

FACT SHEET

Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project

December 13, 1961

Now

The Albina Neighborhood Improvement (urban renewal conservation) project is now in the survey and planning stage. The Albina Neighborhood Improvement Information Center has been established at 3726 North Kerby Avenue and members of the Portland Development Commission Staff are working with the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee to gather data, assist in developing effective citizen Block Groups and otherwise coordinate the development of a Neighborhood Improvement Plan for the project area.

1959

The idea for such a program began in 1959 when John Kenward, Executive Director, Portland Development Commission, and the Director, City Planning Commission, were asked to speak at an Urban League Workshop to discuss the future of Albina Neighborhood.

1960

Following the workshop, the Albina Neighborhood Council became interested in getting an improvement program started. In August, 1960, members of the Albina Neighborhood Council met with members of the Portland Development Commission. The Development Commission agreed to provide technical assistance to a citizens' committee in the Albina Neighborhood to explore the possibility of gaining funds from the Federal Government for an urban renewal conservation and rehabilitation program.

October 1960

The Council appointed Reverend Cortlandt Cambric as Chairman of a neighborhood improvement committee. He contacted various neighborhood organizations and property owners and in October, 1960, the eighteen-member Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee (ANIC) began holding meetings and gathering information about their neighborhood.

November 1960

On November 2, 1960, ANIC sponsored a general neighborhood meeting at the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. The purpose of the meeting was to present the idea of a coordinated improvement project to the residents of the neighborhood and to find whether they were interested and what problems they felt were most critical. As a result of the interest shown at this meeting, ANIC encouraged the Development Commission to discuss the possibility of an urban renewal conservation project with officials of the Federal Government.

December 1960

In December, 1960, officials of the Housing and Home Finance Agency from Washington, D. C. and San Francisco visited Portland, met with city officials and neighborhood leaders and reviewed the conditions. They felt that a successful program could be developed

in Albina Neighborhood.

January 1961

In January, 1961, the Committee members received a proposal for a specific project area located between Fremont, Skidmore, Vancouver, and the alley between Albina and Mississippi Avenues. After a discussion of this area, they decided to gather additional information by talking to residents and asking the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) whether they would back home improvement loans if this area were to be selected as the first project area.

February 1961

On February 7, 1961, ANIC organized a detailed inspection of five structures by members of the local FHA Staff. As a result of this survey, Mr. Oscar Pederson, Director of the local FHA office, reported that this area would qualify for FHA home improvement loans if it were to become an urban renewal project.

March 1961

Starting in March, Committee members visited 335 homes in the area and found the residents and property owners to be very interested in the proposed improvement program.

July 1961

As a result of the foregoing activities, the Development Commission staff began preparing an application for survey and planning funds which was reviewed by ANIC members on July 20, 1961. On July 26, the application was reviewed and approved by the Portland Development Commission and the City Planning Commission. As a result of favorable recommendations of these three bodies, the City Council approved the Survey and Planning Application for the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project on August 3, 1961. The report was transmitted to the Federal Government and approval was granted by the Housing and Home Finance Agency on October 12.

October 1961

Street lights

During this year of activity, the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee has also worked to help solve some of the individual problems mentioned during the general meeting in November, 1960. Because of the need for better street lighting, ANIC discussed the problems with the City Street Light Engineer and thereafter sponsored petitions for additional lights in the area bounded by Fremont, Russell, Williams and Union Avenues. With the cooperation and assistance of Commissioner Ormond Bean and the City Street Light Bureau, a plan was developed and 35 new lights were installed by Portland General Electric Company. ANIC then organized a work party to trim tree limbs which obstructed some of the lights. Through such organized effort, the Committee expects to solve other neighborhood problems.

Block Groups

Another example of the effectiveness of cooperative citizen action has been the organization of Mrs. Joseph Crane's Block Group. The residents of the block bounded by Vancouver, Gantenbein, Failing and Beech Streets began holding block meetings to combat a rodent

problem. After Mrs. Crane explained the interest of her Block Group at an ANIC meeting, the Committee contacted the Bureau of Health and gained the help of Mr. Jack Alderton, Sanitary Inspector. Because the Block Group found that it was just as important to remove rodent harborages as it was to kill the rodents, they organized a clean-up campaign. ANIC was able to get a truck donated, and the members of the Block Group cleaned out basements, garages and back yards and loaded the truck and swept the alley on September 23, 1961. Following the clean-up campaign, Mr. Alderton worked with the members of the Block Group to kill the rodents. Through such citizen action and interest the neighborhood improvement project can be successful.

General
Neighborhood
Meeting

To review the progress of the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Program for residents of the neighborhood, ANIC is sponsoring a general neighborhood meeting at Boise School Gymnasium, 620 North Fremont Street, at 8:00 P.M. on Monday night, December 18, 1961. Father Mell Stead will review the cooperation which made it possible for the neighborhood to gain 35 new street lights. Mrs. Crane will report on how her block has been able to combat rodents. Reverend T. X. Graham will explain the survey work which is being carried out in order to (1) help the residents of the neighborhood develop an effective Neighborhood Improvement Plan and (2) to help the neighborhood gain the participation of the city and Federal Governments when the plan is completed. Mayor Schrunk will say a few words about the program and John Kenward, Lloyd Keefe and other city officials will participate in the program.

Exterior Structure
Survey

The first step, after establishing the Information Center, was to carry out the Exterior Structure Surveys. Between November 4 and December 9, efforts were made to contact every project area resident. The Information Center Staff invited residents of each block to one of four informational meetings held at the Information Center. The resident or property owner of each structure was asked permission to carry out the exterior survey. As of December 9, 508 or 98% of the structures have been surveyed: The staff has been unable to contact 3 families and only 6 families failed to cooperate. With such excellent participation, the survey work will be completed rapidly and residents will be able to discuss specific ideas for a neighborhood improvement plan very soon.

Other Surveys

Depending on structure conditions and considerations for the Neighborhood Improvement Plan, Interior Structure Surveys will be made to gather an accurate cost of rehabilitation, Financial Capability surveys will be made to determine ability of property owners to pay for needed repairs, and Relocation and Housing Availability surveys will be made to determine what housing would be needed and what housing would be available if the Plan were to be approved.

Neighborhood
Improvement Plan

The elements of the plan will include a statement of neighborhood conditions and problems. The plan will propose methods of solving the problems and give an analysis of the costs to the individual property owner, the city government, and the Federal Government. Some of the most evident problems include (1) lack of park or recreation space, (2) inadequate street cleaning and lighting, and (3) poorly maintained alleys. Such problems may be solved by (1) development of play areas or a park, (2) improvement of street surface so that mechanical sweepers can be used on a regular schedule, (3) additional street lights and (4) paving of alleys.

The City Planning Commission is working under contract with the Development Commission to help the residents develop certain elements of the Neighborhood Improvement Plan. The recommendations of the Planning Commission will be ready by February, 1962.

Future

If the Neighborhood Improvement Plan is approved, the Information Center will continue to be available for Committee meetings and will be used as a coordinating office for project activities. Also, members of the Information Center Staff will provide the following technical assistance to residents and property owners of the project area:

Community Services Technician: Assistance to persons who are interested in forming Block Groups to solve localized problems such as rodents.

Financial Consultant: Help for property owners to learn about home improvement loan programs, interested lending institutions, reputable contractors, and costs of home maintenance or remodeling.

Architectural Consultant: Advice on how improvements could be made and sketches of how improvements could look, including color design and landscaping ideas.

For additional information about the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project or the activities of the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee, please call the Information Center, Atlantic 2-2214, or call Larry Coons at the Portland Development Commission, Capitol 6-4036.