

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Nicollet Island – East Bank Neighborhood Association (NIEBNA)

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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?
 - a) Regular Board Meetings (10)
 - b) General Public Annual Meetings (1 – annual meeting)
 - c) Small Area Plan public meetings – both focus groups and general all-neighborhood meetings (2)
 - d) MPCA presentation regarding Superior Plating pollution remediation (1)
 - e) Task Group meetings (all public) regarding redevelopment of Superior Plating site (6)
 - f) Task Group meeting regarding Grain Belt sign (1)
 - g) Participation in Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) -- MPRB, DNR, Nicollet – Central Streetcar, and MWMO – and NIEBNA reps on other Committees (MRP, NIEBNA/NEBA Police Overtime Committee) (10)
 - h) 2nd Precinct Police Substation Fund Raiser (15)
 - i) National Night Out table (1)

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

Due to the nature of the NIEBNA housing stock (almost exclusively condominiums, co-ops and managed rental buildings) and our contacts with the build/association managers, we have direct email and “insider” newsletter contact with essentially all residents of the neighborhood.

We also have good contacts with Northeast Business Association (NEBA), the local business association. Most of our interaction here has been with retail operations in the neighborhood.

The main underrepresented groups are (a) non-retail businesses, a major source of employments in the area, who generally do not belong to NEBA -- we have recruited the owner of such a business to the Board and are building a contact base for further engagement and (b) residential renters – we have recruited two Board members who are renters and have made

contacts with people living in two new rental developments in the neighborhood.

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

Working with associations and building management companies to gain access to internal contact lists works well. We have also started to make available a “State of the Neighborhood” presentation at association annual meetings which provides good face-to-face contact. We have also found that National Night Out (NNO), a very well attended event in the neighborhood, is good for face-to-face contact – especially when giving away Twins tickets gratis (courtesy of the Minnesota Twins).

We are also getting an increasing number of contacts via our web site (approximately 100 in 2014, up from 0 in 2013) – some of these contacts have resulted in new people participating in NIEBNA affairs.

One strategy that is hard to evaluate is use of mainstream media like commercial TV, MPR, the StarTribune, the Downtown Journal, the Northeaster, City Pages, Mill City Times, and Finance and Commerce. NIEBNA projects and meetings have received a lot of coverage – some more or less subtly solicited, but most initiated by the media itself. We know that all this “free publicity” has raised awareness of the Neighborhood and NIEBNA, but we have no way to evaluate its long term effectiveness.

Police Substation Funds Raiser raffle ticket sales – there is nothing like face-to-face selling to make personal contact.

- What did not work so well? Why?

Actually, almost everything we tried this year worked to some degree at least with local residents.

We have found that more than a few people from outside the immediate area (elsewhere in the City, in the suburbs and one in Maryland and one in California) are interested in the NIEBNA area -- once the “ex patriates” get on the NIEBNA email list, contact is maintained, but we have no real outreach effort for distant people.

To date, we have not tried any traditional paper based communication methods like newsletters or running ads in the local newspapers. We are considering trying this out in 2015.

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

We estimate that in the last year we had has some direct personal contact with 400 – 450 area residents (approximately 30% to 40% of the population) mostly through attendance at regular meetings, task group meetings, special events like an MPCA presentation regarding Superior Plating remediation, and neighborhood events like NNO. We have email contact with a higher percentage of our local population.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?
 - a) Active Board of 19 members
 - b) Small Area Planning group (non-Board) 15 – completed in 2014
 - c) New NIEBNA web site (non-Board) 2
 - d) Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) reps 5

- How many individuals participated in your organization’s activities?
 - a) Board meetings – 60 (25 attendees x 10 meetings, but with many duplicate names)
 - b) General/Annual Meeting – 80
 - c) Small Area Plan activities progress – 10 (writing/editorial team)
 - d) MPCA “Superior Plating Past, Present & Future” meeting – 75
 - e) 4th & 5th Superior Plating Task Groups – 50 (30 attendees x 6 meetings, but with some duplicates)

- How many people receive your print publications?

N/A

- How many people receive your electronic communications?
 - a) Direct email list of 275, mostly local residents and business who have requested inclusion.

 - b) Indirect “forwarded” email lists – about 1,100. This source covers all condo associations, co-ops and larger rental buildings in NIEBNA, including nearby non-NIEBNA buildings (like Winslow House and Phoenix on the River in MHNA).

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?

- a) NIEBNA Small Area Plan adoption – the big accomplishment for 2014 was the completion and adoption in September 2014 by the City of Minneapolis of the NIEBNA Small Area Plan. The planning process started in mid-2013 and most of the basic data gather and community input was complete by the end-2013. The main thrust of 2014 activity was to write a Plan that accurately reflect neighborhood goals and desires that met all the requirements of the City for acceptable small area plans. After no fewer than 8 drafts and many meetings, this feat was accomplished by the Planning Committee. The final plan was presented to the NIEBNA membership at the Annual Meeting in July 2014 and approved by acclamation.
- b) Superior Plating side redevelopment – there was a high level of activity and discussion surrounding the current status and future development of this site, as there was in 2013. Unlike 2013 (and most years all the way back to 2005), when there was a lot of “wheel spinning” but relatively little forward movement, 2014 was very productive.

Most of the work to clean up the site and prepare it for eventual development was completed in 2014. NIEBNA monitored the process closely and built good and lasting relationships with MPCA professionals overseeing the project. NIEBNA also organized and sponsored a very well attended “Past, Present and Future of Pollution Remediation at Superior Plating” meeting at which MPCA professionals and elected representatives discussed how the site was going to be handled going forward. This meeting went a long way toward informing neighborhood residents, especially those living immediately adjacent to the site, about this vexing problem. In spite of many unexpected problems, the remediation project was carried through to completion – pollution is no longer an insuperable barrier to development on the site.

In March 2014, NIEBNA organized the 4th Superior Plating Task Group (SPTG4) to work with a developer who taken an option to buy the site. After three meetings, the developer backed out of the deal partly due to apparent disagreement with the SPTG4 and partly due to disagreements with the site owner on purchase terms.

In October 2014, NIEBNA organized the 5th Superior Plating Task Group (SPTG5) to work with the new developer (Lennar Multifamily Communities) on yet another design for the site. This proved to be a more fruitful endeavor and, at the third meeting of the SPTG5 on January 21, 2015, the final design for a first-rate mixed-use housing and retail development was approved; the full NIEBNA Board approved the SPTG5 decision at its meeting on January 28, 2015.

We are reasonably confident that there will be no need for a 6th Superior Plating Task Group (SPTG6).

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?
- a) Completion and adoption of the NIEBNA Small Area Plan.
 - b) Continuing monitoring and working with MPCA regarding pollution remediation at Superior Plating site; sponsoring public information meetings about the remediation effort.
 - c) Approved the design for a first rate development on half of the Superior Plating site based the work of the 5th Superior Plating Task Group (SPTG5).
 - d) Continuing to monitor situations that may affect the Neighborhood, if not immediately then down the road, in particular
 - Superior Plating site
 - Nicollet-Central Streetcar
 - Central River Front Park Master Plan
 - Northeast Bike Committee
 - University District Alliance
 - Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO)
 - St Anthony Falls Alliance
 - e) NIEBNA worked closely with adjacent neighborhoods – MHNA, STAWNO and SAENA in particular – on projects of common interest like the Nicollet Central Streetcar and development reviews for projects on the borders like Superior Plating and the proposed Alatus Tower on the Washburn McReavy site.
 - f) The NIEBNA Board handled neighborhood review as part of licensing and planning applications for several new and existing businesses in the area.
 - g) Established an Information Technology committee to oversee the complete revamping the NIEBNA web site with the aid of an outside consultant. Once fully implemented (one of our main goals for 2015), the new web site and administrative system will be the centerpiece of our outreach efforts going forward.

Other than businesses that received support in license applications, it is hard to determine the direct effect on individuals of all this activity, or to identify a single individual or small group that was impacted directly. These actions go to improving the neighborhood generally and we feel that benefits us all in a collective sense.

4. *Housing*

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

Due to the nature of the housing stock in the NIEBNA area, mostly well-maintained professionally managed-condominiums, co-ops and rental buildings along with some private dwellings on Nicollet Island, there is little scope for NIEBNA action on housing. There is simply no demand.

5. *Financial Reports*

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

Fiscal Year 2014 Balance Sheet and Income Statement are attached.

In 2014, the only source of funds was the CPP program.

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 work most closely with CPED (especially regarding zoning and planning). Our primary contact is Halia Maze who gives us first rate support.

Occasionally we deal with staff assigned to specific applications before the City Planning Commission (CPC) or the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC). In all cases we have received prompt answers to our questions.

Stacy Sorenson from CPP has been very helpful in getting some of our major projects up and running, especially the Small Area Plan, and in providing guidance and support on financial and administrative matters.

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?

No problems with the content or clarity of presentation.

It would be very help if hearing notices for CPC, HPC and the like could be provided in PDF format as well as hardcopy. This would make distribution to NIEBNA mailing lists and inclusion on the web site much easier. This is especially important to us since we have essentially no capacity to handle paper mail in an organized way.

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 get information in good time for us to act if formal action is necessary. No problems.

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? 5

4. ***City Departments***

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

Except for interfacing with CPED regarding planning functions (mostly for the Small Area Plan) and reviews of applications, NIEBNA has little routine administrative involvement with other City departments. Generally we are happy with responsiveness.

5. ***City Assistance***

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

NIEBNA routine operations are very simple with most work being accomplished in monthly Board meetings or in the meetings of specialized task groups like the Superior Plating Task Groups. There is little scope for outside support or assistance from the City.

NCRD does good service in organizing City-wide conferences like the 2015 Community Connections Conference which are helpful and thought provoking affairs.

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? 5

6. ***Other comments?***

None