

2013 Community Participation Program **Neighborhood Annual Report Form**

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Neighborhood Organization: Columbia Park Neighborhood Association

Contact person: Liz Wielinski

Date of Board Approval: August 18, 2014

1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2013, Please provide information about:

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2013?
2013 was a difficult year, but we did hold the annual Earth Day event in April, our annual meeting and potluck picnic in June, our puppet show in June, supported the work of 2 different community garden areas, assisted with 2 different NNO sites and sent out 2 newsletters and maintained our website. We did this all while having a major transition from a long time staff person.
- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013?
The largest underrepresent community in our neighborhood is renters. We did make sure they received the newsletter and did send an extra mailing reminding them of our annual meeting/picnic.
- Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?
I think that the lack of consistency with the newsletter in 2013 as well as the transition of staff gave us little chance to try any new strategies.
- What did not work so well? Why?
It seems that our neighbors are more likely to come to meetings or get involved when there is a crisis of sorts. We had a whole new group of neighbors come forward to participate when MNDOT took down the trees and shrubs that served as the sound barrier for University AV (Hwy 47).
- How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)? We have had a core group of people attending meetings (5-6) and have a new group of 15 households participating in our

new raingarden effort (signed up for the lottery in which 10 will work with Metro Blooms to plant a raingarden on their property). We have been working with the 5 families that live along University AV with the missing trees and have had 20 families participate at NNO events. Our newsletter and other mailings reach 706 different addresses.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?
Between our board members and regular attendees, garden coordinators, garden volunteers, NNO volunteers and our walking group we have 15-18 regular volunteers
- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?
Between attending meetings , gardening, attending Earth Day, the puppet show, NNO and other activities I would estimate that 50 people have participated in our activities.
- How many people receive your print publications?
Our mailings are done through Do Good Biz and at recent count reach 706 unique addresses.
- How many people receive your electronic communications?
We do not at this time have an e-newsletter, but we do have a core group of 35 that are receiving sporadic e communications and we are growing that list in order to get a larger group involved. We hope to get a more regular mailchimp type of news brief out in the future. We do have a new Facebook page and have 61 friends following us.

2. **2013 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?

In 2013 we continued to work on the issue surrounding the 2012 removal of trees along University AV NE. This was complicated due to the various governmental entities involved and lack of clarity in expectations regarding how the work would be done and where the funding would come from.

- Who was impacted?

The residents who live along University AV NE and those other families in the next block who were now living with loud rush hour traffic noise levels due to the removal off the natural buffer.

- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?

The neighborhood group has worked with MNDOT, the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to come up with a plan to re-green the roadside. We will be combining efforts in the early summer of 2014 to install and maintain the new buffer.

- What was the outcome?

At the end of 2013 the grant was done and the Minneapolis City Council had agreed and taken action to become the fiscal agent for the project. At the time of this form being completed we have completed the planting and are doing regular watering to keep it alive. There should be pictures of the finished project in the 2014 report.

3. 2013 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013:

- What were your organization's major accomplishments?

In 2013 we were blessed to have Jeff Schalles come onto the board and he is now writing our neighborhood newsletter. We have already had a successful production in 2013 and both deadlines in the early part of 2014 have been met and the product has been excellent.

- How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?

We decided to offer a raingarden program in 2014. The first issue of the new newsletter (Dec. 2013) asked for people interested in participating in the program to contact the board. We had a great response and have already made plans to offer the program again in 2015 to accommodate the number of requests we had for participation.

4. *Housing*

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

We have continued to make our revolving loan program available and have advertised it in our newly updated newsletter and have placed signs at our most visible community garden area advertising the program. I would say however that only 2% of staff time has been devoted to this program. In 2014 we will be trying to find a vendor to facilitate our emergency home loan program which will take up more of the staff's time.

5. *Financial Reports*

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

Our Funding is mostly CCP/NPP, NRP and Community Garden fees at this juncture. We hope to do more outside fundraising after we become a 501(c)3. Attached are the expenditures and income spreadsheet for 2013.

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 have spent the past year working with Andrew Carlson in Public Works on our MNDOT grant and that has gone extremely well. Our new staff person has worked extensively with the NCR department and they have been very helpful. We have also been working with our CM's office and Lisa Brock is a treasure.

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?
Yes

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?
We have had challenges with some timelines because our neighborhood does not meet every month (July and Dec. there are no meetings). This does occasionally create some difficulties with Planning deadlines and 45 day comment periods, but we are managing the best we can. It would be great if the MPHA job postings were emailed rather than snail mailed to the neighborhoods for the ability to post them quicker.

If not, did your organization inform somebody at the City of this? Did the City respond in a positive manner? Please explain.

We haven't had issues with the city that we couldn't work around.

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 have not had issues with city departments. It was MNDOT that was an issue, which we are resolving, but could have gone smoother.

5. *City Assistance*

How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a community participation group? If there is a checklist of forms due to NCR annually it would be nice to have that easily available to the neighborhood staff so we do not miss deadlines going forward. Many times there is just no notice until you notice you are on a delinquent list.

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?*

Due to the transition from a long time staff person to a new person we have had some issues with the paperwork and timelines that have us tardy on a number of requirements of the NCR department. We are doing our best to come into compliance. We appreciate the efforts made by the NCR department to help us when our timing has been less than precise.