

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Columbia Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA)

Contact person: Liz Wielinski, admin staff

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2014, Please provide information about:

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2014?

CPNA published an all neighborhood newsletter quarterly this year. We held a puppet show in the park, published neighborhood activities and gatherings on our Website and Facebook Page, mailed postcards to drive attendance to our annual meeting, held 2 NNO events and did a roadside greening project along MN HWY47 (University AV NE), supported 2 community garden sites and sponsored an Earth Day event in Columbia Park.

- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2014?

Because our most under represented communities are renters and businesses we made sure to get our newsletter out 4 times this year with references to our website. The website was updated regularly and our annual meeting notice went to all households and businesses via postcard. We also did more direct outreach via email to the neighbors whose emails we had collected at events.

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

We are unsure of the response to the postcards as our annual meeting was rained out. There has been an uptick to the number of hits our website is getting vs. previous years and we did see new neighbors at NNO. I imagine NNO is popular because it involves food and games as well as information (this year we had the Park Board at NNO getting information on our new playground options). The emails did drive a lot of the traffic to our website.

- What did not work so well? Why?

While we do make sure all information goes to the rental properties and businesses in the neighborhood, there is no efficient way to track if they are reading or making note of what is happening in the neighborhood.

- How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)?

We had at least a dozen new faces at the meetings for the upgrades to our park pool and playground and we had the Park Board come one Sunday and do playground upgrade research in Spanish for the Hispanic league that plays at Hi-View Park on Sundays. There were at least 50 families at the games that Sunday.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

We had over 500 hours of volunteer service by over 20 people during 2014 for various activities of CPNA.

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

We had over 100 people participate in the activities organized by CPNA or local neighbors.

- How many people receive your print publications?

We mail to 700 distinct addresses with our newsletter.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

The current e-mail list is over 50 households

2. 2014 Highlights

Please describe one or two major highlights, and if possible, please include digital photos or illustrations:

- What was the issue or opportunity the neighborhood was facing?

This year we did a MN DOT roadside grant with the help of MNDOT, the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County Sentence to Serve and neighborhood volunteers to replace the vegetative sound barrier of plantings along HWY 47 (University AV NE) that was decimated when MN DOT removed diseased trees and Ash trees due to the oncoming issues with Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

- Who was impacted?

Households along 3rd ST NE in both the 35 and 3600 blocks were most affected, but the sound level rose for all households west of University.

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

We applied for and received a MNDOT roadside grant with the public works department of the city as our fiscal sponsor. We sought bids for both the planting materials and the preparation of the site pre planting. Then with the assistance of 5 sentence to serve people and a crew leader from MNDOT the neighbors dug holes for and planted over 200 trees, shrubs and flowering plants and grasses. We also spread 2 truckloads of mulch around the plants over the next 2 weeks. This event was a real challenge because we had to keep moving the event date due to a very rainy summer. This did work out for the best later as we did not have to water often to keep the plants alive.

- What was the outcome?

The project was successfully installed. We have the watering plan for next year and plan to do a weeding event to keep the area thriving. Just 10-20 years of growth needed now to get back the sound blocking benefits we lost due to the tree removal. We did make sure that the variety of plantings used will provide food and habitat for local bird species so there will be multiple benefits beyond a sound barrier.

3. 2014 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2014:

- What were your organization's major accomplishments?

Beyond our planting, we held a successful Puppet Show for a community gathering that also collected information from neighbors about the pool and playground updates at Hi View. We had 2 nice NNO events (Architect Triangle and Hi-View Park). Collected trash at our Earth Day event and supported 2 community gardens.

We also aided in community connectedness with the NE Parade and the NE all school BBQ at Edison High School. These events are at risk due to the change in policies at the NCR department. We hope to find solutions by working with the NCR department to keep our connections with these events possible.

- How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?

We feel that the community was better informed about and could participate in activities that both improve the quality of life in our community, but also keep our neighborhood safer due to knowing your neighbor and taking them time to meet and give input into community decisions based on the activities happening in Columbia Park.

4. *Housing*

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

We spent very few hours on this, probably less than 20 just adding information on our housing program to our newsletters, website and forwarding any calls of interest to GMAC.

5. *Financial Reports*

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

See attached and include a total of \$5575.00 from MN DOT for the cost of the plantings for the Roadside Project. This money never went through our coffers but was directly handled by the City of Minneapolis as our fiscal agent.

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? What worked well? What could be improved?

We worked with Public Works on both the St Anthony Bridge replacement project and our roadside grant. We called our CM on various issues. We also worked with folks from the NCR department on various administrative issues.

Andrew Carlson in Public Works who worked as our fiscal agent was a gem. Lisa Brock in CM Reich's office had great contacts within the city when needed and Bob Cooper and contractor Mike Wilson were lifesavers. We were also assisted by NCR's Robert Thompson and Carrie Aspinwall .

We have found that we sometimes get conflicting advice from the NCR department depending on who you talk to and also find that once we set a budget and it is approved NCR comes out with new policies that seem to negate what we had just had approved. Hopefully becoming a 501c3 and doing some private fundraising will give us more flexibility with event participation in the future.

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? 4

2. *City Communications - effectiveness*

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

It is not easy to explain anything that comes from CPED. Fortunately our staff person served on the planning commission for 3 years and can translate . Most other communications are fine.

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

The most difficult part of working with the city is timelines. Because we do not meet in July or December it is often difficult to include things for approval at meetings, and having a quarterly newsletter makes it even more challenging.

The offices are good at responding and usually quite positive (especially 311).

It would be nice if we could get GovDelivery notices of both the Planning Commission and its Committee of the Whole and the same with the Board of Adjustment

We have communicated with the nice people at GovDelivery about this.

Is there some outreach that is supposed to be done by the various constituency groups via NCR, as we have not heard from anyone.

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?

Many of our volunteers have a difficult time getting to city meetings that start at 4:30 or 5:00pm. This makes it difficult to attend planning commission and other city hall meetings which usually are during regular business hours.

5. City Assistance

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

We have received differing replies from NCR staff as to what defines an NPP. While we would like to set more funding aside for projects and have heard we can use NPP for capital projects this has been an issue.

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? 3.5

6. Other comments?

While the parameters within which the neighborhood has to work are ever changing, the net result of having the opportunity to work as a neighborhood on projects and priorities is much appreciated.