

Community Participation Program
2013 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Calhoun Area Residents Action Group (CARAG)

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Date of Board Approval: July 15, 2014

1. Stakeholder Involvement

What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2013?

- CARAG hosted ten monthly neighborhood meetings featuring topics of community interest and encouraged attendee participation.
- The organization sponsors fun, community building events like the Chilly Chili Fest, Earth Day Clean Up, Super Sale, Dining Out for CARAG, Bryant Square Park concerts, CARAG Garden Tour, Kickball Game/ Movie in the Park, and Hennepin Lake Community Wine Tasting Benefit.
- CARAG has an extensive social media presence with the CARAG website (www.carag.org), Facebook group, and Twitter feed.

How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013?

CARAG worked actively to engage renters who make up about 75% of neighborhood residents, but are underrepresented in CARAG activities. Volunteers and staff identify renters at community meetings and events personally engaging them about the organization and how to get involved. Also, CARAG works to tailor events so they will interest young renters including for example the Kickball Game/ Movie in the Park. Finally, CARAG continues to broaden our social networking presence with many neighbors engaged through email updates, Facebook, and Twitter.

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

- CARAG partnered with Bryant Square Park to sponsor a movie in the park drawing around 500 attendees of all ages. The movie "Skyfall (2012)" seemed to interest many of the young renters who make up a significant portion of CARAG's population.

What did not work so well? Why?



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- Meetings do not seem to draw large numbers of neighbors unless an issue is considered controversial. Many CARAG residents have other commitments in the evening including work or recreational activities.

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- **Direct Contact:** 500

Print or electronic publications

- Uptown Neighborhood News (UNN): 2,500
- CARAG E-Update: 500
- Facebook: 150
- Twitter: 700

of Volunteers : 175

of Participants

- 200- CARAG Chilly Chili Fest
- 25- Earth Day Clean Up
- 50- CARAG Super Sale
- 100- CARAG Garden Tour
- 35- Kids of CARAG Car Wash
- 25- CARAG Pop Booth at Uptown Art Fair
- 500- CARAG Kickball Game & Movie in the Park
- 75- CARAG Annual Meeting
- 400- Hennepin Lake Community Wine Tasting
- 100- Various CARAG Neighborhood and committee meetings
- **1,515- Total**

2. 2013 Highlights

CARAG was able to work with Minneapolis Public Works to plan and implement a series of pedestrian improvements in 2013 along W. 31st Street. The street is wide, which facilitates fast moving traffic, in an area with high pedestrian activity. Many neighbors consider 31st Street an unsafe place to cross the street on foot.

In early 2013 Public Works presented plans to resurface the street, but had no plans to replace crosswalks, calm traffic, or improve the road for pedestrians and bicyclists. Upon CARAG's request, Public Works worked with CARAG, the Lyndale Neighborhood Association, and City Council Office to create a plan that balanced the needs of all users on the street.

The plan has resulted in temporary bump outs and durable crosswalk markings to improve pedestrian crossings. Eventually, an enhanced crosswalk, flashing beacons, and ADA curb ramps will be installed at Girard Ave where Public Works previously refused to implement a legal crosswalk.

2013 Accomplishments

Green Team

- Supported efforts to make CARAG events “zero-waste.”
- Promoted recycling to rental property owners and renters.

Land Use & Transportation

- Initiated 31st St. pedestrian improvements & 36th St. protected bikeway projects

Livability & Engagement Committee

- Organized community-building events such as Chilly Chili Fest, Super Sale, Garden Tour, & Kickball Game/ Movie in the Park.
- Initiated fundraising activities including the 2012 Fundraising Drive, Dining Out for CARAG events, & Kids of CARAG Car Wash.

Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) Implementation

- Supported installation of mural at Aldrich Church & artistic utility box wraps throughout Uptown by securing grant funding and partnering with a local business association.
- Sponsored the planting of 40+ boulevard trees to replace dead and diseased trees.
- Launched CARAG Home Loan Program.

3. Housing
What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities? 10%

4. **Financial Reports**
Attached.

In addition to your annual report, 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?

- CARAG engaged most often with NCR and Development Finance to administer CPP and NRP contracts and projects. CARAG briefly worked with Public Works staff on the W. 31st Street and W. 36th Street projects as planning continued. Representatives from the Minneapolis Police Department attended wone of the CARAG meetings and we remained in email contact with our Crime Prevention Specialist.
- There was little or no engagement with CPED, Inspections, and other City departments beyond receiving group mail and email updates.

What worked well? What could be improved?

Generally, CARAG interactions with City departments worked fine. CARAG and City departments may want to make an effort to connect with each other at least once a year.

On a scale of 1 to5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate your overall experience with your interactions with the City? 3

2. City Communications – effectiveness

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful? It varies in quality per department.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City?
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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.

Generally, CARAG is notified in a timely manner- with more limited notifications related to business licensing and zoning.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the timeliness of communications from the City? _____3_

4. City Departments

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

We are uncertain how to answer this broad question.

5. City Assistance

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

Perhaps, NCR could bring community groups with common characteristics together to discuss common issues and engagement strategies. For example, 75% of CARAG residents are renters and they are underrepresented in CARAG activities. We are interested in discussing how to engage more renters and get ideas to encourage renter involvement.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? _____4_____

6. Other comments?

Thank you for asking for our feedback.