

EPIC NRP Phase II Action Plan: Explanation and Process

[Click Here to Enter Your Comments](#)

Your input is important and will be used to form the final plan.

A summary of the Draft NRP Plan is available here for downloading and your comments. The final Plan will need to have additional material and explanations.

As many of you know, EPIC has been working on the NRP Phase II Plan since last February. A call went out in this newspaper and through meetings and EPIC E-News for task force members at that time. Bear in mind that last December City Hall took 50% of the money allocated to all neighborhoods, most of it coming from the poorest, with a claim that it be used for property tax relief. In fact, this money has apparently provided no property tax relief. Instead our NRP dollars and primarily those of many poor neighborhoods are currently proposed to be used to support other neighborhoods, many of which do not have the challenges and poverty of the neighborhoods from which the dollars were taken. So the point is: East Phillips and all the rest of Phillips, has much less funding to plan with and to assist our neighborhood.

The EPIC task force chose to design a broad and very general survey, based on past successes, projects already undertaken and needs expressed in a variety of community meetings. They also chose to go door-to-door door-knocking and the bilingual surveying began. Experience of the task force members was that on-line only surveys miss too many people who don't have internet access, have language challenges or don't understand surveys well. They also tend to miss the most diverse and/or underserved populations...and also the idea of explaining and promoting the community organization and hooking up new people gets lost. Over 170 opinions were gathered this way. While sorting the percentages has been done in a preliminary way to generate a plan, surveying and focus groups continue.

For the first time all the Lake Street businesses were surveyed. Surveyors carried photos and brochures of the kind of work EPIC has done and hopes to do. For three days a volunteer spent hours at the American Indian OIC with a table and surveys to gather input and allow those there from East Phillips to fill it out and register their opinions. The survey was also presented and discussed at several large community meetings, which included time to offer suggestions and fill it out. The surveyors knocked on many doors in all sections of the neighborhood. Over ten language groups' opinions are represented. We also found new volunteers through these conversations as surveyors told the EPIC story.

The survey helped discover how many business owners and residents knew of EPIC, NRP and the work that was done. It has been rewarding to discover how many knew the work of EPIC and NRP, thought East Phillips has gotten much better because of this and who liked living here and intended to stay.

From this information gathering a draft plan was created for neighborhood assessment. It is presented here for your assessment and comments. Check out the plan and enter your comments. There is a short version and a long one detailed one of the sort required by NRP.

In assessing the plan, remember 70% of all NRP dollars must go to housing and amounts need to remain large enough to actually make an impact. This leaves much less for big plans. In addition, this is the last city funding of any size for capital improvements, so when determining amounts, the committee has tentatively assigned funds according to what really needed doing according to the survey, what projects were half done and what EPIC could not get done in the future when this large funding goes away. Also, many categories are very open and can be tailored to more specific uses in the future. Some major concerns can be accomplished through organizing and

grants, so large funds were not applied there. These are the limits and considerations the task force used in working on the Plan. Remember, it is a draft Thank you to those who have helped so far.

If you haven't had a chance to enter your views on the survey, it is included here in the next listed category to the right. Take the survey.

However, door-to-door surveying will continue through September. The Plan has so far been the subject of several large EPIC meetings and smaller focused ones, where concerns and future hopes were expressed. The next EPIC meetings and additional focus groups will also concern the elements of the Plan.