



## CCP Report for 2012

Neighborhood Organization: **Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association**

Contact Person: Melissa Bean

Date of Board Approval: April 16, 2013

### 1. Stakeholder Involvement

- *What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2012?*

**Focus Groups** – We held focus groups in 2012 with the following groups: Sorority House Directors; Landlords and Property Managers; Artists/creative entrepreneurs; New residents and people with young children; Fund raisers and real estate professionals. These focus group meetings were held in neighborhood restaurants, a church and a student apartment complex.

**Regular meetings** - (Committee, Board and General Membership) which were announced on MHNA's new website, in e-mailings and mailings. Notices were also sent to nearby people who may be affected by new developments being reviewed by our Land Use committee.

**Door-knocking and one on one contacts** – Annual (fall) Welcome Students campaign of door-knocking and providing info about MHNA and the neighborhood; door-knocking about neighborhood events and festivals; conversations with neighbors directly impacted by proposed building projects (for example proposed 35W noise walls and a “choke intersection” along a bike route on one of our streets). We also had several one-on-one conversations with student leaders at U of MN.

**Hosting Events** – Our 2012 National Night Out had approx 200 attendees and was documented in a video by neighborhood filmmakers (posted on our website and Utube). In 2012 we also held our Annual Earth Day River Clean Up. We held our annual Plant Swap & Garden Potluck. Information on the neighborhood and MHNA is available at all meetings and events.

**Informational mailings** – In the fall we sent to all members, non- member residents, organizations and businesses an update on developments coming to the neighborhood along with an invitation to get involved.

**Exhibiting at the Third Ward Neighborhoodfest** in 2012. MHNA's booth featured an illustrated map and tours of the neighborhood, along with info on joining MHNA. A large version of the map is also featured in a kiosk as one enters the neighborhood from the Stone Arch Bridge. The postcard version of the map is a great marketing tool for our organization and neighborhood – we are on our second order of 5,000 cards.. It is included in the leasing packets at new apartment complexes, and was made available at the Soap Factory, at a neighborhood extended –stay motel, Mill City Museum and at the U MN's Employee Appreciation Day.

**Speaking about MHNA** to students at U MN Neighborhood Student Liaison retreat. We also hosted an orientation session for the Liaisons at our office.

**Creating a Facebook page** to attract younger audience.

**Advertising in local publications**, including the program for the Middle School musical at Marcy Open School. We were also frequently contacted and quoted by reporters from various media, including the Star-Tribune, Minnesota Daily, the Daily Planet and other publications. MHNA members also wrote opinion pieces about issues, for example, 35W proposed Sound Wall. (We don't have a neighborhood newspaper here.)

**Partnered with other organizations** to achieve neighborhood goals. These include the University District Alliance, The SE Strategic Compliance Task Force, Restorative Justice Community Action, SEMCOL (SE Mpls Council on Learning), SE Seniors, Stadium Area Advisory Group, District Council Collaborative, Marcy Arts Partnership, and the Beltrami neighborhood organization.

**Invited neighborhood businesses** to join our (free) business list on MHNA website as well as created a page for neighbors to post announcements.

**Mailed a questionnaire** to MHNA members asking them to rank MHNA activities.

**Featured interesting presentations** by speakers at our quarterly general membership meetings that would appeal to a wide audience (for example, new state senator, Kari Dziedzic; Ignacio St. Martin, Metropolitan Design Center, presenting U of MN 3rd year grad studio planning on the Pillsbury A-Mill site; Metro Transit Service Study ; the various blueprints and site plans of developments coming to the neighborhood).

• *How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2012?*

As mentioned above: focus groups, Facebook, speaking engagements, door-knocking, emails and website. We had an extraordinary amount of new building projects to deal with this year and we made an effort to notify nonresident property owners and nearby residents. We posted standing committee agendas on website. We welcomed U of MN students to speak at meetings and we worked with several U classes on projects for the neighborhood. (Granary Corridor studies at U's Metropolitan Design Center; Capstone class students on a neighborhood sustainability project; U graphic design class on creating a logo for University District Alliance). The past few years we have had U students as site coordinators for a clean up event which has brought in more student participation (for the event, but not much further).

Through two U MN Good Neighbor Fund grants, we were able to collaborate with additional new stakeholders. One involves planning (in 2102) and hosting (in May2013) "River Bells", a music festival showcasing neighborhood musicians. An organizing committee has greatly benefitted from the participation of several student musicians who have enlisted other neighborhood talent for the event. The grant also enabled the commissioning of original musical compositions from two U of MN music majors who are collaborating with two professional composers living here. Their works will be publicly broadcast at River Bells in May via a bell tower carillon at a neighborhood church. This approach represents a deeper connection between longer-term residents and U students. Musicians love to collaborate and this project may result in further musical partnerships. It

also brings together MHNA and the church congregation. A representative from the church is coordinating the event. Reinforcing an appreciation of our neighbors' talents is another way to form new neighbor relationships.

A second grant provided funding for the design and installation of a labyrinth at Marcy Open School. MHNA worked with a committee of parents and staff at Marcy Open School to fund this project. Although it will not be constructed until later in 2013, the Labyrinth (named as a memorial to a resident who was active in the school) will strengthen our partnership with the school, staff, students and parents.

- *Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?*

In our neighborhood, multiple approaches are necessary. We have a highly transient population and engagement/awareness efforts must be made to a new population every fall. Because a goal of the UD Alliance is to have the university use the adjacent neighborhoods as laboratories, we have tried to look for, create and welcome opportunities for students and faculty to become involved here.

- *What did not work so well? Why?*

Our highly transient population of young people is busy and for the most part not interested in attending meetings for a neighborhood they do not consider "home".

- *How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, one on one meetings)?* Meet & Greet 750; Focus groups 36; other meetings 20- 30 including one on ones with developers and those interested in housing development and other incidents in the neighborhood. **Total over 800.**

- *How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?* **85**

- *How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?* **300**

- How many people receive your print publications?

Most members receive our monthly mailings via email – only about 40 receive via print. Another 25 organizations and institutions get the monthly mailings in print – others get via email.

Annual fund raising appeal ( which included updates on neighborhood organization activities) was sent via mail to over 600 people – including 197 local businesses.

New neighbor intro/welcome letters 40 people

750 students via Meet & Greet Total = **1455**

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

450 monthly mailers to members, area orgs, businesses and institutions  
Committee agendas are also emailed.

Website hits about 2000 per month in peak months.

And individual emails – **more than I can count.**

## 2. 2012 Highlights (*Please provide photos or samples of work*)

- What ~~was~~ were the ~~issue~~ issues or ~~opportunity~~ opportunities the neighborhood was facing?

Unwanted 35W Sound Wall

Large number of New Rental Housing Projects

Moving office

Organizing Master Plan Update process

Ramp up fund raising including grant applications, professional fund raiser, website donations and history book sales

Design & Launch new website

Hire staff/ update technology

Marketing Neighborhood : Kiosk map/postcard project

Focus groups – hearing new perspectives

Vikings playing at TCF Stadium

Utility Box surveys and follow up

Livability /Incivility problems

Improved conditions for bike riders including Granary Corridor work

What to do with the East Side of Marcy-Holmes now that so much new student housing is being built there?

Move in/Move Out Trash piles

Neighborhood Beautification

- *Who was impacted?*

Residents and potential future residents, property owners, business owners (and the reputation of our neighborhood)

- *What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity? See below*

- *What was the outcome? See below*

## 3. 2012 Accomplishments

Unwanted 35W Sound Wall – The Minnesota Department of Transportation proposed building 20 foot high sound walls along both sides of I35W which divided the neighborhood when the highway was constructed. The proposed walls would not only further divide the neighborhood, but also cut down light, destroy greenery, shorten site

horizons, and create dark dead end streets and walkways amenable to crime and graffiti. MHNA's position since the highway was constructed in the 1970s has been that covering the freeway to reunite the neighborhood at least for pedestrians and cyclists is the desired option.

A committee has worked with MNDOT arguing that such a wall built to alleviate noise for nine properties is contrary to the provisions of its Noise Wall policy that states the social, economic and environmental concerns are to be taken into consideration.

Large Increase in New Rental Housing Projects - MHNA Land Use and board reviewed and acted upon 14 new development proposals in 2012 in addition to 4 smaller business proposals. Several projects were very large and required multiple meetings. Two provided "affordable housing". The MHNA Land Use Committee and Board spent a great deal of time this year working with developers and the community on the numerous proposed rental housing projects primarily on the more heavily trafficked streets. The monthly Land Use and board meetings attracted both opponents and proponents of the projects. While sharing the City's interest in increasing density, MHNA's Master Plan also calls for maintaining the less dense cores and sustainability in housing.

Updating MHNA Master Plan in response to changing conditions - Recognizing the demand for density and the economic and demographic changes since its 2003 Master Plan was approved and based on the results of the 2010 census, members of the Land Use Committee began a Master Plan Update process based on the City's Plan for Sustainable Growth. After months of meetings a request for proposals was issued for professional assistance in updating the plan using available NRP funds.

Moving office- When Marcy Open School notified us they had run out of space, we were able to find an office in a church located closer to the center of the neighborhood. It is much larger and better configured for our use.

Organizing Master Plan Update process- A subcommittee of our Land Use committee spent months reviewing our 2003 Master Plan for possible revisions. They then published and posted a Request for Proposals for planning consultants. By Jan 2013 a consultant was hired.

Ramp up fundraising including grant applications, professional fund raiser, website donations and history book sales We applied for several grants in 2012 (involving arts, history and land use) and worked with a professional fundraiser on identifying future grants. Our new website accepts credit cards for donations. We had great success selling our history book at Lunds - so much that it is now out of print so we are considering a second printing.

Design & Launch new website - We worked with a neighborhood web design business to create an informative, attractive and easy to navigate website that is used both as a marketing tool for the neighborhood and a resource for those interested in our organization. MHNA staff is able to easily update using the new content management system.

Hire staff/ update technology- We advertised for a part time staff and hired in Nov 2012. We created a Facebook page. We purchased some new office equipment, for ex. a projector for our laptop to aid in presentations at meetings.

Marketing Neighborhood-We completed our kiosk map/postcard project in summer 2102. This is an illustrated map of the neighborhood that has a QR (Quick Response) code that opens to neighbor-designed tours of Marcy-Holmes on our website. We printed matching postcards, which we use for promotion and identity. We produced 2 larger vertical versions of the map – one is installed in the kiosk as people enter our neighborhood from the Stone Arch Bridge; the other one we take to various events.

The postcards are available free at many sites and we make them available at all meetings. Postcards were also sent in our annual fall fundraising appeal letters. We also researched other ways we can use this image and text. We continue to promote neighborhood housing opportunities on the [www.livenearyourwork.net](http://www.livenearyourwork.net) website.

Focus groups – hearing new perspectives We continued our successful 2011 round of focus groups to gather opinions and ideas for our Master Plan update and work plan for our organization.

Vikings playing at TCF Bank Stadium As members of the Stadium Area Advisory Group, we continue to participate in meetings with the U of MN and Vikings organization to reach a mitigation agreement for the two years the team is expected to play here.

Utility Box surveys and follow up Graffiti on utility boxes here is rampant and we participated in the City's planning of a Utility Box Art Wrap program. We listed, measured and photographed all 61 utility boxes in our neighborhood in preparation for future wraps. We applied for 2 grants for this initiative.

Livability /Incivility problems – Although numbers of reported problems have gone down, thanks mostly to the SE Strategic Compliance Task Force, they still occur. In 2012 our work with the Restorative Justice Community Action (RJCA) organization resulted in 46 referred participants who were conferenced/ had offended in Marcy-Holmes. 52 out of 59 (88%) successfully completed their agreements in 2012 (some carry-overs from 2011).

Total given back to MH: 504 community service volunteer hours and \$260 donated back in the MH neighborhood. In addition, 4 Marcy-Holmes community members participated in 10 conferences in 2012.

Improved conditions for bike riders . In cooperation with MSA (MN Students Association), we recommended dedicated bike lanes for 8<sup>th</sup> St SE, from 35<sup>W</sup> east to 15<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. We worked with Public Works and nearby neighbors to improve safety on the Stone Arch Bike Boulevard – “choker” curbing is being tested soon at one intersection. We worked with U students and professors to envision a safe biking/walking “Granary Corridor” that will connect Main St/Stone Arch Bridge to Dinkytown along the railroad trench and continue to meet with stakeholders about this.

What to do with the East Side of Marcy-Holmes –This is probably our biggest concern and no one has identified a path to success. How do we keep and maintain decent housing and create diversity in that area? It is hoped some strategies will come from our Master Plan update process. **City expertise is needed** as well as input from the U of MN. A Dinkytown Small Area Plan is underway currently along with a parking study.

Beautification projects such as adopt a garden and trash container help make people proud of our neighborhood.

Move in/Move Out Trash piles After launching a public relations campaign to media, we met with elected officials and U staff to address the issue. Public Works is looking at best practices at other campuses and a class at the U is undertaking the problem. MHNA members continue involvement with this group. A Hennepin County Fix Up clinic is being scheduled.

- *What were your organization's major accomplishments? (see above)*
- *How were individuals in your community impacted by your work?*

Students & Parents- New student housing resulted in safer, well-managed housing close to U campus. Safer bike routes are underway. Through RJCA, students are able to “work off” citations for legal offenses by doing community service projects in the neighborhood. Parents were reassured during Meet & Greet that this is a good, safe neighborhood. Another set of students ( K – 8) will soon benefit from our assistance in establishing a labyrinth at Marcy Open School.

Other residents- experienced a better-behaved population and more amenities as density increased here. They will soon benefit from an influx of creative neighbors as the historic A-Mill artist housing project is completed along our riverfront – a project MHNA supported.

Visitors and residents were able to learn more about MHNA and the neighborhood through its website and Facebook page. Opportunities for participation were easier to identify due to these improved formats. The adopt-a-programs helped improve the ambiance of our neighborhood. Our history books also worked to reinforce our reputation.

Potential new residents- were attracted by a variety of new residential projects and by our marketing efforts.

Business owners – experienced more customers as new residents moved into the multi-family units being built. New developments in Dinkytown compelled business owners there to begin a small area plan. New large housing developments will bring more customers.

Developers and architects learned to respond to community expectations and improve their projects through our established process. Better projects resulted.

Elected officials –who were frequently at our meetings, were more accessible and responsive to concerns because they are face-to face with constituents.

- *What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities?*

75% of staff and volunteer time—that would be including not only land use but safety and livability and the time the board spent

5. Financial Reports – provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year (Include funding sources) Attached.

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

1. Impact – What interactions with City departments occupied a major part of your time? Zoning & Planning; Historic Preservation Commission; Housing Inspections; Sanitation;

Police; Neighborhood Community Relations; Licensing. Our Land Use committee chair and board president also spent a lot of time at city meetings and on phone with CPED people...and others as well on A Mill and other housing projects.

*On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent – how would you rate overall experience with your interactions with the City? 4*

2. City Communications – effectiveness

*Is the information that you receive from the City understandable? 4*

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. 4* Sometimes announcements from the city do not coincide with our mailing/emailing schedules . It would be better to get notices to us earlier so we can include them in our regularly scheduled communications.

4. *City Departments – How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood?* The process of having developers come to the neighborhood before the City staff has made recommendations is awkward. We are volunteers, not experts and we don't know the zoning or building codes as well as they do. It would be helpful to have planning staff attend our Land Use meetings.

5. *City Assistance – How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a community group?* Stacy Sorenson is very approachable and knowledgeable. We also communicate with Bob Cooper frequently. Both are very helpful. However these reports are onerous- take a lot of staff time to answer and unsure what the motivation is. Questions are repetitive. Are you comparing neighborhoods?

*How would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood? 4* (We don't really ask for much but when we do it's answered.)

6. *Other comments?* We very much appreciate the work of Haila Maze, Jo Ann Velde, Nick Juarez and CM Diane Hofstede. We have had excellent service from Gary Myhre--city forester --for tree planting on boulevards and tree damage repair.