

Methodology

Neighborhood Meetings

Starting in January 2001, Redevelopment staff conducted a series of public meetings focused on both the general concept of neighborhood planning and the specific topic of revitalization of the MLK, Jr. Neighborhood. These meetings were advertised by mailer to all current residents, property owners, and business operators within the study area. Primary goals for the meetings included: 1) to introduce project staff to the neighborhood; 2) to describe and discuss the typical neighborhood planning process and time frame; and, most importantly, 3) to solicit a broad range of public opinion regarding both positive and negative aspects of the neighborhood prior to the development of the neighborhood revitalization strategy. To the extent possible, community issues and concerns discussed at these meetings were to become the jumping off point for the development of both a vision for the neighborhood and a priority list of issues and neighborhood objectives that a plan would be developed to address.

At the initial public meeting held on January 25, 2001, at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Multi-cultural Community Center (Center) located in the neighborhood and again at the second public meeting on March 22, 2001, a total of 45 persons participated by describing those aspects of the neighborhood that are, in their opinion, positive assets, and also describing those features or issues within the neighborhood that should be addressed in the plan. The participants were made up of a combination of current and past residents, both renters and homeowners; rental property owners; business owners; persons associated with the activities and operations of the Center; and other interested citizens. Along with these attendees, several public agencies, such as Vista/Americorps, Shasta County Public Health, and the City of Redding Housing Division, had staff in attendance.

Neighborhood assets included:

- The existing MLK, Jr. Community Center and Park provide needed after-school recreational programs and provide a place for the neighborhood children to safely play.
- The neighborhood has a fairly low density that contributes to its quiet residential nature.
- The neighborhood's central location and proximity to the Mercy Medical Center is an asset.

Issues identified as needing to be addressed by the plan included:

- Circulation is difficult due to poor quality streets, barricades at several neighborhood streets, obstructed views on several streets, and the railroad.
- Petty crime and nuisance behavior, including transient and juvenile issues, are problems.
- Police response time to calls for service to the neighborhood is perceived to be longer than for other areas of community.
- City infrastructure, such as street lighting, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and storm drainage, is substandard.
- Some rental property owners neglect their responsibilities to keep up the maintenance on the properties. "Absentee" landlords are perceived to be the worst.
- The neighborhood would benefit from general property clean-up throughout.
- The percentage of homeownership in the neighborhood is low and should be increased if possible through incentive programs encouraging people to buy homes in the neighborhood.
- Illegal dumping at several sites throughout the neighborhood should be addressed.

- The City-owned property at Linden Avenue should be cleaned up and input from the neighborhood should be solicited to determine a positive use for the property in the future.
- An effort needs to be made to establish neighborhood block groups to assist with both crime issues and to help eliminate isolation in the neighborhood.

Two additional “focused” public meetings were also held during the development of the draft plan. The topics discussed were *Crime and Neighborhood Safety Issues* on May 24, 2001, and *Neighborhood Needs related to Parks and Recreation* on November 29, 2001. These meetings are more fully discussed under the relevant sections in this document.

MLK, Jr. Neighborhood Advisory Committee

During the initial public planning meetings held in the MLK, Jr. neighborhood, a call was made for volunteers willing to serve on an advisory committee for the project. On July 16, 2001, the Redding Redevelopment Agency established the Martin Luther King, Jr. Neighborhood Advisory Committee and appointed seven citizens for a twelve-month term. The main function of the Committee is to work with the neighborhood and staff to develop a comprehensive revitalization plan for the neighborhood. In July 2002, the Committee’s appointment was extended for an additional four months to allow for the draft Plan to be completed. The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of individuals representing neighborhood residents, land owners, social service agencies operating in the neighborhood, two board members from the MLK, Jr. Multi-cultural Center, and interested citizens. The Committee has held a number of public meetings since July 2001 and has played a central role in the development of the planning document.

Personal Interviews

In order to obtain background and technical information, staff conducted individual and group meetings with various City personnel (planning, public works engineering, streets, utilities, community services, recreation, and police); Redding Area Bus Authority personnel; community social service providers (County Public Health, County Office of Education, and Northern Valley Catholic Social Services); and community members.

Field Research

Staff also conducted field research to identify existing land uses, opportunity sites, building and neighborhood conditions, and other constraints and opportunities.

Windshield Housing Condition Survey

To develop an accurate database of information regarding the number, type, condition, ownership, and occupancy of the neighborhood's existing residential units, the City's Housing Division staff developed and conducted a neighborhood-wide windshield survey of all properties within the study area boundary. A rating and ranking system was developed which allowed staff to rate each property's physical condition on a “Good” through “Blighted” scale. Residential properties were evaluated as to exterior conditions able to be observed from the street side only. The windshield survey was conducted from June - September 2001. Following the survey, all collected data was entered into a computerized data bank containing additional information on each property regarding current ownership and occupancy status. A summary of the survey results is contained within Appendix “A” of this report.

Park Survey

As follow-up to numerous comments received during the initial public neighborhood meetings regarding the existing neighborhood park and its current level of amenities, staff developed a written survey/questionnaire to solicit additional public opinion in this area. The survey was distributed initially at a neighborhood event (National Nite Out) at the MLK, Jr. Park in August 2001. The survey also was discussed in the Center's newsletter and made available at the Center for a 60-day period. Additionally, Center staff distributed a number of surveys in a door-to-door effort in the neighborhood. A copy of the survey and a summary of comments received is contained within Appendix "B" of this report.