

## **FAQ on Nicollet Square**

### **Programming Basics**

Nicollet Square is permanent supportive housing linked with services to help tenants live stable, productive lives and maintain their housing. Our service model creates a “real life” situation for young adults who are striving to become economically independent within a supportive living environment. We believe that it is important for tenants to develop personal initiative, become responsible for their decisions, access resources and contribute to their community.

### **Who will Nicollet Square serve?**

The target population is young adults (18-22 years old) who are homeless or who are transitioning out of foster care. A 16 or 17 year old may be accepted as a resident when it is determined that this supportive housing is the best housing option for them. To be accepted, a minor will need the permission of their parent or guardian.

Under our funding agreement with Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, at least half of the residents will have experienced significant episodes of homelessness. The other half of the residents may come directly from foster care without first becoming homeless or may be homeless for the first time.

### **What are the requirements for becoming a resident?**

Applicants must qualify as homeless or transitioning out of foster care and must be under 30% area median income (\$16,500). They must also pass a criminal background check. Convictions for predatory sex offenses, arson and violent crimes will not be allowed. Other offenses are evaluated in the context of other positive information about the applicant. Applicants must also be able to live “independently”, i.e. not need a level of personal care provided in group home or nursing home, usually due to cognitive impairment.

Almost all applicants will be referred by youth agencies, such as The Bridge, Project Off-Streets (the YouthLink drop-in center), Avenues for Homeless Youth, District 202 (a GLBT drop-in center), Streetworks Collaborative (a street outreach program directed at homeless youth, or by the Hennepin county and foster care programs. These agencies assist the young person with the application process. An applicant needs a current State I.D. and will need a security deposit and first month’s rent. Agencies also assist applicants in securing General Assistance and/or Food Stamps if they are eligible. (Addendum A: YouthLink info)

Applicants who meet the target population, income restrictions and pass the criminal background check will be accepted as residents if they have adequate income to pay the rent (\$205) on an on-going basis. Property management requires third party income verification. Sources could include employment, General Assistance, Social Security, or Social Security Disability Income.

With our “Work Fast” program, Nicollet Square also has the opportunity to accept residents with no income and place them in employment immediately. If applicants do not have adequate income at the time of application, they will be evaluated by our employment partner for their suitability for our “Work Fast” employment program (described below). If an applicant is accepted into the “Work Fast” program to establish immediate employment and income, the applicant will be accepted as a housing resident if they meet all other criteria.

### **What type of orientation is provided to new residents?**

The property manager meets individually with each new resident to explain the lease and house rules. Since this is the first time for most residents to be responsible for their own apartment, great detail will be taken in explaining the requirements for paying rent, following house rules, reporting maintenance problems, operating the laundry. Orientation is also provided by YouthLink support staff to explain the services that are available on-site and by referral. The staff will immediately begin to engage the young person in discussing goals and issues that they would like assistance achieving. YouthLink staff will reach out intensively during the first few weeks to build a relationship with a new resident and to help the new resident meet other residents of the building and become part of the community.

### **What are the requirements for living in the building?**

Tenants must pay the rent, follow the rules and respect their neighbors. The property has the basic rules of all apartment buildings – not playing music too loud, putting your garbage in the dumpster, keeping your unit clean, etc. Smoking is allowed in individual apartments but not in common areas. A “drug- and crime- free” addendum is a part of our standard lease for all our buildings.

In addition, there are unique housing rules due to the supportive nature of the housing development.

- In addition to being a drug-free building, it will be an alcohol-free building.
- Guests will need to present identification at the front desk, and sign in and sign out. House rules will specify the times and length of guest hours. Anyone under the age of 18 will not be allowed to have guests over the age of 18 without the consent of their parent or guardian.

Also different from most apartment buildings is the level of supervision and intervention available to ensure compliance. The 24 hour staffing of the front desk will make *Nicollet Square*, one of the safest and quietest housing developments in the community. A full-time property manager is double the staffing that most 42 unit apartment buildings would employ. This allows the staffing necessary to properly orient new residents, conduct regular housekeeping inspections, meet with residents to discuss lease violations, meet with support staff regarding residents, ensure rent payment compliance and verify income sources on a regular basis.

In addition to the “supervisory” staffing provided by property management and the front desk, is the extensive on-site supportive services described in detail below.

### **If a minor is accepted as a resident, are the rules different?**

Prior to moving into Nicollet Square, YouthLink or another referring any agency will have worked with a minor to determine if there is a better option for them – reunification with a parent or other relative, foster care, Host Home, etc. However, if it is determined that Nicollet Square represents their best option and permission is granted by their parent or guardian, they will be allowed to apply. If they are accepted, Nicollet Square does not become their parent or guardian but agrees to rent housing and to provide services to them. As a mandatory reporter of child abuse, YouthLink reports any abuse of minors to Child Protective Services for their investigation, including sex between a minor and an adult. Nicollet Square will work with the Minneapolis Police Department and Hennepin County Social Services to develop appropriate guidelines for issues that relate specifically to those that are minors, such as curfew.

### **What supportive services are available for residents?**

Supportive services are provided on-site to immediately engage the young people in moving forward in their lives. It is important to create a “community culture” within Nicollet Square that encourages positive behavior, engagement with services, and working on life goals. Services are provided in a variety of formats to meet the style and interest of different residents.

YouthLink case managers will work in collaboration with youth to develop individualized plans to connect youth to services supporting self-sufficiency. Case management services are specifically designed to meet the needs of homeless or precariously housed youth as they transition to self-sufficiency and long-term empowerment. Youth Housing program objectives include:

- Increase youth stability
- Increase youth skills or income
- Increase greater self-determination
- Promote self-exploration and community participation

Objectives are met through the integration of social and behavioral health services with support for youth development goals. Experience includes providing onsite activities that

integrate case management, educational services, mental health support, and independent living skills training, and community building events.

Case management services are designed to create a sense of belonging and place for residents. YouthLink, in partnership with the resident youth community, creates an engaging, safe ‘home’ environment with ample opportunities for youth to engage in a broad range of services offered onsite or through the agency’s multi-service drop-in center. Some examples of the continuous calendar of activities hosted jointly by youth and staff include: resident council, life coaching, arts group activities and field trips, health education, self-help classes, workplace visits, empowerment groups, holiday parties and more. These efforts are integrated into case management; this creates healthy relationship-building opportunities for youth. The case management approach builds a sense of “community” among the youth -- formation of healthy support structures among peers is common. This results in youth creating a spirit and culture of cooperation and pride in individual achievement through community-building. One outcome of this approach is that youth create a cooperative spirit at the housing site. A culture of individual achievement is infused throughout the community.

YouthLink case management utilizes the general service approaches described earlier in this proposal. Case management at YouthLink is aligned with Minnesota Housing and the Department of Human Service’s definition and is based on an adaptation of a nationally recognized model, *stage wise case management*. Informed by the ACT model, the model recognizes the need to adjust and tailor services to the client in order to motivate change. Service coordination is managed within a framework that includes addressing the state of client motivation, goal setting and appropriate selection of intervention methodologies. This model focuses on four general areas of youth interaction, including:

1. Youth engagement
2. Persuasion
3. Active Intervention
4. Prevention of relapse

(Addendum B: Case Management Matrix)

Individual plans may encompass learning basic life skills (e.g. paying rent, learning to grocery shop), personal growth (e.g. anger management, healthy relationships), addressing mental health or chemical dependency, and increasing employment and educational skills and opportunities. Depending on the goal, staff may work directly with the resident or refer the resident to appropriate community resources. After a referral is made, staff works closely with the resident and referral agency to ensure that the resident is receiving appropriate services.

Many of the young people will not have completed their high school education. YouthLink will provide tutoring for GED, assistance in enrolling in alternative high school, and even basic literacy skills based on the individual evaluation of a resident’s

needs. For those with a high school degree, YouthLink will assist the young people in exploring the opportunities for post-secondary education.

YouthLink will work with the young people to address their personal issues and to make positive life choices as they transition into adulthood. Many of the young people have experienced trauma and abandonment in their family of origin. Working individually with each person, YouthLink staff builds rapport and helps identify key issues that need to be addressed for someone to move forward. YouthLink has an extensive network of agencies for referrals in such areas as substance abuse counseling, anger management, and mental health services.

Interventions become an important component of this housing model. When a resident exhibits behavior that violates the house rules or lease, they are referred by the property management for services. Depending on the severity or repeated nature of the violation, services may become mandated.

### **How are residents able to access mental health services? What is available?**

YouthLink has actively worked to build its organizational infrastructure and capacity to address the complex mental health needs of youth, including youth residing in our housing units. YouthLink has hired a licensed (LICSW) mental health professional to develop the standards and tools necessary to perform diagnostic assessments and treatment plans aligned with medical practice standards.

Mental health screening will be a component of the service planning between staff and residents. Residents will have access to mental health services that could include psycho-social education, treatment programs, medication education, psychological evaluations, and therapeutic counseling, either through YouthLink's Mental Health program or , coordinated and/or provided by other community resources like Family and Children Services, African America Family Services, or Hennepin County Front Door Services.

### **What is the staffing level? Is the support staff 9-5?**

YouthLink will have three full-time support staff dedicated to providing services to the 42 residents. This "case load" ratio of 1 to 14 is considered above average. As a comparison, a county mental case manager would carry a case load of 1 to 30 or more. YouthLink staff schedules will vary according to needs of the program and may include evenings and weekends. There will always be a support staff person on call, which the front desk staff person can contact in the case of crisis.

In addition to the YouthLink staff person, there will be a full-time employment specialist for the "Work Fast" program and other employment assistance. As mentioned earlier, a full-time property manager is also double the normal staffing for a rental property this size. The front desk has a staff person 24/7.

### **What is the rent requirement?**

Rent will be \$205 a month for the first two years and will increase to \$305 for the third year and then to \$410 for the fourth year.

In a flat rent situation, your rent stays the same. If you get a job or work more hours or get a pay raise, your rent stays the same and you get the full benefit of your increased wages. If you quit your job, your rent is still due. There is an economic incentive to get and maintain employment and to increase one's income by doing a good job and working more hours. This economic incentive coupled with the accountability to pay rent regardless of employment mirrors the real world.

The requirement to pay a "flat" rent in a housing program for the homeless is unusual. Most housing for the homeless or very low-income residents has rent that is 30% of household income. Therefore, as income goes up, rent goes up and as income goes down, rent goes down. This rent subsidy design does help keep people housed but does remove the incentive to seek employment in order to pay rent. (*Addendum C: HUD Flat Rent Study*)

### **If someone doesn't pay their rent, what happens?**

The program is designed with a safety net so that the first time someone makes a poor choice of not paying rent on time, they don't lose their housing and become homeless again. However, the rent doesn't go away. It's still due but a rent payment plan can be arranged if the participant is willing to agree to very clear steps and deadlines to come back into compliance. When someone becomes "non-compliant" with the lease, services move from voluntary to mandatory.

Together, the staff and resident work together to identify any shortcomings in life skills, and create a specialized comprehensive plan for education, employment, life skills or other services that will help the individual become a self-sufficient member of our community. If it's a lack of income, the plan would require that the participant work with the employment specialist to secure an immediate job. (With the "Work Fast" employment component of the program, young people can immediately access a job and be held accountable for their income.) If it's poor money management, the plan will be budgeting classes and perhaps very hands-on involvement on prioritizing expenditures. Non-payment of rent can also be a sign of deeper issues. Mental health issues, like bipolar or depression, or chemical dependency issues can impede daily life skills. As appropriate, the staff will work closely with participants to delve deeper into the root problem and provide access to the services to help the participant stabilize their lives.

While all necessary services will be provided and all efforts will be made to ensure that residents successfully transition into adulthood, they will not be given an unlimited amount of second chances. Much like a traditional tenant repeated failure to pay rent or other lease violations will result in loss of housing at Nicollet Square.

### **What are the reasons someone would be terminated from housing?**

If someone fails to follow the lease, house rules or pay the rent, they may lose their housing. Some offenses are so serious that there would be no warnings or intervention. Immediate termination would follow. Most offenses would trigger a lease violation and a referral to supportive services for a specific plan to address the issues. Repeated offenses or failure to respond to supportive service intervention could also lead to termination of housing.

### **How will the “Work Fast” employment model operate?**

The goal of a “Work Fast” model is to provide immediate access to employment. The employment is “supported” meaning that on-site job coaching is provided to demonstrate the “soft” skills, which are also referred to as “job readiness” skills. Each employee is evaluated individually to develop an appropriate placement and job coaching.

Nicollet Square will provide an on-site employment opportunity in the retail component on the first floor. This may be a coffee shop, bakery or deli which doesn’t require extensive “hard” skills but is an opportunity to learn the behavior necessary to keep a job. These soft skills can be basic: personal hygiene, anger management, showing up on time, etc.

Pending adequate funding, the supported employment model will also encompass placement into jobs in the community. With the support of an employer, residents can still access on-the-job coaching in a “regular” job to help them successfully keep a job. Another avenue for placement is “subsidized” employment, where an employer given an incentive (one month’s paid wages) to hire a resident with limited successful job history. If the new employee is successful, they are kept as a permanent employee by the employer.

“Soft” job readiness skills taught through this type of supported employment are not a substitute for the “hard” skills necessary for particular careers. Our goal is to not to train 42 coffee baristas. The employment program will assist residents with exploring their interests, skills and aptitudes for careers and help them access the necessary job training or education necessary to learn those skills. We’ve noticed the number of auto care businesses nearby and would like to work with those employers to place residents interested in auto mechanics.

“Work Fast” is a replacement to the model that required those with low or no job history to take six week “job readiness” classes before being placed in a job. Under this model, someone is taught those same skills on the job. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. considers this a Best Practice for the hard to employ. RS Eden operates a housing for young homeless adults with a successful “Work Fast” coffee shop employment opportunity on-site. (*Addendum D: Prioritizing Work for the Homeless*)

### **Are residents required to work or go to school?**

Supportive services staff works individually with each resident to encourage and promote education and employment. Although it is not a requirement, based on the experience of other programs, the majority of young people will be either employed or in school or both. Our “Work Fast” employment model provides access to immediate employment which removes the most common barriers to employment. Residents are required to pay the flat rent (from a legitimate source of income which can be verified). Failure to pay rent will bring about a requirement to develop and carry out a plan with support staff to secure legitimate income, which is most likely to be employment. This model allows a homeless person to maintain their housing while working to engage them on moving from housing success to employment/education success.

### **What is the underlying philosophy of the programming?**

The philosophic frame work for programming is based on a positive youth development “engagement” model. This model is founded on building healthy, trusting relationships with young people to engage in supportive services. This model is considered best practice for homeless youth; and it is based on youth development research (see below) Mandating a “relationship” with staff can be a barrier to engagement in services. However, empowering people to decide the intensity of a support relationship can make it possible for young people who are often distrustful of adults (due to abuse or other issues) to approach and enter into such a relationship.

The key features of this model—engagement and empowerment—foster independence, not dependency which is the ultimate goal of the program. Residents are held accountable and are required to take responsibility for their own decisions, including the consequences of those decisions. Staff provide guidance and access to resources and referrals to assist residents in learning to make positive decisions vs. making decisions for them.

Immediacy of rewarding positive behavior is essential. The linkage to meaningful employment and a paycheck does just that. Young people who access the opportunity presented by Nicollet Square, maintain their housing and increase their employment skills on their own will not be penalized for their independence.

Some programs inadvertently foster dependency. In a program that mandates services, someone can lose housing for not meeting weekly with a case worker, which does not mirror what someone will experience once they leave Nicollet Square. It rewards compliance with social services but doesn’t necessarily teach real life skills.

Our program design delivers “natural” consequences, (i.e. non-payment of rent or loud music will get you a lease violation), teaching young people what they will experience in rental housing in the “real” world. The service staff doesn’t create the consequence or protect the resident from the consequence but does teach the resident how to work with

property management to prevent eviction. And then the staff works with the resident to address underlying issues that may have caused the behavior.

### **How are youth development best practices incorporated into the supportive services?**

YouthLink case managers are continuously trained on best-practice components and competencies of these models.

#### **1. Strength Based Model of Service**

- Youth engagement in purposeful strategies, activities, and relationships to foster resiliency and building of strengths.
- Focus on youth strengths, interests, abilities and capabilities, not upon their deficits, weaknesses or problems.
- Fosters the way we think about youth; the way we go about our work on a daily basis. It is not an option to apply only to certain youth or to particular parts of our practice.
- Frames our work as a partnership with youth; engaging in a trusting relationship and facilitating a mutual plan with long-term and short-term goals or tasks, and target dates for their completion.

*(Addendum E: Strengths-Based Model of Case Management)*

#### **2. Positive Youth Development Model of Service**

This approach guides youth towards social, moral, emotional, physical, and cognitive competency. Similar to the “strength-based model”, this service approach also builds on strengths vs. weaknesses. Other key components include:

- Strategies that build internal and external assets in youth, helping them to develop resilience and strength.
- Focus on the three influences mostly closely associated with achievement of positive youth outcomes: i.e., caring adult relationships, high expectations and meaningful participation.

This is an ongoing and *intentional* process. The model emphasizes the importance of youth needing support such as acceptance, high expectations, affection, and warmth. Opportunities to explore, create, contribute, and belong are also emphasized.

*(Addendum F: Community Programs to Promote Youth Development)*

#### **3. The Wellness Wheel Model of Service**

Wellness is a framework that YouthLink uses to help organize, understand, and balance human growth and development. It is our desire that our actions, decisions, thinking, attitudes and strategies fit into the six basic concepts of this framework. The framework is depicted in the following schematic.



(Source: Wellness Resource Center, Vanderbilt University, Dr. Bravada Akansanya)

**Why is this permanent housing and not transitional? Won't some people stay forever?**

Nicollet Square is not time-limited housing but “permanent” housing, allowing residents to keep their housing if they pay the rent and follow the lease. Permanent housing has accepted as a Best Practice across the country by public funders and other leading homeless public policy advocates. There has been a concern that residents were arbitrarily losing their housing when their length of stay ran out, which had been imposed by either an agency or by a funder. Permanent housing empowers the resident to determine how long they need to live in supportive housing.

The greatest challenge that youth housing providers face is not that young people stay too long, but that they don't stay longer. One of our goals is to increase the housing stability beyond the average of one year. Too often, a young person with the flush of success of a job, will move out into an apartment in the community, only to have something go wrong- a job loss, a roommate move-out etc. that makes them lose their housing. Programs hope to encourage young people to stay long enough to weather those first setbacks and to have a longer track record of success before venturing out without any safety net.

With the level of supervision and guest restrictions of Nicollet Square, most residents will be interested in moving to a more independent housing. The program is designed to encourage transition after two years. Rent increases from \$205 to \$305 for Year 3 and then to \$410 for Year 4 and beyond. However, the lack of affordable housing in the community can be a barrier for someone to move out. Fortunately, the Foundation is able to assist with this transition since we have studio apartments available at \$410 and \$510.

The choice of moving does remain voluntarily and it's possible someone could stay. However, we are not concerned that one or two slightly older residents would impact the focus of programming on young people.

**Why is this “engagement” model embraced by public funders?**

Minnesota Housing and Hennepin County, two of the primary homeless housing funders, prioritize funding for housing that does not require services but provides easy access and intensive engagement to services. This preference is based on the philosophy that the primary goal of housing for the homeless should be to keep someone housed and to prevent a return to homelessness. Funders discourage creating additional requirements beyond normal lease requirements that can become a barrier for success and cause a return to homelessness for some. Research of adult homeless programs has demonstrated the success of this model, referred to as “Housing First”. (*Addendum G: Heading Home Minnesota Excerpt*)

**How was this program developed? How will be evaluated and changed once operation begins?**

This program was developed through the Housing 150 Taskforce conducting a community research process of current youth housing programs, Best Practices and models researched by Heading Home Minnesota and other public funders, and the expertise of the Foundation staff. (*Addendum H: Housing 150 Process*)

Working with YouthLink, our employment partner, and our service funders, Nicollet Square will develop specific outcome goals and measurements. The program will be evaluated against these goals and changes made to enhance outcomes. The most important outcome will be housing stability, followed by increased income, employment stability and educational achievement. Progress is also measured on the more subjective issues of personal growth and life skills.

**Why serve 42 residents? Are there other supportive housing programs this size?**

Creating the right size for a supportive housing development is important in creating the positive supportive community. It's important to be large enough to have a diversity of residents, staff and programming that is comprehensive enough to meet the needs of individuals but not too large that a resident can become “invisible” and not engaged. The cost of the 24 hour front desk is a fixed expense that becomes more cost-effective based on a larger unit count.

The following are supportive housing programs in Minneapolis that are over 35 units: Alliance Apartments (124), Anishinabe Wakiagun (40), Central Avenue Apartments (61), Continental (70), Evergreen Residence (88), Exodus (95), Glenwood (80), Hope Harbor (96), Jeremiah (39), Lydia (40), and St. Barnabas (39).

**What is the average length of tenant longevity?**

Housing stability is the number one outcome in a program designed to break the cycle of homelessness. Housing developments serving a similar population have an average length of residency of about a year. One of our hopes is to extend the housing stability beyond a year.

**Is it a private or public facility? How does this change the laws for tenants and who can be there?**

Nicollet Square will be privately owned and operated. The Housing 150 Initiative of Westminster Presbyterian Church and Plymouth Congregational Church is creating the vision for this development. Housing 150 LLC, a subsidiary of the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation made up of Westminster and Plymouth members, will be responsible for the development and operation of Nicollet Square.

Like many social service or housing programs, a majority of the funds will come from the public sector but the government has determined that the housing and services can be best provided by a non-profit, not the government directly. However, we are accountable to our government funders for the quality of the housing and services. The housing will be inspected by multiple funders annually. The successful outcomes of our Program must be demonstrated to funders to secure annual renewal of funding.

Tenants have the rights and responsibilities under the landlord/tenant law. Tenants must follow the lease, including house rules and pay rent. If a tenant fails to follow the lease, the landlord may terminate the lease. Usually, we offer a tenant an opportunity to sign “mutual termination agreement” which sets a date for move-out and doesn’t require us to file for an eviction, which saves us money and time and which keeps it off the public record for the tenant.

**Who else serves this population?**

Other permanent supportive housing for this population in Minneapolis is provided at Archdale and Barnabas which is operated by Aeon (formerly Central Community Housing Trust) with YouthLink providing services, and at Lindquist Apartments, which is operated by RS Eden with The Link providing services. Seventh Landing in St Paul which has the supportive housing/coffee shop model is operated by RS Eden. Hearth Connection also operates a rent voucher program in which homeless youth rent apartments and YouthLink and Lutheran Social Services offer social service support individually to the youth. Transitional housing is provided by The Bridge in Minneapolis and by Lutheran Social Services in St Paul.

**Funding Basics and the operation and maintenance of the facility—**

**Who can we contact if there are problems once the building is operating?**

The building will be managed by CommonBond Communities with a property manager officed on site. With the 24/7 operation of a front desk, tenants and neighbors will have easy access to assistance in case of a problem. When the property is ready to open, we will publicize the Nicollet Square phone number for an immediate 24 hour response. The front desk will be able to contact the property manager, the YouthLink lead case manager and Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation after hours if necessary.

The property manager and/or YouthLink will attend the regular Crime Safety meetings of the Kingfield Neighborhood Association to create a dialogue with the immediate neighbors, the Neighborhood Association and the Minneapolis Police Department. These meetings will provide an opportunity to raise any concerns as well as for staff to be aware of any crime alerts to share with residents for their safety.

Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation is responsible for ensuring quality housing and services and will guarantee the responsiveness of our partners and our own staff. The Foundation would be glad to execute a Neighborhood Agreement with the Kingfield Neighborhood Association that would incorporate specific expectations on communication, responsiveness to concerns and include specific policies such as no loitering that would be incorporated into house rules.

**What is the short and long-term funding of the facility? What are the sources for the building and also for long-term maintenance and staffing?**

Heading Home Hennepin and Heading Home Minnesota have helped set priorities for supportive housing developments such as this. The capital development budget for Nicollet Square is approximately \$8 million. Approximately \$5 million has been committed by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and \$1 million by the City of Minneapolis. The balance of funds will be raised from Hennepin County and private donations. (*Addendum I: Nicollet Square Sources & Uses*)

The operational housing budget will be approximately \$300,000 annually. In addition to the \$120,000 collected annually in rent, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency has committed the operating subsidy. These funds will cover the property management, maintenance, insurance, property taxes, utilities, etc.

Supportive service funding which will cover the supportive services and employment program will be applied for from Hennepin County and the Minnesota Department of Human Services and private foundations.

**What is the responsibility and involvement of the churches? Do they have legal obligations?**

The Housing 150 Initiative of Plymouth Congregational Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church created the vision of this new development. Both congregations are committed to long term and active involvement in the development. Legally the obligation rests with Housing 150-Nicollet LLC, which is a subsidiary of the Plymouth

Church Neighborhood Foundation. While the churches are not directly liable for legal obligations, members of the churches form the LLC which does have legal responsibility. The two churches have committed \$350,000 to the development of Nicollet Square.

**Is there a mentoring commitment or opportunities, from church members?**

Yes. We anticipate creating volunteer relational opportunities not only for members of Plymouth and Westminster, but from those of other area churches and the neighboring community as well.

**What is the involvement of Hennepin County?**

Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis have adopted Heading Home Hennepin, the plan to end homelessness in our community. This plan includes specific goals for creating supportive housing for homeless young adults. Hennepin County staff and other public funders have consulted with us in our development of the vision for Nicollet Square. However, no funding commitments from the County have been made to Nicollet Square yet. The Foundation will be applying for capital funding in the spring of 2008 and at a later date for service funding. If the County awards the development service funding, the County is active in their oversight of the quality of the program and the outcomes.

**What has been the involvement of youth in planning this project?**

A youth from Westminster has served on the Housing 150 taskforce which is planning the development. As the project moves forward through development, we will work create focus groups of homeless youth and youth transitioning from foster care to provide input as we continue to define the details of Nicollet Square.

**Will the property be on tax roles?**

Yes. Nicollet Square will pay property taxes. The tax rate for publicly funded affordable housing is lower than private rental housing. However, it is a higher rate than homesteaded property tax. The retail component will also pay taxes.

**Building**

**How was the current proposed building design arrived at?**

The architectural firm, CermakRhoades, was selected after an RFQ process by the Housing 150 Taskforce. CermakRhoades has extensive relevant experience for a development, including “Green” building design features. CermakRhoades has designed many youth housing developments in the Twin Cities, including Lindquist Apartments, Seventh Landing (with the coffee shop) and St. Barnabas Apartments.

The Housing 150 Taskforce and Foundation staff have worked with the architectural firm Cermak Rhoades to develop the building design and site layout. In formulating the current design proposal, the zoning code, Minneapolis Plan and the 2000 Nicollet Avenue Task Force report were all considered. KFNA Redevelopment Committee provided feedback on such issues as density, retail and parking during our preliminary design phase.

**How were neighbors considered during the design phase?**

The Foundation did explore a site plan that would allow greater density and greater height but selected a medium density proposal to fit in within immediate neighboring buildings. This current process is the opportunity provided to neighbors to comment on design. This is still a preliminary design and can be revised prior to submission to the city for approval.

**How does it address Nicollet Avenue.? Does the density & type of building make sense? How is a community corridor balanced with the surrounding residential neighborhood?**

The Minneapolis Plan encourages the development of housing with retail on the first floor. The neighborhood-oriented retail provides an amenity to nearby residential neighbors and creates a lighted and active corner that enhances neighborhood safety. The proposed commercial spaces are small and suited for the neighborhood oriented businesses and office uses allowed by the current zoning.

The site is zoned “OR2”, which is office/residential, allowing a 4 story building with either housing, office or neighborhood oriented retail. With the vacation of the street right of way that we anticipate the city will grant, the site is approximately an acre. Under current zoning, a four story building with 63 housing units would be allowed. Under the current zoning, 20% density bonuses are available for both affordable housing and underground parking. This would make 87 units (of any size) the maximum housing allowed on the site by right.

*Nicollet Square* is not the maximum density for the site but represents a medium density proposal which balances the community corridor uses with residential neighbors. Nicollet Square will be a three story building with 36,000 square feet composed of 42 studio units, substantial community and service space for the housing residents, 3500 square feet of office space for rent, and 2000 square feet for a neighborhood oriented retail business. In addition, four three-bedroom townhomes will be built facing 37<sup>th</sup> Street.

**What about the Phase II townhomes: When and Why?**

The two story townhomes are a part of the medium density proposal, creating a good transition between the commercial/multi-family building fronting Nicollet and the predominantly single family character on 37<sup>th</sup> Street. The townhomes also create a mix

of ages and incomes in the new development as well. The townhomes also act as a buffer for the neighbors across the 37<sup>th</sup> Street, shielding the parking lot and backyard from sight.

We don't have a specific timeline developed yet, needing to focus our staff time and resources on the larger building. However, we will share the design with KFNA and neighbors before proceeding with a request to the City for permission to build.

### **Why is the building not set back from street like other “houses”?**

This corner is a transitional point between the housing to the north and the commercial to the south. As a mixed use development with first floor retail, the setbacks have been designed to match the commercial setbacks to the south. Locating the building close to the sidewalk is intended to maintain the “traditional commercial storefront building” look that is encouraged by the Minneapolis Plan for mixed use buildings along the commercial corridors.

### **Describe the unit layout**

The rooms are studio apartments, approximately 380 SF in area and will include a kitchenette and a private bathroom. These units are identical to the apartments at Seventh Landing in St. Paul. The units will be furnished with a bed, dresser and table and chairs.

The units are intentionally small to minimize housekeeping issues and to encourage transition to other housing as residents increase in self-sufficiency.

### **Why were individual units developed rather than suites, which would be more social?**

Individual private living spaces have been greatly valued by young people in other developments because many have not had the opportunity to control their own privacy in the past. Sharing suites also can create “roommate” issues, which can become time-consuming for property managers to resolve.

The private living units in the building are augmented by numerous public spaces for social interaction if the tenant chooses to use them. Since these common spaces are under the direct supervision and responsibility of property management, it is easier to establish and enforce rules and cleanliness.

There will be a large community room on the first floor with comfortable furnishings. There is a fitness room also located on the first floor with weight training, treadmill and other equipment. A computer resource room will be on the second floor. Both the second and third floor will have smaller lounges for the use of tenants.

### **Who is responsible for the maintenance of the facility?**

Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation will serve as the Asset Manager for the property. This responsibility includes hiring a professional property management firm,

such as CommonBond Communities, who is responsible for the day to day operations, including maintenance of the building and grounds. The Foundation also is responsible for the long term maintenance of the property and will set aside replacement reserves to insure adequate funds are available.

**How will building security be addressed? Are you incorporating the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)?**

A front desk person on duty 24 hours a day controls access to the building for both the front and back entrances. Guests must sign in and present a photo I.D. Multiple video cameras will be located both inside and outside of the building which will be monitored by the front desk person and recorded.

The Foundation and CermakRhoades have consulted with Crime Prevention Specialist Tom Thompson and Lt. Marie Pryzinski of the Minneapolis Police Department to incorporate CPTED principles. The latest project plans will reflect suggestions made during this review. Those suggestions included security camera placement, placement of door opening alarms, landscaping design, lighting design, bicycle parking, backyard screened and anti-graffiti materials.

**Does this design create “eyes on the street” for safety?**

The development will increase a community presence on a currently vacant corner and surface parking lot. There will 46 new households on the site with windows facing both Nicollet, 37<sup>th</sup> Street or the alley. In addition, there will be 24 hour staff on duty monitoring exterior security cameras. The Foundation will work with the Police and the security camera company on the best placement of those cameras. The retail presence also creates safety through lighting and customers that bring the corner to life.

**What is the goal of retail space in this facility? Is it for the youth or for the community—how can both needs be met?**

The goal of incorporating retail space was to benefit both the young people and the neighborhood. Urban design encourages the incorporation of neighborhood-oriented businesses into new housing developments. Normally, this is an expensive proposition that can not be afforded by many developments. However, because of the dual goal of assisting youth with employment, we have the opportunity to raise funds for the capital expenses of the shop that allow us to offer this amenity. For the young people, the retail space offers a “Work Fast” component that has on-site job coaching and if necessary, subsidized employment.

**Would the retail be supported or would it be market rate?**

The term “supported” employment refers to having a job coach on-site to assist with training. This staff position will be paid by program funds, not from store revenue. Our hope is that store revenue will cover the cost of the business and the employees over time. However, we will budget conservatively and assume that the business will lose

money at least initially. In addition, for job training purposes, we might have two young people working instead of one so that may take additional dollars as well.

**How many people would be employed on site?**

Obviously, not all 42 young people are going to have a job simultaneously in a corner business. However, this “Work Fast” model can provide an important transition job of creating real job experience that helps someone get another job in the community. The details of any business plan are dependent on the particular type of business that is opened. However, if a shop is open 14 hours a day with 2 people, it provides almost 200 hours of employment in a week. That could be 20 hours for 10 people or 10 hours for 20 people. Particularly, once Nicollet Square is in on-going operations, there will only be 1 or 2 new residents every month who could be incorporated into a work schedule to provide that immediate first employment.

**Who is going to operate the retail?**

Housing 150 Taskforce is currently comparing the two options of either a for-profit business that would agree to incorporate supported employment or a non-profit employment organization that would agree to operate the business. Housing 150 members with expertise in this area will help evaluate how to create the most feasible approach to meet our goals.

**What is the market for retail at this site and with programming like this?**

Driving Nicollet Avenue near the site, there is a mix of successful and not so successful retail. We are evaluating the strength of the market and in particular, what type of business would be likely to be successful. We are interested in the neighborhood input into the type of business.

**What is the office space in the middle for? How flexible is the space?**

As currently designed the office space in the middle was created to increase the “mixed-use” nature of the development. This space would be rented to a neighborhood non-profit or business. It could be redesigned to expand the retail on the corner.

**Would you consider renting a storefront at 38<sup>th</sup> and Nicollet instead?**

Yes. We believe our current proposal creates the strongest mixed use development on the site, enhancing the employment opportunities for the young people and creating an amenity for the neighborhood. However, if the neighborhood determines that this is not benefit to the neighborhood, we are open to other community options that achieve the same outcomes.