



Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood (CIDNA) 2012 Annual Report Community Participation Program

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2012, Please provide information about:

What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2012?

2012 outreach efforts included two postcard mailings (Annual Meeting and Fall Festival/NPP); monthly e-newsletters; meeting minutes, notifications and ads in community newspapers (Hill and Lake Press and Southwest Journal); and timely updates on our website (www.cidna.org). In addition, Board members and Committee Chairs have written many articles and op-eds regarding current projects for publication in local press.

Residents were invited to participate in monthly board and committee meetings. Residents were encouraged to sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at every event, and we recruited volunteers via standing committees, e-newsletter, community newspaper and our annual mailings.

Events such as the Earth Day clean-up in April, Annual Meeting in May and the Fall Festival in September offered opportunities to bring neighbors together and raise awareness about CIDNA.

CIDNA participated in a Wellness Event (April 2012) in collaboration with West Calhoun Neighborhood Council and businesses at Calhoun Village and Calhoun Commons.

Our Transportation Committee staffed an information table at the Fall Festival to get direct feedback from the residents about Southwest LRT.

CIDNA partnered with other agencies to help promote public projects happening in the neighborhood. Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) continues to work on two large sewer projects that impact many households in the neighborhood. The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) implemented improvements to Park Siding Park in 2012; held a multi-day Charrette for Lake of the Isles/Lake Calhoun; and convened a Community Advisory Committee at the end of the year to begin work on trail improvements to Dean Parkway and Cedar Lake.

The MCES sewer replacement project will result in the reconstruction of Sunset Blvd. CIDNA continued to work on securing approval to create a safer pedestrian access between Chowen and Cedar Lake and implement traffic calming solutions along the

entirety of Sunset Blvd. A petition was mailed to residents who own property on Sunset Blvd to vote in favor or against the construction of a sidewalk. Door-knocking and neighbor-to-neighbor conversations were also used to gather feedback for the petition. The petition fell just short of the required 70% approval required by the City of Minneapolis. CIDNA continued to work with MCES and Council Member Lisa Goodman to reach a solution. On January 2, 2013, CIDNA presented to the Pedestrian Advisory Committee to seek their support for a sidewalk in an area that currently is a gap in the City's Pedestrian Master Plan. Public Works approved the sidewalk installation based upon the recommendation of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

The sewer project is also impacting Park Siding Park. Parts of the park are under construction to accommodate sewer work. CIDNA has had a core group of volunteer gardeners who tend the four large flowerbeds in the park. We partnered with MCES and the Park Board to redesign the beds using low-maintenance native plants. Neighborhood volunteers and Conservation Corp workers replanted two of the four flowerbeds in 2012 (the others will be completed in 2013).

How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2012?

We reached out to our under-represented community (renters) by sending two mailing to every resident in Cedar-Isles-Dean and including CIDNA Board meeting minutes, notifications and ads in the local newspaper, Hill and Lake Press, which is delivered to every residential property (including apartment buildings) in the neighborhood.

Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why? What did not work so well? Why?

Over the years, CIDNA has employed a variety of outreach efforts (as outlined above) but residents were not particularly engaged with activities of the organization. We saw an increase in participation in 2012 due to some major projects happening in the neighborhood that will have a significant direct impact on residents (Southwest LRT, reconstruction of Sunset Blvd, and a land development project). As residents learned of projects by which they felt directly affected and began to attend various meetings, they also became aware of the various vehicles by which they could keep better informed. This is sort of an indirect success; but we consider it an accomplishment nonetheless.

Another effort of significant consequence in 2012 was the submission of informative articles to the Hill & Lake Press and Southwest Journal. Board members and Committee Chairs wrote time sensitive material, which was distributed to every resident in CIDNA. However, ensuring that residents read the articles is beyond our control.

Tabling at the Fall Festival on the issue of Southwest LRT was a successful tool to engage with residents in a one-on-one setting. Residents had the opportunity to ask questions and were invited to provide written feedback regarding Southwest LRT.

One resident (not associated with CIDNA) delivered fliers to neighbors along the Southwest LRT route with a call to action to respond to the DEIS. This resulted in an

increase in participation but it did not necessarily engage our under-represented community of renters.

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

CIDNA had direct contact with approximately 300 people in 2012, particularly related to a proposed development, sewer project and Southwest LRT.

How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

CIDNA had 40-50 individuals volunteer for various activities in 2012.

How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?

Approximately 550 people participated in our activities during 2012.

How many people receive your print publications?

CIDNA's mailing list contains over 1,700 households.

How many people receive your electronic communications?

CIDNA's email distribution lists contained 300 contacts in 2012.

2. 2012 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?

Southwest LRT

CIDNA created a Neighborhood Priority Plan (NPP) to focus on the Southwest LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The DEIS was released in October 2012. Public comments were accepted through the end of the year. CIDNA created a Joint Task Force with two other neighborhood groups, two townhome associations and Cedar Lake Park Association to draft a response to the DEIS.

The proposed route for the Southwest LRT is on the Kenilworth Trail through Cedar-Isles-Dean (C-I-D). The project will have a dramatic impact for residents in townhomes, condos, apartments and single-family homes that abut the route as well as trail and park users.

The Joint Task Force worked countless hours to draft a written response to the 1,000+ page DEIS to address issues about visual impacts as well as concerns about noise and vibration from 250 LRT trains per day in this corridor surrounded by parkland and residential property.

CIDNA continues to work on this issue as the project progresses. The project is facing opposition to the proposed re-location of the freight rail (currently in the Kenilworth corridor) to accommodate LRT. A final decision on the location of LRT and freight rail is expected by the end of 2013. CIDNA will continue to engage in efforts to mitigate the impacts of light/freight rail in the neighborhood.



Looking east toward the Kenilworth Trail and railroad crossing from Cedar Lake path along Cedar Lake Parkway. Image on left: existing conditions. Image on right: artist rendering of proposed LRT aerial bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway.

Proposed Development on Lake Street

CIDNA's Land Use and Development Committee engaged with a developer on a proposed a 150- to 170-unit apartment project on the 1.3-acre site at 2622-26 West Lake St. (just east of the Calhoun Beach Club Apartments and north of the Lake Calhoun Beach at West Lake St. and Thomas Ave. S.). The committee had a number of meetings with the developer to discuss design options for the project and communicated its support for an aesthetically designed, moderate-density development on the property that respects the sensitive and complete context of the surrounding parks, lakes, Greenway and residential properties. Options were discussed but the developer was firm on their desire for a 13-story tower. The committee held a public meeting that included a presentation by the developer and a chance for public input on the project. Due to a number of concerns, the Land Use and Development Committee and the CIDNA Board voted unanimously to oppose the tower development proposal. Outcome: the proposal was withdrawn by developer. We anticipate that another developer will propose a project for the site in 2013.

3. Housing

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

Ten percent – see suggestion under #5 - *How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a community participation group?*

4. Financial Reports

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

See separate document.

5. 2012 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2012:

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

Park Siding Park

Park Siding Park (PSP) continues to be a primary focus for the neighborhood. Park enhancements in 2012 included the following:

- Redesign and replacement of plantings in two of the four large flower beds with sustainable species
- Install drip irrigation system in these same two flower beds
- Installation of a permanent table tennis table, the first of its kind in the City of Minneapolis and its park system
- Plant new trees (magnolias) and replacement of diseased trees

The MCES sewer realignment has required an easement through the park resulting in the removal of the playground equipment as well as two of the planting beds. In October of 2012, a public meeting was held to gain input on replacement of the play equipment. At this time, MCES had proposed play equipment, which would serve children age 2 – 5. The CIDNA NRP Committee pushed back on this plan as the new play ground would not provide a “like” play experience as what had been removed.

Park reconstruction slated for summer 2013 include:

- New playground equipment divided into two containers – one for 2-5-yr olds; the other for 5-12-yr olds
- Ornamental railing and planting beds to provide a buffer from the street
- Creation of an accessible and inviting park “entry”
- Placement of a crosswalk for safer park access from the Kenilworth (approval of the crosswalk installation was as a result of a presentation to the Pedestrian Advisory Committee and their subsequent recommendation to Public Works
- Reconstruction of two planting beds with drip irrigation
- New lighting at park entrance

Sunset Boulevard Pedestrian Accessibility and Traffic Calming

Met Council Environmental Services' project to replace a sewage force main, will come through the C-I-D neighborhood in Spring 2013. The facilities plan for the project calls for placement of new force main pipes under the roadway on the North (Westbound) lane of Sunset Blvd, and full roadway restoration to its original configuration at no cost to the City or its residents (funded entirely through sewer tax). CIDNA recognized that this project provides a unique opportunity for significant roadway design improvements desired by the neighborhood.

Timeline Overview

- The Cedar-Isles-Dean neighborhood has voiced its concern with the lack of pedestrian safety on Sunset Blvd Section B as far back as 1993. At this time, CIDNA was in the process of developing its NRP Phase I Action Plan. In a neighborhood-wide survey, the Sunset sidewalk issue rose to one of the top priorities.
- In 1996, a City of Minneapolis Traffic Management Study was completed for C-I-D, which included a range of street redesign alternatives for Sunset Boulevard.
- In March 2010, the CIDNA NRP committee conducted another neighborhood survey to establish priorities to be included in the NRP Phase II Action Plan. Again, the Sunset pedestrian safety issue rose to the top.
- Notified in January of 2010 of MCES sewer construction that would effectively require reconstruction of Sunset Blvd, the CIDNA Board took action to engage the community. The CIDNA Board invited MCES to present construction schedules and discuss possible enhancement opportunities at the December 2010, Board meeting. Many residents were in attendance.
- Other public forums held to solicit input were held in September 2010; Fall Festivals 2010, 2011 and 2012 as well as the 2010, 2011 and 2012 CIDNA Annual Meetings.
- MCES, with the help of traffic engineering consultants, HR Green, conducted several public meetings and open houses in 2011 to determine Sunset Blvd reconstruction priorities.
- October 25, 2011 – the Sunset Improvement document was forwarded to Council Member Goodman and Don Elwood, Public Works.
- In November 2011, the CIDNA Board prepared Resolutions for Public Works, MPRB and MCES to work with the C-I-D neighborhood in meeting the four established Sunset reconstruction objectives.
- Early in 2012, CIDNA was notified that the decision was made to lay the sewer main under the North side of Sunset Blvd. A sidewalk (curbside abutted or with green boulevard) could be included in boulevard reconstruction.
- Council Member Goodman proposed a 70% resident approval threshold for sidewalk installation. A petition was complete in Fall 2012 with 7 residents in opposition – narrowly missing the 70% needed.
- In November of 2012, Council Member Goodman advised CIDNA to present the Sunset Blvd issue to the Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The presentation was made on January 2, 2013 and pursuant to the City's Pedestrian Master Plan and complete streets policy to provide pedestrian access where and when the opportunity arises, the PAC subsequently made the recommendation to Public Works to advise MCES to reconstruct Sunset with a sidewalk on the north side and construct corner bump outs for traffic calming.

After 20 years of neighborhood action, Sunset Blvd will include a sidewalk for safe pedestrian accessibility. We're calling that a success!

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?

Over the past year, CIDNA has continued to spend quite a bit of time in engagement with MPRB. We have established a good and open dialogue regarding Park Siding Park renovations, Cedar Lake pedestrian and bike trails as well as Cedar Lake Pkwy/Southwest LRT crossing mitigation efforts.

Also, once CIDNA had the opportunity to present the Sunset Blvd sidewalk proposal before the Pedestrian Advisory Committee, which seemed to open a better stream of communication and action with the City and Public Works. In hindsight, it would have been more effective had CIDNA been advised on PAC much, much earlier in the process.

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

2. *City Communications – effectiveness*

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

- Many of the public hearing notices are very cryptic and require follow-up on the part of neighborhoods to learn more so we can determine whether it is an issue we wish to address.
- Newsletters from our City Council members (Goodman and Tuthill) are excellent.
- Communication from the City regarding Single-sort recycling was excellent.

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 receive complaints from residents who feel that the City does not properly communicate regarding issues/projects until very late in the process. CIDNA continues to struggle with ways to properly communicate with residents. We need help from the City to improve communication with residents. We do not have the volunteer man-hours or the budget to communicate in ways beyond what we are currently providing.

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?

CIDNA would like to thank Lisa Goodman and Meg Tuthill (Minneapolis City Council), Anita Tabb and Deborah Bartles (MPRB) and Adam Gordon (MCES) with the help, guidance and responsiveness they have shown over this past year. They have been in attendance at meetings and functions whenever and wherever requested.

One idea for improving functionality between the City and CIDNA would be to facilitate communication between specific department personnel and sub-committees. For example, over the several years CIDNA has been working on the Sunset Blvd sidewalk issue, we were not aware of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Possibly, had we known about this committee prior to last November, we could have circumvented a few false starts.

5. **City Assistance**

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

The C-I-D neighborhood has, over the past several years, been involved in quite a few significant issues/changes. CIDNA has tried very hard to engage residents in the programs and processes, but have had spotty response until residents become aware (often at the 11th hour) and/or are directly impacted. Examples: Southwest LRT, sidewalk installation, park enhancements, etc.

Because the primary goals of NCR are community engagement and reaching under-represented residents, we would be interested in hearing suggestions or given additional tools to meet those goals on our small CPP allocation.

Other suggestions -

- NCR could provide better policy guidelines in respect to housing project definitions and requirements. Take into account the variety of housing and property needs/issues affecting different neighborhoods. For example, the Southwest LRT running down the Kenilworth, and possible co-location, will have significant effect on C-I-D housing stock including potential removal of townhouse units and reduction in property value; therefore, reducing property tax revenue. CIDNA feels that working toward acceptable mitigation should be considered as an effort to *“Stabilize the quality of the housing stock in the neighborhood”*.
- Get creative with the funding so that a small percentage of the CPP can go toward food or find a way to ease that NRP restriction. Food brings people together.

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?*

CIDNA would like to acknowledge the help and guidance Jack Whitehurst has given us over this past year. Jack has provided invaluable assistance in steering us through the CPP and NPP process while not losing focus on our objectives. We would also like to thank Bob Cooper for his responsiveness and willingness to help us sort through questions and arriving at effective solutions.