



Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Standish Ericsson Neighborhood Association

Contact person: Shirley Yeoman

Date of Board Approval: April 13, 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 12th Annual Standish, Ericsson & Corcoran Garage Sale
 - 4th Annual “What’s the Big Idea?” contest at annual meeting
 - 3rd Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony
 - 2nd Annual Chili Fest
 - Continued support for the West of the Rail Business Association
 - Door knocking campaign to reach under-represented constituency with follow-up community meeting

- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2014?
 - We continued to produce our award-winning newsletter, *SENA News*
 - We continue to utilize our website, www.standish-ericsson.org
 - Our Facebook page and Twitter accounts continue to grow
 - The board identified engaging community diversity as a priority for SENA and formed a Community Engagement working group. This working group identified demographic groups that are underrepresented on SENA’s board, particularly people of color and renters, and planned outreach. Six board members participated in a targeted door knock effort. They knocked on 368 doors, met 91 people, and had 70 conversations, asking residents what issues they care about. Residents were invited to a community gathering on September 17th. Approximately 40 people attended and discussed issues including renters’ rights, library hours, safety, and climate change with state and local elected officials and city staff. Food, childcare, and Spanish-English translation were provided. An important outcome of this project is that residents’ concerns with their rights as renters has informed SENA policy positions as well as policymaking at the city level.

- Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?
 - We believe the *SENA News* continues to be our most effective communication and identity-building tool
 - The Community Engagement working group's activities (see previous bullet point) have been a very good start to engaging under-represented groups. The group will likely continue its work as a formalized committee in 2015.

- What did not work so well? Why?

None

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

Approximately 670

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Approximately 60

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

Approximately 850

- How many people receive your print publications?

The *SENA News* is produced bi-monthly – so six issues per year. It is mailed directly to every address in our neighborhoods as well as an additional list of 100, approximately 4600. The goal is that all 10,000 residents will receive the newsletter.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

Our electronic communications are primarily conducted through our Facebook page and Twitter account. We have over 600 followers in each of those mediums. We also take advantage of the e-democracy Standish Ericsson Neighbors forum. This forum is very active in our neighborhoods, with approximately 1,300 members, and is a very effective communication tool.

2. 2014 Highlights

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

Engaging Under-Represented Constituents

The work of engaging community diversity by the Community Engagement working group was certainly a highlight for us in 2014. Six board members participated in a targeted door-knocking campaign, in an effort to reach the identified demographic groups that are underrepresented on SENA's board, particularly people of color and renters. They knocked on 368 doors, met 91 people, and had 70 conversations, asking residents what issues they care about. This effort culminated for 2014 with a community gathering where approximately 40 people discussed issues they identified as important to them. Food, childcare, and Spanish-English translation were provided (essential ingredients to successful community engagement.) We look forward to continued work in this area in 2015.

Chili Cook-off

Neighbors who attended SENA's second annual chili cook-off on Friday evening, Oct. 17, tasted eight variations of chili—some with no meat at all. There were even gluten-free and dairy-free entries. The winning chili—a turkey red bean dish by Jennifer Edwards - was both the judges' and the crowd's favorite. Winners received gift cards from local businesses (Northbound Brewpub; A Cupcake Social; and Elevated Beer, Wine & Spirits).



S'more's for dessert!

Besides chili, people enjoyed fresh bread from A Baker's Wife, vegan cornbread from home-based baker Seymour Munchmore, and a keg of root beer from Elevated Spirits. S'mores were available for dessert.

The chili fest was an opportunity for neighbors to get better acquainted and to learn more about the work of SENA. One person, new to the neighborhood, was especially enthusiastic. She liked that neighbors had a chance to sit down and talk with each other, rather than just "mingle" in a crowd. (excerpted from SENA News article by Judy Peacock)

Partnerships:

► **Connections Mural Project**

SENA partnered with Folwell Performing Arts School to submit a proposal to the MN State Arts Board for a large mural project at Folwell School. We have been granted \$54,205 for the creation of a large four-panel mural on the exterior of the school. One of the most exciting parts of the mural project is that there are many ways for it to involve members of

the community. A major focus of the mural is that it brings the community together and the theme of the mural is Connections – what are the things that connect us all together. This mural project planning and organizing began in 2014, but the majority of the art work will take place in 2015 with a projected completion in July, 2015.



Mural artist Greta McLain gathers mural ideas from attendees of the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting event.

► **Allina Healthy Activities Grant – Hiawatha Skiclubb Partnership**

The winner of our 2013 “What’s the Big Idea?” contest was the Hiawatha Skiclubb, who used SENA’s support to get the Hiawatha Golf Course open on the weekends in January and February for ski training and events for neighborhood children. In 2014 SENA and the Skiclubb partnered to receive an Allina Healthy activities grant which allowed the Skiclubb to expand their activities to encourage families to be active together. This project also crossed years. Activities began in September with a dry-land training event (with 50 people participating) and an organized ski-swap (with 40 participants) and will culminate with the Hiawatha Hustle Kids Nordic Ski Race in 2015. A seven-member leadership team has been in charge of the planning and execution of these events.



Hiawatha Hustle poster designed by children’s book illustrator Mike Wohnoutka.

Although some of the highlights mentioned here were not funded by our CPP funds, it is important that we mention them. They are things that would not have been available to our neighborhoods if SENA wasn’t here to make them happen.

3. 2014 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2014:

SENA Board of Directors

At our Annual Meeting in November another six new Board members were elected to serve on the SENA Board of Directors. This follows the election of six new members in 2013, so we are at the maximum allowed by our by-laws. Along with tons of new energy and talent, this also means additional training and support is required. New members appear to have jumped into the work with both feet and are willing to share their expertise and ideas.



SENA Board present at Board workshop with Jonathan Buck of the Dendros Group on March 28, 2015. Not pictured, Luis Morales, Susan Fall

Continued support of the West of the Rail Business Association



The West of the Rail Business Association now has 60 members. The WRBA continues to be active and work to support and sustain our local businesses.

4. *Housing*

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

15%

5. *Financial Reports*

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year.

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?

There were no interactions with City departments that occupied a major part of our time.

Our Councilmember (12th Ward), Andrew Johnson, and his office staff are one department that is in consistent communication with SENA. Councilmember Johnson attends many SENA board meetings and gives us updates on projects impacting the Standish and Ericsson neighborhoods.

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

2. *City Communications – effectiveness*

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

As we mentioned in last year's report, it's unclear what is expected of the neighborhood group in soliciting community input for variances, land-use applications, and other notices from the City. It seems like there is little interest in getting community input in these situations, and there is no guideline as to when the City wants/needs this input. While the city ordinance requires the notification of neighborhood groups and surrounding properties, it seems like the information supplied could be more robust (more than a 1-page notice) and following a consistent timeline.

There is still no clear definition of another plan that is an expectation of NCR, the NPP plan. What is expected from the neighborhood group in developing it? What is the rationale for why we even do them? This would be helpful before we as an organization spend time and resources to prepare and submit them to the NCR.

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

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.

Note above comment on effectiveness. We have also been working with 12th Ward office, Mpls Public Works and MetroTransit on shortening of a bus stop for going on three years. Everyone agrees it is a good, workable idea. Yet, year after year it dies in Public Works. No idea how we can move it forward at this point. Approaching absurdity.

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

4. *City Departments*

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

There are many ways City departments can improve the way in which they function in the Standish and Ericsson neighborhoods. However, this report is to be quick and only a few paragraphs long, so this response will also be short. Our staff and board member would like to engage with the City on a more in-depth and authentic conversation in the future.

As we stated last year, we would like better cooperation from the Police Department with Block Club Leaders information. For a number of years we have sought the names of residents who are signing up for block club leaders training but have been unable to get that information. While we understand this information may be sensitive, there needs to be transparency with neighborhood groups from the City in this regard so both the Police Department and SENA can benefit from shared information. We field a lot of calls and emails from residents about safety concerns and we would like to have a robust block club leader group we can draw on to assist residents.

On a scale of 1 to5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the way in which City departments function in your neighborhood? 3

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 need the NCR to advocate for neighborhood groups at City Hall and to help us obtain an equitable and steady funding source. Assisting in other city-related issues, such as road construction projects and helping us obtain block leader information from the Minneapolis Police Department and provide support and assistance to our work to engage under-represented communities would also be helpful.

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? 1

6. ***Other comments?***

As we stated in last year's report, we would really love to know what happens with this report once it is submitted. Does anyone read it? Does it make any impact on how things are done or communicated? What is the purpose of this report? We did not receive feedback or follow up from last year's report.