



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

January 22, 2014

To the Honorable, the Common Council
of the City of Milwaukee

Re: Report on the Strong Neighborhoods Investment Plan in the 2014 Adopted Budget

Honorable Members of the Common Council:

As you are aware, I vetoed File 130781, a “resolution effectuating the intent of an amendment and footnote to the 2014 adopted budget directing any change of 10% or \$100,000, whichever is less, in funding of any purpose under the Strong Neighborhoods Investment Plan, shall require Common Council approval before the expenditure is authorized to be made.”

I appreciate the thoughtful communications from Council members over the past weeks regarding the Strong Neighborhoods Investment Plan, and our discussions about strategies for efficient, targeted implementation and the Housing Outreach position that I added to support the Plan’s implementation. I agree that implementation of the Plan relies on appropriate oversight from department managers, my office and the Common Council. My concern is that the Plan, as a City-wide response to a City-wide issue, overlaps a number of City departments and the responsibilities of several standing Council committees.

I respectfully ask that you sustain my veto, and in lieu of the file I vetoed, I propose that regular updates on the Plan, its implementation and supporting legislation be based on a communication file and heard in the Steering and Rules Committee. This provides a regular, established venue for reporting, involves Council leadership and the combined perspective of the standing committees that deal with the various aspects of the plan: funding and staffing, City property disposition, contracts, State legislative issues, interdepartmental policy and collaboration and code enforcement issues.

My Housing Director and Outreach Director will be prepared to present updates on the Plan including policy initiatives, spending and financing updates and other performance metrics. Department staff will join them as needed. I believe this venue is the best opportunity to bring together the shared input of Council members and City staff to ensure the Plan’s success and provide accountability for its implementation.

The Strong Neighborhoods Investment Plan was proposed in my budget and adopted by the Council as a City-wide approach to address the issue of vacant, abandoned and tax foreclosed

property. This issue affects us as a City, and I am committed to working with you to ensure that we meet our goal of addressing this issue City-wide.

The Plan itself does not represent a single program or purpose that is appropriated, but uses the City budget as a tool to program and plan efforts addressing blight elimination and neighborhood housing improvement across City departments. Those efforts are directed toward four strategic goals:

- Prevention of tax foreclosures in the future
- Mitigation of blighting impacts through property management and demolition
- Revitalization of city neighborhoods disproportionately affected by tax foreclosures
- Renewal of those neighborhoods and their public spaces

The amounts appropriated in support of the Plan's activities are shown below. My staff will report regularly on performance metrics relative to progress on the Plan's goals, and if there are significant departures from what was allocated in the 2014 Budget relative to anticipated expenditures or unanticipated departmental resource needs in order to implement the Plan.

I agree that it is practical to define this threshold as \$100,000 of the 2014 Budget allocation in any activity, as they are defined below. I have listed the activities within the Plan that are related to the strategic goals. These activities may be funded by a combination of accounts and fund sources, including salaries, operating, capital, or grant and aid accounts. I believe this approach will accomplish the goals of oversight and management, while at the same time providing for efficient, timely and flexible implementation of the Plan. Those purposes and total funding amounts are:

	Total Funding 2014
Property Management & Marketing	\$3,235,682
Property & Vacant Lot Renovation	2,767,242
Demolition	5,306,000
Tax Foreclosure Prevention	425,464
TOTAL 2014 Budgeted Funds	\$11,734,388

Accountability for the Plan is not limited to the funding, and reporting on Plan outcomes will include updates on the performance of City departments in their work on tax-foreclosed and abandoned homes.

I once again respectfully request your support of my veto, and I look forward to the next Council cycle wherein we can begin to discuss the Plan and monitor our collective achievements.

Sincerely,



Tom Barrett
Mayor