

## **Description of Current CE Activities**

Ten types of activity comprise the current Minneapolis community engagement system:

- 1. Activities of Elected Officials and Their Offices**
- 2. Standing Committees of the City Council**
- 3. Formal Public Hearings of the City Council**
- 4. Official Advisory Boards and Commissions**
- 5. Temporary Advisory Groups or Committees**
- 6. Citywide Communication and CE Activities**
- 7. Citywide and Small-Area Planning Activities**
- 8. Department-, Program- or Project-Specific Activities**
- 9. Neighborhood Citizen Participation Contract Activities**
- 10. The Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)**

### ***CE Activity 1: Activities of Elected Officials and Their Offices***

The community engagement activities of elected officials may include visits to regularly-scheduled neighborhood or ward meetings; blogs, newsletters, email or other notices sent directly to constituents; special meetings or forums convened to discuss a particular issue or pending decision; constituent-relations and outreach activities conducted by office staff; door-knocking and election-related activities; and of course elections themselves, which could be considered the ultimate community engagement activity.

### ***CE Activity 2: Standing Committees of the City Council***

There are eight standing committees of the City Council, seven of which meet once during the two-week cycle prior to meetings of the full Council. These seven committees are Community Development; Health, Energy and Environment; Intergovernmental Relations; Public Safety and Regulatory Services; Transportation and Public Works; Ways and Means / Budget; and Zoning and Planning. The eighth standing committee, Claims, meets once each quarter. Three special standing committees of the City Council are convened as called by the Chair. They are Elections, Rules and Taxes. The Executive Committee, which considers appointments of department heads and other officials and negotiates labor contracts, generally meets on a bi-weekly basis.

Most City Council decisions are considered by at least one of these standing committees before coming to the full Council for final action. Although the City Council's meetings are also public and televised, there is seldom time allotted for public input or dialogue; this type of engagement is usually handled at the committee level rather than at meetings of the full City Council.

### ***CE Activity 3: Formal Public Hearings of the City Council***

The City Council is required to host formal public hearings for some decisions, including the adoption of the annual budget, applications for federal funding, and certain decisions concerning the sale and use of land. The Mayor and Council may choose to hold public hearings on other decisions as well. Public hearings usually have a formal structure designed for the one-way communication of community concerns and opinions to the Mayor and Council, and are not generally intended to be forums for discussion or collaborative decision making.

### ***CE Activity 4: Official Advisory Boards and Commissions***

There are also over 50 official boards and commissions, to which community members are appointed to advise the Mayor and City Council on a wide range of issues and decisions. Some of these, like the Planning Commission and the Capital Long-Range Improvements Committee, have well-defined functions and provide highly structured recommendations to the Mayor and Council that directly influence public decision making. Others, like the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee and Latino Advisory Committee, also provide input and recommendations on City decisions, but the process is not as clearly structured and varies widely depending on the composition and leadership of the group at a given time.

Finally, there are a number of independent and multi-jurisdictional boards and commissions, including the school, park and library boards, the Youth Coordinating Board, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program Policy

Board and the Board of Estimate and Taxation. A complete list of current boards and commissions is included in the appendix to this report.

#### ***CE Activity 5: Temporary Advisory Groups or Committees***

From time to time, the Mayor and City Council also establish temporary advisory committees to advise the City regarding a particular issue or decision, such as the selection of a department head or the establishment of a new policy or program. These groups are appointed by the Mayor and Council for a specific period of time, to influence a specific decision, and then disband.

#### ***CE Activity 6: Citywide Communication and CE Activities***

In addition to working with individual departments to promote and facilitate use of the CE Process Model described above, the Communication Department also coordinates a number of citywide outreach and engagement activities, including a bi-annual resident survey and development of the increasingly interactive City of Minneapolis website. The website allows residents to sign up for automatic email updates on a growing range of topics, including the agendas and minutes of individual committees, boards and commissions. It can also be used to provide an online forum or survey on a current topic or pending public decision. The City is actively exploring increased use of interactive “e-government” technology.

#### ***CE Activity 7: Citywide and Small-Area Planning***

The Planning Division of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) works directly with residents, businesses and community organizations on a wide range of citywide and small-area planning activities. For example, CPED is currently facilitating community engagement in small-area planning activities in Downtown and Uptown and on West Broadway Avenue, while developing the citywide community engagement process for the ten-year update of the citywide comprehensive plan (“The Minneapolis Plan”) in 2007-2008.

#### ***CE Activity 8: Department-, Program- or Project-Specific Activities***

Many City departments – including Police, Public Works, Regulatory Services, CPED, and Health and Family Support – regularly engage the community in decision making relative to specific programs and projects. For example, Public Works regularly provides public notices and participates in community meetings regarding planned street and infrastructure improvements. Regulatory Services facilitates public engagement on a wide range of site-specific licensing and environmental issues. The Police Department convenes Precinct Advisory Committees and staffs the Police Community Relations Council.

In addition to the official advisory boards and commissions described above, many departments also convene temporary or on-call advisory committees for specific purposes, such as the multi-cultural advisory committee recently convened by the Department of Health and Family Services to advise the Public Health Advisory Committee on the development of its urban health agenda.

#### ***CE Activity 9: Neighborhood Citizen Participation Contracts***

In addition to the department-sponsored activities described above, CPED also administers citizen participation contracts with 77 neighborhood organizations, and works with these organizations to engage the community around a variety of development-related decisions.

These contracts identify specific types of decisions for which the City provides neighborhood groups with notification, and a 45-day review period, before taking action. These contracts do not obligate neighborhood groups – or the City – to engage the community regarding other kinds of City decisions. The 2006 Citizen Participation Program guidelines are included in the appendix to this report.

#### ***CE Activity 10: The Neighborhood Revitalization Program***

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) is a 20-year program designed to revitalize Minneapolis neighborhoods by engaging residents and local government in the development and implementation of neighborhood action plans, primarily funded by tax-increment revenue from downtown redevelopment projects of the 1970s and 1980s. While the NRP has increased the organizational capacity of neighborhoods – and has engaged residents in the development and implementation of local action plans – the program has not generally focused on engaging the community in broader, citywide decisions such as policies, programs or budget priorities.