

**Community Participation Program
Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association (LHENA)
2011 Annual Report**

1. Accomplishments

What were your organization's major accomplishments in 2011? How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?

- In August 2011, the LHENA Board began developing a two-year strategic plan for the organization. The plan focuses on the existing LHENA committees (NRP, Z & P, Wedge, and Fundraising) and adds two new committees (Branding and Environment), asking them to develop specific goals and strategies. The plan will help LHENA better serve the neighborhood by increasing community participation, staying focused and accountable, and building collaborative relationships.
- LHENA was awarded a Community POWER (Partners on Waste Education and Reduction) Grant through Hennepin County in October 2011. The grant included various education and outreach efforts to increase recycling and composting in the neighborhood. LHENA hired Rebecca Harnik as Environmental Coordinator to implement the grant programming. The work completed through the grant helped to highlight environmental sustainability as a continued neighborhood priority and led to the creation of the LHENA environmental committee as well as a coalition of Green Teams from the four Uptown neighborhoods.
- The LHENA Zoning & Planning Committee, LHENA Board, and members of the neighborhood thoughtfully reviewed and provided feedback on a number of new developments, ultimately resulting in better projects for the community by addressing aesthetics, the pedestrian environment, and livability concerns:
 - Bennett East site (north of the Midtown Greenway at Colfax/Dupont Avenues South)
 - Buzza Building (Lake Street and Colfax Avenue South)
 - Track 29 (north of the Midtown Greenway at Bryant Avenue South)
 - 2900 Lyndale (south of the Midtown Greenway at Lyndale Avenue South)
 - City Walk Uptown (Lake Street/Girard Avenue South/Lagoon Avenue)
 - New Walker Library connections to Midtown Greenway
 - A variety of other requests, including conditional use permits, variances, and liquor licenses.
- LHENA carried production of *The Wedge* newspaper into its 41st consecutive year. In 2011, the newspaper was elevated to a new level through the outstanding work of its editor, Bruce Cochran, and layout designer, Kelly Newcomer.
- LHENA continued implementing Neighborhood Revitalization Program strategies, which included a fourth round of historic preservation matching grants and the ongoing revolving loan, matching exterior and green home improvement programs, resulting in over \$193,000 in LHENA funding for improvements to neighborhood homes.
- LHENA successfully deployed new fundraising strategies, including quarterly 'Dine Out for LHENA' events, which help neighborhood members contribute to the organization, build community, and support local businesses and restaurants.

2. 2011 CPP Submission

Reviewing your submission for CPP funds for 2011, what outreach and engagement activities did you carry out? What worked well, and what did not work so well? Why?

- **Monthly LHENA Board Meetings** – The LHENA Board met the third Wednesday of every month. The Board made neighborhood building and land use recommendations, maintained financial oversight of the organization, published *The Wedge* newspaper, organized neighborhood social events, and served as a forum for neighborhood concerns.
- **Committee meetings:**
 - **LHENA Neighborhood Revitalization Program Steering Committee** – Met the first Wednesday of every month. This committee focused on implementing neighborhood revitalization strategies in the areas of housing, infrastructure, crime & safety, and youth, arts & commerce.
 - **Zoning & Planning Committee** – Met the second Wednesday of every month. This committee reviewed any project, development, or zoning request in the neighborhood.
 - **Wedge Newspaper** – Met the second Monday of every month. This committee oversaw content and production of *The Wedge* newspaper.
 - **Fundraising Committee** – Met on an as-needed basis. This committee oversaw implementation of fundraising strategies and plans events.
- **Multiple means of communication with the neighborhood including:**
 - **The Wedge** – The longest-published neighborhood newspaper in Minneapolis, *The Wedge* was founded in 1970 by Lowry Hill East neighbors who would come to form LHENA as well. *The Wedge* remained one of the primary communication tools with the neighborhood. It was delivered monthly to every resident and business in the neighborhood and was also available for pickup at many locations.
 - **Online resources** – The LHENA website (www.thewedge.org), the LHENA Facebook page (www.facebook.com/TheWedgeNeighborhood), and email blasts to the neighborhood were used to reach those who prefer to receive information electronically. Electronic communications offered the benefit of allowing recipients to easily forward information to their neighbors. Our email list and Facebook numbers grew during 2011 and have now reached over 200 community members per source.
 - **Direct mail** – This method, while costly, carried the advantage of drawing the attention of those possibly new to the neighborhood or otherwise unaware of other communications. Mailings were successfully used to alert property owners to home improvement funds available through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.
 - **Flier drops** – LHENA frequently utilized this method to advertise upcoming events. It can be a helpful physical reminder, particularly between issues of *The Wedge*.
 - **Postings at businesses and other community locations** – LHENA regularly sought permission from area business owners to post information on programming and events. Notices are also posted at Jefferson Community School.

- **Additional media outlets** – Sources such the Southwest Journal, Star Tribune, City Pages, Metro, Minnesota Monthly, and Kare 11 calendar listings were used as part of the LHENA communications plan to reach a wider audience.
- **Interaction with neighborhood through various opportunities:**
 - **LHENA-NRP Green Seminar Series** – February through June 2011. Topics included recycling, composting & waste reduction, raingardens, and raising urban chickens. Over 45 neighborhood members attended the events.
 - **Dine Out for LHENA** – March, June, August, November 2011. A fundraising event where LHENA partners with local restaurants pledging to donate a portion of their proceeds during designated times. The events raised over \$2,600.
 - **Mustaches for LHENA** – March through April 2011. Mustache-growing contest with final unveiling at Annual Meeting. The contest had 10 participants, and the winners in various categories received prizes donated by The Herkimer Pub and Brewery, Peace Coffee, The Corner Store and Flanders Bike Shop.
 - **LHENA Annual Meeting** – April 2011
 - **Community Energy Services workshops** – April 2011
 - **Uptown Market** – May through September 2011. LHENA staffed a booth at this weekly farmers' and artists' market held in the southern part of Lowry Hill East.
 - **LHENA Ice cream social & neighborhood garage sale** – June 2011; The ice cream social is an opportunity to connect with neighborhood members who may not attend other events to inform them of LHENA's services and activities.
 - **National Night Out** – August 2011; Over 200 participants in Lowry Hill East.
 - **Neighborhood potlucks in the park** – Summer 2011; Attracted 15-20 participants.
 - **Walk the Wedge Home & Garden Tour** – September 2011; Attracted 33 attendees.
 - **City Ghosts: Tales of Minneapolis Hauntings** – October 2011; Attracted over 40 attendees. The event grew into a multiple-weekend offering based on the success of 2011.
 - **Lowry Hill East Neighborhood CleanSweep** – September 2011; Collected 9,640 pounds of debris and 3,000 pounds of metal.
 - **Hennepin Lake Community Winetasting Benefit** – October 2011; this event raised over \$2,800 in funds for community-building activities in the neighborhood.
 - **Lowry Hill East Holiday Party** – December 2011; 50 attendees.

3. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your submission for CPP funds for 2011, how did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities? Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful?

In 2011, LHENA endeavored to increase involvement among renters. At 85 percent, the majority of the population in Lowry Hill East is comprised of renters, many of them between the ages of 20 to 34. Traditionally, it has been challenging to reach this demographic due to high mobility, high levels of turnover, and difficulties obtaining contact information.

Outreach associated with other programs allowed us to begin compiling a database of rental property owners in the neighborhood in effort to better reach tenants. This work is ongoing.

LHENA successfully increased our online presence to aid in accessibility of information. We updated the website regularly, began sending e-news blasts and built the number of recipients on our email list, increased numbers on our Facebook page, and created a Twitter account.

Please also provide the following:

A. How many people currently serve on your board? Are there vacancies?

There are 11 LHENA Board members and zero vacancies.

B. Approximately how many individuals have participated in committee meetings in the last year?

60

C. How many people attended your annual meeting?

75

D. How many households regularly receive your publications (such as newsletters or newspapers)?

4,500

E. Approximately how many people participate in other activities of the organization?

600

4. Financial Reports

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year. (Please include all funding sources).

Please see attachment.

In addition to your annual report, please take time to describe your interactions with City departments and other jurisdictions.

1. *Impact*

What interactions occupied a major part of your time? What worked well, what could be improved?

The majority of LHENA's interactions are with Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) - specifically the Planning division, Neighborhood and Community Relations, Regulatory Services - specifically the Licenses and Consumer Services division, and the Minneapolis Police, Fifth Precinct, and the Ward 10 City Council Member.

2. *City Communications – effectiveness*

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful?

The weekly planning reports provided via email are extremely useful in notifying the neighborhood of upcoming project applications. The regular communications from the NCR department (*Minneapolis inTouch*) are also very useful. We appreciate the listing of neighborhood events.

3. *City Communications – timeliness*

Do you receive adequate notice of City activities in your neighborhood? If not, did your organization inform somebody at the City of this? Did the City respond in a positive manner? Please explain.

Yes.

4. *City Departments*

How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood?

LHENA submits neighborhood recommendations on land use applications for major neighborhood developments; a follow-up notification or communication on Planning Commission decisions may be helpful.

5. *City Assistance*

How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a citizen participation group?

LHENA appreciates and looks forward to continuing the ongoing positive relationship we have had with Robert Thompson. His institutional memory and nonprofit expertise are assets. He checks in with LHENA frequently, provides constructive feedback, and is always responsive to questions. We also find great value in his training sessions.

6. *Other comments?*