



Roots • Pride • Vision  
**West Bloomington**  
Revitalization Project

## ***Roots – Pride – Vision***

Under the shade of old, old trees, our neighborhood has stood, bloomed, deteriorated and been revitalized.

Long-time neighbors have welcomed newcomers and joined them to share the stories, the hopes and the endless work of making things better.

Rooted in the hard-working heritage of the railyard, the coal mine, the factories and the small shops and businesses, this area has countless quiet stories of success, and too many tales of distress, distrust and disillusionment. Untangling the roots of the bad times is a long and difficult task.

Pride of place and persistent application of pressure and partnerships have slowly drawn positive attention and earned the respect of others in the community. More people from all parts of town have stepped over the line – some for the very first time – to explore ideas and develop plans to bring needed changes. Weeds have been dug up. Flowers and vegetables have been planted in ground that was formerly blighted. As the flowers have bloomed, so has the neighborhood's vitality. Over time, new friendships and collaborations have developed in an unlikely "greenhouse" with the stewardship of a small group of dedicated community developers whose encouragement and support allow new ideas to grow and thrive.

Vision is a powerful element for any project. Vision evolves from sharing the dreams and brainstorming about ways to make those dreams become reality. As we begin to see possibilities where once there were only weeds and broken down buildings, we begin to stand a little straighter. As others come along to help pick up the garbage and rebuild the porches, we begin to see our streets and ourselves in a different light, too. When a group of Realtors spend a whole day volunteering to "spruce" up an old building, and one neighbor walks over to ask another how to raise sunflowers, that SAYS something about just how much has changed.

A long-ago neighbor planted sunflowers in my yard. Over more than a decade, those tall, brilliantly-beaming flowers have come back each year, providing a haven for bees and birds. And those birds and bees and westside winds have distributed seeds up and down the street so that more small clusters of cheerful yellow blooms dot the landscape. Upon learning where I live, people frequently comment, "Oh! THAT'S the house with the SUNFLOWERS! I LOVE that!"

In the end... it all comes back to allowing good ideas to take root, feeling pride in being part of a strong neighborhood, and having the vision to want to make this place something that stands out for its good qualities. Our sheltering trees now preside over a better view and a stronger, more productive part of the broader community.

