

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: **Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.**

Contact person: **Lynn Regnier**

Date of Board Approval: **March 16, 2015**

1. Stakeholder Involvement

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

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

The Livability Task Force, under new leadership, worked to increase participation, consistently reminding neighborhood employees of nonprofit institutions and organizations to attend along with residents. By the end of the year those efforts had worked to create a small base of returning community members that worked together on neighborhood issues.

Historic properties in Elliot Park have always been revered, but it was becoming apparent that a number of properties were deteriorating and needing repair. EPNI began working with the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota to consider ways to engage the property owners and other community members in the beginnings of an historic preservation program. We began meeting with building owners to gauge interest and drive enthusiasm for future efforts that will officially begin in 2015, including: Building community awareness of the South 9th Street Historic District; creating a database of property owners in order to connect them to each other and to alert them to resources and opportunities that can help them maintain their properties; research vintage buildings in the neighborhood that are important to the fabric of this historic urban community; consider the designation of additional landmarks, districts or conservancies.

The Elliot Park Leadership Group was organized by EPNI about six years ago to bring together the leadership of neighborhood nonprofits who had become disconnected through the years. The group meets quarterly for work updates and lunch. 2014 was a year of intermittent attendance due to some leadership changes and changing job descriptions. In an attempt to keep the group engaged EPNI facilitated meeting arrangements and announcements as needed. It is important to the membership that they remain connected to each other and to the activities within the community.

Staff served on the: Board of Directors of the East Downtown Council and several of its committees; 2025 Development Plan Committee; 2025/EDC Small and Large Task Forces; East Downtown Residential Subcommittee; Minneapolis Partners in Outreach; Downtown School Initiative Committee; Downtown Families Minneapolis; Downtown Neighborhoods Group; Elliot Park Leadership Group.

As well, staff attended Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association and Mill District Neighborhood Association events;

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

EPNI connects with the institutions and organizations that work directly with the under-represented to facilitate cooperative solutions to community needs between partners and city departments as required. Current collaborative relationships include: Five community institutions have representatives serving on the EPNI Board of Directors; the Elliot Park Leadership Group, an informal gathering of neighborhood nonprofit leaders, meets quarterly to stay connected and informed; the EPNI Tailgating Task Force and the McKnight Grant Planning Team included representatives from community nonprofits; and, in 2014 EPNI successfully enlisted increased institutional presence on the Livability Task Force. As well, that group continues to encourage new participation from residents living in neighborhood housing owned/and or operated by our nonprofit organizations. EPNI also reached out regularly to Ward 6 Council Member Abdi Warsame, and his staff, for help and consideration in engaging with East African residents living in Elliot Park.

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

As noted in the above, EPNI continues to stay connected to the many institutions and nonprofits in the neighborhood and works to increase communication and collaborative partnerships between them and with neighborhood residents.

- What did not work so well? Why?

Connecting directly with many of the vulnerable populations is a struggle with a neighborhood demographic that is mostly poor and mainly living in rental units in the neighborhood.

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

621

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

194 Volunteers worked 2,245 hours to support neighborhood work in 2014.

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

468 people participated. This number is much lower than the 2013 total as the Night to Unite event was cancelled in 2014.

- How many people receive your print publications?
We do not publish a printed newsletter.
- How many people receive your electronic communications?
257 people are now registered subscribers to our E-Newsletter. We also maintain a website and Facebook page.

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?
- Who was impacted?
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
- What was the outcome?

EPNI Tailgating Task Force

In March 2012 the State of Minnesota, the City of Minneapolis, the Minnesota Vikings and the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission signed and supported the *Overview of Stadium Development and Operating Terms-Minneapolis Downtown East Site* (Term Sheet). Language in that document allowed for consideration of the expansion of tailgating into areas south and east of the current boundaries as allowed by city ordinance. The Vikings, in 2013, requested that the current boundaries for tailgating be broadly extended to include much of the Elliot Park Neighborhood. As a follow up to that request the City of Minneapolis and EPNI each convened their own Tailgating Committees. (EPNI also serves on the City Tailgating Task Force.)

EPNI brought together institutional stakeholders to work with neighborhood residents to review the possibilities, the potential ramifications and to develop creative solutions that might otherwise work in place of traditional parking lot tailgating parties. The community was particularly concerned about the many vulnerable populations in Elliot Park and wanted to keep outdoor parties away from them as well as from residents, care centers and churches. House of Charity, for instance, was very concerned that their clients would be standing in line at the Food Centre right next door to a tailgating lot with open beverage containers. Over the course of nine months the task force met, often with representatives of the Minnesota Vikings. An agreement was reached that essentially allowed tailgating with alcohol in only two locations in the northwest corner of the neighborhood. Tailgating without alcohol was approved throughout the neighborhood but will be subject to city ordinance rules and guidelines. The matter has now been returned to the City of Minneapolis Tailgating Task Force for review and consideration of next steps. Elliot Park neighborhood task force members were diligent in their efforts to make the right decisions on behalf of their community and their work will have a positive impact far into the future.

3. **2014 Accomplishments**

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2014:

- What were your organization's major accomplishments?
- How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?

In 2013 The McKnight Foundation suggested that EPNI consider its future role in the district, its future sustainability and whether or not there were opportunities to create new collaborations or mergers with existing organizations. Subsequently the organization received a grant to implement this project over much of 2014. Working with the Dendros Group our consultants conducted interviews with Board members, City Council Members, City Staff and community residents and stakeholders. They also facilitated several focus groups and prepared reports on all of these interviews and discussions for further review by a Planning Team. The team included a representative of each of the three district-wide neighborhood and business organizations, several EPNI board members and several neighborhood stakeholders. Over the summer this team met regularly and frequently to review the past and present work of EPNI and to carve out potential scenarios for future roles.

Their report was reviewed and studied by the EPNI Board of Directors who selected their top five scenarios which fell naturally into two distinct categories:

1. Marketing Plan and an Historic Preservation Program; **focusing on the internal neighborhood and organizational work of EPNI.**
2. Organizing Volunteer Resources Across Downtown Neighborhoods; District-Wide Collaborations; and, Political Advocacy **focusing on building external relationships and collaborations with organizational partners.**

These directives began with community input and participation from a diverse group of community members who ultimately guided and defined the future role and work of the organization. The prioritized scenarios are now embedded in the EPNI work plan for 2015.

4. *Housing*

What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities?
50-60%

5. *Financial Reports*

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year.
(Please include all funding sources).
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? What worked well? What could be improved?

Beginning January 2014 the Elliot Park Neighborhood was officially divided into two wards- Ward 7 and Ward 6. Ward 7 retained veteran Council Member Lisa Goodman and Ward 6 is served by newly elected Council Member Abdi Warsame. As well, the neighborhood directly north of Elliot Park was changed to Ward 3, adding a third council member (also newly elected) to the East Downtown District that includes Elliot Park. Creating new relationships and understanding shared goals became imperative.

With new developments emerging in the neighborhoods, along with the Tailgating Task Force work, EPNI had a great deal of interaction with a number of departments and staff throughout many city offices. As well, many city staff sit on committees and task forces with EPNI. The relationships are numerous and ongoing and generally productive.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate your overall experience with your interactions with the City? 3-4

2. *City Communications - effectiveness*

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful? Communications from the City are understandable and useful and help us to keep our community informed about the issues and concerns that are relevant.

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.

We receive City notices of activities that are relevant to our neighborhood.

On a scale of 1 to5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the timeliness of communications from the City? 2-3

4. *City Departments*

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

We continue to be very pleased with the relationships that we have developed with City departments and staff and they are extremely cooperative and helpful.

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 continue to receive support and advice from NCR staff and appreciate their timely responses to our questions.

On a scale of 1 to5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? 4

6. *Other comments?*