PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY:
PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION FOR REVITALIZING
THE ROSEMONT-WALBROOK NEIGHBORHOOD

Prepared for:
Neighborhood University Initiative

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The **Neighborhood University Initiative** (NUI) is a community based strategy to build partnerships between Coppin State University, Baltimore City, and non-profit organizations towards physically revitalizing the North Avenue Corridor, which encompasses the 2700 - 3100 blocks of North Avenue. The NUI’s primary goal is to create a mixed income community that connects residents to affordable housing, high performing schools, quality childcare and early childhood education, and responsive health care. The key catalyst for the NUI is the North Avenue and Hilton Merchants Association Task Force, a community based organization that is working to improve the life outcomes for low-income children and families living along the corridor and surrounding communities.

The **Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity** is a university-wide interdisciplinary research institute. We generate and support innovative analyses that improve understanding of the dynamics that underlie racial marginality and undermine full and fair democratic practices throughout Ohio, the United States, and the global community. Responsive to real-world needs, our work informs policies and practices that produce equitable changes in those dynamics.
Executive Summary

Momentum and direction – for Rosemont-Walbrook, establishing both is a part of a broader effort to increase opportunity for its residents and stakeholders. Getting there will be the result of partners, institutions, relationships and assets. The vehicle positioning itself to influence this change is the Neighborhood-University Initiative (NUI). The impact area for the NUI extends from the 2700 block of North Avenue to North Avenue and Hilton Streets. Guided by the principles of “Anticipate, Stimulate and Engage,” the NUI seeks to increase access and proximity to high-opportunity structures in the neighborhood, centered on the North Avenue corridor.

Increasing opportunity in disinvested core areas is a dynamic challenge. To assist the NUI with their goals, the Kirwan Institute offers this position paper as a resource for policy makers, funders and local leadership. It provides a wider framework for understanding this particular physical environment, local organizations, community culture, and leadership. As part of our research, we interviewed residents, city and non-profit administrators, and owners of neighborhood assets. Lastly, we provide a targeted assessment of best practices by similar neighborhood revitalization efforts and a series of recommendations for building on and strengthening the NUI proposal.

Our findings reveal strong optimism among area stakeholders and investors. The most noted opportunities and assets include:

- The North Avenue corridor is one of only a few in Baltimore which runs nearly the length of the entire city
- In the focus area, a number of businesses are owned by people from Asia, Africa and by African Americans
- There is a strong homeownership contingent, primarily by older, long-time residents of the neighborhood
- The area has a strong aesthetic, educational and commercial base, including the Mellon Institute, Glynns Falls, Coppin State and Mondawin Mall
- Coppin State University is regarded for its role as liaison and partner because of its education-related outreach (i.e., taking over two state watch list schools in the neighborhood and improving them).

The potential of the neighborhood, however, is being held back -- muted by limited resources, fear in the neighborhood of crime and drugs, and the threat of potential institutional exclusion of residents in neighborhood decision-making. The development areas of greatest concern by stakeholders and investors include:

- Lack of a clear lead revitalization agency
- Neighborhood character
- Lack of land assembly tools
- Capital needs
- Leadership pipeline and coalitions
- Building trust between generations

Turning development areas into opportunity-enabling assets will require a flexible and comprehensive policy and investment framework. The Kirwan Institute’s extensive work in the creation and implementation of the Communities of Opportunity model provides the NUI with the grounding necessary to turn policy into action through its local asset base. Where necessary, we offer guidance on how the NUI could position itself as a change-agent in its efforts to increase investment, while maintaining economic and social equity for its existing stakeholders. In sum, these are:
• **Connect your development initiatives**: Trying to create a new path for the neighborhood’s social, economic and health concerns is a dynamic process carried out both formally and informally. It also should be carried out in a holistic way: tying housing opportunities to high-achieving schools, for example. No one committee can do it all, but it can create options for utilizing specialist knowledge and connecting knowledge, capital and commitment.

• **Develop an intermediary agency**: Our findings point to the need for intermediaries that are well staffed, well resourced, and empowered to carry out complex, long-term revitalization projects.

• **Define organizational culture and train leadership**: Clearly define the organization’s culture and identify a cross-section of leaders who can collaborate and invest long-term in the neighborhood. Principal in this effort is establishing the leadership pipeline. Having a more representative balance of leadership is critical to creating and sustaining the sense of ownership for the neighborhood. Understand that people outside of the neighborhood’s core leadership may not own property in the neighborhood.

• **Encourage and constructively manage disagreements**: Proper management and expertise can turn disagreements into productive outcomes. An emphasis on visioning – defining successful outcomes – and on developing capacity and consensus are linked objectives that require trust and coalition building.

• **Messaging and Feedback**: Clearly and simply articulate NUI core values, its goals, and how it intends to measure its performance.
Section 1: Introduction – Building a Community of Opportunity in West Baltimore

Some of Baltimore’s neighborhoods have recently struggled with economic, educational, housing and social challenges. The North Avenue corridor of West Baltimore has suffered from a steady decline in opportunity. The decline appears to be most pronounced in education and employment opportunities surrounding the corridor. This is especially worrisome, because broadly speaking, educated labor is one of the primary indicators of an economically healthy region. Over half of the residents had a high school degree or better in 1990 (58.1%), -- even more in 2000 (65.7%) – but only 10.7% of residents held a bachelor’s degree or better in 2000. Although this did represent an increase over the 1990 level of 9.1%, this rate still lagged Baltimore City’s rate of 19.0% and the state of Maryland’s 35.1% rate -- the third highest after DC and Massachusetts (the U.S. national average is 27.0%).

The community’s discouraging figures for employment of young, working-age residents is a major concern. In 2000, the unemployment rate for the neighborhood stood at 15.3%, compared to the city’s unemployment rate of 6.0%. A large number of residents rely on public transportation; in fact, between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of residents using public transportation roughly doubled – from 33.3% to 65.7%. This means long, inefficient commutes when employment opportunities move to the suburbs and exurbs. Also between 1990 and 2000, the neighborhood’s population decreased by 16.3%. In 2000, the median household income was $29,667, with 11% of residents receiving public assistance, and 25.35% of families living below the poverty level. In comparison, these same figures were $30,078, 7.3%, and 18.8%, respectively for the City of Baltimore. For Baltimore County, they were $50,667, 1.7%, and 4.5% respectively.

Baltimore’s core neighborhoods, like many urban neighborhoods in the Midwest and Northeast, are especially vulnerable to the flight of jobs, families, and fiscal resources away from the city. As employment and infrastructure investment is lured to suburban greenfields, social and economic isolation can result. Luckily, West Baltimore is blessed with engaged local leadership, committed community and faith-based institutions, and considerable development momentum from Coppin State University and the Mondawin Mall. The challenge is to capitalize on this development momentum by drawing on the tremendous resources of the area – engaging residents and local businesses in the development process – so that true revitalization, not gentrification and resident displacement, occurs. Building and maintaining increased opportunity for all families and all neighborhoods, especially Baltimore’s disinvested core neighborhoods, is at the heart of a sustainable regional future.

Section 2: Regional Equity and Communities of Opportunity in West Baltimore

Regional equity strives to achieve equitable development through making connections between people and pathways to opportunity in housing, workforce development, economic development, and education. Equitable regionalism proactively combats the harms of structural and institutional discrimination, or systematic lack of inclusion of and disinvestment in communities of color. This disinvestment and exclusion does not necessarily stem from individual actions or beliefs, but from institutional arrangements...
and interactions. The goal of regional equity is to provide improved access to opportunity for everyone in the region -- now and in the future. Every family and every neighborhood should have a voice in the future of the region. To that end, public investments should be fair and sustainable.

How and where we develop and invest bears directly on the health of the region. The quality of a neighborhood’s environment, resources or opportunities has significant implications for the life chances of its residents. Low opportunity neighborhoods do not allow for development of human capital, a factor which is becoming increasingly important in today’s global knowledge economy. Thus, a community’s decreased social and educational capital negatively impacts regional competitiveness at the national and global levels. As stated by Richland Florida in *The Flight of the Creative Class*:

> “Rising inequality is a deadweight drag on our economic competitiveness…The basic formula is simple: Those companies, regions and countries that reduce waste and effectively harness their productive assets have a huge advantage in the Darwinian competition that powers creative capitalism.”

However, the extent to which a region can develop successful and diverse pathways to opportunity for all its residents will result in increased and sustainable social and economic health. Using regional equity as a framework for guiding policy and development decisions is more important than ever, as regional growth and investment patterns often continue to disadvantage low-income, central city neighborhoods. Efforts that continue to respond to the disparities at an unconnected and small-scale level will not be sufficient. Successful efforts must be brought up to scale and connected to other efforts in the region.

**The Communities of Opportunity Model**

The “Communities of Opportunity” framework is a model of fair housing and community development. The model is based on the premises that everyone should have fair access to the critical opportunity structures needed to succeed in life; and that affirmatively connecting people to opportunity creates positive, transformative change in communities. The Communities of Opportunity model has two goals: to bring opportunities to opportunity-deprived areas, and to connect people to existing opportunities throughout the metropolitan region. The model seeks to bring opportunities into distressed neighborhoods by improving education, stimulating investment and expanding employment opportunities. The model also advocates affirmatively connecting marginalized populations to regional opportunity structures by improving housing mobility and providing fair and effective public transportation. In addition, the model advocates for managing sprawling growth, in order to reduce the drain of jobs and resources from existing communities. The “Communities of Opportunity” model advocates for a fair investment in all of a region’s people and neighborhoods -- to improve the life outcomes of all citizens, and to improve the health of the entire region.
traditional “city vs. suburb explanations” of regional disparities. It emphasizes leveraged opportunity for all citizens. Integration is a goal of the model, but integration into opportunity. Transformative changes occur when communities actively pursue increased access to opportunity for all citizens. Thus, the model relies upon engagement of a region’s officials, stakeholders, and citizens. Integration is a goal of the model, but integration into opportunity. Transformative changes occur when communities actively pursue increased access to opportunity for all citizens. Thus, the model relies upon engagement of a region’s officials, stakeholders, and citizens. 

The Communities of Opportunity framework addresses the systemic and structural barriers which cumulatively work to deny opportunity and advancement to marginalized people and places. The model is not a welfare-oriented model, but is focused on empowering communities by reorienting the structures which produce disadvantage and making them work for marginalized populations. By allowing a creative space for individuals and communities to achieve their potential, we can produce a healthier democratic society. 

A neighborhood’s physical, social and economic opportunities and connections structure group and individual choice in significant ways. In response, the Communities of Opportunity model identifies the pathways to opportunity as involving people, places, and linkages. 

Supporting people is achieved through investments in human capital whereby everyone has the opportunity to reach their creative potential. This can be generated through wealth creation, educational attainment, sustained employment, and political empowerment. Examples include affordable homeownership programs, leadership and job training, community organizing and assisted housing where needed. 

Supporting places is achieved through support of community development initiatives and growth management practices that support and empower neighborhoods. This can be generated through neighborhood redevelopment, support of neighborhood anchors, including schools and museums, increasing employment opportunities to jobs providing living wages, and equal provision of local services, including high-performing schools. Examples include brown field and vacant property development, minority and small business development, improved school conditions, and housing and infrastructure investments.

Supporting linkages is achieved through providing the connections between people and places. This concept revolves around the mobility and degree of access for people to high opportunity areas. Examples through which this can be achieved include fair share and inclusionary (or opportunity based) housing, public transportation, and school integration. Without these linkages, support of people and places is less effective. 

The model’s “place-based” strategies align with “people-based” strategies to encourage a comprehensive paradigm for transformative change. For the West Baltimore neighborhood, this link is especially important in light of the new development occurring at the Mondawin Mall and the MARC transit station. These new development projects signal a new and much needed interest in revitalizing West Baltimore. Investment of millions of public dollars into these two projects has generated much excitement about the neighborhood’s future; however, revitalization projects such as these also run the risk of spurring gentrification. In order to avoid the displacement and exclusion of current residents, it is paramount that the community be involved in the planning process. These factors, coupled with Coppin State’s plans for expansion into the neighborhood, signal a great opportunity to engage the community in the process, ensuring that equitable development does occur, and that the benefits from these investments accrue to all.

Section 3: Voices of Opportunity

“A place of choice, where people want to invest and live, a place that continues to be affordable, where local businesses are supported by the community, a self-sufficient community, where the money is put back in the area” – The Vision for the Community as Expressed by a Neighborhood Stakeholder
The Rosemont-Walbrook neighborhood surrounds the North Avenue corridor, which is central to a diverse array of institutional and civic assets. How these assets are capitalized upon (or neglected) is affected by people’s perspectives on the corridor and how the neighborhood fits into the broader context. To get a sense of the specifics of the challenges, development areas and opportunities present for the corridor, we contacted a cross-section of business, planning, university, and resident leaders to discuss their viewpoints on coalition development, challenges to revitalization, and the external forces shaping the future of the corridor and neighborhood.

A Summary of Challenges and Responses

Our research assessed stakeholder perceptions of the neighborhood, identifying primary concerns and expectations. Below are highlights of the opportunities and assets identified for the Rosemont-Walbrook neighborhood.

Opportunities and Assets of the North Avenue corridor

1. The North Avenue corridor is one of only a few in Baltimore which runs nearly the length of the entire city
2. In the focus area, a number of businesses are owned by people from Asia, Africa and by African Americans
3. Along its northern boundaries, there is a strong homeownership contingent, primarily by older, long-time residents of the neighborhood
4. The area has a strong aesthetic, educational and commercial base:
   - Mellon Institute, Glynns Falls, Coppin State and Mondawin Mall
5. Coppin State University is regarded for its role as liaison and partner because of its education-related outreach (i.e., taking over two state watch list schools in the neighborhood and improving them).

Development Areas

Lack of a clear lead revitalization agency: The lack of a revitalization intermediary was considered an impediment to the physical revitalization of the North Avenue corridor. Most believe Coppin State is the de facto revitalization lead agency, but this role has not been explicitly negotiated, according to stakeholders. The university has strong interest in expanding its physical presence in the neighborhood to anticipate its burgeoning student population.

Neighborhood character: Drugs and the drug culture among the youth are another impediment stakeholders believe detract from the physical character and revitalization of the corridor. The cumulative effect is acted out by both those in the neighborhood and passers-by. Issues around ‘open-air’ drug markets and trash are high priorities for local groups.

Lack of land assembly: Comprehensive assembly in the neighborhood is limited due to highly clustered absentee ownership. For most conventional larger-scale developers, this curtails entry and reduces the likelihood of new investment.
Institutional engagement: Interacting with large-scale institutions is viewed as a panacea by some, but others are concerned about institutional commitment to making the neighborhood a “priority.” These stakeholders worry about how institutional agendas fit with the neighborhood’s need for investment in relationships and resources for a protracted period of time.

Capital needs: The lack of internal capital and neglect by absentee landlords reduce opportunities for capital reinvestment by residents. But, stakeholders are concerned that seeking outside investors can increase the risk of gentrification and displacement. Ideally these new partnerships can be carefully managed, with deliberate actions undertaken to develop safeguards which encourage revitalization while preventing gentrification.

Leadership Pipeline and Coalitions: Businesses, homeowners, civic associations and institutions have shared interests and concerns, according to stakeholders. Coppin State and various local civic and businesses organizations are considered the primary agencies operating in the area. The common thread among these organizations is the profile of their leadership; they tend to be organizations with leadership that has been fixed over the last few decades. All respondents suggest that reaching out and developing a leadership pipeline, to steer young people to neighborhood stewardship roles, is a priority. Fears about inviting the young people to community meetings, coupled with a lack of interest and engagement, territorialism and fatigue limit the development of any new leaders. Coalition-building is somewhat more successful among business owners. More broadly, the redevelopment of Mondawin Mall has been a catalyst for discussions around how groups can work together. Coppin involvement in this arena was also acknowledged by respondents. To some they serve as a conduit, yet groups still remain active to coordinate activities amongst themselves.

Building trust between generations: A driver of the leadership gap is the relative social distance between younger residents and older residents. Older residents are owners and stakeholders in the community through their associations and homeownership, whereas most of the younger people have not participated in any of these opportunities. Each group has different perspectives on this social distance. One neighborhood leader believed the ‘gap’ is exacerbated by the drug culture which “has made us afraid of our youth.” “Getting those [youth] to understand the value of being a leader and advocating for their community is the challenge,” according to another respondent. Younger residents report a feeling of alienation, and a belief that information and initiatives are too slow to trickle to the community from civic associations. There is a belief that the older residents’ fear of crime has made them fear younger people in general, which especially impacts African American males, according to one respondent. In general, both sides acknowledge severe revitalization implementation hurdles due to the state of social ties between older leaders and younger-aged groups. Unfortunately, the lack of engagement with area youth leaves the neighborhood open to unsustainable stewardship, as decision-making could fall outside the hands of current residents.

State of Interventions

One respondent summarizes the state of neighborhood leadership as “There is no active leadership development; leadership and membership consists of the older generation…little high school or college age individuals…if [leadership] development is occurring it is on the individual / organization level.” Community and civic organizations share deep concerns about balancing current leadership interests in the near and intermediate future with neighborhood youth participation in the neighborhood going forward on a longer-term basis. Unfortunately, the group most likely to benefit from such participation is not involved in these early discussions. It is clear that for this neighborhood, leadership and youth are a major concern. (‘Youth’ is a catch all term used to capture primary students, secondary-
school students, college students and even professionals in their middle age.) A major obstacle in leadership development is communication. The young people “don’t understand the old people” which leads to a perception that the youth are showing a “lack of interest in learning about leadership” and “are not thinking about the greater community.” What is at stake, according to one respondent, is the decline of social capital - - resulting in less connection to history, people and place - - and a “flight of the economically mobile.”

Some institutional partners are involved in the push to build and sustain social capital. The Coppin Heights CDC (University affiliate) has convened groups of small developers to come together, while civic groups are encouraging community involvement and supporting community organizations. Coalitions have made progress on addressing day-to-day issues such as trash management along North Avenue. Respondents all say that these small victories are vital, but more is needed in the way of coordination and standards to revitalize the corridor and neighborhood. Closely associated with this demand for better control is the perception the neighborhood has few land use controls at its disposal. Land use controls are desired by respondents to enable more coordinated development patterns along the corridor and guide neighborhood expectations (i.e. small area master plan, zoning overlays). In terms of the leadership pipeline, respondent believe a combination of indirect physical and direct organizational remedies are critical.

**Looking Forward to the Future**

A mix of revamped design controls and land development tools, stakeholder coordination, and planning for affordable housing is needed to ensure the viability of the North Avenue corridor and the surrounding neighborhood. Addressing the physical impacts of vacant properties and engagement of absentee landlords looms prominently as the neighborhood seeks to enhance its image. Physical change may be over-weighted towards homeowner areas in the North (compared to renter dominated areas in the South), in the view of some respondents. Walbrook has a lot of vacant land, relative to other city neighborhoods, according to analysis and stakeholders. For those living in more prosperous pockets of Walbrook that are “99% occupied,” efforts to maintain aesthetics “get done.” In contrast, some streets have a ton of vacant land and there is no one to take ownership for a problem too overwhelming for individuals.

Getting residents to support such change requires physical change that is economically and socially accessible to a variety of groups: young professionals, upper classmen at Coppin, elderly residents and recently released inmates. Institutionally, there is interest in the adoption of façade improvements and uniformity along the North Avenue corridor to Interstate 83. The corridor has the potential to have a boulevard scale in terms of aesthetic and feel, due to Coppin (and other institutions) needing a high-quality “gateway.” For its housing stock, one respondent suggests: “Respect the brownstone culture, but need to tear down obsolete structures.” This work is emerging to some extent, with the proposed development from West to East along the 3400 Block from the 2800 block of North Avenue. Respondents believe this development can be coupled with the physical development by Coppin State along the 2800 Block. There may be an opportunity to further engage the community via access to Coppin’s proposed Health and Human Services and the Physical Education complex.
Structuring cross-organizational relationships is vital to more rapid improvements, according to several respondents. There is a genuine desire to work with the City around issues of revitalization, but respondents acknowledge that this is not the only domain where partnerships are needed. Residents and stakeholders must also plan for student housing, transportation, and guiding new jobs into the region. Respondents would like to see an expansion of the Coppin Foundation’s and Coppin Heights CDC programming to senior programs and housing. Coppin, the State, private developers and community and equity investors must work collectively to address these long-term issues. Organizations can also work together to eliminate the activities that contribute to blight, such as dumping trash on North Avenue. One respondent pointed to the difference in criminal activity with the shift away from a zero-tolerance policy towards community policing strategies, which should be continued. Other respondents felt that cooperation among churches and community organizations to reduce the “crabs in the basket” mindset and move to “a rising tide lifts all boats” mindset will be an important force in making progress in the neighborhood.

The North Avenue corridor has the potential to be a regional destination due to its physical character, but fully achieving this economic viability must be balanced with the risk of displacement due to rapid development and limited land use controls. Regardless, there is an immediate desire for action around vacant lots and homes to kick-start the economic future of the neighborhood. Too many vacant lots in the overall housing stock are exposing homeowners to rapid depreciation. Given the neighborhood’s vacancy challenges, respondents see a future in which direct vacancy remediation is carried out by or on behalf of the City, as a response to “getting people who own vacant property to do something about it.”

Business building is a key concern for the neighborhood as it seeks to balance its need for a stronger tax base with the interests of stakeholders. For the neighborhood to become a destination for employment or socialization, respondents felt the corridor must enhance its “open for business” quality. Reaching the twenty to thirty crowds is the future of the neighborhood and corridor. To reach these people, efforts should include enterprise-building among minorities and attracting businesses “that don’t deteriorate the social fabric or encourage loitering.” Respondents pointed to several Coppin State-related opportunities to achieve these ends. One such opportunity is a proposed University bookstore, which could be designed to increase community access. The school has a strong reputation for producing educators and health care professionals, which the university could leverage to establish an area live-where-you work program aimed at juniors, seniors and professional staff. The City has some protections against gentrification in place, while limiting the future burden of existing homeowners through its four percent cap on property tax increase per year for homeowners. More could be done to ensure similar protections for renters.

Reflections

Respondents agreed that a single entity needs to lead the area’s revitalization charge, but have reservations about top-down arrangements with institutional partners. What
people favor instead is coming together to
discover how a diverse, cross-sectional
partnership can increase access to opportunity
constructively across multiple agencies.
Stakeholders appear to have several core ideas
of what should be done; the fundamental issue
is how relationships should be structured to
achieve those ends. Each stakeholder group by
definition engages residents differently.
Stakeholders should seek collaborative
arrangements which allow them to leverage
shared resources to create wealth, opportunity
and investment in the neighborhood. For
example, collaborations between education
service providers in the neighborhood and
Coppin State could enrich the University with
learning experience and local stakeholders
who gain access to the bright, innovative
practices being explored at the university.
Reflecting upon these voices, we believe that a
well resourced, independent change agent can
bring together and help negotiate the
differences among institutional and
community partners. We give examples of
these change agents, and further discuss the
potential we see for the North Avenue
Corridor, in the following “Best Practices”
discussion. Everyone involved plays a role in
moving the neighborhood to an opportunity
rich area. The entire community – institutional
partners, businesses, residents, and churches
have a duty to understand the potential
negative impacts on the neighborhood, and
indeed the region, by maintaining the status
quo. Among the community partners there
needs to be an effort to understand the
opportunity cost of taking no action.
Leadership should consider the cumulative
cost of low opportunity to the neighborhood in
terms of education and wealth gaps and further
isolation. We believe relative to the cost of
increasing opportunity of the neighborhood to
the Baltimore region’s opportunity structures
will measure out to be relatively little
compared to the cost and lost opportunity
passing residents by.

Section 4: Review of Best Practices -
University Community Partnerships to
Encourage Revitalization

While increasingly more prevalent today,
university-community partnerships gained
steam in the early 1990s, with the creation of
the Office of University Partnerships (OUP). Established in 1994, this federal government
program, administered through HUD, helps
universities and colleges in their efforts to
address urban issues. The program funds the
development of these programs, provides
research on campus-community activities,
technical assistance, and other resources to
facilitate more effective community
development partnerships between campuses
and communities. Several programs are
offered through this office. Of specific interest
for this report are the Historically Black
Colleges and Universities fund (HBCU) which
offered $9 million in funding for FY08
(including $1 million for new applicants and
$8 million for previous grantees.

Below are case studies that highlight the best
practices that can result from these university-
community partnerships, illuminating the
possibilities that can be achieved when
committed residents, leaders, and stakeholders
combine resources and will. Many of these
neighborhoods share the same struggles and hopes for their community as West Baltimore does. In this way, the socioeconomic challenges that face our core neighborhoods cut across geographic divides, allowing for the possibility of communities to teach each other, coming together across space to redevelop these areas into communities of high opportunity, communities of choice.

**Best Practices: Community Engagement and Capacity Building**

*Rhodes College, Memphis, TN - Focus Area: Neighborhood Capacity Building (2004)*

**Funding Source: Community Outreach Partnership Fund** (Initial Funds: $399,978)

Rhodes College has been involved in community outreach programs since 1995, with an emphasis in the Hollywood-Springdale area. The establishment of the Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) in 2004 institutionalized this involvement within the community, focusing its efforts on community renewal through fostering long term partnerships with the community. These efforts have coalesced in the Rhodes Hollywood-Springdale Partnership (RSHP), and include other area schools, including middle and elementary, city and county government, and area businesses. The COPC provides a central forum for addressing the needs identified by the partners. The program is overseen by the Head of the Urban Studies Department, and relies extensively upon student involvement in the form of service learning. Other faculty from the department acts as a steering committee, lending their expertise in overseeing program development, implementation, and evaluation. Partners have also committed in-kind, cash, and other resources to further the objectives of the COPC. As of 2005, this contribution totaled more than $600,000, in addition to the grant money from OUP.

The Hollywood-Springdale community, where these efforts are concentrated, is an urban core neighborhood, which has faced economic, social, and political distress, issues that have plagued many of our core neighborhoods. The area faces the specific challenges of poverty, poor health, crime and violence, and physical and environmental deterioration. As of 2000, 37.4% of all households were below the poverty level (compared to just over 25% for West Baltimore). The area had a population of approximately 4,000, with Blacks comprising 98% of the population (96.9% for West Baltimore). Key issues that were identified by residents included a lack of community organization, physical decline, crime, poor health, and no youth development programs. The question was how to lift the community from survival mode, to vitality and viability?

Armed with this information, COPC set out to develop a program in conjunction with the community and the other partners that would specifically address these areas in an effort to achieve long-term community renewal. Specifically, the goal is to create a community that is healthy, clean, and safe – a community of choice. The program’s specific focus areas include: Neighborhood Capacity Building; Housing and Community Renewal; Community Health and Improved Schools and Opportunities for Youth.

Specifically, the College sought to address these issues in the following ways:

- The roles for the College as a substantial partner and stakeholder within the neighborhood are multiple. Perhaps the biggest achievement, and most critical, was the application for and establishment of the COPC as a central resource for direction and capacity-building.
- The College has also opened its campus, engaging the community through hosting cultural events, and offering the use of its facilities for meetings. The College recognizes that it has tremendous resources, and by opening the campus to community-wide access, it can more substantially meet the objectives of the program, and ensure community engagement.
- The College also shows its commitment to the community cause in its service
learning requirement for the Urban Studies students, as well as faculty support in ongoing program development and evaluation.

Research suggests the program has been impactful. Violent crime was down in the area in 2006, sometimes by a few points, in other areas by as much as 31%.

Drug dealers were forced out of parking lots, where they had previously visibly dealt; code enforcement has been morestringently applied, from student-led creation of a GIS database detailing the violations; city services returned, such as trash pick up; more than 40 faculty-led programs were established, as well as several student-led programs.

**Best Practices: Economic Development and Business Investment**

**Mott Community College, Flint, MI - Focus Area: Economic Development (2004)**

**Funding Source: Community Outreach Partnership Fund (Initial Funds: $398,936)**

The Flint North Central Community Outreach Partnership Center was established in 2004 through a grant form the Office of University Partnerships. Through the establishment of the Flint North Central COPC, the College strives to unite the efforts of community organizations and individuals committed to community renewal with the resources of the College, through collaborations with students and faculty. The FNAP program is administered by a collaboration of faculty and community leaders. In order to more effectively implement the program objectives, a Community Advisory Committee was established, with representatives from the faculty, students, and residents and community leaders from area faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, and other partner organizations.

The focus area is the North Central neighborhood (part of the federal program Renewal Community of Flint), consisting of 4 census tracts. The total population in this target area, in 2000, was 8,363, with an average poverty rate of 47.55%. The average Black population for the total area is 88.05%, with 3 of the census tracts just over 94% Black. The average unemployment rate in 2000 was approximately 13%. Some of the critical concerns include the loss in population, the high unemployment rates, and the high crime rates.

The specific focus areas of the program include: Beautification, Crime Prevention, Job Training and Housing. The main thrust for many of the programs available through FNAP center around job skill/ workforce development, especially targeted to youth, minorities, and women, as well as technical assistance in the form of GIS databases as a community resource, and transportation option for those with disabilities. Aesthetics and safety are also important concerns of the neighborhood. Specifically, the College set out to more effectively guide student involvement in community service, as well as engage more faculty in renewal efforts. Service learning programs have been implemented in the school to focus on the issues most relevant to the neighborhood, as outlined above. The College offers a Certificate of Achievement in Leadership to reward the service learning efforts of students. The FNAP has successfully created an active “logic model” database that tracks the progress of the programs (utilizing GIS software), making the information accessible to community organizations and residents. In this regard, the FNAP has effectively increased the community’s resources through this capacity-building measure. This record is available online at [http://www.flintcopc.org/](http://www.flintcopc.org/). Databases are available for all the above focus areas.

**Best Practices: Economic Development and Business Investment**

**Campus Partners, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH - Focus Area: Economic Development (1995)**

**Funding Source: Ohio State and the Community Outreach Partnership Fund**

The Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment was formed by Ohio State University in 1995 in an effort to bring renewal to the neighborhood surrounding the
University, known as the University District. Although the organization does not actively develop, they do partner with other developer organizations to promote revitalization in the neighborhood, offering its comprehensive and community-based planning expertise to the efforts. Campus Partners is a non-profit organization, and works with community leaders, organizations, the University, and residents to bring change to the neighborhood. Immediately upon creation, the organization set out to develop a revitalization plan for the area, enlisting the aid of a consulting firm, the city, and a community advisory council that included representation from community leaders and residents. The key neighborhood of the University District is the Weinland Park neighborhood. The neighborhood has experienced significant socioeconomic challenges. For 2000, the area had an unemployment rate of 15%, with a poverty rate of 50%. The median household income was $15,381. This neighborhood also contains the highest concentration of Section VIII housing in Columbus.

The focus areas for the organization and the community include: Greater faculty participation, health and well-being of neighborhoods, economic development, improved student quality of life, and improved elementary and secondary schools in the area. Recommendations specifically included in the plan are: Improved rental housing and quality of life in student-dominated areas, increased level of homeownership, retail market revitalization and encouraged faculty and student engagement.

Major programs implemented include:

- **Rehabilitating the Section VIII Portfolio:** This project was undertaken in 2001 to address the Section VIII housing heavily clustered in the neighborhood, the densest concentration of subsidized housing in the nation and one of Weinland Park’s main concerns. To address this issue, Campus Partners joined with Ohio Capital Corporation to turn what once was a liability for the area into an asset through extensive renovations and new management policies, investments which totaled $100 million. The goal was to ensure that affordable housing remained in the area, even as revitalization occurred.

- **The South Campus Gateway:** Completed in 2005, this revitalization project, which borders the Weinland Park neighborhood, involved redevelopment of 7.2 acres into mixed-use space. The project involved public and private investments totaling $150 million, and created 700 jobs. The development includes one large national bookstore anchor, several smaller national restaurant chains, as well as small and start up businesses, a theater, and other shopping amenities.

- **Community Crime Patrol:** This program utilizes civilians, paid and trained, to patrol city neighborhoods. Funded through the University and the City of Columbus, the program recently opened a new site in the neighborhood, to further establish their presence and commitment to controlling crime in Weinland Park. The program also seeks to better the relationships and communications between the police and neighborhood residents.

Campus Partners continues to be a potent force in the neighborhood. Several developments are underway, including a major redevelopment of a brown field site. Visit [http://campuspartners.osu.edu/](http://campuspartners.osu.edu/) for more information regarding the projects.

**Best Practices: Economic Development and Business Investment**

*Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, NC - Focus Area: Economic Dev. (1999)*

Funding Source: OUP HBCU grant (Initial Funds: $466,690)

To help improve conditions along the northwest corridor, Johnson C. Smith University aligned themselves with community stakeholders to create The Northwest Community Development Corporation in 1991. Within the first four years of their inception the Northwest Corridor CDC began the revitalization
process. Additionally, Johnson C. Smith obtained HBCU funds from the Office of University Partnerships (OUP) to help support the process. In 1995 the CDC partnered with National Bank Community Development Corporation and private investors to undertake a commercial revitalization project for the neighborhood.

The Lincoln Heights Neighborhood was a neighborhood in serious distress. The neighborhood was overwhelmed with crime, unemployment, dilapidated housing and a decaying commercial corridor. The neighborhood consists of 2,000 residents, where on average a homeowner earns $16,000 a year, compared to the average Charlotte resident with a median income of $64,000. The corridor has a 42.7% homeownership rate, compared to 57.2% in the city as a whole. It also has a higher rate of substandard housing and a lower average household income than the city at large. A Mecklenburg County Housing Market Analysis reported that finding affordable housing is a challenge for those households earning less than $35,000, a major challenge for households earning less than $25,000, and almost impossible for households earning less than $16,000. Average household income is less than $25,000 in 7 of the Northwest Corridor neighborhoods, and between $25,000 and $41,000 in 5 others.

The partnership with National Bank CDC and private investors developed the University Village Shopping Center to replace a dilapidated shopping center in the University Village neighborhood. The new development is a 55,000 square foot center, including a 25,000 square foot Food Lion supermarket, a Revco Pharmacy, Subway and a U.S. Post Office Branch. After addressing the immediate need of commercial space along the Northwest Corridor, the CDC transferred their focus to developing housing. The first project was “Vantage Point,” a 26 unit development that sold for $95,000 per unit for first-time homebuyers with incomes up to 80 percent of the area median income. The second project, “Phoenix Rising,” located adjacent to the Vantage point townhouses, includes 25 smaller three bedroom units that sold for $85,000 per unit for first-time homebuyers with incomes of 50-80 percent of the area median income. To further improve the community’s housing stock, dilapidated housing units were purchased and demolished, using bank financing and private investments to make way for a housing project for the elderly. The new construction was financed with a mix of private investment, tax credits, city loans, and bank financing.

The Northwest Corridor CDC in partnership with Johnson C. Smith University has continued to combat the issues affecting their community. The Vantage Point and Phoenix Rising town homes are currently under construction and the University Shopping Center is complete, along with the LaSalle at the Lincoln Heights housing development for the elderly. The CDC over the past years has also addressed additional pressing issues of resident homeownership rates through homebuyer education classes, as well as establishing a Women’s Enterprise Project for low- to moderate-income females.

**Best Practices: Affordable Housing and Homeownership Programs**

**Norfolk State University, Norfolk, VA - Focus Area: Affordable Housing (2000)**

**Funding Source: OUP HBCU grant (Initial Funds: $1,000,000)**

The Norfolk State University affordable housing program was undertaken in 2000 to help the area low-income residents secure financing and housing, specifically targeted to the public housing residents. The community programs are administered through the School of Social Work Outreach Services. The program engages in collaboration with faculty, students, community organizations and other stakeholders to further the objectives of community service and renewal. Funded largely through revitalization grants, other program focus areas include: academic outreach and service learning; community cleanup and service; entrepreneurship and health maintenance. To get a better understanding of the community problems,
Norfolk State University Urban Revitalization Community Development Corporation developed a partnership with Plumbline Ministries, a local faith-based organization.

The Central Brambleton community, located in the City of Norfolk, faced some critical socioeconomic challenges. In 1999 the median household income of Central Brambleton was approximately $11,000 with 43% of Brambleton's residents living below the poverty level—almost three times Norfolk's overall poverty rate. Conditions in the nearby public housing complexes are even more alarming. The average income of Norfolk public housing residents is approximately $7,000 and only 18% have completed high school.

Norfolk State University has undertaken the task of developing a comprehensive plan to revitalize the Central Brambleton community with the first step to address affordable housing. Norfolk State University began the revitalization process in 1993 with funding received from The Office of University Partnership-HBCU Grant. Within the next two years The Norfolk CDC renovated eight single family homes with revitalization work completed by unemployed residents trained by the Department of Construction and Technology. During the next seven years the Norfolk University CDC and Plumbline Ministries developed 60 new homes. The new housing units remained affordable because $1 million was obtained by Norfolk State University from the University Partnership-HBCU to acquire the lots and to subsidize the housing prices. The new housing units will range from $95,000 - $125,000, and with the subsidies mortgages will range between $520 - $600 per month. As the revitalization process gained more momentum Norfolk Redevelopment & Housing Authority donated land and the City of Norfolk invested $8 million to update public infrastructure within Central Brambleton to support new housing. Public infrastructure updates included water, sewage upgrades, roadwork and a 2-block retention pond in an area prone to flooding. The partnership between Norfolk State University and Plumbline Ministries has developed 78 new homes and brought $8 million in infrastructure upgrades over 9 years. The neighborhood improvement is helping create a sustainable environment and a new economic climate in a neighborhood that was once blighted.

**Section 5: The Neighborhood University Initiative -- Putting Best Practices into Action**

Promising practices and voices of neighborhood stakeholders share a common thread: revitalization is a process. Within that process exists opportunities for ‘home runs’ and ‘base hits’ in the form of near, intermediate and longer-term objectives. The Kirwan Institute has developed expertise in researching, analyzing and developing methods for equitable regional and neighborhood revitalization in communities around the United States. Our scan of current best practices involving neighborhood and university collaborations hopefully provides material for fruitful discussion for NUI partners and supporters. The following is our understanding of how the best practices in building opportunity overlay with the NUI principles and program areas. This discussion is followed by recommended interventions to build upon the strengths of the existing plan.

**Overarching Principles for Neighborhood Revitalization**

Neighborhood and community revitalization is an important but challenging goal. Revitalization is a complex, dynamic and long-term challenge. Successfully intervening to bring positive and transformative change to distressed areas requires a long-term commitment, extensive collaboration, in-depth community engagement, a multi-faceted approach and the ability to leverage initiatives with public policy and private dollars.

Based on the community development literature and on original research conducted by the Kirwan Institute, the following strategies have been identified as the best practices to guide, spur and support neighborhood and community revitalization.
- **Define success before intervening.** A shared vision of a successful neighborhood or community is needed to convene and effectively engage the various stakeholders. The goal should be focused on promoting sustainable community revitalization, not gentrification, which would displace existing residents. Neighborhoods should be communities of choice and opportunity, accessible to a wide spectrum of residents, and contain the critical opportunities to be livable, healthy and safe. The exact measures for this broad goal will vary by community and should be guided by local residents and stakeholders.

- **Make equity, “fairness” and inclusion explicit goals.** Equity, fairness and inclusion must be explicit goals for neighborhood and community revitalization. Without explicitly planning for and maintaining a focus on inclusion in revitalization activities, existing residents could be excluded from the benefits. Revitalization must seek to produce mixed income communities and infuse neighborhoods with a variety of housing options. Efforts should also reinforce existing social networks and organizations in the community, while attempting to connect marginalized and impoverished residents to opportunities.

- **Adopt a long-term approach.** Neighborhood distress did not occur quickly in marginalized communities, but represents decades of disinvestment, segregation and decline. Therefore, successful community revitalization will require a long-term approach and strategy. Interventions must give initiatives time to mature. (Grant cycles and planning should recognize this need.)

- **Engage critical stakeholders.** Universities, urban hospitals and major employers have tremendous resources, influence and linkages to nearby communities. The investment of these partners (and the ability to leverage their considerable assets) can significantly increase the likelihood of a successful revitalization effort.

- **Focus on “turning point” neighborhoods or communities.** Many communities have resources and attributes which give them great potential for revitalization, where strategically placed investments can effectively spur revitalization.
Initiatives to promote revitalization must first target communities who are “on the brink” of revitalizing.26

- **Bring small success to scale.** Revitalization strategies should seek out small-scale, successful initiatives and bring these initiatives to scale. Many small-scale interventions have proven locally effective, but are not producing significant results because of their limited scale or scope. An assessment of which prospective small-scale models are working within the Foundation’s service area would be useful. Revitalization will require seeking out these potential model initiatives that have the best potential to be brought to scale.

- **Address specific macro-level issues.** Supporting initiatives to address systemic problems in marginalized communities can also aid both targeted “turning point” communities and communities who are least likely to redevelop. For example, addressing macro-level issues, such as discriminatory public investment policies, will produce benefits for many communities.

- **Support establishment of anchor institutions.** Successful revitalization initiatives often involve anchor developments in the community. Highly visible and targeted investments can spur nearby private investment and provide a positive physical sign of reinvestment to encourage the private sector. Revitalization efforts must seek out these potential highly visible, targeted investments for distressed communities.

- **Make catalytic investments.** It is necessary to align actions with public policy, public agencies, non-profits investment and private capital. Community revitalization requires significant capital investment -- public sector or non-profit funds alone will not be sufficient to spur revitalization. Activities must seek out projects and investments that have the potential to attract private investment, be coordinated with large-scale public investments and policy or encourage nearby private investment. The best strategy to promote catalytic investments is to geographically target investments.

**Best Practices for Successful University-Community Neighborhood Revitalization**

The following broadly outlines the best practices gleaned by the case studies. For a more detailed understanding, we urge personal engagement with the leaders of these groups, as well as additional research.

**Organization and Leadership: Leveraging university resources**

- Service learning and access to university resources, including technical expertise (computer databases, GIS, professor expertise; student involvement)

- An emphasis on encouraging strong faculty presence in agency (either directly or through implementing service learning requirements)

- Building and sharing the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about land use (often enabled by GIS analysis sponsored by university departments)

- Economic value and knowledge creation by stakeholders turned investors, particularly students and faculty

**Organization and Leadership: Redevelopment agency makeup and role**

- The agency is autonomous from any particular group.

- Partnership is cross-sectional and diverse (university, business, non-profit, government, housing, faith-based and social service stakeholders)

- The agency role is to manage change while maintaining a commitment to core values (e.g. a shared definition of
successful revitalization is decided before redevelopment is begun).

- The agency’s vision emphasizes that the neighborhood is an integral part of the broader community/region and focuses on developing assets which represent and capitalize on this recognition.
- The agency becomes a vehicle for private and public capital, including federal funds.
- Agency and public sector partnerships foster capital improvements (public dollars are strategically utilized to attract private investment).

The Physical Environment

- The partners work collaboratively to decrease actual criminal activity (walking and bicycling police; police-community dialogue)
- Perception management is also key, with particular attention focused on managing issues of aesthetics and safety (code enforcement; design guidelines; trash removal; lighting; etc.).
- Initiatives proactively and aggressively target vacant and foreclosed lots and structures for improvements and investments.
- Critical infrastructure investments are made in the neighborhood (often in conjunction with other public/private investments).

Supporting critical opportunity structures

- Initiatives target resources and awareness to develop homeownership and home equity in the neighborhood.
- The initiatives focus on increasing the value of human capital within the neighborhood (job/skill development; early childhood education; youth leadership training; financial literacy; minority business development).
- Invested capital is inclusive (it can be knowledge capital, such as that contributed by students and faculty, and relationship building), creating a sense of ownership among stakeholders

Section 6: NUI Principles and Opportunity Areas

Research suggests central city revitalization success is determined by “changes in quality of life.” It is widely known that success fosters success, but what is seldom discussed is the relationship between strategy and fit. The Rosemont-Walbrook neighborhood and Baltimore context can not afford to invest in ‘cut and paste’ solutions because activities must fit the bundle of assets, opportunity and constraints of Rosemont-Walbrook.

Effecting positive neighborhood outcomes will require advancing policies that connect places to opportunity. Policy decisions impacts investment decisions and, ultimately shape development and access to opportunity. For all neighborhoods, deliberate, equitable connections to opportunity create shared infrastructure which can shape individual and institutional investment and the distribution of future opportunity.

Making this commitment to equitable development has tangible, positive spillover effects. Policy makers and investors alike are very active in connecting educational investments to neighborhood development efforts. According to The Enterprise Foundation “neighborhoods can influence...access to jobs, a sense of physical safety and social networks” which in turn “influence peer groups” and provide economic and social influences that impact the population – the very fabric of the neighborhood. For example, the efforts of The Enterprise Foundation and Urban Strategies in exploring the relationship between elementary level schools and neighborhoods are illustrating the need for better policy, noting connecting both types of investment have a reverberating impact throughout the community. For higher-education institutions such as Coppin State University with an academic and civic tradition, the message that education...
inseparable to neighborhood interests is magnified.

Highlighting the NUI Opportunity-Based Principles

Residents and neighborhood leadership feel Rosemont-Walbrook can be “a place of choice, where people want to invest and live, that continues to be affordable, where local businesses are supported by the community, self-sufficient—where the money is put back in the area.” Getting there requires vision and accountability. It can not be emphasized enough that there are no quick and easy solutions. Although many communities have great potential for revitalization, the investment and commitment must be long term. Revitalization is a dynamic process and often needs a vehicle to carry its efforts through the short and intermediate periods of change. Initiatives and funding must also allow for leadership to evaluate their efforts and learn from not only successes but mistakes (without fear of being penalized for identifying failed initiatives). The Neighborhood-University Initiative (NUI) key principles are a reflection of a nuanced understanding of the social, economic and physical challenge areas for stakeholders to engage, including the following key principles:

- **Anticipate** increases in the value of the surrounding neighborhood. Leaders should work with city leaders to mitigate potential negative effects on those in the neighborhood or, better, prepare them to take advantage of the changes.

- **Stimulating** new ideas, providing places to meet and share those ideas, gaining acceptance and “pick up” of ideas and cultivating a culture of risk-taking are critical to innovation. Anchor institutions can play a lead role in providing and encouraging these critical conditions.

- Anchor institutions must move beyond “outreach” to “engagement.” That is, anchor institutions cannot simply make their offer and “sell” the community hoping they will buy it. Anchor institutions must engage with the community to shape the offer itself.

The NUI Role in Rosemont-Walbrook

The NUI, extending from the 2700 block of North Avenue to North Avenue and Hilton Streets, is a robust model built on direct partnerships and diverse projects. Each of these programs has a best-practices parallel in the literature we reviewed. The pairing of the NUI with an opportunity orientation is strategic and activity based. Building consensus around the high-opportunity frame is critical. As one stakeholder noted, “Everyone has their own idea of how they want the corridor to look. It is important to have the input of all affected by the corridor; it is more important to have consistency among what people want.” Below we listed the core projects identified by the NUI plan. Following each NUI description (in italics, bullet point) is a recommendation for developing each project.

**Community Engagement** strategies will develop and cultivate neighborhood associations and other informal neighborhood networks. Also, senior engagement activities include transportation of residents to Coppin State University’s cultural events. The purpose of these objectives will be to learn resident’s vision for their community and assess key intervention strategies that will have the greatest impact influence and leverage.

- **Engagement is critical, and should directly tie to areas of need for the neighborhood, such as the leadership gap.**

**Model Dissemination and Framing** will implement strategic dissemination activities to expand the use of the NUI model. Only through strategic action and communication can the model gain further ground in the neighborhood development and community development world.
At the outset, the NUI should focus its resources on activities that net short-term results (grabbing the “low-hanging fruit”), and then move progressively into the more challenging, long-term development areas.

Community Health Outreach Agenda will link Coppin’s Health and Human Services physical and human capital with the surrounding community’s health outcomes and indicators. It will also link community residents with drug treatment programs and rehabilitation.

• Similar to the community engagement activities, this outreach should focus its resources on high-need projects with fairly direct paths to results. This project should intentionally leverage University resources, engaging students to develop a ‘feel’ for the neighborhood, especially nursing students.

Home Buyer Incentive Programs will connect new home buyers’ with regional and area private schools, innovative house designs, neighborhood transition programs for senior citizens, which includes ensuring that senior residences are maintained and transferred to viable mixed income residents. This objective will also use land banking and tools to maintain affordability and diversity.

• Housing is a historic wealth driver, but the NUI has to consider how home ownership is aligned with its core values, the regional economic environment and the associated opportunity elements (education, transportation, etc.). The objective should be stable wealth creation, which requires that affordable housing is linked to high-opportunity structures, such as education, child care, and sustainable employment.

North Avenue/ Hilton Merchants Association main street campaign will seek to promote the North Ave Hilton Business corridor into a main street and encourage business investment.

• This organization and its leadership are emblematic of the spirit of the neighborhood. Their efforts must focus on ways to increase economic opportunity through a variety of commercial opportunities. More needs to be done to take advantage of the multi-ethnic shop keepers and owners as a means of attracting “more eyes on the street.” The NUI should play an indirect role in ensuring voices from the community and the full set of proprietors are engaged and active in this process.

Land Usage Recommendations will serve as the bridge between community residents and developers and influence the development of new homes and green space. It will also support the ongoing development of the 3000 block of North Avenue into a mixed-use development.

• North Avenue is a regional corridor. It is broad, diverse and valuable to those inside and outside of the neighborhood. Increasing stewardship of this segment should include voices from customers and business owners to set an investment agenda as part of any land use recommendations.

Lastly, we identified key synergies which can help reframe the neighborhood as an emerging higher-opportunity urban neighborhood.

Suggestions for building upon the NUI plan:

• Connect development initiatives: Trying to create a new path for the neighborhood’s social, economic and health concerns is a dynamic process carried out both formally and informally. It also should be carried out in a holistic way: tying housing opportunities to high-achieving schools, for example. No one committee can do it all, but it can create options for utilizing specialist knowledge and connecting knowledge, capital and commitment.

• Develop an intermediary agency: Our findings point to the need for intermediaries that are well staffed, well resourced, and empowered to
carry out complex, long-term revitalization projects.

- **Define organizational culture and train leadership:** Clearly define the organization’s culture and identify a cross-section of leaders who can collaborate and invest long-term in the neighborhood. Principal in this effort is establishing the leadership pipeline. Having a more representative balance of leadership is critical to creating and sustaining the sense of ownership for the neighborhood. This is particularly critical as many people outside of the neighborhood’s core leadership do not formally own property in the neighborhood.

- **Encourage and constructively manage disagreement:** Proper management and expertise can turn disagreements into productive outcomes. An emphasis on visioning – defining successful outcomes – and on developing capacity and consensus are linked objectives that require trust and coalition building.

- **Messaging and Feedback:** Clearly and simply articulate the core values, goals and goals of the NUI, and benchmark its progress.

From the outset, the NUI was envisioned as the bridge to a higher opportunity for the Rosemont-Walbrook neighborhood. Enough emphasis cannot be placed on the ‘equity’ investment this vehicle represents both in its ability to assist in attracting capital, and, in the effort to increase economic and social inclusion for area residents.
REFERENCES


2 U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2006 American Community Survey. (http://factfinder.census.gov)

3 Ibid.

4 Figures from Census 2000.

5 Ibid

6 Ibid

7 Ibid


12 The Community of Opportunity model also incorporates quantitative assessments, such as an “opportunity map,” which is useful for multiple real-world applications. See www.kirwaninstitute.org for examples.

13 Blackwell, 4.


15 Office of University Partnerships. http://www.oup.org/grantee/AbstractDetail.asp?Abstract=2182&Program=COPC. All information contained herein is from this source, unless noted otherwise.

16 The federal Community Outreach Partnership Fund has not received funding since 2005.


18 http://www.flintcope.org/ October 4, 2007. All information contained herein was provided through the Flint COPC website, unless otherwise noted. May 13, 2008.


20 All information contained herein was provided through http://campuspartners.osu.edu/ April 20, 2007.


26 For more information on turning point strategic investments, please reference the “Neighborhoods in Bloom” policy example provided through the Local Initiatives Support Corporation online at: http://www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/902


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