

# **INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2003-2008**

(Note: This plan currently being updated)

### **I. Neighborhood Leadership Development**

Effective, strong leadership at the neighborhood level is imperative for community councils to adequately represent their residents in addressing issues of importance and in fulfilling obligations for continued participation in the Neighborhood Support Program.

#### **A. Needs Assessment**

1. Invest will survey community councils to determine what training is desired.
2. Invest will analyze survey results and prioritize neighborhoods' assets and highest needs.
3. Invest will assist neighborhoods in developing own needs assessments.

#### **B. Processes and Procedures**

1. Invest will help neighborhoods develop and implement effective programs and practices that will contribute to effective, smooth-running operations and interactions with local government.
2. Invest will maintain a databank of organizations and resources that can be of use to neighborhoods.
3. Invest will assist neighborhoods in their ability to problem solve, resolve conflicts, communicate, negotiate and interact with various groups in their day-to-day operations.
4. Invest will provide opportunities at meetings for neighborhoods to discuss and share their experiences in running effective community councils.

#### **C. Training and Skill Building**

1. Invest will cooperate and assure that necessary leadership training is available to neighborhoods and that neighborhood leaders participate.
2. Invest will maintain a databank of educational organizations, social service organizations and others who offer leadership and skill-building courses.
3. Invest will incorporate into meetings presentations and discussions of leadership issues.
4. Invest will maintain training sessions for meeting the guidelines of the Neighborhood Support Program.

5. Invest will develop workshops as needed to be presented as part of a regularly scheduled meeting or independently. Possible workshops may be:
  - a. Maneuvering through City Hall
  - b. Publishing a newsletter
  - c. Resolving conflict
  - d. Building coalitions
  - e. Building membership and conducting meetings
  - f. Fundraising strategies
  
6. Invest will maintain a “mentor” list of community council presidents to assist others.

## **II. Neighborhood Collaboration**

Neighborhoods can be far more effective when they unite to address common concerns and accomplish common goals. Invest will promote such interaction, not only with each other, but also with outside groups sharing similar interest.

### **A. Identify Issues**

1. Invest will survey communities to determine key issues, concerns, and needs.
2. Invest will review similar surveys by the City or other organizations to identify overlapping interests.

### **B. Identify Organizations, Resources and Contacts**

1. Invest will compile a list of such organizations and resources, to include names and contact information and have it available for neighborhood use.
2. Invest will identify mediation resources available for struggling communities.

### **C. Information Sharing**

1. Invest will maintain information that can be readily accessed.
2. Invest will maintain a web site housing all information about Invest and its programs and that lists contact information for city departments, community councils, and other organizations.
3. Invest will provide an area on the web site where neighborhoods can participate in an open forum of current issues.

### **D. Neighborhoods Coming Together**

1. Invest will conduct meetings for community leaders, to share their problems and successes.

2. Invest will occasionally invite speakers to meetings to address issues of common concern.
3. Invest will encourage neighborhoods join together in common projects and interest.

### **III. Financial Resource Development**

Community councils and Invest work with limited resources but still deliver a high level of service and representation. Their effectiveness can be greatly enhanced with more financial resources and greater self-sufficiency. Invest shall continue monetary assistance from proceeds of the endowment fund and assist neighborhoods to secure funding from public and private foundations.

#### **A. Neighborhood Support Program**

1. Invest will work to ensure it continues to administer the NSP program. This recognizes the importance of NSP funds to neighborhood operations and that Invest is best placed to work with both the City and the community councils to maximize the benefit of the program.
2. Invest will periodically review with the City and communities the NSP funding level to assure that it meets the needs of the neighborhoods.
3. Invest will assist neighborhoods with the NSP grant process by providing appropriate training, advising as necessary at each step – preparation, writing, submitting for approval, and contract signing – and offering pre-review.

#### **B. Endowments and Grant Programs**

1. Invest will continue to oversee and encourage growth of the Neighborhood Fund. Efforts will be made to attract additional contributions from private sources. Encouragement also will be made for non-participating communities to become vested members.
2. Invest will continue to operate the Merit Grant Program and to expand its endowment by contributions from outside sources. As necessary, annual contributions will be solicited to maintain the program.

#### **C. Applying for Grants**

1. Invest will assist neighborhoods apply for and secure additional funding through the grant writing process.
2. Invest will maintain a list of funding resources to include the types of projects supported.

D. Supporting Other Invest Programs

1. Invest will secure funding as necessary for specific programs as they are developed and for ongoing operations.

**IV. Neighborhood Partnerships with the City**

Community councils are viewed as highly representative of their neighborhoods and provide the City – both elected officials and administration – with a databased viewpoint from the neighborhoods. City and neighborhood positions frequently are in alignment, and the City and communities get broad publicity and credit for working together. Invest will work to strengthen their relationship by collecting and sharing data, problem solving, publicizing information, and other measures.

A. Information of City Activities that Impact Communities

1. Invest will survey communities about the timeliness and quality of notice and communication from the City.
2. Invest will survey communities about the performance for various city departments, to include examples.
3. With survey results in hand, Invest will follow up with appropriate city departments to seek improvements in problem areas.

B. Identify Specific Objectives

1. Invest will work with City to identify specific objectives for neighborhoods and coordinate with neighborhood objectives.
2. Invest will stress to each community council the importance of its input to zoning questions. Especially, neighborhoods need to participate in the new zoning designations as applied to their own communities.
3. Invest will identify city actions in one neighborhood that may have impact in others. This will be shared with both the City and the affected neighborhoods.
4. Invest Board members will attend/monitor City Council meetings to stay abreast of the City's agenda.

C. Database Feedback

1. Invest will arrange training and information as available over the internet.
2. Invest will solicit from community councils names of volunteers for city panels, boards and advisory groups. These names will be offered to the City for consideration.

3. Invest will maintain community boundaries and have them respected by the City. This will include maintaining a map to quickly identify where boundaries overlap or omit an area.

## **V. Communications**

Communication is critical to the effectiveness of any organization. Invest shall work to assure that its efforts and achievements and those of the member communities are known to the City and to the public.

### **A. Web Site**

1. Invest will continue to maintain a web site as a primary means to disseminate information about Invest and its activities.
2. Invest will expand its web site to be a source of information about and for the communities and the various City services available to communities.

### **B. Press Relations**

1. Invest will be proactive in communicating news of importance to communities to the major media outlets in the city.

### **C. Joint Projects with the City**

1. Invest will work with the City to showcase the accomplishments of community councils.
2. Invest will work with the City to establish joint activities, such as day-long conferences on neighborhoods and proclamations to recognize neighborhoods.

### **D. Outreach to Community Councils**

1. Invest Board members will attempt to visit community council meetings on a regular basis to keep abreast of neighborhood concerns and to assure that communities are aware of Invest services to identify any problems or issues and to give recommendations when necessary.