

## Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Longfellow Community Council

Contact person: Melanie Majors, Executive Director

Date of Board Approval: Pending approval by LCC Executive Committee on Tuesday, May 12, 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?

LCC's regular outreach and engagement activities for 2014 included:

Regular communications and updates through LCC's media sources:

- Facebook
  - *Longfellow/Nokomis* Messenger
  - *Yahoo Groups*
  - Facebook
  - E-democracy
  - LCC Website
  - LCC Insider email newsletter
  - LCC Weekly Events Round-up (new weekly email newsletter)
- Monthly committee meetings (Board of Directors, Environment and Transportation, Neighborhood Development Committee, Community Connections, Advancement, River Gorge, Seward/Longfellow Restorative Justice, Longfellow Business Association, Transition Longfellow, Longfellow Faith Forum and Southside United Neighborhoods.
  - Community meetings for on-going and emerging issues
  - General Membership Meetings (April and October)
  - LCC programs and events
  - On-going meetings with Hennepin County Community Works, Southside United Neighborhoods and various other community partners

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

In 2014, LCC continued its community engagement work with a focus on enhanced outreach and visibility. Targeting specific groups or demographics has not been an effective strategy for the organization. Broad outreach to people to inform them that the neighborhood association and the community have much to offer is proving to be more effective. The more people that LCC can communicate with along with a diversity of programs, projects and activities, the more successful we are.

Examples of work that LCC did in 2014 to directly and indirectly enhance community engagement include:

- Completing our new branding package
- Redevelopment of our website
- Working with LCC committees and the Board to encourage broader one-to-one engagement efforts
- Funding support for the Longfellow 365 photography project
- Funding support to the Longfellow Faith Forum for a school support program
- Funding and administrative support to Transition Longfellow to promote sustainable practices in the Community
- Outreach to Block Club Leaders
- Began hosting happy hours at local businesses to promote LCC programs, events, activities, projects and support local businesses.

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

The majority of our efforts in 2014 were successful. We measure our success through attendance/participation, communications and the programs, projects and activities that are implemented. For each event, activity, program and project LCC advertises widely and through a number of different media sources.

Through the creation of a City-sponsored "Minnehaha Mile" project through the Longfellow Business Association (LBA), LCC and LBA have been able to successfully support local businesses on Minnehaha Avenue who have been concerned about their viability through the reconstruction process.

Also, Hennepin County in coordination with LCC has been hosting a series of community update meetings to inform residents and businesses of all plans for reconstruction including timelines, delays and contact information. LCC has also worked with the County to use our media sources to share information widely to the community on the progress of the project.

LCC holds monthly committee and Board meetings where residents are able to proactively address emerging issues in the community and to plan for future activities. However, we also recognize that there are many people in the community who cannot commit to monthly meetings but still want to be heard on larger issues that they feel strongly about. The LCC Board of Directors are mindful of the need to involve the greatest number of community stakeholders possible and ensure that a variety of options are open to people to participate.

What did not work so well? Why?

One of the most challenging ways of engaging residents in our community is through door knocking. LCC has over 7,000 households and 20,000 residents. The size of Greater Longfellow makes it difficult for us to use staff and volunteer time to go door to door. We are also restricted from leaving information in mailboxes.

To get the word out about LCC and community activities we enlist as many resources as we are able in an effort to inform the maximum number of residents and stakeholders. We have also not been quite as successful in reaching Block Club leaders as we had hoped. We sent letters to all of the Block Club Leaders in Greater Longfellow to reintroduce LCC and to encourage stronger involvement. We had a large number of returned letters as Block Club Leaders have high turnover and the mailing lists are controlled by the police precinct. In 2014 we plan to work more closely with the 3<sup>rd</sup> precinct CCP Safe Officer to share information and maintain updated lists of Block Club Leaders.

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

Approximately 200 through our work with Hennepin County on our Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) grant. We have also flyer for smaller events, usually within a 3-block radius.

How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

LCC estimates that we had 550 volunteers engaged in our committees, programs, events and activities in 2014.

How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?

LCC estimates that over 6,000 individuals participated in our events, activities and programs in 2014.

How many people receive your print publications?

LCC pays for a monthly page in the Longfellow/Nokomis Messenger Newspaper. Their monthly circulation is 21,000, which includes residents businesses, libraries, schools, churches and parks.

How many people receive your electronic communications?

Facebook: 1250

Insider Newsletter: 650

Weekly Roundup: 650

Website: 13500

Yahoo Groups: 450

**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?

In 2014 LCC created and implemented a rain garden program to support local residents in modifying their yards to mitigate storm water runoff. The program supported 10 rain gardens in the community. The program was very popular and over 135 people applied for the program. LCC partnered with Metro Blooms and local volunteers to complete the program. Based on need and interest, LCC has raised funding to expand this program to 40 rain gardens to be offered to residents in 2015.

### **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?

#### LCC Website/Rebranding Campaign

- LCC successfully launched our branding campaign. We have created t-shirts, tote bags and window clings to sell to raise funds. We have created new signage to promote LCC and the Greater Longfellow Community. Our website has been redesigned as well as our page in the local newspaper using our new branding package and we now require that our new logo be used by all organizations that we sponsor for events, programs and activities.

#### General Membership Meetings

- April Meeting had approximately 100 attendees and we elected a full board
- October meeting had over 120 attendees
- At each meeting we are seeing new faces and an increase of families with children.

#### League of Longfellow Artists

- 2014 was the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Crawl. The event is getting bigger each year and getting lots of notice from outside communities.

#### Other accomplishments include:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Chili Cook-off (130 attendees)
- Met our fundraising goal of \$10,000
- Continued support of the Longfellow Business Association
- Continued participation in the Southside United Neighborhoods (SUN) project
- Share the Gorge Event (Over 200 attendees)
- 4 new businesses opened on E. Lake Street
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Longfellow 365 Community Photography project
- Transition Longfellow programs

**4. Housing**

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

LCC estimates that we spent 25-35% of our time on housing related activities in 2014.

Through the work of our Neighborhood Development Committee, the SUN project and our East Lake Street Workgroup, we spent time on the following activities:

- Review of regulatory requests for commercial and residential development
- Updates to the community on several local housing developments
- Referrals to the Center for Energy and Environment for LCC's open housing loan programs
- Referrals to the Center for Energy and Environment for LCC's Emergency Deferred Loan Program
- Development and implementation of the Art in Vacant Storefronts program
- On-going planning
- Development of a policy agenda with the SUN project to address issues with regulatory services

**5. Financial Reports**

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

Included with this report

**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?

LCC communicates most regularly with the NCR Department, CPED and the Department of Finance. Each of these departments is critical to the functioning of LCC. LCC relies on our communications with CPED to keep the community informed of development finance and regulatory requests that will impact the neighborhood. The NCR and Finance Departments assist LCC in managing a portion of our administrative and program funding.

For the most part, LCC is able to obtain the information we need in a timely fashion. We have regular contact with staff from all three departments and have established positive relationships with staff.

Notices from the NCR Department and CPED are not always consistent. There are times when LCC will receive notices by mail or email or both. There have been times when we have not received expected notifications at all. It would be most helpful if the neighborhood notifications were communicated in a consistent manner.

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? **4.5**

**2. *City Communications – effectiveness***

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

Information from the City is understandable for the most part. When notifications for policy and program reviews are sent to LCC, they are usually documents that are dense in content and not easy to share with community residents who might be interested in comment and input.

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.



There have been instances where LCC received late or no notice on City-held regulatory reviews for businesses in the community. When this has happened, LCC has contacted the appropriate staff-person from the City and has experienced a positive response. What is most problematic for LCC is that when a notification is late or not received we are not able to provide appropriate notice to the community. Residents and businesses attribute the lateness of lack of notice to LCC instead of the City and LCC is held responsible for issues that we cannot control.

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? **3.5**

**4. City Departments**

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

As mentioned before, CPED, Finance and NCR are the City Departments that we work with most frequently. One suggestion I have is for City Department leaders to make attempts to attend a few neighborhood committee or board meetings each year. This would help both the staff and committees to establish relationships with City leadership.

**5. City Assistance**

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

NCR provides excellent assistance to LCC because there are several staff available at any given time to answer questions and to respond to requests for assistance. NCR works well with the Department of Finance which is especially helpful to LCC when we are working on funding requests and managing our Phase II NRP and CPP contracts. The Department seems to be making great strides in transitioning from NRP to CPP program management. It would be helpful if there was more consistent expectations in reporting requirements for CPP funding.

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?**