

2000-2003 Harambee Neighborhood Strategic Development Plan
Harambee Community Residents & Harambee Ombudsman Project, Inc.
December 1999

1.0 Goal

To use community and stakeholder input to develop a plan for the Harambee community that would increase safety, employment, provide job training with a special focus on youth, and develop a cultural center using some existing assets of the community.

2.0 Process

The City established minimum requirements for the preparation and content of neighborhood strategic plans. They were as follows:

- Minimum of four planning meetings must be conducted, including sign in sheets.
- Surveys must be mailed to every resident and 300 surveys must be returned and analyzed
- A ratification meeting must be held.

In June of 1999, over 25 meetings took place between each of the five community clusters within the Harambee neighborhood. Residents in the Harambee neighborhood were invited to work with the 17-member steering committee (residents identified to oversee implementation of neighborhood plan). These residents formed 4 working groups; Economic Development and Employment, Crime and Public Safety, Housing and Social Services including the youth and elderly population to help prepare the plan for the neighborhood. Following the series of meetings held by the working groups, there were stakeholder meetings to incorporate input from as many invested people as possible. The final draft was ratified on December 22, 1999.

The meetings and discussions of the stakeholders and residents, as well as the 300 survey responses, showed some interesting statistics about the neighborhood:

- In 1998, unemployment was estimated at 14% with in the community-well above the city rate of 9.4%
- In 1997, just over 33% of residents 25 years and older had not completed high school.
- 26.6% of housing units were owner occupied
- In the Harambee neighborhood, 1142 crimes were reported per 10,000 residents, compared with the citywide average of 819 crimes per 10,000 residents

3.0 Goals and Objectives

Each of the plan's goals was written to be assessed annually and be pursued over a four-year period.

Housing

- Increase number of owner occupied housing units.
 - Convert 5 vacant/boarded up and other problem units into owner occupied units
 - Purchase/acquire 5 problem residential properties owned by absentee landlords
 - Construct 5 new homes in targeted areas

Economic Development and Employment

- Help create jobs in the community in order to meet the needs of residents
 - Help 10 existing businesses expand and create 100 new jobs over a 4-year period
 - Attract 5 new businesses, creating 50 new jobs
 - Help 5 residents start new businesses and create 20 new jobs.
- Provide Training
 - Assist 50 individuals who need training for entry-level factory positions
 - Assist 100 individuals who need training for skilled positions, including the medical field and computer technology
 - Create work internships for 50 youths

Crime and Public Safety

- Reduce crime in the community
 - Reduce drug activity by 5%
 - Establish and maintain 5 new block clubs
 - Develop a recovery facility for women with drug problems and/or arrests for prostitution

Social Services and Facilities-Youth, Elderly and Open Space

- Increase training and employment opportunities for youth
 - Work with 20 businesses to create 10 summer jobs in each business for youth (200 jobs annually)
 - Increase and maintain year round job training and employment for youth in the workforce
- Increase recreational opportunities for youth
 - Provide additional recreational programs to accommodate 100 youth
 - Develop a center for youth in the Harambee Community
- Improve and expand outreach services to the elderly
 - Extend outreach services to 100 elderly
- Develop small parks throughout the community
 - Create 2 small community parts within 4-year period

This plan identified 22 organizations to act as lead agencies or possible participants to achieve these goals.

4.0 Market Assessment

The following statistics were recorded while doing a market assessment for the Harambee Ombudsman neighborhood plan. All assessments were estimated for 2002 unless otherwise noted.

- 9% population decrease to 36,000
- Households would decrease 7% to 13,231
- Median income projected was \$23,551
- 88% African American and 6.6% white
- 42% of residents worked in service industries
- 54% worked in blue collar occupations
- Unemployment in the total trade area was 18.1%

- 66% of housing was renter occupied, however two neighborhoods support strong homeowner's associations, Halyard Park and Brewer's Hill
- 26 business were recruited by the Business Improvement District
- Most establishments were small businesses, employing less than 20 people
- Brewer's Hill was one of the most desirable historic districts in the city. Demand in this trade area existed for many different types of retail uses. Residents who developed this plan would like to generate employment with these new uses.

5.0 Targeted Areas

North Avenue at Historical King Drive Cultural and Entertainment District

- Create a cultural and entertainment district that could be part of the existing MLK BID district. The district could attract cultural tourists and finance development by creating Tax Increment Financing district and using LID funds.

Holton Street

- New business could be an asset to this community and could capture a portion of the \$20 million in lost sales within the trade area. Several buildings and vacant lots on Holton have been identified, including sites for mixed commercial/residential uses that could qualify for LID funds.

Improved Public Open Space

- Numerous vacant lots and underutilized play areas have been identified for possible improvement (such as the Green Bay Avenue School play area).

Palmer Street Housing Conservation and Redevelopment Area

- Residents want to implement a block-by-block approach to redevelopment within the neighborhood. New construction, substantial rehab, modest renovations, block clubs and block watch programs would be completed within one block before moving to another.
- Harambee Ombudsman Project Offices and Youth Center, a multipurpose facility, was being planned to house the offices of the Harambee Ombudsman Project, as well as training facilities for youth. This project could qualify for Historic Tax Credits and LID funds.

Transitional Living Facility

- This planned facility was in response to the increasing number of adults who need help to get off and stay off of drugs. This facility would provide shelter for drug users and prostitutes, as well as support services to help individuals obtain training, meaningful employment, day care, transportation and other needed services.