

## **Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report**

**Neighborhood Organization:** Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association (MHNA)

**Contact person:** Melissa Bean, Executive Director

**Date of Board Approval:** March 17, 2015 (MHNA Board Meeting)

### **1. Stakeholder Involvement**

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2014, Please provide information about: **What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2014?**

- Introduced MHNA to new building residents at “Ambassador” presentations led by board members and, in cooperation with property managers, fraternities and sororities, sent MHNA info to renters via email and flyers
- Delivered 1400 door hangers to residences, welcoming new neighbors to Marcy-Holmes and inviting them to MHNA’s October 2014 General Membership meeting
- Presented MHNA work to faith leaders (our board currently has a seat for SE Clergy)
- Door knocked in annual fall new student UMN Meet & Greet; included our Welcome Students flyer in UMN’s guidebook smartphone app
- Enhanced MHNA communications via Facebook, created Twitter and Instagram social media channels, and significantly overhauled monthly “Items of Interest” newsletter that is sent through MailChimp (this latter platform allows us to better gauge readership and reading habits, allowing us to tailor our message in a way that meaningfully impacts our residents)
- Added a board seat for the Greek Alumni Partnership
- Advertised on “Lucille”, the parking shuttle bus in Dinkytown, and on Varsity Theater marquee
- Made MHNA membership easier with online registration and renewal
- Began a monthly Volunteer Recognition segment
- Created and staffed an Info Table at Third Ward Neighborhood Fest and United Way Women’s event
- Filled both student seats on MHNA board
- Regular mailings and e-mailings of meeting materials and events info
- Held events with wide appeal to gardeners, bicyclists, history buffs and families



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

- **Students** Many of 2014's projects and activities involved students:
  - Transportation Committee work centered around bicycle access and safety, including sponsorship of an August 2014 Dinkytown Transportation Forum
  - Work on the Dinkytown Greenway, bike access from TCF Stadium to Dinkytown along with way-finding signage and kiosk design
  - Annual River Clean Up in April was co-sponsored by MSA (as an official Spring Jam event) and Neighborhood Student Liaisons
  - Promotion of and joint planning for Pack & Give Back, recycling program at move in and move out times
  - Continued work with student groups on projects, for example 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Greenway Planting plan (Students for Design Activism)



- Supervised community service work for Restorative Justice participants, demonstrating that our neighborhood is multi-dimensional and deserving of respect

- Student board members regularly participate in committees (Land Use & Creative Places) and assist in recruiting other students

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

- Because students are mainly here for only 9 months a year, and much of their time is spent on coursework, it is very difficult to create lasting connections with them on an ongoing basis. What we have found, however, is greater success in working with student groups – where the organization remains stable amidst the revolving door of students. The **Pack & Give Back** initiative is an example of multiple entities coming together (City, student groups, neighborhood groups, U MN, businesses) to solve a problem but it takes time to institutionalize such a program. Streets and sidewalks were much cleaner during 2014 Move In/Move Out than in 2013, but still a massive amount of usable household goods went un-recycled and stayed too long in public sight.

**What did not work so well? Why?**

Recruiting a steady and stable source of new volunteers. This isn't about new board members, but more about the number of volunteers that are needed to carry out some of our continued work. A vast number of people are needed to bring about the work of MHNA – whether they are board members, volunteers, or staff. All three components remain strong, but finding replacements for those who have moved out of the neighborhood remains a challenge. As an article in the Star Tribune (Jan 26, 2015) put it “As older Minnesota volunteers leave, who will replace them?” This is a concern for all organizations that rely on volunteers, but especially vexing in places with a high percentage of transient residents. MHNA currently has great leadership and no end of creative neighborhood improvement ideas, but capacity issues prevent us from taking on “more than we can chew.”

- **How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)?** 500
- **How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?** 90
- **How many individuals participated in organization activities?** 585
- **How many people receive your print publications?**  
Annually: 400                      Quarterly: 60
- **How many people receive your electronic communications?** Monthly “Items of Interest” and meeting agendas 380 – 400; countless emails.

## 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?

### **Stronger ties to Dinkytown Business District and Owners**

#### Issue:

Development pressures in Dinkytown (in the form of new student housing and a proposed hotel) forced the need to examine the area's future: preserve the character; diversify businesses; retain small locally owned businesses; expand the footprint of business area; provide goods and services to a new and immediate residential population; keep SE Library in Dinkytown; enhance the marketing of assets and public awareness of Dinkytown. Although Dinkytown was one of 5 "character areas" covered in the Marcy-Holmes Master Plan (adopted by City Council in August 2014) more direction was needed.

#### Impacted:

New residents, longer-term residents, business and property owners, preservationists, new urbanists, thousands of people who live or visit; people who walk, drive, park or cycle in the area.

#### Steps:

MHNA collaborated with Dinkytown business owners to receive a Great Streets grant to form a new business organization (Dinkytown Business Alliance) and create and implement a marketing strategy and a business recruitment plan. MHNA promoted a "Growth with Preservation" strategy (in the press and in public hearings) that would protect certain older buildings while permitting new construction in adjacent parcels. This led to a Historic Designation study by the City of Minneapolis, expected to be complete in March 2015.

MHNA convened a Dinkytown Transportation Forum to air differing viewpoints. Our Transportation Committee is following up on recommendations. MHNA advocated to keep the SE Library here and has found volunteers to serve on a library planning committee. MHNA volunteers also serve on the Friends of the SE Library organization.

Outcome: The new Dinkytown Business Alliance was formed. A marketing company, Brave New Media, was hired to re-brand Dinkytown and re-

position marketing strategies. Several innovative businesses have opened that attract a wider audience – the nation’s first Target Express, and Gina & Will, an “upscale” version of Goodwill, its parent company. MHNA won a Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Award for its work on Dinkytown.

### **Nurturing the Creative Endeavors and Reputation of the Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood**

**Issue:** How to address the City’s Creative Placemaking challenge and to welcome and engage over 250 new residents moving into the A-Mill Artist lofts; how MHNA can help these creative residents and how they can help our neighborhood

**Impacted:** New residents, existing residents and businesses; the neighborhood’s reputation and success in attracting and retaining a creative population

**Steps:** In 2014 we boosted the awareness of our Creative Places committee via focus groups then followed up with a larger community meeting. Since June, one of our new board members (with executive management skills) has enthusiastically led the committee. The committee’s mission and goals were declared and approved by MHNA board. Several subcommittees have been formed from this committee (Development, Events, and Marketing) which have led to multiple grant proposals being written, all carried out to support the “Marcy Creative Network” outreach effort. In Jan 2015 we welcomed our first A-Mill artist to the committee. Stay tuned for great things!



Minneapolis was built on water power and now runs on creative energy. Come visit the source: Marcy-Holmes. We’re just across the Stone Arch Bridge from Downtown Minneapolis.

***To learn more or get involved:***

**CALL** (612) 623-7633

**VISIT** [marcy-holmes.org](http://marcy-holmes.org)

**FOLLOW** Marcy-Holmes on Facebook & Twitter



Two creative, public projects were completed in 2014 that complement the above. We launched our Audio History Tour, working with [Preserve Minneapolis](#). The smartphone app tour has been downloaded just over 1,000 times since it became available in May. We also won a HPC award for this project in 2014.

We completed [6 Art-Wrapped Utility Boxes](#) and held a guided walking tour in late summer of 2014. Several other Southeast neighborhoods have contacted MHNA about the many steps and funding involved and we have shared our experience. We partnered with the Soap Factory on this year-long project.

Excerpts from the Artists' Statements:

Artist: Kristina Laskowski



A lot of my illustrative work has lots of small and fine details which I hope catches a viewer's eye and helps to draw them further into the work. The final print turned out to be something fun and imaginative which I hope to help send a passerby into a world of dreams and happiness and a smile.

100 University Avenue SE

Artist: Norbert Marklin



My approach to the Box Fresh project is to use a photorealistic image of partially visible people sitting in a photobooth from the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. The half-scale Photo.Booth will be easily recognizable by everyone & because it is located outdoors & outside of its normal viewing habitat, my hope is that the public will interact positively & creatively with the artwork & thus discourage its tagging.

328 4th Street SE

Artist: Scott Bean



The subject matter of my paintings reflects my world-love of the outdoors and the north woods, my neighborhood Marcy-Holmes in SE Minneapolis and my hometown, Duluth. I am inspired by nature and the color and light of the world. Beauty surrounds us. I just like to record it to the best of my ability. My design for the utility boxes reflects my love for painting my surroundings.

326 6th Avenue SE


Artist: Rachel Orman



Our inner lives are full of question marks and unknowns, interpretations of what we see and how we perceive. My work explores the place where inner and outer worlds overlap and intersect-with animals, plants, and people of the outer world, and inner spaces of silence and intuition, blessed by expansive scrapes of dry brush color, or chaotically charged dreaming imagery.

1222 4th Street SE

Artist: Tony Chrenka



How many people pass this corner? Is it noted by the presence of people as a "good corner" or a "bad corner?" This prism is a minor element of a grander architecture of what makes a day. A little island that can reflect the larger architecture. It is an inner void to mark change within self and the broader space around you. A place of calmness and a mark of self improvement

1300 4th Street SE

Artist: Candy Kuehn



The work you've chosen is from many walks, occurring over two years between the fall and spring. It's the sky between the leaves before the new leaves come. A perfect image for hot summer days drinking cold cocktails and beer, amongst the flower boxes at the Loring Pasta Bar in Dinky Town. It's also a colorful celebration between snowdrifts and the first spring flowers.

327 14th Avenue SE

### **3. 2014 Accomplishments**

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2014:

- **What were your organization's major accomplishments?** (See attached)
- **How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?**

Through these projects, the neighborhood was beautified, kept informed, and was galvanized into action. Neighbors were brought together over areas of common interest that went beyond their geographic commonalities. And they had fun.

### **4. Housing**

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

Our Land Use committee met 12 times in 2014. There were numerous side meetings with developers and architects between meetings. Land Use Committee recommendations are sent to the MHNA BOD, which acts upon them.

MHNA sent a rep to the UDA (University District Alliance) Housing Committee meetings. MHNA created a Housing Diversity Task Force, which met frequently and hired, and oversaw the work of, a housing diversity consultant (his [recommendations](#) were finalized in early 2015). MHNA created a Task Force to decide the future of our CEE Housing Fix Up Loan fund when their admin costs became prohibitive. MHNA's Land Use committee also spent time educating attendees about zoning and land use issues and terminology. MHNA staff posted meeting agendas and info on the website and sent meeting announcement emails to 75 people each month, as well as contacted neighbors when nearby building projects were being reviewed. Land Use committee actions are sent to our lists and posted on our website. We write follow up letters to presenters and city officials. Our [Master Plan](#) was unanimously adopted by the Minneapolis City Council in August 2014 – seems like a long time ago now but much work in that document addressed Land Use and Housing. We don't clock the hours, but feel it is safe to say that at LEAST 51% of our time is spent on Land Use/Housing items.

### **5. Financial Reports**

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

We spent a lot of time with City Planning, including Haila Maze and Mary Altman. We also communicate regularly with (and feature at board meetings) Council Member Jacob Frey, and his staff. In 2014 we got a Great Streets grant so we worked with Erik Hansen of CPED. We always work with Stacy Sorenson, Bob Cooper, Robert Thompson and Judy Duffy on our contracts, trainings and finances. This year we also worked with the Heritage Preservation Commission and with Regulatory Services. Simon Blenski, of Public Works, was helpful with plans for traffic calming and safer biking. Although our interactions were not as frequent in 2014, we do keep in touch with the Second Precinct – Inspector Waite and Nick Juarez were presenters at the October 2014MHNA general membership meeting.

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? **5**

**2. *City Communications - effectiveness***

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

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.**

Just one thing that has gone missing that we wish would be revived – the weekly BZZ Reports from Zoning & Planning. Is that because the big development rush here has subsided? Still it is useful to know what is in the pipeline.

In general, timeliness is good but it seems like a waste to send out the NCR newsletter in the mail. Some things are over by the time we get it. Electronic version is more useful.

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? **4**



4. ***City Departments***

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

We still need more housing inspectors. Over-occupancy and poor housing conditions are still prevalent. Another problem for us is graffiti. Can the City develop some kind of graffiti reporting as a community service program? It is really too much to ask residents to photograph and report all the graffiti that goes on. With each new utility box that goes in, another blank canvas for taggers is created. We surveyed these boxes before, and while the City encourages the art wraps, it is a very time consuming and expensive process to pursue that route. Now the City has stopped what little funding that was available. If the City had regular graffiti monitors, maybe even citizens who were paid (or who could pay off a fine by doing this work) our neighborhood would look a lot better. This is very difficult for volunteers to keep up with.

5. ***City Assistance***

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

Last year in this report, we requested: **Could the city's property look up feature also be sorted/searched by owner? That would be very helpful.** We never heard back, so we undertook this time-consuming task on our own. This greatly enhances our ability to communicate with property owners.

We have had some help from NCR in putting on presentations and workshops. Would it be possible for NCR to offer a compressed 2-hour training *in the neighborhoods* that would cover items in the City Academy curriculum? That would be very helpful for new board members and residents in general.

In fact, this is from last year's CPP Report: **An Inspections workshop would be great- people are not always sure what is code, how to complain, how to follow up. We requested extra funding for more housing inspectors here but have not received any reply. It is difficult for novices (neighborhood volunteers) to make informed decisions without the necessary tools/background.**

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?***