its growth.
- H. Develop and support opportunities for economic literacy that lead to asset accumulation.
- I. Leverage and develop opportunities for residents to access and retain living-wage and career-path employment.
- J. Support economic market centers to stimulate new business start-ups and other economic activities with an emphasis on community-based and locally owned businesses.
- K. Address health disparities through education, prevention, access, and intervention in order to enhance health and reduce at risk behaviors.

We will engage in an ongoing evaluation process to examine our progress in accomplishing these activities, pursuing our strategies, and achieving our goal. The evaluation process for the NorthWay Plan will ensure that evaluation serves as a central tool in building a learning community in North Minneapolis. In addition to fostering greater mutual accountability among partners and stakeholders, evaluation will be the primary vehicle through which we will *learn from each other* how best to proceed toward our overall mission of reducing poverty and building wealth in North Minneapolis.

Each year, participants will ask each other what we have learned about the systems that uphold poverty, and will identify the leverage points we have found that promote more effective systems change. At the same time, a core set of indicators, consistently collected over time, will ensure reliable monitoring of key outcomes. These will help both internal and external stakeholders quantify changes experienced by the community. These indicators will cut across multiple outcomes, reflecting more than one issue or outcome at a time. In short, the evaluation process will help us look at systems rather than silos and understand how we are progressing toward our goals for the community.

The community estimates that \$20 million is required from the partnership agreement with the Northwest Area Foundation. This \$20 million will be leveraged to achieve an overall \$105 million devoted to fulfilling the four long-term strategies and pursuing our mission for North Minneapolis. Funds from the NWAFF will be divided into a “designated fund (of \$6 million) to resource the NorthWay Community Trust, and a “donor advisor fund (of \$14 million) to be disbursed to community partnerships and organizations as recommended by a Community Partnership and Resource Committee made up of local residents.

# NorthWay Plan for Poverty Reduction and Wealth Creation in North Minneapolis

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	6
<b>How We Got Here</b> .....	7
Action Circles.....	7
Strategy Circles.....	8
The New Planning Work Group.....	8
Community Review.....	9
<b>Who We Are</b> .....	10
Population.....	10
Families and Households.....	13
Housing.....	13
Income and Spending.....	13
Physical Space.....	16
A Changing Community.....	16
<b>Our Vision, Mission, Goal and Values</b> .....	17
<b>Our Theory of Change</b> .....	18
What Is Poverty? .....	18
Acting on a Complex Definition of Poverty.....	18
<b>Our Strategies</b> .....	21
Build Connection and Capacity.....	22
Build Community Wealth.....	22
Create Truly Affordable Housing.....	23
Address Health Disparities.....	24
Budgeting for the Strategies.....	25
<b>Our Activities</b> .....	26
<b>Accomplishing Our Mission:</b>	
<b>The Governance and Structure to Get the Work Done</b> .....	36
The Alliance.....	36
The NorthWay Community Trust (NWCT) .....	37
Funds Management.....	39
Establishing the First NWCT Board.....	40
Recommendations on Decision Making by the NWCT Board.....	41
Unresolved Governance Issues.....	42

**Operation of the NorthWay Community Trust**.....44  
    Establish The Alliance.....44  
    Base Daily Operations on Community Lessons Learned..... 44  
    How Will the NorthWay Community Trust Work? ..... 45  
    NorthWay Community Trust Staffing..... 48  
    NorthWay Community Trust Operational “DOs” and “DON’Ts” ..... 49

**Evaluating Our Progress**..... 52  
    Three Types of Indicators.....54  
    A Shared Powers Evaluation Process for NorthWay Indicators.....56  
    How the Evaluation Process Might Look in Practice..... 56

**Conclusion**..... 59

**List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Area Map of the North Minneapolis Community (??-still needed)  
Appendix B: NorthWay Plan Community Review: Data Synthesis Report  
Appendix C: Vision and Indicator Statements  
Appendix D: Summary of Results of Best Practices Research  
Appendix E: Theory of Change: Barriers and Opportunities  
Appendix F: NorthWay Budget  
Appendix G: NorthWay Personnel Plan  
Appendix H: NorthWay Community Trust Capital Requirements  
Appendix I: Proposed Indicators for the NorthWay Plan  
Appendix J: Data Sources for Proposed Indicators  
Appendix K: Shared Powers Process for Evaluation  
Appendix L: Community Profile—North Minneapolis

**List of Tables and Figures**

Table 1: Change in North Minneapolis Population, 1990-2000  
Table 2: Income Quartiles in North Minneapolis  
Table 3: Poverty and Income of North Minneapolis Neighborhoods, 1989  
Table 4: Income Sources for North Minneapolis  
Table 5: Four Largest Costs of Living, 1990  
Figure 1: Theory of Change Diagram (??-still needed)  
Figure 2: NorthWay Governance and Structure  
Figure 3: Systemic Evaluation  
Figure 4: Three Types of Indicators

# NorthWay Plan for Poverty Reduction and Wealth Creation in North Minneapolis

*“To our fellow swimmers. There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold onto the shore. They will feel they are being torn apart and will suffer greatly.*

*“Know that the river has a destination. The Elders say that we must let go of the shore, push off into the water. And we say, see who is there with you and celebrate.*

*“At this time in history, we are to take nothing personal, least of all ourselves, for the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey come to a halt. The time of the lone world is over.*

*“Gather yourselves. Banish the word struggle from your attitude and vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration. We are the ones we have been waiting for.”*

- from a message from the Hopi Elders (2001)

## Introduction

North Minneapolis, located just west and north of downtown Minneapolis, is a community of thirteen neighborhoods and home to about one-fifth of the city’s population. While challenged with one of the largest concentrations of the lowest-income residents in Minnesota, North Minneapolis is also rich in ethnic and racial diversity and in community commitment to improve the quality of life here. Hundreds of North Minneapolis residents have been involved in developing the following “NorthWay Plan for Poverty Reduction and Wealth Creation.”

The essence of the NorthWay Plan is found in its focus on the inter-connectedness of the community. A fundamental principle of this effort is that poverty is not just a lack of financial resources but an overall reflection of community well-being. Any efforts to reduce poverty must be holistic, addressing the economic, physical, emotional, and spiritual health of individuals and families as well as connections among community members and conditions in the community. Another fundamental principle of this effort is that solutions to reduce poverty in North Minneapolis must come from within the community. Therefore, the NorthWay Plan emphasizes widespread participation and an ongoing effort to include and engage the community’s diverse members.

This document discusses the community process that resulted in this plan; an overview of community demographics and characteristics; our vision, mission, and goal and the values that

underlie our work; and the theoretical basis for our holistic approach to poverty reduction. It then lays out a set of four poverty-reduction strategies and eleven resulting activities that will be pursued by our community to meet our mission. We then describe an innovative and multi-faceted governance and operating structure that emphasizes community engagement and staff support. Lastly, we provide plans for ongoing evaluation that will be used to measure success. A set of extensive appendices provide additional explanations and documentation for various parts of the plan and lay out the budget, personnel, and capital expenditures required to achieve the strategies and strive toward our vision for a better North Minneapolis.

## How We Got Here

*Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's "Theory of Relativity" to serve. You don't have to know the Second Theory of Thermal Dynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love, and you can be that servant.*

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1968<sup>1</sup>

This plan represents the work of a large and diverse group of people who participated in meetings, discussions, focus groups, and surveys over the past two-and-a-half years. They offered their time, effort, and ideas to be involved in what is seen as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build community in North Minneapolis and address the needs of some of the most unfortunate among us—those who live in poverty.

The planning began in July 1999, when the Northwest Area Foundation (NWAf) identified North Minneapolis as a candidate community for its Community Ventures Program. NWAf formed a “North Minneapolis Team” who began listening to the community—meeting with community members and leaders at every level, sitting in on community meetings, observing current programs and developments, and analyzing existing plans and data—in order to learn how the community worked and how the Foundation might work with and within the community.

### Action Circles

The first community activity was to convene five “Action Circles” in early 2000 involving over 100 residents. The Action Circles brought together people concerned about North Minneapolis, in an environment of equal sharing and mutual respect, to begin shaping a possible partnership between NWAf and the North Minneapolis community. Participants discussed the need to broaden and expand economic participation, see real improvements in people’s lives, expand participation in community decision making, and foster institutional cooperation. The Action

---

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from “The Drum Major Instinct,” from *A Knock At Midnight: Inspiration from the Great Sermons of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Circle process provided limited, short-term funding for fifty-five individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to address priorities raised in the action circles. These efforts represented a starting point for the subsequent strategy-building process.

### Strategy Circles

In the spring of 2000, the first “Strategy Circle” was convened to begin developing a poverty reduction strategy for North Minneapolis. Individuals who lived in, worked in, or were affiliated with the North Minneapolis community began meeting monthly to discuss their concerns regarding the quality of life and the barriers to moving out of poverty that are experienced by many residents. The conversation in North Minneapolis did not begin with a discussion about a healthy and wealthy Minneapolis. The conversation began with dialogue around issues of poverty. What is poverty? How is poverty manifested in North Minneapolis?

Members of this Strategy Circle formed working groups to learn more about various issues identified by the Circle related to poverty reduction planning. The strategy-building process also included working with local institutions and tapping the knowledge of local and national experts to establish a rigorous and comprehensive baseline of facts from which to build a focused and coordinated strategy.

By March 2001, through the work of twelve Strategy Circles and eighty work group meetings, community members completed a set of key components for a long-range, wealth-creation and poverty-reduction plan, convened a Northside mini-summit and two communication summits to obtain broader community input, and engaged a writing team to draft the NorthWay Plan for Poverty Reduction and Wealth Creation.

### The New Planning Work Group

During the Strategy Circles process, a “planning work group” was established (comprised of the chairs of each task-specific working group) to guide the development of a final plan. After receiving initial reactions from others involved in the Strategy Circle process, it became clear that this first draft could be improved by re-thinking.

In August 2001, the planning work group began to focus on the question “What do we really want to say to our community?” This question re-energized the group around their desire to continually broaden the circles of community engagement in the work that needs to be done. It also resulted in a target date of October 2001 to distribute a new draft plan throughout the North Minneapolis community to obtain reactions and feedback.

Such a shift in their focus led this work group to re-name themselves the “New Planning Work Group” (NPWG). It also led them to request greater involvement of NWAf's North Minneapolis team in the planning process. In order to maintain credibility with the larger community, the participants and the Foundation wanted to work more closely on the plan development so that whatever plan they took out for review would represent something that NWAf was willing to consider.

With renewed commitment, the NPWG settled in to prepare a draft plan for community review. Some of the members of the NPWG have thus been meeting nearly every week for over two

years now, volunteering their time to shepherd this process through to this final plan.

Participants chose the term “NorthWay” to represent the larger process and resulting actions of this plan. By giving it a name, the plan and the work take on a stronger identity. The term suggests several meanings, from the focus on North Minneapolis to finding a way out of poverty. The large-case W, drawing attention to the “Way,” represents a reaching for new opportunities and success for the residents of North Minneapolis.

### Community Review

In October 2001, the NPWG began an overall community review of the draft NorthWay Plan. This review served a two-fold purpose: (1) to disseminate information about the Plan, and (2) to solicit feedback from community members regarding their support for the Plan and suggestions to improve it. This information was obtained through surveys, focus groups, large group sessions, and targeted discussions with underrepresented groups.

An executive summary of the Plan and a survey seeking reactions were handed out from October through mid-November during meetings, at presentations made by NPWG members to church groups and others, and in the community (e.g., grocery stores, Laundromats). The English-language materials were translated into four additional languages (Hmong, Lao, Somali, and Spanish) to ensure that all community members had the opportunity to understand and comment on the Plan. Five hundred forty-one surveys were completed and returned. The survey respondents expressed overwhelming support for the NorthWay Plan, and there were no significant differences in the responses by either ethnic group or by neighborhood—all groups supported the plan. (A detailed discussion of survey results is presented in Appendix B.)

Sixteen small focus groups as well as six large-group sessions were held in mid-November 2001. The members of these groups were less sure that the NorthWay Plan would work compared to the survey respondents. They demonstrated a sober understanding of the complexities and realities of addressing an issue as comprehensive and demanding as the reduction of poverty. They noted that, for the plan to work, strong leadership will be required, everyone will need to participate, and “lots of help and encouragement” will be needed. There was also a near universal call for the NorthWay Plan to address issues of health in the community, an addition which has been incorporated into the final plan. (A detailed discussion of focus group results is presented in Appendix B.)

The results of this extensive community review provided specific reactions to the elements of the Plan and the strategic objectives discussed. These results, compiled in December 2001, guided the NPWG in making final revisions to the draft. The following Plan, therefore, has embraced and benefited from the input of over seven-hundred community members and reflects a broadly diverse population’s ideas about how to improve the North Minneapolis community. (See Appendix C for a list of all survey respondents’ visions for North Minneapolis 25 years from now.)

## Who We Are

According to the City of Minneapolis community and neighborhood designations, the “North Minneapolis community” referred to in this plan actually comprises two “official” communities—Camden and Near North. These two communities have thirteen neighborhoods among them, seven in Camden and six in Near North. The neighborhoods in the Camden Community: Cleveland, Folwell, Lind-Bohannon, McKinley, Shingle Creek, Victory and Webber-Camden. The Camden Community also includes three industrial areas (Camden Industrial, Humboldt Industrial, and the North River Industrial). The neighborhoods in the Near North Community: Harrison, Hawthorne, Jordan, Near North, Sumner-Glenwood, Victory and Willard-Hay. (See map, Appendix A).

North Minneapolis comprises the city’s northwest quadrant and is bounded on the north and west by the city limits, by the Mississippi River on the east, and by Interstate 394 on the south. The community is located near major transportation hubs, with easy access to Interstate Highways 35, 94 and 394 and major highways such as Olson Highway.

The area is home to significant concentrations of manufacturing and commercial businesses along several of its six major commercial corridors: West Broadway Avenue, Plymouth Avenue, West River Road and Washing Avenue, Lowry Avenue, Penn Avenue and Glenwood Avenue. A good portion of the community lies within an Empowerment Zone and a HUB Zone (historically underutilized business zone), two programs of the Federal government that promote employment, economic development and investment in targeted areas.

North Minneapolis is also home to a large number and wide range of community institutions and organizational resources. A comprehensive list is offered in Appendix L, but the following numbers provide an impressive overview:

- 207 child care centers
- 200 block clubs
- 94 faith centers
- 110 nonprofit
- 29 schools
- 40 youth groups
- 71 major employers
- 100s of businesses

The following brief discussions of demographics and characteristics of North Minneapolis are drawn from a much more detailed “Community Profile” that goes into depth about the community’s demographics, assets, and social indicators (see Appendix L).

### Population

North Minneapolis is home to about one-fifth (18%) of the city’s entire population. Its 67,668 residents make it one of the most diverse communities in the city.

Its racial composition changed considerably over the past decade. While the overall population of the community rose 6% from 1990 to 2000, both the Asian-Pacific (124% increase) and

Latino (112% increase) populations more than doubled. The African-American and Black population increased 55%, making this the community’s largest single racial group for the first time in history. Other groups diminished, with the Native American population decreasing by half (45% decline) and White population reduced 40%.

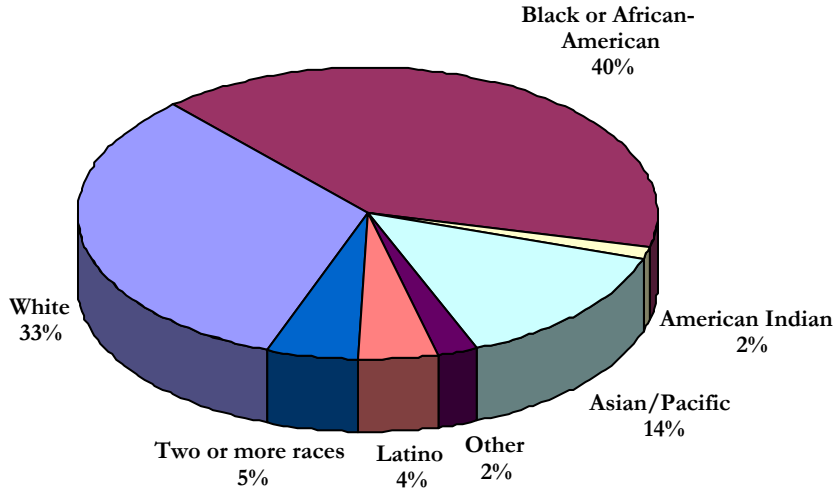
**Table 1: Change in North Minneapolis Population, 1990-2000**—Source: Federal Census of 1990, 2000<sup>2</sup>

	1990	pct of pop	2000	pct of pop	pct of change	pct chg
<b>White</b>	38,670	60.4%	23,224	34.3%	-15,444	-39.9%
<b>African-American &amp; Black</b>	18,260	28.5%	28,345	41.9%	10,088	55.2%
<b>Native American</b>	2,044	3.2%	1,124	1.7%	-920	-45.0%
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	4,339	6.8%	9,713	14.4%	5,374	123.9%
<b>Other</b>	689	1.1%	1,638	2.4%	949	137.7%
<b>Hispanic</b>	1,436	2.2%	3,042	4.5%	1,606	111.8%
<b>Two or more races</b>			3,624	5.4%	3,625	
<b>Total</b>	64,002		67,668		3,666	5.7%

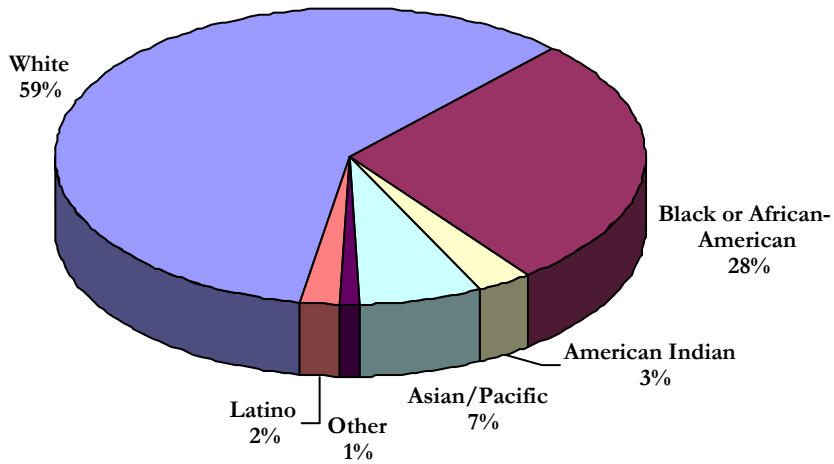
These demographic changes were far more dramatic in the northern half of the community where the Asian/Pacific population rose by 660%, and the African American and Black population increased nearly 300%. In the Southern half of the community, the African American population rose 21%, while the Native American population declined 59%, the Asian/Pacific population fell 55%, and the White population was cut nearly in half.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the Census used slightly different categories for defining race in 1990 than in 2000. The option of declaring “two or more races” was not given to residents in the earlier Census years. Also, note that these figures include the 96% decline in Sumner-Glenwood’s population (from 3,336 to 144) resulting from demolition of a public housing project.

### North Minneapolis Population 2000



### North Minneapolis Population, 1990



The North Minneapolis population also altered its age profile in the last decade. The number of youth between 5 and 19 years of age rose a striking 40% to 21,506, with the greatest increase in the number of children 10-14 years old. The neighborhood actually has 6% fewer very young children than it had a decade ago, with a group of 6,385 children under the age of five. While the population of younger adults (aged 20 to 34) fell 14%, the number of adults aged 35 to 44 rose slightly. As baby boomers aged, the number of adults 45 to 54 years old increased by 56%, but the community has 3,000 fewer residents over 55.

### Families and Households

The community's family and household structure is changing in quite different ways than is the city as a whole. North Minneapolis experienced a 20% drop in the number of married couple families over the decade, twice the city rate. Most of the North community's decrease occurred in the neighborhoods north of Lowry Avenue. Another signal of change was the number of single-parent households headed by women, which rose 10%, compared with a decline of 2% for the city as a whole. This change was by no means uniform across the community. Neighborhoods south of Lowry saw a 4% decline in single-mother households, while the northern neighborhoods saw their count climb 45%.

### Housing

North Minneapolis has just over 23,000 housing units, an 11% decrease since 1990. Reflecting the continuing trends in the entire Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, North Minneapolis has experienced a significant rise in the median sale prices of homes. The median sale price in 2000 for a single family home was \$94,250 in Camden and \$72,250 in Near North. These prices represent increases of 57 percent and 60 percent, respectively, over the 1997 prices. Both figures, however, are well below the citywide median sale price of \$118,000.<sup>3</sup>

The community's housing stock runs the gamut, from some of the city's best to some of its worst. Less than 10% of all housing units in the Shingle Creek neighborhood were rated as below average, compared to 30% to 80% of the housing units in the neighborhoods of the Near North community.<sup>4</sup>

### Income and Spending

North Minneapolis has 18% of the city's population, yet earns only 12% of the city's household income. In 1989, the lowest quartile of North Minneapolis households earned \$10,000 or less per year. This income level would be worth \$13,887 in 2000 dollars. The highest quartile of the community earned \$37,500 or more (\$52,077 or more in 2000 dollars).

---

<sup>3</sup> Source: *State of the City 2000*, Minneapolis Planning Department; page 20. Sale prices are for the First Quarter of 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, page 19. Figures are for 1999.

**Table 2: Income Quartiles in North Minneapolis**—Source: Federal Census of 1990, adjusted with cost of living rates from Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

Quartile:	Value (1989 dollars)	Value (2000 dollars)
<b>Lowest</b>	Less than \$10,000	less than \$13,887
<b>Lower</b>	\$10,000 to \$22,500	\$13,887 to \$31,246
<b>Higher</b>	\$22,500 to \$37,499	\$31,246 to \$52,077
<b>Highest</b>	\$37,500 and more	\$52,077 and more

Income is not divided evenly across the community. In 1989, one of every four young householders (25-34 years), and one of every three householders over 75 years, were members of the lowest-income group.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, North Minneapolis is home to one of the largest concentrations of the lowest-income residents in Minnesota. Table 3 shows the percentage of persons living below poverty and the median household and family incomes for 1989.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 3: Poverty and Income of North Minneapolis Neighborhoods, 1989**—Source: *State of the City 2000*, Minneapolis Planning Department; page 9

Neighborhood	Percent of Persons Below Poverty	Median Household Income \$	Median Family Income \$
Harrison	48.9%	\$14,877	\$13,375
Hawthorne	37.8	15,534	17,328
Jordan	28.4	21,924	26,065
Near North	46.5	12,461	14,107
Willard	26.9	24,504	25,953
Cleveland	7.8	29,493	33,354
Folwell	9.7	28,279	33,980
Lind-Bohannon	10.1	27,335	31,734
McKinley	19.2	24,205	26,895
Shingle Creek	6.7	31,234	33,315
Sumner-Glenwood	78.3	6,452	7,340
Victory	5.8	31,767	36,816
Webber-Camden	9.9	24,189	30,313
<b>City of Minneapolis</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>\$25,234</b>	<b>\$32,998</b>

In the community as well as in the city, more than three of every four dollars earned comes from wage and salary income. Still, aggregate income is lower here, meaning that North Minneapolis residents work for lower pay. North Minneapolis does earn more of its income through public assistance than is typical for the city—earning, in fact, almost one of every three dollars in public assistance earned by city residents. However, the total amount of public assistance received is still a relatively small number when compared to income earned through wages and salaries.

<sup>5</sup> Note that the figures are for 1989 (the most recent available) and that new information indicates that some could have changed drastically.

The community earns relatively less from capital (interest, dividends, and rent) than the city as a whole, at a rate about half that of the city, but still earns as much as the community receives in public assistance. North Minneapolis also earns a bit greater share of its income through social security payments than city residents.

**Table 4: Income Sources for North Minneapolis compared to entire city**—*Source: Federal Census (1990)*

Type of Income	North Mpls.	pct	Minneapolis	pct	North pct of city
Wage and salary	\$ 490,975,373	77.0%	\$ 4,065,902,299	76.2%	12.1%
Self-employment	\$ 20,908,426	3.3%	\$ 295,632,083	5.5%	7.1%
Farm	\$ 514,812	0.1%	\$ 5,093,533	0.1%	10.1%
Interest/dividend/rental	\$ 22,550,057	3.5%	\$ 380,843,439	7.1%	5.9%
Social security	\$ 45,574,779	7.1%	\$ 280,227,583	5.3%	16.3%
Public assistance	\$ 22,396,548	3.5%	\$ 79,923,059	1.5%	28.0%
Retirement	\$ 22,943,176	3.6%	\$ 164,695,017	3.1%	13.9%
Other income	\$ 11,652,472	1.8%	\$ 64,569,867	1.2%	18.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$637,515,643</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 5,336,886,880</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>

North Minneapolis residents, in the aggregate, spend about as much as they earn each year, a total of \$638 million (in 1989). Of this, residents use \$35 million (5%) to pay taxes to local, state and federal governments. This leaves \$603 million for essential consumer purchases. Just as with earned income, resident consumer power dwindled from 1980 to 1990 due to the rising cost of living. But consumption fell at a rate twice that of the decline in income; resident purchases were worth 14% less in 1989 than a decade earlier.

Four major consumer expenditures top the list. Housing requires about 28% of the neighborhood budget, at \$177 million per year. Transportation costs residents \$117 million (18%) each year. Food spending totals about \$90 million each year, and insurance/pensions total \$60 million. These four categories amount to 70% of all consumption by neighborhood residents.

**Table 5: Four Largest Costs of Living, 1990**  
*Source: Federal Census (1980, 1990), combined with Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Studies (1979, 1989)*  
 [See Assumptions section in Appendix L]

Housing	\$177 million	(same as 1980)
Food	\$90 million	(22% less than 1980)
Transportation	\$117 million	(9% less than 1980)
Insurance	\$60 million	(23% more than 1980)

This should be considered important consumer power—many business people would be eager to serve a \$90 million food market, or a \$60 million insurance market, for instance.

However, the community also must consider where it spends its money. While no detailed calculation of internal and external spending was done, a similar review of the Camden Community in 1995 found that, conservatively estimated, three of every four dollars of consumer spending is done outside that community. It is likely that the figure for the North Minneapolis community as a whole is similar. This means that more than \$450 million is spent by North Minneapolis consumers outside their community each year. And North Minneapolis has few destination stores or services that would draw sufficient income from residents outside the community to balance this outflow. Overall, this \$450 million outflow is *20 times larger* than the \$22 million of public assistance income earned by community residents.

### Physical Space

Residential areas account for more than 40 percent of the land use in both communities. As with many neighborhoods in the city, most in North Minneapolis have at least one neighborhood park. However, access to the Mississippi River is severely limited by Interstate 94, which cuts off the community physically from the river, and also vaults considerable traffic noise into the valley. Safety has been a concern in many public spaces. And residents complain that only the most privileged have significant chances to live near water or green space.

There are several major development projects currently underway in the community, including the \$150-million Near North redevelopment along Olson Highway, the West Broadway Streetscape, the Emerson Avenue Parkway and the Bassett Creek Initiative.

### A Changing Community

As this overview of North Minneapolis shows, we have much to do to improve our community, but we also have many assets with which to work. We have seen disturbing trends in housing stock and prices, income levels, and single-parent households, but we have also seen exciting new possibilities in the increased diversity of our community and the ongoing efforts to improve infrastructure and economic opportunities. While every community is always in flux, we intend to use this NorthWay Plan to give North Minneapolis the vision and means to direct change toward positive outcomes and an ever-improving community profile.

## Our Vision, Mission, Goal, and Values

The NorthWay Plan has been designed to achieve the following vision: **North Minneapolis is a welcoming community where people of diverse backgrounds and experience sustain and continue to develop their economic, physical, relational, and spiritual well-being.** This vision, developed to inspire the community, is the driving force for the NorthWay Plan's overall approach as well as the priorities, specific strategies, and actions outlined here.

NorthWay also developed a mission statement to provide direction to the community's efforts. The mission evolved from the vision, reflects its holistic approach, and speaks to the specific actions of a plan to reduce poverty. The mission of NorthWay is **to reduce poverty and increase the wealth, health, and well-being of the community by creating systems to engage and empower its residents.**

This mission is manifest in our overarching, concrete goal **to reduce poverty by building the assets and wealth of individuals and families whose household earnings place them in the lower quartile economically.**

The following values statements also provide a fundamental base for the strategies and action steps of the NorthWay Plan.

1. We believe in the sanctity, value and, dignity of every human being throughout his or her life span.
2. We believe in the development of every individual's full potential with life-long learning.
3. We celebrate and build on the community's wide-ranging diversity as a common asset.
4. We commit to the creation of a culture of hospitality, welcoming all people regardless of resources.
5. We commit to dismantling all systems of oppression.
6. We believe in providing access and opportunity that promotes economic, physical, and relational well-being.
7. We honor holistic and integrated approaches to achieving the health and well-being of the community.
8. We affirm the interconnectedness of all resources and the importance and power of cooperation.
9. We believe in partnering in implementation and investment in community.
10. We believe in honesty, openness, and trust.
11. We commit to individual, mutual, and public responsibility and accountability in all aspects of community life.
12. We will exercise social responsibility in funding and all activities, holding ourselves accountable to high ethical standards.

## Our Theory of Change

During the Strategy Circles stage of our planning, one work group was charged with developing a “theory of change” that would provide a foundation for our community’s plan to reduce poverty. The group studied definitions and causes of poverty and researched best practices from across the country that were targeted toward poverty reduction and community change. The research into best practices focused on poverty-reduction strategies that (a) created value-added initiatives to complement existing efforts to address poverty, (b) stimulated new thinking or rethinking of strategies, and (c) were not currently in practice in North Minneapolis (see Appendix D). The results of this research led to a systemic understanding of poverty and of the changes that will be required to reduce it in our community.

### What is Poverty?

The condition of poverty is complex and should not be thought of as a simple problem with a simple solution. Race, gender, familial status, age, and place of residence are some, but not all, of the characteristics that enhance the risk of living in poverty. Poverty is comprised of both economic and non-monetary dimensions. Poverty is the unavailability of affordable housing and experiencing homelessness and hunger. Poverty is being sick and not having the means to access medical care. Poverty is not having a job or is being employed at wages that don’t sustain an adequate quality of life. Poverty cultivates a sense of hopelessness, disconnection, and alienation between community members and from systems of support.

The bigger picture shows that poverty is a system of interacting barriers which operate together to prevent movement out of poverty. These barriers include:

- *Systemic or Environmental Barriers* – Obstacles in the surrounding context that require effort in the larger community to overcome, such as racism, insufficient public transportation, polluted air or soil or water, lack of affordable housing, lack of affordable and accessible child care, lack of jobs paying a living wage, limited access to financial resources, zoning codes that favor suburbs or big business goals, etc.
- *Skill and Asset Barriers* – Obstacles that can be remedied by education and training, such as illiteracy, insufficient financial or planning skills, insufficient job skills (both “soft” and technical), insufficient work experience, etc.
- *Personal Barriers* – Obstacles that require growth, healing, and conversion to overcome, such as mental and physical illness, chemical dependency, dysfunctional family systems, family break-up, sexual and physical abuse, lack of resilience and persistence, sense of discouragement and hopelessness, etc.

Because the barriers to moving out of poverty are complex and interwoven, any theory for how to change the community to reduce poverty must also be complex, reflecting a holistic and systemic perspective.

### Acting on a Complex Definition of Poverty

A “theory of change” asks that the participants in the change process be as clear as possible about not only the ultimate outcomes and impacts they hope to achieve but also the avenues

through which they expect to achieve them.<sup>6</sup> We developed a theory of change early in our planning process to serve as a foundation for our decision making. We referred to it regularly as we sought to clearly specify the initiative’s intended outcomes, the activities that need to be implemented in order to achieve those outcomes, and the contextual factors that are likely to influence them. Our theory of change will also serve as a building block for mid-course feedback and solid evaluation about how and why the plan is working.

Starting with our definition of poverty, we realized that the majority of people in our community who are economically in the lowest quartile of our population find themselves in one or both of these two categories:

- They are already working in the economy, but they have insufficient income or access to assets to move them out of poverty.
- They possess personal barriers or experience social or structural barriers that prevent them from accessing current opportunities in the economy.

**Therefore, to reduce poverty and create wealth, our community must develop and support sustainable social, economic, and political practices and structures in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors to assist people in accessing opportunities.**

After embracing a complex definition of poverty and a comprehensive theory of change, we have realized that North Minneapolis will need to take a systemic, community-wide, sustained approach to reducing poverty. From our research of best practices around the country, we were impressed by the potential of one community-directed establishment—known as a “community support organization”—to provide the organizational framework and hands-on assistance to ensure that such a demanding approach to poverty reduction can succeed. The community support organization serves as an impartial, skilled, local intermediary dedicated to fostering the success of local collaborations and systemic reforms in order to improve the way the community solves problems. This organization will not only facilitate cross-sector approaches and collaborative efforts to address a range of community issues, but will engender community-wide support and responsibility for developing and leading the efforts.

We adopted the concept of a community support organization as the keystone for implementing the vision, mission, strategies and activities presented in this plan. Our community support organization is known as the **NorthWay Community Trust**.

Community input has been and will continue to be a critical ingredient for our work in North Minneapolis and the efforts of the NorthWay Community Trust. To ensure that the Trust is serving the community’s vision, it will be designed as a membership organization, with the membership known as **The Alliance** (see the upcoming section on Governance and Structure for details on the Trust and Alliance.) We have identified the following as primary actions that the Trust will pursue, with the involvement of the larger community:

- Develop living wage employment and indigenous business growth that reduces poverty and builds wealth.

---

<sup>6</sup> Weiss, Carol Hirschon. (1995). “Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families.” In *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts*, ed. James Connell, et al. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.

- Increase the supply of safe, affordable housing and appropriate financial products.
- Increase access to knowledge and services to support spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health and well-being.
- Develop a community infrastructure for shared learning.

**Figure ??: Theory of Change Diagram**

Please insert, if this has been created....

## Our Strategies

With our focus on interconnectedness, systems, and comprehensive solutions, the NorthWay Community Trust and North Minneapolis will pursue the following four long-term strategies:

- I. Build Connection & Capacity.** Strengthen social connections among residents that enhance trust and collective efficacy, and lead to mutually beneficial relationships among residents, faith communities, businesses, schools, agencies and other organizations.
- II. Build Community Wealth.** Reduce personal debt, increase household income, and foster the accumulation of assets by low-income residents of North Minneapolis through employment programs, strategic use of financial tools, educational campaigns, and business partnerships.
- III. Create Truly Affordable Housing.** Direct resources to increase the supply of housing affordable to people who earn 50% or less of the City of Minneapolis median income, and ensure safe occupancy of affordable housing in North Minneapolis through educational initiatives.
- IV. Address Health Disparities.** Direct resources to address health disparities through education and prevention campaigns, by creating new access to affordable health care, and by intervening in community affairs in ways that enhance health and reduce risk behaviors for all members of the North Minneapolis community.

A further discussion of these four long-term strategies will help clarify their value and purpose and the ways in which we will know if we are accomplishing them. We include a preliminary list of indicators for each strategy, with the assumption that indicators under one strategy may also be relevant in measuring progress on another strategy. While each strategy has a specific focus and each indicator provides a very specific piece of data, they combine to help us understand how we are doing in reaching our goal of reducing poverty and building assets and wealth. And they work together to allow a comprehensive, systemic approach to change.

In the listings of outcome indicators below, the following abbreviations are used to pinpoint the data sources or methods for collecting each indicator.

- [program]** Programmatic data for Key Outcomes
- [panel]** Panel Study
- [admin]** Administrative or other agency data
- [putnam]** Robert Putnam or associates
- [original]** Requires new study launched by NorthWay
- [alliance]** Discussions & Surveys by Alliance

## **I. Build Connection & Capacity**

The social capital survey of North Minneapolis (see Appendix L for a discussion of this survey) showed that the level of civic engagement in the community is similar to that of the surrounding suburban areas. Key strengths include the organizational capacity of its community nonprofits, especially in the southern tier of neighborhoods. Youth and school-based citizen participation are also strong.

Community leaders point out, however, that despite the large number of organizations addressing local concerns, there is often little interaction among them, let alone close cooperation. Ethnic tensions have erupted from time to time, and class differences interfere with community progress.

Thus, this NorthWay strategy focuses on building new interpersonal connections among residents. We want to focus simultaneously on building greater trust among individuals and fostering effective collaborative work in community initiatives. We will strengthen the ground-level network of interconnected residents as our community institutions learn to cooperate more effectively. NorthWay will also use its strategic activities as a way to weave a stronger fabric.

The outcome indicators that will be used to measure progress on this strategy include the following:

- 1) “Trust and belonging” as measured in Putnam’s social capital survey [putnam]
- 2) Number of organizational partnerships (public and private) advancing two or more NorthWay objectives [program]
- 3) Citizen competencies built by NorthWay (career, technical, leadership, management & other skills) [program]
- 4) Number of youth engaged in advancing NorthWay mission [program]
- 5) Number (and percent) of residents actively engaged in NorthWay [program]
- 6) Number of multicultural (and single-culture) citizen clusters [original]
- 7) Number (and percent) of residents involved in faith communities or self-help groups [original]
- 8) Use levels and residents’ perception of safety of public spaces [panel]
- 9) Resident perceptions of NorthWay governance [panel]+[alliance]
- 10) Parent and student satisfaction with public and alternative school options [panel]
- 11) Number (and percent) of eligible voters who vote in general elections [program]

## **II. Build Community Wealth**

Poverty in North Minneapolis is structural. Only 3.5% of the community's income derives from public assistance, and residents earn the same percentage of their income from work as the average city worker. Merely increasing residents' income would not, in itself, alter the economic structures that systematically drain wealth away from this community.

Residents earn \$638 million each year, yet few of their consumer purchases do anything to build wealth for local residents. North Minneapolis consumers spend at least \$450 million *each year* outside the community—paying interest on home mortgage loans and rent to absentee owners, buying food, clothing, fuel, cars and insurance from sources outside North Minneapolis. This

would be of no particular importance if the community sold an equivalent amount of goods and services to an external market. However, this is not the case.

To truly reduce poverty will require the construction of new economic relationships that foster the creation of wealth that stays in the North Minneapolis community. This will involve cycling money from one resident to another so that local transactions built local wealth.

These will be exceptionally difficult steps to take. Even in the mainstream American economy, working families of some means are rarely able to accumulate adequate savings unless they are aligned with some institution that has the power to leverage their individual savings. Most middle-income workers, for example, would not work for a corporation that did not cover a substantial part of their health insurance expenses, or that did not match employee contributions to a pension fund. Most low-income residents who are poor have no such access to leveraging partners. Many of the poorest of the community's residents work full time (or more) without receiving fringe benefits, even if they hold more than one job.

Concerted savings programs, such as Individual Development Accounts which leverage the savings set aside by low-income residents, offer one such vehicle. Community-owned financial institutions offer another, by creating a stronger flow of money in the community, and by building financial expertise among residents. Encouraging and supporting the development of both tools are contemplated in the NorthWay plan.

The outcome indicators that will be used to measure progress on this strategy include the following:

- 1) Value of savings built by residents in individual development accounts (IDAs) (including number of residents building savings) [panel]+[program]
- 2) Value of resident equity built by NorthWay activities (including number of residents building equity) [panel]+[program]
- 3) Value of resident investments in NorthWay activities (by income quartile—including number of residents investing) [panel]+[program]
- 4) Number (and percent) of businesses owned by people of color (include size in annual sales and number of employees) [panel]+[program]
- 5) Number of living wage jobs and covenants (including wage levels) [panel]+[program]
- 6) Value (and percent) of home loan interest payments recycled in community [panel]+[program]

### **III. Create Truly Affordable Housing**

The largest consumer expense for North Minneapolis residents is housing, which costs an aggregate total of \$177 million per year. Consequently, the largest flows of money away from the community involve housing costs, as residents pay interest on home mortgages, or pay rent to absentee owners.

Moreover, the number of housing units in the community fell 11% (more than 2,000 units) over the decade 1990-2000. While this was fueled by the destruction of the Sumner-Glenwood housing project, neighborhood efforts to remove vacant and boarded homes also played a strong

role. In fact, *each neighborhood in the community* experienced a net loss of housing units, despite \$35 million of investment by the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, about half of which was devoted to housing.

Although new homes are currently under construction in North Minneapolis, residents complain that these homes are priced beyond reach of residents. Even homes designated as "affordable" by developers often require an income of 80% of the median metro income—and thus offer no housing relief to the lowest quartile. We will encourage the development of homes for people who earn at 50% of the city's median income or less.

Providing adequate housing in our neighborhood is not simply a matter of bricks and mortar, however. Construction and rent credit programs will have to be combined with solid educational programs that show low-income buyers how to properly manage their homes, along with support mechanisms that help home owners stay ahead of maintenance.

The outcome indicators that will be used to measure progress on this strategy include the following:

- 1) Number of units affordable to each income quartile (focus on lowest quartile) [panel]+[program]
- 2) Number of affordable units near public amenities [panel]+[program]

#### **IV. Address Health Disparities**

North Minneapolis is blessed with the attention of state, county, and city initiatives to address health disparities in the community—yet these initiatives exist precisely because severe health disparities exist. In fact, health is such a powerful community concern, that during the community review process for the NorthWay Plan, residents voiced a clear consensus that poverty cannot ultimately be reduced unless health issues are specifically addressed.

Infant mortality rates, low birth-weight babies, and teen pregnancy rates are all signs of the health disadvantages faced even by new-born children in this community. These rates also point to a lack of health among adults, and a lack of connectedness and wealth among community residents. The African-American population has several special health issues that are often not adequately addressed by conventional health care systems. Diabetes and cardiovascular disease are two prominent examples.

NorthWay will partner with existing health disparities initiatives, engaging more residents in the process of building greater health, and adding new options for affordable health care. Culturally appropriate care models will be encouraged, and community risk factors will be addressed.

The outcome indicators that will be used to measure progress on this strategy include the following:

- 1) Community's capacity to address needs of residents with AIDS (includes number of residents with AIDS, participation in AIDS management programs) [original]
- 2) Blood lead levels of residents tested [admin]
- 3) Number of senior residents with specific health concerns [panel]

We feel confident that progress on these four long-term strategies will represent a significant improvement in the quality of life in North Minneapolis as we work and learn together, leverage our resources, and reduce poverty.

### Budgeting for the Strategies

The community estimates that \$20 million is required from the partnership agreement with the Northwest Area Foundation. This \$20 million will be leveraged in the following ways to achieve an overall \$105 million devoted to fulfilling these strategies:

The \$20 million provided by the NWAFF will be divided into a “Designated Fund” to support the infrastructure and planned activities of the NorthWay Community Trust and into a “Donor Advisor Fund” to provide the partnerships and connections developed in the community with leverage, match-funding, and resources to enable achievement of the goal of reducing poverty and creating wealth for the residents of North Minneapolis. (See the Governance and Structure section for more on these funds and the NorthWay Community Trust.)

- Designated Fund = \$6 million  
See Appendix F (NorthWay Budget) for detail as to budget and timeline
- Donor Advisor Fund = \$14 million  
Housed at The Minneapolis Foundation and disbursed at the direction of the Community Partnership and Resource Committee (see “Governance” section)

The Donor Advisor Fund will be distributed, by strategy, in the following manner with the expected leverage from other sources listed.

**Strategy I: \$3,500,000.** This is expected to generate leverage for additional dollars, in-kind, and volunteer commitments of \$10 million.

**Strategy II: \$3,500,000.** This is expected to generate leverage for additional dollars and in-kind commitments of \$25 million.

**Strategy III: \$4,200,000.** This is expected to generate leverage for additional dollars from various public and private funders of, at least, \$42 million.

**Strategy IV: \$2,800,000.** This is expected to generate leverage for additional dollars, in-kind, and volunteer commitments of \$8.5 million.

## Our Activities

The four long-term strategies will be integrated into the work of the community through the following activities. Each activity was chosen based on its ability to contribute to interconnectedness and systemic work, usually by helping to pursue more than one of the four strategies.

### A. Organize the Alliance

The NorthWay Community Trust (NWCT) will be a membership-based organization in which its members elect and hold accountable its board of directors. NWCT's membership will be called **The Alliance** which will welcome anyone as a member who supports NWCT's principles, mission, and goals. One of the first activities of the NorthWay Plan is to organize The Alliance so that the members can move forward with the other activities in the Plan.

Actions: Engage media to publicize the opportunity to join  
Conduct an outreach campaign at gatherings throughout the community  
Enroll members  
Set a regular schedule for meetings and begin meeting

Indicators: New and growing membership  
New community leaders emerge  
Literature is regularly circulated that keeps people involved and informed  
Regular meetings of The Alliance occur  
Members of Alliance represent each race/ethnicity, gender, age, class  
Leadership represents the population of North Minneapolis

Outcomes: Traditionally disenfranchised people and grassroots groups in the community will have a voice in community decision making and the power to take action for improvements.  
A network for action and reflection will be in place to help dismantle racism and create a community culture for full economic and civic participation

Strategies: I – Build connection and capacity

### B. Create the NorthWay Community Trust

The **NorthWay Community Trust** (NWCT) will be a community-directed, membership-based, nonprofit organization with its own governing board that will provide the organizational framework and hands-on assistance to support this Plan's comprehensive, systemic approach to poverty reduction. The Trust is discussed further in the Governance and Operation sections of this plan.

- Actions: Incorporate the organization—obtain federal 501(c)(3) status, and get legal recognition from state  
Write Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws  
Establish the structure (roles of board members and staff)  
Elect board  
Hire executive director, who then hires staff  
Locate appropriate work space  
Obtain necessary equipment  
Develop budget based on funding from “designated fund” (see Governance section for more on this fund)
- Indicators: A legal entity exists with 501(c)(3) status  
A board and staff are in place and able to do their work
- Outcomes: A community support organization will exist to which the North Minneapolis community can turn for assistance in achieving the strategies of this plan.
- Strategies: I-IV (the creation of the NWCT will enable pursuit of all strategies and will provide the tool by which the other activities will be accomplished)

### C. Establish the Community Partnership and Resource Committee

Funding from NWAFF will be held by The Minneapolis Foundation in two types of funds: a *designated fund* and a *donor advisor fund*. The *designated fund* will provide an annual allocation of money necessary for NWCT operations. This annual allocation will be based on the budget for this purpose included in the NorthWay Plan. The disbursement of grant funds to North Minneapolis organizations and partnerships will be recommended to the NWCT board of directors by a donor advisor fund committee called the **Community Partnership and Resource Committee**. (See the Governance section for more on fund management and disbursement.)

- Actions: Establish the donor advisor fund with The Minneapolis Foundation  
Write a fund agreement  
Establish guidelines for the committee’s work  
Seek additional partners to participate in NorthWay funding
- Indicators: Solid funding partnerships in place  
Funds from other sources obtained to increase the fund  
Grant announcements made  
Members of the committee represent each race/ethnicity, gender, class
- Outcomes: A donor advisory committee will exist to which the North Minneapolis community can turn for funding to achieve the strategies of this plan.
- Strategies: I-IV (the establishment of this fund will enable pursuit of all strategies)

D. Build Capacity—Community, Organizational, Personal

North Minneapolis is blessed by a healthy mix of institutional assets, including neighborhood groups, nonprofit organizations, and religious institutions (see Appendix L). And a 2001 study of social capital in North Minneapolis, showed that the “levels of general civic engagement are *not* significantly different between North Minneapolis and the suburbs.” However, the study also pointed to weaknesses in the connections among residents and involvement in civic life that negatively impact the capacity of our community to improve.

For example, while North Minneapolis is especially strong in its organizational capacity, youth and school-based participation, and participation in reform politics, its weakness is in civic activism, voting participation, faith-based participation, and team sports. Researchers also found a low level of neighborhood trust in North Minneapolis, with only 21% reporting strong trust of their neighbors, compared to 45% for the city as a whole and 68% for metro suburban areas. Residents reported greater trust for police (27%) than for neighbors, or for any single ethnic group. Less than 50% of residents at any income level reported they felt effective in making the community a better place. And residents are not happy with their quality of community life, with only 19% reporting "excellent," compared to 63% in metro suburbs.

With these data in mind, we have identified the need to build capacity at the community, organizational, and personal level to work together and make use of our many resources in order to reduce poverty.

Actions:            Convene educational forums and other opportunities for residents to come together to learn from each other  
                          Facilitate the process of connecting and prioritizing service delivery in accordance with community needs and goals  
                          Enhance voter registration and “get out the vote” efforts  
                          Recruit members for The Alliance to get involved in the NorthWay Plan  
                          Develop new leadership from within the resident population  
                          Form mentor groups for youth involvement as well as to support other outcomes of plan  
                          Identify and enhance existing resources for community improvement  
                          Support people through relational networks to achieve a positive personal vision to improve their lives

Indicators/  
Outcomes:        Many productive partnerships between and among organizations to address system-wide goals  
                          Increase in number and percent of residents voting  
                          Many residents actively engaged in NorthWay  
                          New leadership developed  
                          Previously measured indicators of social capital improve  
                          Existing organizations and community assets experience success with their efforts  
                          More youth are engaged in community activities  
                          Residents report an excellent quality of life and feel effective in making the community a better place

Strategies: I-IV (all strategies will be easier to pursue when we build the capacity of our community, organizations, and residents to achieve the comprehensive outcomes to reduce poverty)

E. With the NWCT serving as catalyst and technology hub, develop knowledge and communication clusters throughout the community that create, capture, and share learning inside and outside the community.

North Minneapolis has been engaged in many community development efforts over the last few decades. A review of these initiatives shows that many have been—or continue to be—valuable, but none has succeeded in creating the systemic, long-lasting changes needed to set our community onto a new path of success. (See the section on “Previous Plans for North Minneapolis Community Revitalization” in Appendix L) Still lacking are (a) lasting “connective tissue” that integrates separate community improvement efforts, (b) sustained investment that nourishes broad-based leadership, (c) consistent evaluation that ensures that development efforts actually do build long-term wealth for community residents, and (d) a resource base that systematically cultivates a spirit of community learning, so residents can respond flexibly, strategically and effectively to new challenges as they arise.

The NorthWay Plan intends to speak directly to the limitations of previous efforts by ensuring that the knowledge we build, information we gather, partnerships we establish, and insights we experience are captured and shared throughout the community and beyond.

Actions: Put a system in place at the NWCT where information can be collected, collated, abstracted, and shared (and possibly marketed to other organizations)  
Put in place a technology infrastructure at the NWCT that will support knowledge and action clusters (e.g., the collectives, community work, BIHA)  
Enable direct and mutual accountability among partners in carrying out the plan (e.g., create circles of support and accountability)  
Engage the entire community in establishing a culture and practice of lifelong, life-sustaining, and intergenerational learning.  
Establish community education partnerships—to facilitate the learning that is already underway (with schools, libraries, continuing education programs, etc.).

Indicators: Information flow in the community  
Cultural competence of nonprofits  
Number of multi-cultural clusters  
Sale of information to external organizations  
The number of websites that belong to institutions in community  
How well we do on the connected community survey (e.g., who has got Internet access and how well is it working?)

- Outcomes: Immediate access (with proper privacy assurances) to a broad range of information, such as indicators data, The Alliance calendar, best practices research results, Information and Referral database, and case management protocols  
Information is leveraged across organizations and sectors for better decision making, enhanced services, and improved systems  
Computer literacy is increased  
Local accountability for businesses and services is assumed and acted upon  
The community is the author and evaluator of its own information
- Strategies: I-IV (all strategies will be easier to pursue when we have systems and relationships in place to capture and share knowledge)

F. Create an environment that produces and sustains safe, clean, healthy, and stable neighborhoods.

The profile of North Minneapolis (see Appendix L) shows ongoing changes in neighborhood composition (including increased diversity) and in family structures that can either be a strength or a weakness for neighborhoods, depending on how well they are functioning. The profile also discusses health and well-being indicators (such as teen pregnancy, infant mortality, vaccination rates, homicides, and crime rates) that are less favorable for North Minneapolis than for the city as a whole. These present challenges to our community that we want to address through strong neighborhood environments.

- Actions: Support and enhance neighborhood clinics  
Encourage clean-up projects and awards programs  
Enable transportation for access to services  
Establish partnerships with law enforcement and violence prevention programs  
Support crack down on minor crimes  
Support, enhance, and connect neighborhood centers and associations  
Improve the quantity, quality, and affordability of housing stock
- Indicators: Number of housing investments that reduce cost  
Public safety crime statistics  
Statistics on low-birth weight babies  
Vaccination rates  
Number and functionality of block clubs  
Survey community responses regarding cleanliness of neighborhoods
- Outcome: Residents perceive and experience their neighborhoods as safe, clean, healthy, and stable.
- Strategies: I-IV (A good quality of life in our neighborhoods will lead to and result from the pursuit of the four long-term strategies.)

G. Determine degree to which an intentional and coordinated delivery system for housing access across the full range of needs exists in North Minneapolis and foster its growth.

While housing prices are rising, and housing stock in our community has declined, the opportunities for safe and affordable housing for all North Minneapolis residents are decreasing. In addition, the goal of home ownership, under conventional financing structures, is a two-edged sword for a lower-income community like ours.

On the one hand, buying a home is one of the few ways for most individuals and families to build wealth. The investments home buyers make in improving their properties, and the increased commitment to place this brings, are also one of the strongest stabilizing forces in the community. On the other hand, it is not clear that low-income communities can afford the erosion of wealth that results when interest payments are made to the secondary mortgage market. To the extent these secondary lenders are located in distant financial centers—and most are—it is less clear that these interest payments cycle back into the community.

Analysis of North Minneapolis census tracts found that in 1996, community home buyers took out 831 loans with a total value of \$44 million. Assuming these are 30-year loans at the prevailing interest rate for the year (7%), this amounts to a total of \$113 million in mortgage payments over the term of the loans. This includes \$69 million in interest payments paid primarily to the secondary market. This amount essentially builds wealth for people outside the community, but not for residents. (See Appendix L for a fuller discussion of this issue.)

Once again, we find that efforts to reduce poverty and improve quality of life run into complex, systemic challenges. In order to increase opportunities for lower-income residents to occupy stable, safe, affordable housing that enhances their opportunities to accumulate assets without eroding the community's financial resources, we need to foster an intentional and coordinated delivery system for housing access across the full range of needs.

Actions:        Educate residents, realtors, lenders, and developers about the full complexity of the housing issue in our community  
                    Hold system-wide discussions about what an intentional and coordinated delivery system entails  
                    Encourage development of new, affordable housing stock  
                    Establish and support forms of financial assistance that are beneficial (with emphasis on guiding low- to mid-income residents through credit repair and financing steps)

Indicators:     Housing prices  
                    Number of housing units  
                    Quality and value of housing stock  
                    Home-ownership and rental statistics  
                    Percent of income paid for housing  
                    Interest payments made to secondary lenders

Outcome: An intentional and coordinated delivery system for housing access across the full range of needs is established, growing, and meeting the needs for safe and affordable housing (especially for residents earning 50% or less of the median city income).

Strategies: I-III

H. Develop and support opportunities for economic literacy that lead to asset accumulation.

Knowledge is power. The more residents in our community understand about their personal finances and the benefits of accumulating assets, the better able they will be to improve their financial well-being.

Actions: Establish local investment clubs  
Explore and expand access to individual development accounts  
Enhance life skills education in junior high schools and high schools  
Enhance adult education programs addressing asset building and debt reduction

Indicators: Value of savings built by residents in Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) (including number of residents who build savings)  
Value of resident equity  
Value of reductions in (or local purchases of) major living costs for food, housing, insurance, and transportation  
Home purchase and home improvement loans made in community

Outcomes: The residents of North Minneapolis will be economically literate and able to make informed and better decisions about purchases, debt, savings, investments, and assets.

Strategies: I, II, IV

I. Leverage and develop opportunities for residents to access and retain living-wage and career-path employment.

As stated previously, North Minneapolis has 18% of the city's population, yet earns only 12% of the city's household income. Thus, if more North Minneapolis residents earned a living wage, this would be one of the most straightforward ways to improve the community's aggregate income—and thus its ability to build wealth. We need systemic changes in the local economy to make available the career-path employment and jobs that pay a living wage. At the same time, we need to create opportunities for individuals to prepare to succeed in those jobs.

Actions: Develop more jobs in the community that pay a living wage  
Establish wage covenants between businesses, government, and unions  
Develop ongoing relationships between community organizations and businesses to support employees after the hiring stage

Develop training, social services, and industry relationships that enable residents to obtain jobs in the growing fields of printing and health care  
Apply sector strategy model

Indicators :   Number of people earning a living wage  
                  Number of wage covenants  
                  Number of community/business partnerships  
                  Number of career path jobs created  
                  Length of employment of new work trainees following training

Outcomes:    Residents in North Minneapolis will be employed and retained in jobs that pay a living wage or better and that offer the potential for growth, advancement, or career-path training.

Strategies:   I-IV

J. Support economic market centers to stimulate new business start-ups and other economic activities with an emphasis on community-based and locally owned businesses.

Our community profile estimates that more than \$450 million is spent by North Minneapolis consumers outside our community each year. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with spending money outside the community, we must ask whether the community has compensating income sources—does it sell enough to others outside the neighborhood to balance this outflow? Clearly, North Minneapolis has few destination stores or services that would draw sufficient income from outside. Thus, the potential for community residents to earn wealth out of their own community’s consumption (for example by exchanging goods and services with each other) is lost. North Minneapolis consumer spending, in effect, subsidizes the broader economy.

At the same time, we have seen that residents here spend over \$600 million on essential consumer purchases. The opportunity is great for local business success if new owners can tap into this market. And the community can negotiate more effectively with potential investors if it makes use of such data. It is more forceful, for example, to attract an investor by pointing out what the community spends each year, rather than by stating that this is a struggling community.

This activity, therefore, emphasizes the development of local businesses in order to create new earning opportunities for the resident business owners and also to encourage residents to spend their consumer dollars within the community, for the benefit of our own local economy.

Actions:       Support and encourage the development of a market feasibility plan for all of North Minneapolis  
                  Identify new funding sources that would support the market centers  
                  Stimulate new business development and small start-ups through the use of various business assistance programs

Indicators: Numbers of new, locally-owned businesses established within the community  
Numbers of participants in business development training programs  
Use of micro-loan programs  
Growth of existing businesses

Outcomes: New and successful businesses

Strategies: I, II

K. Address health disparities through education, prevention, access, and intervention in order to enhance health and reduce at risk behaviors.

The physical health of our community residents is a central matter in our ability to reduce poverty. Ill health of adults and children, premature death of bread-winners, exorbitant medical bills, unexpected pregnancies, and high-risk behaviors all make it more difficult for families to escape poverty. In the larger context, health care costs, ill workers, and children with health problems affect the community's ability to optimize its resources and improve its overall sense of well-being. In North Minneapolis, significant health disparities exist that call for focused attention (see Appendix L for detailed statistics). For example, deaths from breast or cervical cancer are higher than in the rest of the city, Native Americans and African Americans die disproportionately more often from diabetes and cardiovascular disease than other ethnic groups, infant mortality rates are among the highest in the county, and while teen pregnancy rates throughout the county are falling, they are still highest in some of our North Minneapolis neighborhoods.

Actions: Approach health care providers to offer support in developing health care plans for the 68,000 residents of North Minneapolis  
Identify factors that affect health care delivery to residents in the economically lower quartile, including preventive health care services  
Identify and support youth leaders to educate and inform the community on at-risk behaviors  
Track and publish the network of health care delivery systems available for the community  
Create an accessible network of transportation (public and private)  
In conjunction with The Alliance membership, convene informational forums and distribute information on health achievement outcomes

Indicators: Number of residents receiving services through health care plans  
STDs/STIs in 12-18 year olds  
Teen pregnancy rate  
Measurements of health disparity between people of color and the larger community (e.g., cancer, stroke, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and drug use)

Outcomes:    Increase the amount of preventive health care available and used  
                  Increase the number of people receiving health care services  
                  Lower number of people turning to emergency room as primary care giver  
                  Increase knowledge of first aid and home health care  
                  Increase youth knowledge of health issues and risk behaviors  
                  Have plans in place that will provide access to health care services for the 68,000  
                  residents of North Minneapolis

Strategies:    IV

## **Accomplishing Our Mission: The Governance and Structure to Get the Work Done**

In order to accomplish our mission through the activities we have described above, our community will need a strong framework of leadership and service to ensure that the work gets done and the community stays connected. This is why we have envisioned the NorthWay Community Trust, with its community-based membership and governance, and its hands-on nonprofit staff, to provide an ongoing hub of activity for the NorthWay Plan. When the work of this Plan begins, all NorthWay community advisory roles will be transferred to the NWCT, and the membership of this nonprofit—The Alliance—will be formed. In the following pages, we discuss the purpose, formation process, and preliminary responsibilities of The Alliance, the NWCT, and the governing board. (See Figure 2 at the end of this section for a graphic representation of this structure.)

### The Alliance

1. The Alliance will welcome anyone as a member who supports NWCT's principles, mission, and goals. Any resident of North Minneapolis who joins The Alliance is considered a voting member. Non-residents of North Minneapolis are welcome to The Alliance as non-voting members. The membership fee for joining The Alliance is \$1.
2. All those who served as members of the New Planning Work Group (NPWG) during the exploratory and planning phases of the NorthWay process will become founding members of The Alliance.
3. In forming The Alliance, extensive outreach, communications, and community-organizing efforts will encourage North Minneapolis residents to become familiar with and join The Alliance before its first annual meeting. These efforts will continue after the first annual meeting to foster active participation in the NWCT by North Minneapolis residents and others who consider themselves members of the North Minneapolis community.
4. The Alliance will emphasize relationship building as a form a "social capital" upon which the NWCT will draw for expertise, credibility, and a variety of other forms of support. The Alliance will require staff support to carry out its activities. This could be achieved either by dedicated staff supervised by and integrated into the efforts of the NWCT (thus modeling the relationship between the Trust and other collaboratives) or by separate staff supervised by The Alliance.
5. Alliance members will approve governing board members for the NWCT. The approval of board members will be based on two kinds of elections. One, perhaps held in the spring, in which each North Minneapolis neighborhood, recognized as such by the city of Minneapolis, elects one resident representative to the board of directors. A second, perhaps held in the fall, in which 13 at-large members, who may or may not be residents of North Minneapolis are elected through a process described below (see recommendations 15 through 20 for establishing a NWCT governing board).

6. In addition to an annual meeting, The Alliance will hold two community forums at which the NWCT governing board will report on its accomplishments, plans for the future, and challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed. To emphasize NWCT's commitment to mutual responsibility with the community, the forums will strongly encourage community residents and members to share their views about what is making a difference in the community and what might be done differently or better in the future. The Alliance forums will provide for regular and ongoing accountability of the NWCT to the broader North Minneapolis community. The meetings will also encourage Alliance members to make contributions, such as their time and expertise, to the NWCT.

### The NorthWay Community Trust (NWCT)

1. The NWCT will serve as a “community support organization.” It will not provide services or offer its own programs. Rather, it will provide community organizing, partnership development, grants, capacity-building, and research and evaluation assistance to organizations currently operating in North Minneapolis or, if necessary, to new organizations created to serve North Minneapolis. This will ensure that the NWCT will be a supporter, not a competitor, of other North Minneapolis organizations or initiatives.

Because the NWCT is a central tool for accomplishing the goals, mission, and vision of our community, and because it is an innovative approach to community work, it requires further explanation. Drawing from our research on best practices in other communities<sup>7</sup>, we have discovered that such a “community support organization” provides the behind-the-scenes specialists, organizers, and coaches that are necessary to sustain community-wide efforts and get results. Planning together, implementing collaborative approaches, and sustaining action require support. Comprehensive community efforts need someone who maintains progress between meetings and in the face of participant turnover. They need someone who is keeping an eye on the ball at all times, who is taking responsibility to find answers to questions, involve additional participants as necessary, handle logistical details, and assure that the process is achieving results.

After ten years of providing these kinds of support services to community problem solving in a large, diverse California community, one local funder observed, “You need to fund full-time glue and connective tissue in community work.” He believes it is essential to have staff supporting broad-based community work, because “you’re trying to build a central nervous system for your community, to create another way information is passed around the community and received and processed and utilized. And this just takes full-time work.” Another experienced leader of comprehensive systems reform efforts in Georgia says that three kinds of support are needed to change the way an entire community assists needy families and children:

---

<sup>7</sup> Connor, J. A., and Kadel-Taras, S. (forthcoming, 2002). *A Funder's Guide to Fostering Successful Community Problem Solving: Delivering on the Promise of Collaboration*. St. Paul: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

- someone who manages the data and keeps meticulous track of the results;
- someone who functions as a networker to keep the politics and the communications among agencies running smoothly; and
- someone who looks at the big picture and pays attention to long-term goals and planning.

This kind of community support will be made possible in North Minneapolis through the NorthWay Community Trust. The NWCT will be an impartial, skilled, local intermediary that is dedicated to fostering the success of this plan. The NWCT will provide the following forms of support:

- convening The Alliance and the governing board to make community-level decisions,
- facilitating cross-organization meetings and community forums,
- providing research services to help community groups make informed decisions,
- tracking systems-based outcomes data and serving as a hub for evaluation of community efforts
- coordinating funding streams or facilitating local funder collaboratives,
- being a liaison between community initiatives and government officials within and outside of the community, and
- developing information management systems for local use.

In order to provide these services, the NWCT needs staff whose full-time responsibility is to serve and sustain the systemic work outlined in this plan. These staff must have the time and commitment to do the between-meeting tasks that allow community work to progress. This provides a stability that is essential for collaborative efforts built around the volunteer time of community leaders and the ever-changing faces of government officials and nonprofit executives. Like the manager at a construction site who attends to the whole building while carpenters, plumbers, and electricians come and go, the support staff keep the community process moving along, even as the participants may change. And as the support needs of each partnership or activity ebb and flow over time, the NWCT can target resources appropriately, allowing people and funding to be applied in a just-in-time fashion. At the same time, the staff can prevent a collaborative from petering out as if in a “natural life cycle” when it hasn’t yet accomplished the goals for which it was formed.

Other communities that have such a community support organization have come to rely on it as a key resource for making the case for coordinated approaches, creating the political resolve to affect change, removing barriers to implementation, building relationships across traditional boundaries, and preventing conflicts while not allowing the community to take “no” for an answer. It serves as a champion for community improvement, a bridge-builder, and, above all, a servant to its community. It is not a direct service provider and does not run its own programs. Instead, by committing itself to the success of the community’s vision—over and above the success of any participating organization, program, or project—the support organization remains impartial in its relation to any one leader, organization, or sector.

2. By encouraging community engagement in the full system of social problem solving, the NWCT will enable a focus on “what do we want?” and on community/system outcomes rather than individual agency outcomes.
3. By actively involving a wide range of stakeholders in each NorthWay initiative, the NWCT will enable and undergird community connectedness and full representation in community decision making.
4. By fostering community examination of needed system changes, the NWCT will make apparent the tools needed for successful community work, including the need for technology to support partnerships and systems-based outcomes measurement.
5. By tracking the community’s return on investment through a comprehensive evaluation process, the NWCT provides information for empowerment and allows budgeting and implementation to focus on proactive work and positive change rather than remediation. Its evaluation work and big-picture perspective will thus inform the effective distribution of the donor advisor fund to community partnerships and organizations.
6. By involving all members of the community in pursuing the NorthWay vision, the NWCT provides an ongoing stimulus for community improvement. It makes possible the citizen engagement that moves social challenges from “problems to be addressed by nonprofits and government” to “solutions to be enabled by the full community.”

### Funds Management

1. NWAFF funding allocated for the accomplishment of the NorthWay Plan will be held by The Minneapolis Foundation. The Minneapolis Foundation has agreed to serve as the fiduciary, so that none of the principle acting organizations in the NorthWay process holds the purse strings.
2. The Minneapolis Foundation will hold a portion of the funds in a *designated fund*. The designated fund will serve as a reservoir for the annual allocation of money necessary for NWCT operations, based on the budget for this purpose included in the NorthWay Plan. The NWCT board of directors will be responsible for ensuring that these funds are used appropriately. (See section on “Operation of the NWCT” for more on this use of funds.)
3. The Minneapolis Foundation will hold the other portion of funds in a *donor advisor fund*. The *donor advisor fund* will allocate grants to North Minneapolis organizations and partnerships that are creating community and systems change within NWCT grant-making guidelines.
4. The disbursement of grant funds to North Minneapolis organizations and partnerships will be recommended to the NWCT board of directors by a donor advisor fund committee called the Community Partnership and Resource Committee (CPRC). A NWCT staff grant review

analysis will inform and assist the CPRC in making its grant recommendations to the NWCT board.

5. To ensure the same accountability to residents of North Minneapolis as NWCT's board of directors, the CPRC also will be elected by The Alliance through a process mutually determined by The Alliance and NWCT's board.
6. The NWCT's board of directors will review and make final determinations on all grant recommendations made by the CPRC. Once this process is completed, the NWCT executive director will inform The Minneapolis Foundation of the grant decisions and authorize the Foundation to issue grants to NWCT grantees.

The grant review process would, thus, occur something like this: A community partnership or organization would begin by reviewing NWCT grant guidelines, and perhaps speaking with NWCT staff, in order to gain a clear understanding of the community's mission and goals. The partnership or organization would then submit a proposal for support. This application could be from a single organization or from a partnership or collaboration among multiple organizations. NWCT staff would make a site visit to meet with the grant applicant(s) as part of a larger assessment of the proposal. When this was completed, the staff would inform the NWCT board that the proposal was being brought to the CPRC for its review and recommendation. Once the CPRC made its recommendation to fund or not to fund the proposal, its recommendation would be shared with the NWCT board so that it could approve or, if it deemed it necessary, disapprove of the CPRC's recommendation. If the proposal was approved, the NWCT's executive director would inform The Minneapolis Foundation to authorize the grant as specified in the review process.

7. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the NWCT will be able to raise funds both for operations and for partnerships/grant-making with the approval of its board of directors. This reflects a goal of the NWAFF to leverage its own funds with broader community support.

### Establishing the First NWCT Board

1. The NWCT board of directors will be governed by people who have self-nominated or whose names have been placed in nomination by others through a process designed by a nominating committee established by The Alliance. People nominated for possible membership on the NWCT governing board will not be eligible to serve on the nominating committee.
2. The nominating committee will be responsible for creating a slate of possible at-large board members that will be presented to The Alliance for approval. The initial slate of board members will be given staggered terms of one, two, and three years, with the possibility of serving a second term of three years, when confirmed as governing board representatives by The Alliance. The use of staggered terms will allow for continuity on the NWCT board when transitions from the original membership would be necessary in years five and six.

3. The NWCT board of directors elected by the Alliance could include a majority of voting members who are residents of North Minneapolis and a minority of non-voting members who are not residents of North Minneapolis. Once on the board of directors, all directors will have an equal vote on decisions before the board, irrespective of their Alliance voting status.
4. The nominating process will include a review of each candidate's qualifications for board membership by the nominating committee, based on guidelines established by the nominating committee and shared with The Alliance.
5. The guidelines for the nominating committee review of at-large board members will include, but may not necessarily be limited to:
  - (A) Using the principle of "first among the first" for members of the governing board to ensure that residents of North Minneapolis whose economic circumstances place them among the lowest 25 percent in income are well represented;
  - (B) Assuming that, in all efforts to locate people with expertise relevant to the work for the governing board, such expertise can be found among the residents of North Minneapolis, unless proven otherwise;
  - (C) Strongly guiding the selection of governing board members and the work of the governing body with the vision, mission, values and standards agreed upon in the final NorthWay Plan;
  - (D) Ensuring that the governing board is highly reflective, representative, and inclusive of the diversity of North Minneapolis communities; and
  - (E) Requesting that all candidates for board membership read and, if necessary, clarify any questions they may have about the NorthWay Plan with members of The Alliance's nominating committee.
6. To ensure community participation in The Alliance's board and CPRC selection processes, a well-publicized invitation to the North Minneapolis community will be made to join The Alliance in making these decisions. This open invitation will be for a specified period of time with the purpose and date for The Alliance decision clearly noted. The outreach and publicity for this open invitation process will be supported and monitored by The Alliance's nominating committee. However, the NWCT staff will have primary responsibility for carrying out this outreach and publicity.

### Recommendations on Decision Making by the NWCT Board

1. Decision making by the governing board will be based on majority vote processes that respectfully provide opportunities for those in disagreement with the majority to express their viewpoints. To help ensure that this practice is implemented, each member of the governing board will be asked individually if he or she wants to comment before a vote is taken on a motion before the board.

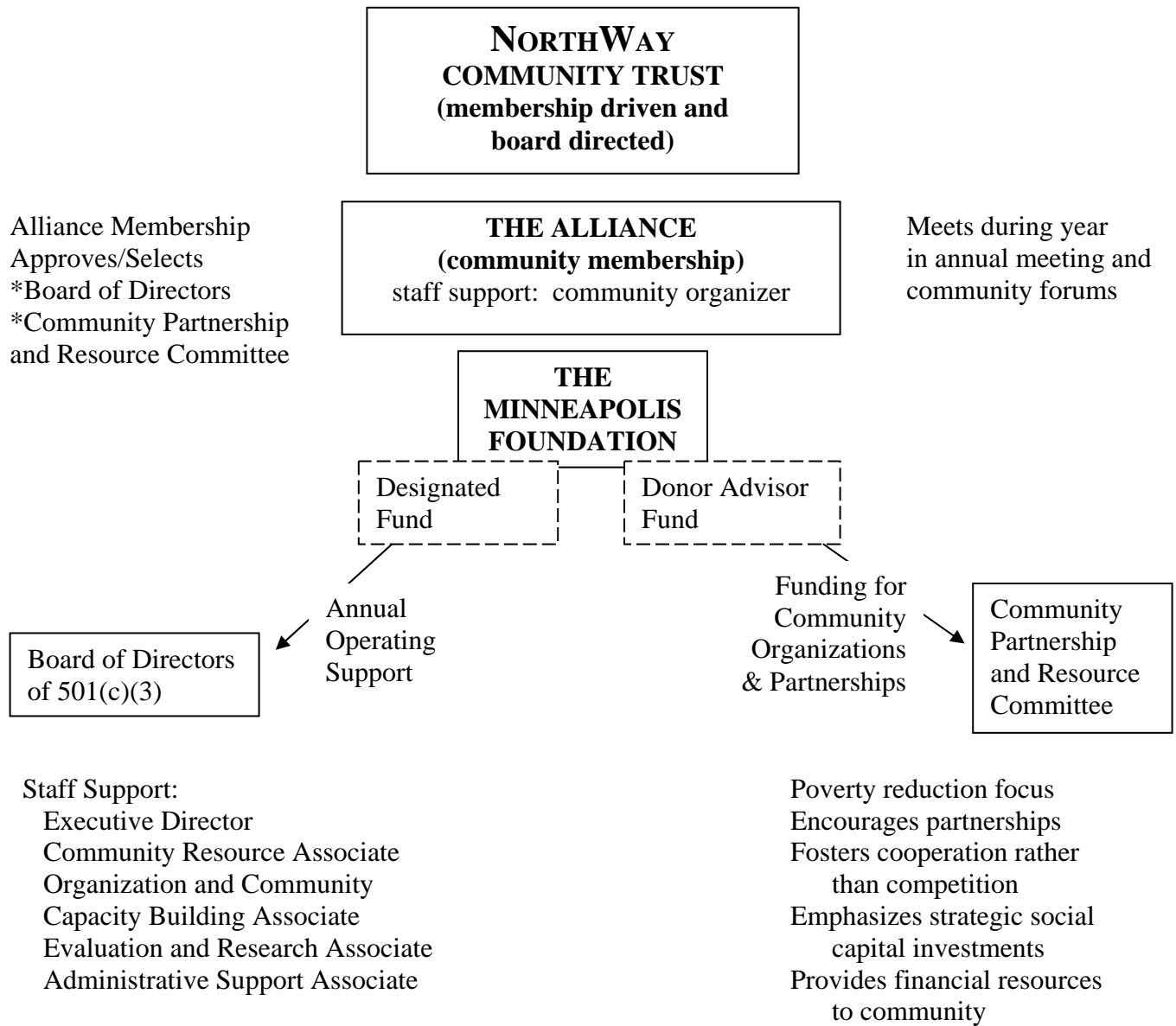
2. The use of majority voting will include options for different circumstances, ranging from a simple majority (over 50 percent of those voting) to a larger majority (over 67 percent of those voting), or even a “super” majority (more than 80 percent of those voting), if an issue is very controversial or of special importance. The board will determine the use of the majority-voting options on an as-needed basis.
3. Members of the board will receive “non-financial compensation” through skill development and other kinds of learning opportunities that could benefit them as individuals as well as support the board’s development as a governing body.

### Unresolved Governance Issues

The following suggestions did not receive a majority recommendation by the New Planning Work Group when writing this Plan, but they were considered worthy of further consideration by the NWCT board.

1. Consider the possibility of governing board members receiving compensation for their service on the board. Such a stipend could be provided for board service based on attendance at board meetings. This was further considered in terms of whether all board members should receive such compensation or only those whose income was within the lowest 25 percent of North Minneapolis residents. Some NPWG members thought that limiting it only to the latter could make those in this circumstance feel uncomfortable because of the need to identify themselves in this manner. As a result, it was agreed that, if compensation is provided, all board members should receive it.
2. Consider compensation for board members for services they might provide to residents of the North Minneapolis community while serving as a governing board member. In such cases, board members seeking such compensation would not participate in the board’s decision or vote on their proposal to provide such services. In addition, it was suggested that board members making such proposals would also abide by all standard, legal nonprofit organization rules regarding conflicts of interest.
3. Consider ways to include residents of North Minneapolis who may have issues in their background that would normally disqualify them or greatly limit the possibility of their service on a governing board.

**Figure 2: NorthWay Governance and Structure**



## Operation of the NorthWay Community Trust

The central point of focus for the services of the NorthWay Community Trust (NWCT) will be on the various collaborative and partnership efforts in North Minneapolis that leverage and support progress on our four strategies. The fundamental opportunity presented in the plan is to use the resources, skills, and technology of the NWCT to frame the community’s collaborative work, and, thereby, establish the priorities that will make the most of the “donor advisory funds” (grants for community organizations and partnerships).

The NWCT is the vehicle to create a different way of doing business in North Minneapolis. It creates the infrastructure and expectation for us, the residents of North Minneapolis, to act strategically, *together*. Without the connecting and supporting responsibilities held by the NWCT, our work could easily be diminished by falling into business as usual: the donor advisory fund would revert to operating like a small local foundation, reviewing individual proposals and making small grants, and the more system-wide pieces of the plan would be abandoned. The NWCT does the work of preserving the commitment to systemic and comprehensive change.

The budget for the NorthWay Community Trust is laid out in three interrelated appendices. The NWCT *Budget* (Appendix F) which details the “designated fund” request and ten-year timetable, is based on information contained in the NWCT *Personnel Plan* (Appendix G) and the NWCT *Capital Requirements* (Appendix H). Detailed assumptions are also presented with the appendices.

### Establish The Alliance

Though outlined in the “Governance” section, it is important to emphasize here that the enabling steps to begin operation of the NWCT must be preceded by forming The Alliance. The budget for the NWCT (see Appendix F) includes dollars in the first quarter to provide the resources to mount a community-wide membership campaign. Once constituted, The Alliance will elect the Board of Directors of the NWCT. When that is accomplished, the operation of the NWCT can begin, as outlined in the following pages.

### Base Daily Operations on Community Lessons Learned

Over the two years of developing the concepts and structures contained within this plan, the community of North Minneapolis learned several lessons that should be incorporated into the NWCT’s operations and “way of doing things”:

- **Seek community wisdom.** From the very beginning, we realized that the answers we were seeking were contained in our own community. We used circle meetings, presentations, surveys, and focus groups to seek feedback and adjust our thinking along the way. On-going polling of the community for input serves to refine our decisions and to build strong community “ownership” of our plan.

- **Be intentional about diversity.** Considerable effort must be focused on continuing our work of gathering cultural/ethnic community information and seeking out the involvement of residents from all cultural/ethnic groups. In addition, we must be intentional in our inclusion of people and information representing different classes, ages, beliefs, backgrounds, and neighborhoods of residence.
- **Cultivate new leadership.** This two-year development process gave us an insight into the premium that will be placed on community leadership over the ten-year horizon envisioned in this plan. We found that not only is new leadership required to carry forward the work but also is required to carry forward the on-going effort of broadening community engagement with NorthWay.
- **Create a culture of continuous learning.** From its inception, this planning process valued what could be learned and shared within our community as well as across communities. Whether it was the search for “best practices” which supported the formulation of the Theory of Change or the capturing of knowledge about our community in the Community Profile, we have learned that a key to achieving and sustaining results is the openness to learn and distribute knowledge.

### How Will the NorthWay Community Trust Work?

The day-to-day tasks of the staff of the NWCT will be dictated by the goal to achieve the four strategies as outlined by the Plan activities. The methods for proceeding will include the following:

- Getting people to participate
- Basing work on shared aspirations
- Making meetings happen
- Making meetings matter
- Following up between meetings
- Managing information
- Serving multiple collaboratives
- Supporting The Alliance
- Developing and managing the tools for systemic improvement

These are discussed in further detail as follows:

#### *Getting People to Participate*

In order to get the broad community engagement necessary for systemic solutions, the NWCT staff will spend a lot of time encouraging individuals to join particular collaborative groups. The “community organizer” on the NWCT staff will develop an ever growing list of potential participants and engage in many one-on-one conversations to explain the goals of the collaborative efforts, past work, and why participation is important. The NWCT staff will follow-up these conversations with information packets and regular appreciation for each individual’s commitment. Through this ongoing process, the NWCT helps each collaboration involve an ever-wider circle of influencers, from neighborhood residents, to business leaders, to policy makers, to funders. And it ensures an orientation for each new participant, so that the rest of the collaborative members are not continually back-tracking to bring new people up to speed.

### *Basing Work on Shared Aspirations*

When working with a collaborative group, one of the first responsibilities of the NWCT is to ensure that the group knows what its purpose is and bases all of its decisions and actions on reaching its shared goal for the community. The NWCT staff then posts this goal on the wall at every meeting and highlights it in reports and announcements.

### *Making Meetings Happen*

The NWCT staff develop a schedule of meetings for each collaborative group so that participants know far in advance when meetings will occur. The staff then locate space, send reminders and an agenda that makes people want to attend, and ensure that everyone has directions to the location and that any preparatory materials are mailed in a timely fashion.

### *Making Meetings Matter*

The NWCT staff ensure that good participation, a meaningful agenda, excellent facilitation, and adequate background information make each meeting worth the participants' time. Of course, agendas and materials are decided in consultation with members of the collaborative, but the NWCT staff makes sure the results are relevant, timely, and well distributed. If people are going to present at the meeting, the NWCT staff ensure the presenters are organized, the content is clear, and the presentation will keep people's attention. The NWCT staff may also help presenters prepare materials and transparencies or PowerPoint slides and practice their presentation in advance.

Through facilitation at meetings and conversations between meetings, the NWCT staff challenge participants to be guided by their highest aspirations for North Minneapolis so that perceived barriers do not allow meetings to devolve into lowest-common-denominator compromises. Each meeting is evaluated by all participants for its content, structure, pace, and progress toward goals.

### *Following Up between Meetings*

While participants in collaborative groups often leave the meeting to return to a mountain of other responsibilities, the NWCT staff keeps the collaboration foremost in their daily work. Minutes from the previous meeting and a summary of the evaluations are prepared as quickly as possible and sent to all interested parties. If research needs to be done on an issue raised in the meeting or on promising practices from other communities, the NWCT staff start studying the matter in the hopes of finding an answer before the next meeting. Summary reports are then sent in advance of the next meeting, with suggestions for how participants can use the information.

The staff are also available between meetings to coach participants in the problem-solving and group process skills needed for effective collaborative work. While participants can receive group dynamics training at one or more of their meetings, the NWCT staff will still be available between meetings to mentor individual participants in how to handle an emerging conflict, how to see an issue from someone else's point of view, and how to listen as well as be heard. These conversations are also a welcome opportunity for CSO staff to remind participants of the purpose and aspirations of the collaboration and to thank them for their participation.

### *Managing Information*

Much of the rest of the NWCT's responsibilities falls into this broad category, because an essential missing piece of most collaborations and community initiatives is the ability to organize, track, and communicate various kinds of information and knowledge. It has been demonstrated that a major reason that "community support organizations," like NWCT, are more necessary and more successful in today's communities is due to advances in technology that enable information to be managed like never before.

As outlined in Activity E, information management, communication, and community knowledge transfer involves much more than communication about and between meetings. These enhanced actions might include:

- Keeping databases of participants in collaborations.
- Keeping databases of local services to clarify the structure of community systems.
- Hosting a management information system used by multiple service providers to track data about clients and services provided; such an MIS enables better case management for integrated services and better community-wide data collection for policy and funding decisions.
- Managing funding information by tracking grant opportunities, administering grants for collaboratives, and providing services to a local funder collaborative.
- Helping participants in collaborative groups use various collaborative technologies (listservs, document sharing, application service providers, and so forth) to keep information flowing across organizational and sectoral boundaries.

### *Serving Multiple Collaborations*

While all of the services discussed so far apply to each collaborative group served by the staff of NWCT, a key value is its service to multiple partnerships, at the same time. As the only entity in the community charged with working in the shared space between the nonprofit, government, and business sectors, the NWCT keeps its finger on the pulse of all community-level work moving toward a reduction of poverty. By knowing which people are involved in which collaboratives with which goals, the NWCT can see and inform the community when activities are beginning to overlap, how decisions on one issue will impact another, when policy reform is going to be needed, how funding can be re-organized to better serve the community, and how the "donor advisory fund" can be used most strategically. Also, as processes or data are learned through the work of one collaborative, the NWCT staff can share this with another collaborative that will benefit from the same knowledge.

By serving multiple collaboratives, the community can also use the services of the NWCT in more efficient ways. Instead of each collaborative group hiring its own staff or creating its own nonprofit—which may be more or less necessary at different stages of the collaborative's work—the services of the NWCT can expand and contract throughout the life of each collaboration. As needs are greater in one group, the NWCT can apply more resources there, and when that collaboration becomes more self-sustaining, the NWCT can shift its focus more to another group—while still ensuring that the first group is progressing.

### *Supporting and Being Guided By The Alliance*

As a conduit for the voices and experiences of community residents, The Alliance has the critical

responsibility to ensure that the NWCT remains a servant to the community, even as it may behave as a leader for the process of collaboration. The NWCT staff will convene regular meetings of The Alliance to report on the work of the NWCT and ask for guidance. The Alliance will prioritize the services of the NWCT and ensure that the NWCT is adequately resourced to accomplish its responsibilities without compromising its impartiality to the programmatic dictates of funders.

#### *Support the Tools for Systemic Improvement*

By investing in the tools necessary for reforming systems of services, the NWCT can provide returns on this investment in the form of greater efficiency and cost reductions. Many of the suggestions made in this Plan—about using management information systems, system-wide outcomes measurement, research data for better decision making, etc.—are made possible through the infrastructure of the NWCT. For example, the NWCT can coordinate the process of selecting, customizing, implementing, and maintaining an MIS across multiple agencies that will bring new insights about client use, redundancies and gaps in service, funding allocations, and system design.

When such tools are implemented, North Minneapolis will be able to see where the system can be improved, where funding can be leveraged more strategically, and where services can be streamlined. Unlike calls for mergers and acquisitions to reduce duplication, the tools for systemic improvement—made possible by advances in technology and enabled by the NWCT—allow the community to start with its goals and know what to change to reach these goals without eliminating strategies. Thus, the whole range of funders with commitments for improvement in North Minneapolis can stop “throwing money at problems” and join with the community in its great wisdom on how to achieve lasting impact through the role of the NorthWay Community Trust.

### NorthWay Community Trust Staffing

The Personnel Plan (see Appendix G) proposed for the NWCT includes the following staff positions. Please note that the parenthetical list after each position identifies the activity (in the “Our Activities” section) that the position most clearly supports.

- a) An *executive director* who will help create systems change partnerships with community organizations, provide support for the board of directors, and provide management supervision for the staff. (The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of all the activities).
- b) A *community organizer* who will serve The Alliance to ensure that it can grow its membership and take initiative to implement its activities, including convening community forums at which it will hold the NWCT board and staff accountable for their work. (With primary focus on activity A, this staff position will positively impact activities B, D, and E as well).

- c) A *community resource associate* who will help organizations form partnerships related to funding opportunities and analyze and recommend grants for the CPRC and NWCT board. (Achieving activity C, with policies that reflect the value of funding connections and collaborations, will position this staff position to have significant impact on activities F through M.)
- d) An *organizational and community capacity building associate* who will coordinate NWCT internships and provide assistance that can enhance the capacity of North Minneapolis organizations and their ability to work in partnerships. (Once the operation structure is in place, this staff position, which will be augmented by interns and the addition of two more capacity builders in years four through six, will be instrumental in achieving activities D through M.)
- e) A *research and evaluation associate* who will establish databases, conduct or oversee community studies, conduct NWCT internal evaluations, and assist community organizations supported by the NWCT to conduct useful evaluations of their efforts. (This position has primary responsibility for implementing the Evaluation Plan as well as activities D and E.)
- f) A *technology* position will be added in subsequent years to reduce the dependence on consultants (with their professional fees), manage the dedicated information interns, support the Evaluation Process, (and fulfill the mandate of activities D and E).
- g) An *administrative associate* who will support the executive director and other staff.

### NorthWay Community Trust Operational “DOs” and “DON'Ts”

The value of NWCT as an organization lies in its ability to lead and serve simultaneously, to work in a “no man’s land” between boundaries while remaining relevant to all sectors, to be neutral while at the same time challenging the residents and organizational assets of North Minneapolis to high aspirations. Research on similar community support organizations have demonstrated that these dual responsibilities can be tricky to balance, leading to procedural or policy recommendations that, at first blush, might seem counter-intuitive. Some suggestions for the staff and governing body of the NWCT include the following:

- DO focus everyone’s attention on the highest aspirations for the community. The galvanizing force of a problem-solving vision will not only secure your most passionate early participants but will serve to engage, over time, broader sections of the community.
- DON’T let discussions revolve around least-common-denominator agreements. The community deserves better than uninspired efforts at consensus. If it’s easy, it’s probably not sufficient.
- DO post on the meeting room wall the goal and the process to achieve that goal. Continuous reminders of both the goal and process keep discussions on task and serve as a quick orientation for guests or new members.

- DO ensure that each collaborative group develops and adheres to guiding principles (or “non-negotiables”) and group norms.
- DON’T be a passive facilitator of collaborative meetings. Being “neutral” is not the same as being passive. The NWCT has a point of view, which is squarely focused on achieving the community’s goal of reducing poverty and creating wealth. The NWCT facilitation may well be neutral as to methods and means, but not to expectations. Challenge participants to rise to the occasion.
- DO evaluate every collaborative meeting and share results with participants. No meeting is worth having if you are not evaluating whether its objectives were met. This evaluation need not be lengthy or time-consuming. It can be as simple as a three-question survey that asks both on-going “pulse-taking” questions to build trust and maintain momentum (e.g., “How would you rate today’s meeting for increasing our understanding of this issue?”) and teachable moments that underscore goals or requirements (e.g., “How would you assess your participation in tonight’s meeting?”). An evaluation also provides a confidential forum for participants to express concerns that can arise at each meeting.
- DO provide “safe harbors”™ for stakeholders to explore their positions before going public. In an open community forum or an Alliance meeting, it is natural for a group of providers or funders or other stakeholders to feel the need to defend their past actions. This defense of the status quo spotlights points of contention rather than points of agreement. The larger progress toward a shared aspiration can get stuck or derailed if the stakeholders aren’t given a chance to deal with this potential scar tissue outside the spotlight of a community forum.
- DON’T let the group be held hostage to “those who should be here.” Collaboratives usually get stuck early in the process because the desire to get everyone around the table supersedes discussion of goals and undermines the confidence to act before the synergistic force of a shared aspiration can take hold.
- DO develop an expectation for broader and broader community engagement. The membership of The Alliance should be ever reaching out to more and more of the community.
- DO keep an “open chair” at all meetings—both the physical place to sit but also the commitment on the part of the collaborative and NWCT staff to orient and support whomever sits in the chair.
- DON’T let the need to build trust keep groups from taking action. A classic passive-aggressive posture to keeping the status quo is to “embrace change” but delay action by a need to “build trust.” No better foundation for sustainable trust could be laid than by taking successful action, together.
- DO expect the collaborative to test all proposed actions against the goal or aspiration. There is no easier way for a group to get hijacked to irrelevance than to act on meaningless or marginal items. The time, talent, and passion of the members of a collaborative are a rare and fleeting resource. Invest it wisely.
- DON’T let a perceived lack of resources curtail the group’s aspirations. “How the work is organized” must take precedence over funding matters, because until you see the path to where you are going, much money can be wasted in wrong turns. Conversely, once the path is clear, many new sources of support can present themselves.

- DO provide well-organized research and data (for example, practices from other communities) to inform decision-making. The NWCT must ensure that it is providing information—normative and strategic—to enable intelligent decisions. But it must also be mindful not to inundate or obfuscate.
- DON'T be led into the business of capacity building for individual organizations. Be clear that the focus of the NWCT's responsibility is on systems change for community solutions. Clearly, technical assistance for individual organizations is necessary for strengthening a community, but providing such services is work for others. The work of the NWCT is across organizations and sectors.
- DON'T confuse respect with low expectations. For a collaborative to achieve its goals, each participating organization will be expected to change the way it does its work and interacts with other organizations. A balance must be struck between preserving individual strategies while holding everyone to standards that will assure the community's desired outcomes are accomplished.
- DO expect the collaborative to set deadlines and keep to them. Engagement, momentum, and achievement are all more likely if there is a creative pressure to keep moving.
- DON'T underestimate the value of technology. Failed efforts at collaboration are often blamed on lack of information, communication, and follow-through. New technologies can alleviate these potential pitfalls as never before.
- DON'T underestimate the need for broad engagement in all stages of implementing new technology. Potential users at all levels of the system must be included in planning, design, and deployment.

## Evaluating Our Progress

The evaluation process for the NorthWay Plan will ensure that evaluation serves as a central tool in building a learning community in North Minneapolis. In addition to fostering greater mutual accountability among partners and stakeholders, evaluation will be the primary vehicle through which we will *learn from each other* how best to proceed toward our overall mission of reducing poverty and building wealth in North Minneapolis.

In our evaluation plan, we continue to emphasize building partnerships that allow existing community resources, and existing organizations, to be more effective in transforming systems that reinforce poverty. Solid data will drive action, helping partners “keep their eyes on the prize”: systems change.

As we discovered during the two-year development of this Plan, and recently found reinforced during the Community Review process, the wisdom present in our community is our best starting point. Our evaluation process recognizes this. It also proposes that this local wisdom will increase as NorthWay partners become more adept at addressing poverty. Each year, participants will ask each other what we have learned about the systems that uphold poverty, and will identify the leverage points we have found that promote more effective systems change. Hence, our evaluation process is flexible enough to ensure that as new wisdom is gained in the community, new indicators can be defined that reflect new learnings.

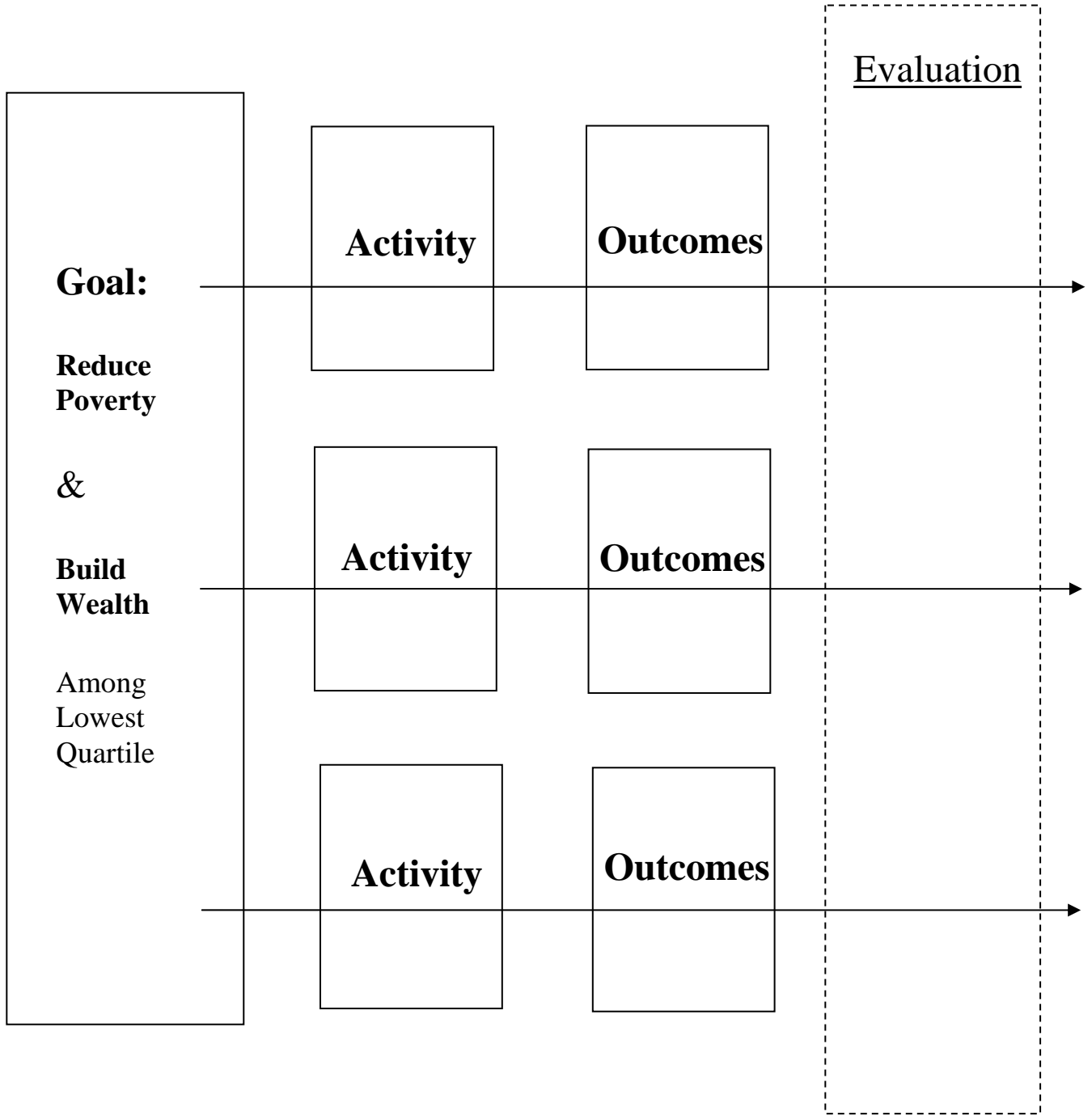
Still, a core set of indicators, consistently collected over time, will ensure reliable monitoring of key outcomes. These will help both internal and external stakeholders quantify changes experienced by the community.

Our evaluation process will be led by residents themselves. Given the residents' understanding that our community is caught in a system that creates and reinforces poverty, our indicators focus more on community conditions than upon the lives of individual poor people.

Each year, as the NorthWay Alliance convenes residents to assess the outcomes of recent accomplishments, Alliance members will have at their fingertips solid counts of the equity and assets built by community residents. Alliance members will also have specific tallies of ways that living costs have been reduced, whether through individual lifestyle decisions or through community investments. With these data in hand, and with clear measurements of the outcomes of NorthWay activities, residents will reflect together on our progress. Three key questions will be asked each year:

- What have we learned about the systems of poverty?
- What are the leverage points we can use to alter those systems?
- What external issues are having the most important impact on our community?

**Figure 3: Systemic Evaluation**



*Note: Systemic Indicators may link several outcomes at once: issues do not come in silos!*

Figure 3 shows how our systems evaluation approach has shaped our selection of indicators. Our mission guides the selection of strategies and activities. Over time, all this activity will achieve multiple outcomes. For instance, building a cluster of homes shapes the food, transportation, and public safety choices (and costs) of local residents. It is not simply an investment in “housing.” As the diagram shows, the indicators used for evaluation will cut across these outcomes, reflecting more than one issue or outcome at a time. In short, the evaluation process will help us look at systems rather than silos. Our indicators attempt to recognize and express this complexity.

### Three Types of Indicators

To assist our community in gaining efficacy in addressing complex social systems, the indicators we choose to measure must help us capture a holistic view, reflecting many issues at once. As Figure 4 shows and as detailed in Appendix I, we have defined three types of indicators.

(1) At the outer borders of our evaluation process are **Community Context Indicators**. These illuminate broader social dynamics that may fall outside the influence of North Minneapolis residents. New waves of immigration, for example, may cause thousands of new residents to establish homes in the community. Lenders may change their home loan policies. New diseases may come to the attention of health officials. These changes will be tracked by assessing what is happening on a community level.

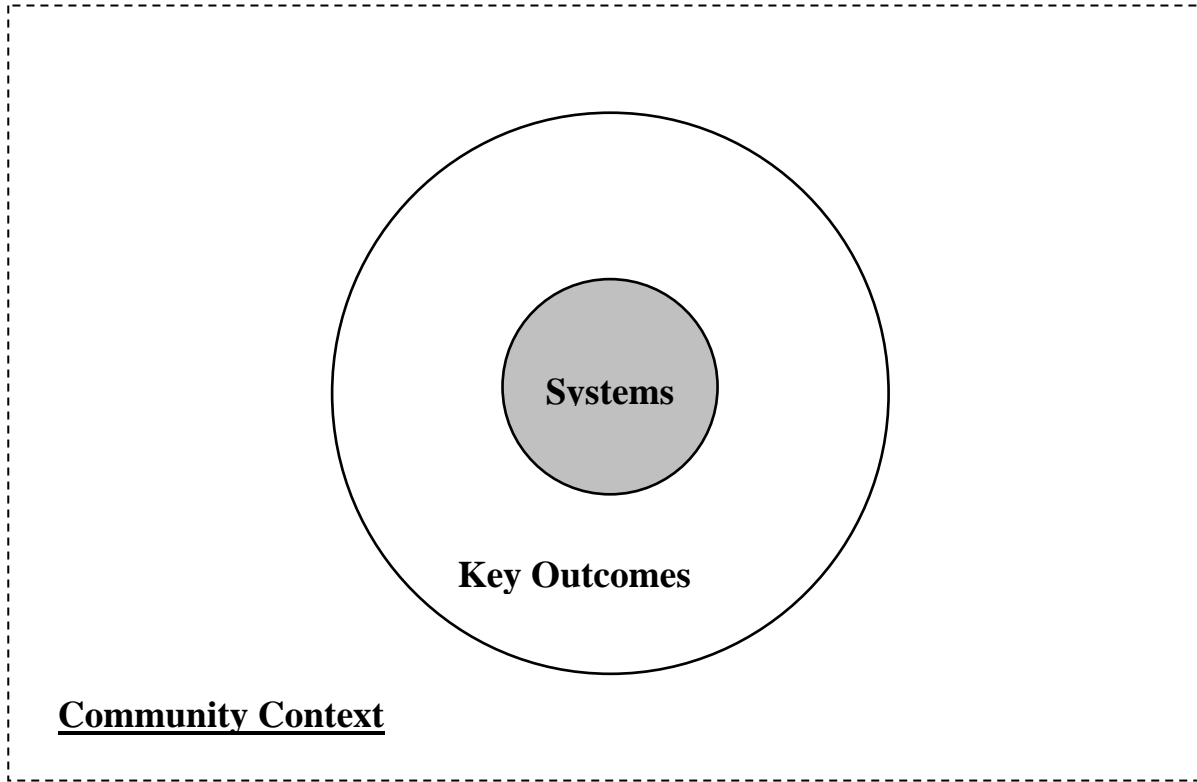
(2) Closer to the strategic priorities of this plan are the **Key Outcomes Indicators**. These reflect the results of the day-to-day work undertaken by the NorthWay Community Trust and its partners. These indicators will help measure how many new leaders have been cultivated through NorthWay activities, how many employers have signed covenants with NorthWay that they will hire residents at a living wage, how many new affordable housing units have been built, and which health conditions have been treated. These indicators will also work *across issue areas* to help us look at how systems of poverty are changing. For example, as we track how much money residents invest in NorthWay initiatives, we will learn something about the connectivity of community social networks, the number of people who have discretionary income, and the number of people who feel their housing costs are manageable.

(3) We will also track specific **Systems Indicators**. These reflect our understanding that poverty is systemic, that social and economic structures must be changed if poverty is to be diminished, and if wealth is to be built. These indicators also occupy a position most central to the aspirations of our community—and they are the indicators most likely to change over time, as residents gain a better and better sense of which systems impinge upon their lives, and what leverage points exist that allow residents to make systemic change. By reviewing these indicators each year, residents will learn more about which steps are the most strategic to take in overturning poverty, and which issues are the most closely linked to building community wealth.

**Figure 4: Three Types of Indicators**

**NorthWay defines three kinds of indicators:**

- 1. The Community Context**
- 2. Key Outcomes of NorthWay activities**
- 3. Systems that reinforce (or reduce) poverty**



Further, our indicators will also encourage residents to scrutinize external issues. Since poverty in North Minneapolis is connected to legislative decisions made in Washington, DC, and to financial decisions made in distant capitals like Beijing and Cape Town, our evaluation also asks residents to identify which external factors seem to have the strongest impact on our ability to reduce poverty in the community.

These three types of indicators are intended to speak to various audiences and stakeholders, both within the community and outside it. Systems Indicators will be of central use to neighborhood residents, but may also be important for foundations, researchers, and policy makers to know. Key Outcomes Indicators will be useful in assessing our progress toward our mission, but will also offer specific measures that can be used to attract the attention and the investment of external stakeholders—in short, to hold outside stakeholders accountable to the community's

vision, not simply to judge the work we are doing. Community Context Indicators will allow researchers to make more valid comparisons among low-income neighborhoods across the nation, but will also help North Minneapolis residents understand more about broader social forces that affect their lives.

Like the accountability relationships this plan intends to cultivate, the indicators will help analysis move forward and backward, inwardly and outwardly, from street level to office building, fostering bonds of mutual respect and mutual clarity. (See Appendix J for data sources for proposed indicators).

### A Shared Powers Evaluation Process for NorthWay Indicators

Working through partnerships that build mutual accountability, the evaluation process will foster relationships based upon shared powers. (See Appendix K)

All NorthWay members and organizations will play a strong role in the periodic evaluation of NorthWay initiatives, including compiling data for specific indicator measures and tracking them over time. The broader and more diverse the participation in this process, the more likely it is that community organizations will engage meaningfully in the long-term evaluation process. Further, by sharing powers, this work can be accomplished more effectively, and no one group is likely to dominate the process.

We hold the following goals for this shared powers evaluation process:

- (1) Help build community wealth by compiling and owning the best data available about the North Minneapolis community
- (2) Ensure accurate data are collected and reported
- (3) Ensure data collection and reporting are performed in a professional and transparent manner
- (4) Ensure that internal and external stakeholders can hold NorthWay accountable for the evaluation process
- (5) Ensure that no one person or power bloc controls the data collected
- (6) Ensure that the evaluation process can change as needed over time to adapt to new learnings gained about building community wealth and reducing poverty

### How the Evaluation Process Might Look in Practice

The overall goal of the NorthWay Plan is to reduce poverty by building the assets and wealth of individuals and families whose household earnings place them in the lower quartile economically. All evaluation processes and indicators collection will be directed toward this overarching goal.

The list of indicators (see Appendix I) will be refined over the first year of the initiative as the NorthWay Community Trust engages potential community partners in planning towards specific strategic partnerships. The Trust will begin these discussions by posing the indicators listed in this plan as recommended indicators for assessing poverty reduction in North Minneapolis. Potential partners may counter by saying they wish to ensure that different, or additional, issues are addressed. With guidance from professional consultants, revisions may be made, but only for the purpose of creating a stronger set of measures—not merely to respond to a favored single issue, or to avoid scrutiny of key social relationships. Exceptional data quality will of course be maintained.

Residents will be closely engaged in the evaluation process in two ways. First, the Alliance will convene three public meetings in the first year, each offering residents an opportunity to reflect on our progress and to assess the achievement of key outcomes and systems change.

A "Panel Study" will also be convened, both to collect data from community members, but also to offer assessment of NorthWay activities from the residents' perspectives. This Panel Study will consist of five panels with 40 residents each, one for each major ethnic group (African-American, White, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino, and Native American) living in North Minneapolis. Residents will be asked to submit information confidentially regarding their household budgets, wage levels, health conditions, and so forth. They will also share their stories of community revitalization, and assess the impact of the NorthWay activities on their lives.

Program participants will also offer data showing the results of community initiatives called for in this plan—for example, showing how much resident equity is being built by a new affordable housing project, or detailing which investments have been attracted to North Minneapolis. Compiling these data in a consistent, ethical, and accurate manner will be a major challenge faced by the Trust in its first years. Close cooperation from all partners will be required, and each initiative will have to budget for funds to compile these data.

Once a year, the Community Trust will compile all this information drawn from residents, organizational partners, and specific indicators measurements, and will integrate it into a comprehensive assessment of poverty reduction and wealth creation efforts in the community.

The publication of these indicator measurements, and the subsequent analysis of the data by residents, through both the Alliance and the panel study, will spark yet another round of public and private reflection on our community's progress toward our goal, mission, and vision. Insights gleaned from this review will then be woven into the subsequent years' action plans.

By the beginning of the second year, it is anticipated that the appropriate data sets will all be stored electronically at the NWCT. Public data sets may be posted on the World Wide Web to assure transparency and easy access.

Summaries of indicators showing progress toward specific targets will be generated by the NWCT and released to the community near the end of the first year in time for the Alliance's year-end evaluation. Such releases should draw upon a variety of community education

strategies, including informational or promotional brochures (using a “report card” showing the indicators being tracked), media campaigns, public appearances, web postings, informal discussions, and the like.

Following the end-of-year-one evaluation by an outside consultant and by Alliance members, the NWCT may elect to revise the working slates of progress indicators so that NorthWay goals and outcomes may be more effectively achieved in succeeding years.

## **Conclusion**

We are proud to submit this NorthWay Plan for Poverty Reduction and Wealth Creation to the Northwest Area Foundation as an example of our hard work, highest aspirations, and commitment to success. We believe that our four long-term strategies—Build Connection and Capacity, Build Community Wealth, Create Truly Affordable Housing, and Address Health Disparities—target the most central challenges and opportunities facing North Minneapolis as we try to reduce poverty and create wealth. And we feel confident that the supporting structure of the NorthWay Community Trust and The Alliance will keep us focused on this mission, help us engage and empower ever more community residents, and allow us to succeed with the daily work of systems change. At the same time, our flexible yet rigorous evaluation process will allow us to capture and share our learning while tracking our progress toward our goal on behalf of those most affected by poverty in our community. It is a demanding agenda, but we are inspired by the belief that “we are the ones we have been waiting for.”