

Charge #4 - Improved organizational structure

Charge: Develop alternatives for an improved organizational structure that supports the connection points and identifies responsibility for action.

Several themes for recommended improvements emerged through small group discussions. These themes represent high level recommendations for improvement to community engagement system. Under each theme are specific recommendations. The specific recommendations are not meant to be exhaustive but to give a sense of the intention of the broader based them for which it is associated with.

Recommended Community Engagement Improvement Strategies

1. Inter-jurisdictional collaboration
 - Independent boards need to be formally included in the community engagement system (ex. School Board, Park Board, County, etc.)
 - Annual or Biennial Gathering/Celebration of the Community that includes community organizations, city departments, libraries, schools and parks
2. Department responsible for community engagement integrated into City organizational structure
 - Create a Department or Commission for Public Engagement under City Council with adequate staffing
 - Coordinate input from NRP to City departments
3. Improved accessibility to information through consistent interface(s) that is "push" and "pull"
 - Connect with County, schools, parks, libraries by having them come to community organization meetings
 - More meetings at the times the affected community organizations and their consistencies can attend
 - Provide information "on demand" (more video recordings of meetings)
 - Community centers
4. Processes are well defined, well documented, provide community input at meaningful points throughout the process and provide feedback to the community at its conclusion
 - Have government representatives from all jurisdictions come to community organizations to speak.
 - Listening at the front end of the process while it still can substantially influence the outcome
 - Get citizen input into the planning process
 - Establish policies that require reporting back after implementation just as with policies requiring reporting before decision-making
5. Entities within the community engagement system must have well defined responsibilities and well understood relationships to each other
6. Entities within all aspects of the structure are driven by consistent expectations and good customer service
 - The City documents the value of and commitment to community engagement

- Help inform people of the various avenues and resources available to them
7. Block clubs incorporated as a basic building block of the system
- Integrate block clubs into community organizations and sharing information
 - End “gate keeping” of block club information
 - Outreach to new block residents – welcome packets, welcome teams/committees
8. Build on what works
- NRP is powerful – networking brings together City, school, etc.
 - Identify and utilize what is already working in communities that serve as systems of communication and information sharing and provide supporting resources

Additional comments related to this charge:

- Bring more citizens to city hall in a fun way – food and transportation
- 80+ groups can be administratively heavy, but it creates a different level of input
- Neighborhood groups: some are naturally consolidating
- A consistent and widespread community engagement system could be useful in dealing with unprecedented crime in some parts of our city
- Citizen committees at 13 planning district level, 80+ too many
- Review what funds the city gives to the schools
- Community schools are better for community engagement and communication in general
- Put in place requirements of communication engagement in order for schools to receive city funds
- Schools consistent expectations throughout the district
- Gap in neighborhood action plans and funding
- If the community engagement system holds neighborhood action plans as value, then resources and staff should be provided for those action plans
- A Commission of Community Engagement should have limited taxing authority