

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Audubon Neighborhood Association

June, 2012

This document presents our plans for the 18-month period starting July 1, 2012. It was reviewed and approved by the association Board of Directors on June 7, 2012.

1. Eligibility

The Audubon Neighborhood Association has previously been funded through the Community Participation Program.

2. Community Participation Efforts

The association views outreach to the community—particularly underrepresented members of the community—as being perhaps our primary endeavor in the coming year. We have established a planning committee to guide efforts to meet this objective. This committee is led by and includes residents who are past board officers and other individuals who have been active in the community for many years. Other members include current board members and representatives of community groups, such as a local church and seniors' center.

While the committee's immediate purpose is to develop the Neighborhood Participation Plan, we will use it as the primary means to develop our outreach approach. We will start by continuing last years' activities, as detailed in last year's submission:

- Six community meetings, one of which is an annual meeting in which board members are elected
- A neighborhood carnival that was held in cooperation with the local middle school and park board
- Neighborhood farmers' market
- Bi-monthly print newsletter and monthly e-newsletter
- Web site
- Neighborhood Facebook page (not an official association page)

We also developed and distributed a "welcome package" to new residents. The package includes information about the neighborhood and association, local shops, and a letter from the president welcoming the new residents to the neighborhood. The letter also identifies ways the neighbor can volunteer with the association.

In April, we took special efforts to inform the community of a meeting regarding a particularly important and controversial issue. We sent out two e-mails to everyone on our e-newsletter list, posted notices on our website, and distributed fliers in the area most affected by the proposed development. The result was by far the best-attended meeting of the year. Should it be appropriate, we will take similar efforts to publicize any meeting in which a particularly important topic requires particular community input.

3. Building Organizational Capacity

The planning committee discussed under #2 will focus largely on this issue, given its close relationship to neighborhood participation. We will continue to send print newsletters to every address in the neighborhood; these documents routinely contain information on association events and information on how to volunteer. We also will participate in other groups' events to publicize our activities. For example, we sponsored a table at a school event earlier this year in which we distributed association literature to neighbors who may not have previously been familiar with what we are doing. We also distribute materials at our weekly farmers' market.

In terms of leadership, this has been a transitional year. The majority of the board members—three officers and others who were highly experienced—resigned for various personal reasons. The result is a new board of individuals who are committed but are new to the process and need assistance in becoming more skilled managers of the association.

We anticipate using some of the following resources:

- Continued contact with our NCR neighborhood specialist, who has been a valuable resource to us. She has provided in-person training to the board and to our office manager, and we anticipate inviting her back. Most important, we will continue to inundate her with questions regarding NCR and city policies and procedures that affect us. In particular, we hope she will help us benefit from other neighborhoods' experience and insights.
- Coordination with other organizations. Representatives from neighborhood businesses and other organizations routinely address community meetings and attend board meetings. Also, we may once more request individual meetings with Councilman Reich and Doron Clark to gain additional insight. The president found past meetings with these individuals to be helpful towards gaining an understanding of the broader environment in which we are working.
- Continued interaction with the city departments we are involved with, such as CEE.

We hope there will be another Community Connections conference this year, for we believe it would once again be a valuable training opportunity for our board members.

4. Building Neighborhood Relationships

As noted above, our publications, community meetings, farmers markets, and other events are all designed to enhance the sense of community among our residents. In addition, the cluster of shops on Johnson Street between 27th and 29th Avenues is a center of the neighborhood, and we work closely with them on such events as their annual "Johnstock" festival. We recently added one of the merchants to the board; he will serve as the liaison between the board and other owners.

We recognize that coordination between neighborhoods is an NCR priority. We took a step towards this end last summer, when Audubon and Waite Park held a very successful joint garage sale in which 42 households participated as sellers. Windom Park is joining Audubon and Waite on year's sale, scheduled for June 23-23. As we plan other programs, we will consider ways to coordinate with adjoining neighborhoods. One such

program is currently being considered, although planning is too preliminary for it to be discussed here.

Finally, the president of the association contacted his counterparts from five adjacent neighborhood associations and met with three of them on June 7 (two had to cancel at the last minute.) We found the meeting to be very helpful as an opportunity to “compare notes,” share experiences, and begin developing relationships that will support future joint activities. We plan to meet monthly and anticipate inviting one or more neighborhood specialists to join us at the appropriate time (three of the neighborhoods are supported by Carrie Day Aspinwall.)

5. Engagement of Under-engaged Stakeholders

The western part of the neighborhood consists of lower-income residents, largely people of color. Many are renters. Residents of this area used to be more involved in association activities. For reasons that are uncertain, now they are not. A major effort of the neighborhood participation planning committee will therefore be to begin the process of identifying ways to reach out to these neighbors. We will definitely be seeking help from NCR in this regard, perhaps by gaining insight into methods that have worked for other neighborhoods.

6. Housing Activities

ANA has several housing loan programs. In fact, a significant percentage of ANA's financial resources is devoted to these programs because ANA considers neighborhood housing to be the priority for funding assistance. ANA contracts with the Center for Energy and the Environment (CEE) to administer the loan programs.

As of May, ANA has almost \$250,000 allocated across six housing loan programs under one contract with CEE and \$30,000 in another contracted housing loan program.

Two board members are assigned to manage the housing programs and act as the primary contact with CEE. These duties average four hours per month each. In addition, the housing program person works with the ANA office manager to keep updated information about these programs published in every ANA newsletter. This involves another hour per month as well as the office manager's time.

Board members discuss the housing loan programs periodically at their meetings, which totals around four hours per year for the entire Board.

It is difficult to state these numbers as a percentage of time, since there are so many other association activities that take a significant amount of time (e.g., board meetings, individual meetings between board members on specific topics, communications with neighbors). We can state that housing activities do not involve a major percentage of the association's time—a very rough estimate is 3 percent.

7. Unused funds

ANA's website needs work, primarily in improving its overall usefulness and attractiveness. It also requires ongoing maintenance. These tasks have been performed by a neighbor who is a professional in this area, but we have been asking a great deal from him as a volunteer. We

would like to use our unused funds for a \$100/month stipend for the 18-month contract period for him to perform considerable upgrading and ongoing updates throughout this timeframe.

8. Budget

We developed our budget by analyzing NRP/ CPP expenditures over the 16 months and using them as the basis for projected expenses during the next 18-month period. There are two major changes from our previous budget: An increase in occupancy costs, which were significantly higher than previously budgeted; and an increase in the festivals and events/neighborhood priorities budget, to allow us funds to promote the kinds of outreach and community activities that, we believe, are CPP's main priority.

The budget is within the CPP's allocation of funds for the Audubon Neighborhood Association.

Staff Expenses	\$15,000
Employee Benefits	\$2,000
Professional Services	\$1200
Occupancy	\$3700
Communications/Outreach	\$16,500
Supplies and Materials	\$400
Festivals and events	\$5,000
Development	\$250
Fundraising	\$250
Other Services	\$2000
Neighborhood Priorities	\$10,330
TOTAL:	\$56,630

I look forward to discussing this plan with you.

Thank you very much.

Nic Baker, President
Audubon Neighborhood Association