

Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitation Program (NHRP)
City of Bloomington

I. Purpose

The Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitation Program (NHRP) is a targeted, citywide initiative designed to address property deterioration, increase neighborhood safety, expand housing opportunities, and promote community pride. This multi-departmental program focuses especially on returning vacant or dilapidated homes to habitable condition and returning them to the housing market. This effort will be accomplished through data-driven action, cross-sector partnerships, direct investment, and empowered community participation, with a long-term vision for equitable, attractive, and vibrant neighborhoods.

II. Strategic Objectives

(1) The program's core objectives are to:

- a. Identify and create a current inventory of vacant housing units in targeted neighborhoods.
- b. Explore and implement legal pathways for reclaiming persistently vacant properties (e.g., Judicial abandonment proceedings, Tax foreclosure processes, and strategic acquisition)
- c. Repair and rehabilitate housing units that can reasonably be salvaged.
- d. Use proactive community enhancement (code enforcement) strategies to maintain and improve the local housing stock.
- e. Improve overall housing quality, neighborhood safety, infrastructure, and visual appearance.
- f. Increase the supply of affordable and market-rate housing through rehabilitation and new construction.
- g. Demolish housing units that cannot be rehabilitated.

III. Program Goal, Assessment, Action Plan, Partnerships, Timeline and Benchmarks

(1) Vacant and Dilapidated Housing Recovery

1.Goal

Confirm, assess, and return housing units that can be reasonably rehabilitated to the housing market.

1.2 Identification and Assessment

1.2.1 Community Enhancement (Code Enforcement), in partnership with GIS (Planning Division) and other planning partners, will conduct a detailed property inventory within 6 months.

1.2.2 Vacant and dilapidated properties will be confirmed and categorized based on:

- a. Habitability condition
- b. Ownership status
- c. Property tax delinquency
- d. Redevelopment potential

1.3 Property Action Plans

1.3.1 Each property will receive a tailored strategy, including one or more of the following actions:

- a. Rehabilitation
- b. Acquisition for redevelopment
- c. Demolition
- d. Enrollment in the Neighborhood Preservation Program
- e. Donation to a qualified nonprofit

1.3.2 The City will proactively contact owners of vacant properties to encourage:

- a. Voluntary rehabilitation
- b. Sale of the property
- c. Donation to a nonprofit or housing partner
- d. Enrollment in the City’s Neighborhood Preservation Program

1.3.3 The City will explore and implement legal pathways for reclaiming persistently vacant properties through:

- a. Judicial abandonment proceedings
- b. Tax foreclosure processes
- c. Strategic acquisition of properties with high redevelopment value
- d. Demolition

1.4 Partnership Pipeline

1.4.1 The City will establish partnerships with key housing organizations, organized neighborhood groups, nonprofit organizations, and development stakeholders, including:

- a. Habitat for Humanity
- b. Local Community Development Corporations
- c. Local Neighborhood Organizations
- d. Landbanks
- e. Private real estate developers with affordable or workforce housing experience
- f. Local Unions
- g. Academia, Pre-apprenticeships, Apprenticeships

1.5 Timeline and Benchmarks

1.5.1 Year 1:

1.5.1.1 Complete confirmation and categorization of vacant and delapidated properties (estimate of 300 properties)

1.5.1.2 Initiate rehabilitation and/or demolition on the highest-priority sites

1.5.2 Years 2 through 5:

1.5.2.1 Continue to initiate rehabilitation and/or demolition on the highest-priority sites

1.5.2.2 Return approximately 25% of properties per year to active occupancy or use

1.5.3 Year 6:

1.5.3.1 Achieve the goal of addressing the full property inventory

1.5.3.2 Conduct program evaluation and determine next steps for continued revitalization

IV. Other Program Components – FY26

1. Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation

This program provides critical home repairs and improvements to low- and moderate-income homeowners, helping preserve housing stock and ensure safe, livable conditions.

2. Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction

Focused on protecting children and families, this federal program funds the removal or stabilization of lead-based paint hazards in older homes, prioritizing units with young children.

3. Emergency Repair

This initiative addresses urgent home repairs that pose immediate health or safety risks, such as plumbing failures, sewer collapse, HVAC failures, or unsafe electrical systems, for income-eligible households.

4. ReBloom the Block Program: From Vacant to Vibrant

This community revitalization effort will transform vacant lots and abandoned properties into productive, vibrant spaces—such as community gardens, green infrastructure, or new housing.

5. Home Accessibility (Ramps)

This program funds the installation of ramps and other accessibility modifications to help seniors and individuals with disabilities remain safely in their homes, especially veterans.

6. Proactive Code Enforcement + Improve Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance

By strengthening enforcement and modernizing the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance, this effort proactively addresses blight and property neglect before they worsen.

7. Improve Rental Registration Ordinance

This update enhances the rental registration process to better track, inspect, and improve the condition of rental housing, ensuring healthier living environments for tenants.

8. **Demolitions**
The demolition program will target structurally unsound or dangerous vacant buildings, eliminating hazards and paving the way for redevelopment or greening.
9. **Support a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Application**
The City will support applications for Illinois Housing Development Authority Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program that incentivize the development of new, high-quality affordable housing units.
10. **Update and Implement West Bloomington Quality of Life Plan**
This initiative refreshes the community-driven Quality of Life Plan with updated goals and actionable steps to guide equitable development, safety, and opportunities in West Bloomington.
11. **Provide Technical Support and Micro-Grants to Neighborhood Associations/Groups**
By offering hands-on assistance and small grants, this program empowers neighborhood groups to lead local projects, build capacity, and strengthen community engagement.
12. **Placemaking: Interactive Mural, Pop-Up Events in Public Spaces, and Community Gardens**
This creative placemaking strategy brings people together through temporary and permanent community art, events, and gardens, activating public spaces and building neighborhood pride.
13. **Cleanup Greenup Program**
This program provides mini grants to residents for beautification projects like planting flowers, trees, or installing small landscape features that enhance curb appeal and community pride.
14. **Quarterly Neighborhood Cleanups**
These regularly scheduled cleanups will take place in and around neighborhoods, allowing residents that may not have the resources to dispose trash and debris. This will improve neighborhood appearance and fostering community involvement.
15. **Cones (ice-cream) with Community Enhancement (Code Enforcement)**
This community outreach effort will combine informal gatherings with education on property maintenance standards, helping residents understand and comply with local codes in a supportive environment.
16. **Sidewalk Improvements**
This program prioritizes repairing and upgrading sidewalks to improve safety, accessibility, and walkability for residents in underserved neighborhoods.
17. **Targeted Tax Foreclosure and Lien Enforcement**
This strategy will accelerate the resolution of vacant or delinquent properties by enforcing tax and code liens, returning them to productive use and deterring long-term neglect.
18. **Apply for Brownfield Assessment Grant (U.S. EPA)**
The City will pursue federal funding to identify and assess potentially contaminated properties, laying the groundwork for safe redevelopment and revitalization.

V. Funding Strategy Overview (approved FY26 Budget)

(1) The total program cost for this fiscal year is estimated at \$1,950,500, with \$1,825,500 (95%) already covered by federal and state grants and approximately \$20,000 from the General Fund. CI&E staff has worked to realign existing grants to better meet the community needs. Staff will request an additional \$105,000 this fiscal year to complete two programs (West Bloomington Quality of Life Plan update and Quarterly Neighborhood Cleanups). Future programs and projects will require additional General Fund support over the next 5-10 years with the total yet to be determined through the annual budgeting process.

(2) The NHRP FY26 funding strategy includes:

Federal Grants: \$1,465,500

- a. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- b. Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Grant

State Grants: \$360,000

- a. Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) Program
 - Strong Communities Program
 - Housing Rehabilitation and Accessibility Program

General Fund: \$20,000

- a. General Fund
- b. Staff is requesting an additional \$105,000 in FY26 to complete two programs
- c. Future projects/programs will require additional General Funds over the next 5-10 years

VI. Program Oversight and Accountability

The Department of Community Impact & Enhancement will lead the Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitation Program, coordinating a cross-departmental team that will meet regularly to track progress, resolve challenges, and align departmental efforts. City Council will receive semiannual updates that include performance data, challenges, and future recommendations.

VII. Funding Strategy

The Neighborhood Housing Revitalization Program will be funded through a combination of local, state, federal, and philanthropic sources. These include the City's General Fund, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), state and federal housing initiatives, and private or nonprofit contributions. The city will also pursue in-kind support and volunteer assistance from community organizations, nonprofit organizations, academia, local unions, resident groups, and institutional partners. Funding levels and allocations will be reviewed annually as part of the City's budget process to ensure responsiveness to the program's goals and objectives and return on investment.

VIII. Continuous Improvement and Program Review

- (1) To ensure the Neighborhood Revitalization Program achieves sustainable, long-term success, the city is committed to a culture of continuous improvement. Accordingly, this program shall include a recurring review process that enables thoughtful reflection, data-driven decision-making, and learning. At least annually, and more frequently as needed, City staff shall conduct a comprehensive review of the program's implementation, outcomes, and resident feedback. This review will:
 - (a) Assess key performance metrics, including but not limited to housing units rehabilitated, properties returned to productive use, resident engagement, and neighborhood safety indicators.
 - (b) Identify systemic issues, bottlenecks, or unintended consequences in program design or delivery.
 - (c) Engage internal and external stakeholders, including residents, neighborhood associations, and partner organizations, to gather diverse perspectives and insights.
 - (d) Recommend actionable improvements or adaptations based on the findings, with an emphasis on enhancing service, removing waste, and increasing value to the community.
- (2) The results of each review shall be documented and made available to program leadership and the public. Recommended changes will be incorporated into future implementation phases to drive alignment with strategic priorities and operational excellence. This commitment to reflection and refinement is essential to ensuring the program remains responsive, equitable, and impactful over time.

IX. Conclusion

The Bloomington Community Revitalization Initiative is more than one singular project. It is a movement to reinvest in the people, places, and potential of every Bloomington neighborhood. Guided by equity, powered by partnerships, and built on measurable progress, this initiative reflects our shared commitment to a safer, stronger, and more vibrant city.