

**East Isles Residents' Association (EIRA)
2013 Annual Report
Community Participation Program**

Contact person: Monica Smith, Coordinator
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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 outreach efforts included our annual mailing to all residents; monthly e-newsletters; meeting minutes, notifications and ads in community newspapers (*Hill and Lake Press* and *Southwest Journal*); and updates on our website (www.eastisles.org).

Residents were invited to participate in monthly board and committee meetings. Our committee meetings and events offered the opportunity for residents to become EIRA members. We recruited volunteers via standing committees, e-newsletter, events, community newspaper, personal contact and our annual mailing.

EIRA organized two large annual social events: Ice Skating Social in January and the Ice Cream Social in August. These popular events were very well attended. EIRA also holds semi-annual membership meetings (April and October). We tried something new in 2013 and held the April meeting at a restaurant and provided a free chili dinner. The October meeting included presentations about the new Walker Library and the Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis.

The Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis is a Metro Transit project to study transit options for Lake St and the Midtown Greenway. EIRA helped promote the project's public meetings to our residents. The East Isles Transportation Committee engaged with residents to learn more about issues and concerns regarding the study by conducting surveys at April and October annual meetings and extensive outreach to attendees at the Ice Cream Social in August.

The Outreach & Nominations Committee employed a variety of methods to recruit new board members to serve on the EIRA Board of Directors.

The East Isles Green Team held a number of very successful events in 2013 (see 2013 Highlights for more details).

Board members staffed an EIRA table at the Uptown Association Annual Meeting Expo; over 30 volunteers ran a pop booth during the Uptown Art Fair; and we participated in the Annual Wine Tasting Fundraiser benefiting Uptown neighborhoods.

How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013?

We reached out to our under-represented community by sending a mailing to every resident in East Isles and including EIRA Board meeting minutes, notifications and ads in the local newspaper (*Hill and Lake Press*), which is delivered to every residential property (including multi-family buildings) in the neighborhood.

Fliers to promote events were hung in the lobbies of larger apartment buildings, posted in local coffeeshops/businesses and on the community bulletin board in Triangle Park.

Board members were asked to distribute fliers to promote the Annual Meeting to friends and neighbors.

We redesigned our website and created a Facebook page (see Highlight section for details).

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

Personal phone call and email communication were the most effective strategies to encourage participation and recruit volunteers.

Our monthly e-newsletter is a great tool to communicate events, programs and issues.

The Green Team effectively used lawn signs and door-hangers to promote the 2nd Annual Super Sale.

What did not work so well? Why?

We had difficulty keeping our Facebook page updated with all of the events. The problem may have been that several people had access to update the site and everyone assumed that others were keeping the page current.

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

EIRA had direct contact with approximately 300 people in 2013.

How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

EIRA had 80 individuals volunteer for various activities in 2013.

How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?

Approximately 800 people participated in our activities during 2013.

How many people receive your print publications?

2,200 households

How many people receive your electronic communications?

EIRA's email distribution lists contained 415 contacted in 2013.

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?
- Who was impacted?
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
- What was the outcome?



Green Team

The East Isles Green Team's goals for 2013 were to bring neighbors of all ages together to learn, have fun and take action in three areas:

- Reduce, reuse, recycle waste
- Conserve household energy
- Improve the quality of our waterways by creating and promoting a demonstration raingarden

East Isles Green Team organized 20 successful events in 2013 including: green film series featuring six films throughout the year; two educational events plus an anniversary celebration at our community raingarden; a four-part climate change discussion series; Earth Day clean up; Solar 101 presentation; and the second annual East Isles Super Sale.



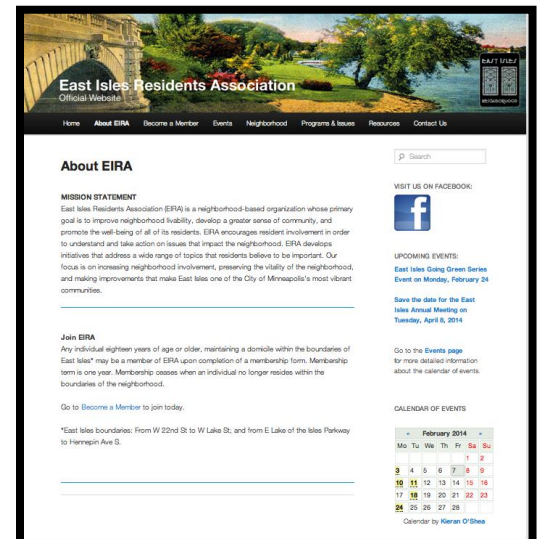
In addition, the team also volunteered to help with organics composting at community events (Nature Valley Bicycle Festival, Uptown Art Fair, St. Mary's Greek Festival and the Wine Tasting Fundraiser).

The Green Team completed the yearlong Demonstration Raingarden project with educational seminars in March and May and an anniversary celebration in September.

Website Redesign

Our website used specific software that required us to contact the Webmaster every time we had an edit; as a result keeping the website current was very cumbersome.

In Summer 2013, we completely redesigned the website allowing EIRA to control the content. The new website is attractive and the information is current and relevant.



3. **2013 Accomplishments**

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013:

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

Smith Triangle Park

A committee was formed to focus on Smith Triangle Park. Smith Triangle has a highly visible location on Hennepin Avenue but it is a small park and does not receive a lot of attention from the Park Board. The committee began working on ideas to make improvements to the park.

A clean up day was organized in June 2013 (see the results in the photo at right!).



The committee met with the Park Board to request maintenance improvements and recruited a landscape architecture student from the University of Minnesota to provide ideas to revitalize the park (this process is ongoing in 2014).

The Park Board is committed to improving the park and included \$200,000 for Smith Triangle in their five-year plan.

Zoning Committee

The Zoning Committee was feeling unprepared to deal with some of the zoning issues that were coming before the group. To remedy the situation, the committee planned a series of meetings to educate members on the following topics: CPED Zoning and Planning Overview, Uptown Small Area Plan, and Shoreland Overlay Districts.

The sessions provided historical information and practical tools for reviewing zoning requests.

Community Leader Award

The Uptown Association (at its annual meeting in January 2013) nominated EIRA Coordinator Monica Smith for a Community Leader Award.

4. **Housing**

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

Fifteen percent

5. *Financial Reports*

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

Please see separate document.

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 interact most directly with our City Council Member Meg Tuthill and her staff. CM Tuthill attended our monthly board meetings to share information about City news and issues.

We work most directly with NCR for our CPP and NRP programs.

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.
- Newsletter from Council Member Tuthill was very helpful.
- The City offers a number of ways to keep informed about Snow Emergencies.

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.

Public hearing notices are mailed within 10 days of hearings. The notice is often the first time we are learning about an issue. This presents a challenge to adequately respond since our board meets once a month. The City wants feedback from the neighborhood organization but the timing rarely works out to be able to respond with only a 10-day notice.

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? 3

4. City Departments

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

- Greater transparency and information sharing.
- Committee, board and commissions should be respectful of residents who attend public meetings.

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 can share best practices of other neighborhood organizations to help us better reach our renter community.

NCR's reorganization shifted East Isles from Robert Thompson to Jack Whitehurst. EIRA would like to thank Robert Thompson for supporting our neighborhood over many years. And thanks to Jack for ensuring a smooth transition and not missing a beat.

We would also like to thank Bob Cooper for his responsiveness and willingness to help us sort through questions and arrive at effective solutions.

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?