

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Ventura Village (VV)

Contact person: Thor Adam

Date of Board Approval: March 11, 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?

VV held meetings to allow for neighborhood review of the following projects: The Rose housing project at Portland. The Norway House between Elliot and 10th Avenues, the First & First Event Center in the old Franklin Theater at 11th Avenue, the new AICDC Housing project at 16th Avenue, the NACDI open market at the LRT station on Franklin, and the Baraka Day Care Playground at Columbus. Approximately 300 people attended these meetings and voted to support these projects.

VV continues to use traditional and nontraditional methods of reaching out to residents through mail, email, local neighborhood newspaper ads, hosting monthly meetings, focus groups, targeted group meetings, workshops, celebrations and youth events.

VV worked with the City of Minneapolis to train 15 election judges for our neighborhood election locations.

The VV Wellness & Gardening Committee helped organize participation in the Urban Farm at 13th Ave and E 24th St. Approximately 600 people participated. VV partnered with the Women's Environmental Institute, Native Health Board, Indigenous Women's Task Force, and Waite House to support the Urban Farm. Participants helped maintain the garden and received education about gardening techniques. Food from the garden was given to volunteers and Waite House to use to help feed neighborhood residents.

An additional gardening activity was added in 2014 – keeping bees. A neighborhood resident volunteered to host the beehive. Approximately 20 people participated in educational sessions about beekeeping. The VV Wellness & Gardening Committee partnered with the University of Minnesota Bee Squad on the beehive project.

In the spring this Committee partnered with the Hub Resource Group to distribute seeds and vegetable & herb plants to community participants. Approximately 130 people participated. In addition, this committee recruited 8 residents to help with the Flowers on Franklin project, and managed the Franklin Ave trash removal project in conjunction with the Mount Olive Youth Program.

VV supported and participated in the Annual Phillips Area Clean Sweep. Approximately 200 people participated.

Along with a number of community partners VV successfully organized the fourth annual Peavey Park Festival in September. Over five hundred people of all ages attended.

In conjunction with the Franklin Area Business Association, the Seward Neighborhood, and the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition, VV supported the first Open Streets event on Franklin Avenue. Approximately 5000 people attended this event.

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

VV reached out to non-English speaking residents of public housing by hosting seminars on various topics including personal safety, the use of 911, how to file a police report, etc. VV also provided educational seminars on government and civic participation. VV provided translation services for neighborhood meetings. VV recruited leaders in under-represented communities to serve on the VV Board of Directors.

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

Recruiting leaders in under-represented communities to serve on the VV Board of Directors has been most successful, because it has encouraged them to get more members of their communities involved.

- What did not work so well? Why?
Direct mailings are not successful because our residents are primarily renters and move often.
- How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)? *approximately 400*
- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities? *approximately 200*
- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities? *over 3000*

- How many people receive your print publications? *approximately 3300*
- How many people receive your electronic communications? *approximately 350*

2. 2014 Highlights

The VV Wellness & Gardening Committee Urban Farm Project continues to be very successful because we partner with a number of organizations to maintain the garden and to help educate those who participated and those who were interested. Food from the garden was given to volunteers and to Waite House to use to help feed neighborhood residents. Waite House feeds approximately 11,000 meals per year. A detailed informational document is included with this report. This project received a 2014 Minneapolis Public Health Week LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH HERO Award. We plan to expand to a second location in 2015.

Ventura Village assisted in organizing a Somali Independence Day event in June in Peavey Park. This event was attended by more than five hundred people. There are two slide shows available documenting this event.

3. Accomplishments

VV had many accomplishments as listed in # 1 above. We are proud of all of them, because they were done by volunteers, so our greatest accomplishment is that we do everything without paid staff.

4. Housing

VV spent 16% of our time on housing-related activities. VV has two homeowner grant programs that are administered by GMHC.

5. Financial Reports

VV 2014 income and expense report is 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?

In 2014 VV spent a great deal time and resources working with the Minneapolis Police Department. Due to the success of all our hard work, for the first time in recent memory, the Peavey Park area is no longer a Target Enforcement Area.

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?

The information we receive is not always up to date. The website is not totally operative (some links do not work). We have difficulty getting responses to requests for information from our NCR support person.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? 2

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 is a lack of information from Zoning & Planning, they only provide what is minimally required by City Ordinance, and many times there is no time allowed to host a meeting before the City takes action.

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? 1

4. ***City Departments***

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

The Police Department has been great to work with. They are represented at monthly meetings and are very accessible and responsive. Other departments do not communicate well with the neighborhood or with each other.

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 Staff does not always follow NCR policies which causes confusion at the neighborhood level. It would improve assistance if policies were followed. Contracts are not prepared in a timely manner. Contract amendments are not prepared in a timely manner. Plan mods are not completed in a timely manner. We have a contract amendment that has been requested for two years.

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? 2

6. *Other comments?*

Insurance policies carried by NCR are not adequate, and are not explained, and internet links do not always work. NCR needs to develop and follow policies that address issues that arise when neighborhoods are faced with frivolous claims and accusations. They should be required to find insurance for all neighborhoods.

Ventura Village
Profit & Loss
 January through December 2014

	TOTAL
	Jan - Dec 14
Income	
300 Income	
301 Income-NCR	74,056.70
302 Income-NRP	19,105.50
303 Income-Interest & Dividends	218.01
304 Income-Other	9,201.84
Total 300 Income	102,582.05
Total Income	102,582.05
Expense	
350 Professional Services	
351 Contracted Services-NCR/ CPP	29,065.50
352 Contracted Services-NRP	8,192.00
353 Contracted Services-Other	2,755.00
Total 350 Professional Services	38,012.50
400 Occupancy	
411 Rent PCC	4,421.49
431 Equipment-general	30,697.28
433 Telephone & Internet	2,055.25
451 Insurance	2,721.99
Total 400 Occupancy	39,896.01
500 Communication and Outreach	
511 Ads & Signs	3,780.00
512 Signs	514.25
521 Copies & Printing	25.00
541 Postage	1,790.10
Total 500 Communication and Outreach	6,109.35
600 Supplies and Materials	
611 Supplies-general	11,139.38
600 Supplies and Materials - Other	15.17
Total 600 Supplies and Materials	11,154.55
700 Festivals and Meetings	
711 Events	4,728.60
721 Meetings	0.00
Total 700 Festivals and Meetings	4,728.60
912 Miscellaneous-non NCR	134.00
951 Food	1,014.34
Total Expense	101,049.35
Net Income	1,532.70