

## The Collective Power of Engagement & Intentionally Collaboration

### Odom Community Developers PARTNERSHIP OUTLINE AUGUST 19, 2019

#### **1. A description of proposed plan and how it relates to the Common Council/City's basic purpose and mission:**

Odom Community Developers (OCD) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure that legacy residents on the west side of South Bend have access to affordable housing options in order that they might remain in the neighborhood through revitalization. The organization's short term goal is to build 28 new affordable homes and rehab 60 homes.

We have been implementing our vision in the community for the past four years. The CEO, Stacey Odom, initiated a home repair program in the neighborhood powered by an all volunteer workforce. Representatives of the City of South Bend learned about her program, wrote a grant, and secured funding to hire her to implement the program through Cities of Service. The program is called Love Your Block Home Repair Program and was implemented city wide starting September, 2018 in six different neighborhoods.

OCD was also instrumental in completing the community survey that gathered the data needed to better understand the needs of real people. The survey results offered critical information that helped the city revise the South Bend Home Improvement Program and open up eligibility requirements so that residents who make just above the federal poverty line could access the resources to complete major repairs. Families were able to receive up to \$20,000.00 of repairs such as roof replacement that based on their household income were previously impossible to save for. Along with the data collected, OCD was a voice of support to encourage the city to pilot the new program in a target area on the Westside.

This proposal fits into two of the three pillars of administration policy, putting residents first and investing in people and places. The Diversity and Inclusion Executive Order signed in January 2016, indicates that the City Administration will "work intentionally to incorporate into the whole those persons or groups who have been historically underrepresented and underserved by government." Established by an African American woman whose family has lived on the west side for generations, City investment in Odom Community Developers' work will demonstrate the value the administration holds in delivering services that empower everyone to thrive and in investing in minority and women owned businesses.

The work of OCD is also in line with the City's West Side Main Streets Plan adopted in 2014. On page 95, the plan identifies vacant lots on the Lake from Meade to Iowa and Colfax to Western that are prime for redevelopment stating explicitly, "These

vacant parcels represent...opportunities to stabilize the existing neighborhoods with additional new residential and/or rehabilitated residential. It is important to acquire and consolidate lots to make redevelopment more feasible.”

**2. Why this plan is needed:**

This project’s ultimate goal is development without displacement. We are currently wrestling with the challenges of 102 families that are facing displacement from Western Manor due to the sale of their low income housing complex to developers with a plan for market rate housing. It is critical that we take action to secure parcels for affordable housing development that will remain affordable in perpetuity. Odom Community Developers was established with the deliberate intention to ensure legacy residents on the Lake have access to resources to repair their existing homes and build new affordable homes. The Racial Wealth Divide Report tells us that 37% of Black households in South Bend have zero net wealth. The homeownership rate for Blacks (35%) lags far behind all other racial groups, Whites (63%), Latinos (63%), and Asians (51%). Developing affordable homes - for rent and for sale - gives African American families, and other poor people and people of color, the opportunity to gain assets so that families who have been in the neighborhood for generations can pass on their assets and begin to build wealth.

**3. The human and financial resources needed to implement the plan (in detail):**

***Financial Resources***

Financial support for the work of Odom Community Developers can be allocated from the \$1,000,000.00 set aside in the 2019 budget for construction of affordable housing which has yet to be distributed. OCD is requesting \$250,000.00 for the construction of two homes within the next year. Various city departments can include line items in their budget over the next three years to support other fundamental neighborhood improvements.

***In Kind Resources - acquisition of parcels currently on tax sale***

The association owns and maintains thirteen (13) lots on the Lake in the LaSalle Park Neighborhood. There are vacant parcels currently on the tax sale list from Meade to Iowa and Colfax to Western. We ask that the City add these lots to the list of properties they acquire from the county and donate them to OCD. This will allow us to implement our comprehensive affordable housing plan. For a list of these parcels, see the attached proposal description.

**4. What will this mean to the Common Council/City in opportunities and cost in one to three years:**

The Common Council has made a clear commitment to prioritize investments in the neighborhoods outside of the downtown area. There is no community development corporation operating in the farthest west side neighborhoods. OCD fills this role.

Supporting the work of Odom Community Developers is in line with the City's mission and values. As a community based, neighborhood friendly, developer specializing in construction of affordable housing, OCD will leverage public and private resources to help the City's dollars do more great work in the neighborhoods that need it most.

In the 2020 Budget and for the next three years, city departments must allocate dollars for the Lake and the entire LaSalle Park Neighborhood for investment in:

- infrastructure improvements (streets, sidewalks & curbs, lighting, etc.) from the Department of Public Works
- Business development and workforce training through the Department of Community Investment.
- Additional upgrades in programming and park amenities at King Center, pocket parks, and green space development through Venue Parks & Arts
- restorative, trauma informed practices through the
  - Department of Diversity & Inclusion for training and intercultural development
  - Police Department to hire interventionists for community policing
  - Animal Care and Welfare for an Animal Based Community Center

**5. An alternative plan/other options:**

Alternative funding for this project could be through setting aside money in the 2020 Budget for new construction of affordable homes and/or Community Development Block Grant dollars.

For additional information about Odom Community Developers, see attached.