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January 13, 2011

Dear Madam or Sir:

We are writing this letter to you to request funding for our neighborhood through the City's Citizen Participation Program. In this letter we will address a bit about who we are, how we engage our residents and what we plan for the upcoming year.

McKinley Community is the incorporated, non-profit neighborhood organization of the McKinley neighborhood. Situated within the borders of Lowry Avenue, the Mississippi River, Dowling Avenue and Dupont Avenue in North Minneapolis, McKinley Community organization was established by concerned neighbors in 1994 to positively impact livability issues. The McKinley neighborhood median household income is \$37,000, and nearly a quarter of McKinley households live at or below the poverty level and with anywhere from fifteen to twenty percent of the population is unemployed at any given time. McKinley is mostly a residential neighborhood and lacks economic development opportunities for residents. The recent upheaval in the housing market has put increased pressure on neighborhood stability, with about one hundred homes currently vacant due to the continuing foreclosure crisis and a growing number of empty lots due to teardowns of condemned housing. More about who we are will appear during other parts of this letter.

We have always been an organization that's first job is to be an organization for all residents of our neighborhood, which also includes property owners, business owners and people who work and "play" in our neighborhood. This idea has always been in our by-laws, that all people who have a tie to our neighborhood can be heard. We door-knock & flyer homes, send monthly newsletters, semi-regular postcards, and weekly emails and joined the rest of the world on the Internet and social media to increase participation and get input from our residents. We have three monthly public meetings in our neighborhood where information goes out and comes in; a Community Meeting that focuses on general neighborhood and regional topics, we have our monthly Board of Directors meeting where much of the business of the organization is done and a monthly Crime and Safety meeting where the topics revolve around those issues. One reason that we have so many forms of outreach and possibilities for participation is because we are a very diverse and mobile community. Around 45% of all of our residents are renters, which are a very hard group to get involved, but with door knocking and fliering we have increased our participation amongst that group. The same can be said of residents at or below the poverty line. Face to face meeting through our organization and great block club leaders can and do increase participation amongst these neighbors. We have an open door at our neighborhood office, an open forum on Facebook, and full access to three monthly meetings where residents have an opportunity to provide any and all feedback and input, not to mention email and phone calls to our office.

In the coming year we will be planning for the future of our organization, planning for future work along Lowry Avenue and the Upper River work to be done, additions and revitalization to our neighborhood park, Perkins Hill Park, and much more. We will also be doing a lot of collaborative work with other organizations within the realm of gardening and urban farming. In addition to our

planning activities and regular monthly meeting mentioned above we will be a co-sponsor of the Lowry Avenue Harvest Festival in the fall and several other regional events that are still in the planning stages. Much of the work we will be caring out is a direct result of the neighborhood survey we did in 2008-9 where residents of all types to tell the organization what they want for and from their organization completed over 200 surveys. The input came via door knocking, at community meetings, through an e-survey and a paper survey sent via email.

Our Board of Directors will be voting to approve the NCR CPP budget at our Board of Director's meeting on Monday, January 17th. Our EIN is 41-1782670.

We thank the City, the NCEC and NCR for giving us the opportunity to share this narrative and allow us the opportunity to request funding to continue our hard work in making where we live a better place.

Sincerely,

Ricky Venson
McKinley Community, Board Chair

Christopher Morris
McKinley Community, Executive and Program Director