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NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEPARTMENT FUNCTIONS

The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department will be housed in the broader department of the City Coordinator and both serve residents directly and support all other City departments with enterprise guidance in the realm of strong neighborhood and community relationships. The department will be charged with strengthening our City's quality of life through vigorous community participation, resident involvement in neighborhood and community organizations, and supporting clearly defined links between the City, City services and neighborhood and community organizations.

The department will be assisted in achieving its mission with the help of the Neighborhood and Community Advisory Board, a group of eighteen residents appointed to oversee the City's relationship with neighborhoods, community organizations and the crucial link between City services and its residents.

The following descriptions outline the broad functional outcomes for the department. The functions are not mutually exclusive and the aspirations will be achieved through the creative definition and use of both personnel and financial resources.

Neighborhood Vitality

The City's "connected communities" goal prescribes that there be "thriving neighborhoods" in every corner of Minneapolis. Neighborhood vitality has been both a constant aspiration and a trademark of our identity throughout the City's history. So, too, has the City's partnership with neighborhood groups in defining the opportunities and challenges that face us in achieving truly livable neighborhoods.

Neighborhood groups exist as independent organizations. Each has their own priorities and processes. The City contracts with these organizations to provide a forum for participation of residents and other stakeholders. Our work with neighborhood groups, however, extends beyond this contractual relationship; we share a common goal of creating a better City for all our residents. To achieve this goal, the City and its neighborhood groups must work to forge and foster strong partnerships that respect each other's roles and responsibilities.

The most remarkable fruit of this partnership began in 1990 with the creation of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). For the past two decades, the NRP process has worked to make the city's residential areas better places to live, work, learn and play. NRP is an investment program based on bringing residents into the priority-setting process of the City and on the belief that the mobilization of untapped resources, energy and creativity can make our collective desire for a better future a reality.

This department will focus on nurturing neighborhood vitality through neighborhood-based priority setting, planning and implementation.

To be expanded [Further discussion needs to occur about what neighborhoods produce and how plans are affected by any expectations from the City or based on contracts with the City.]

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Neighborhood Organizational Infrastructure

Community participation is a basic City service. The department will administer a new, enhanced Community Participation Program to include:

- neighborhood group administrative funding contracts;
- technical support to neighborhood organizations to help build the capacity and leadership development of neighborhood groups through training and educational opportunities;
- assistance to neighborhood groups in navigating City departments;
- support for the involvement of diverse populations in neighborhood organizations, including alternative methods and models for involvement; and
- enhancement of the professional support available to neighborhoods from City staff.

Neighborhood Investment Fund & Microgranting

The *Framework for the Future* states that a Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) should be established by the City to ideally provide dedicated funds to neighborhood organizations. Depending on the resources available to such a fund, the NIF could be allocated by neighborhoods to help address neighborhood-identified priorities or competitively for specific projects and to achieve citywide objectives.

Department staff will work with neighborhood and community groups on the allocation and implementation of NIF funds, and the integration of these activities with other City resources and initiatives. Department staff will also work with neighborhood and community groups on the continued planning and implementation of their Phase I and Phase II NRP activities.

A Strengthened Link

To be expanded [Discuss leveraging department institutional position and the strength of internal coordination to assure that neighborhood and community perspectives are appropriately reflected in the broad resource allocation decisions of the City.]

Block Clubs

Block clubs are an essential civic building block of neighborhoods. Department staff, in cooperation with community crime prevention, will promote more collaboration and improved communication between community organizations and block clubs where their respective goals in community participation align.

Access and Outreach

The City's "One Minneapolis" goal prescribes "equal access, equal opportunity and equal input" for all residents of the City. These aspirations have been important throughout the City's history and development, but become even more pertinent as we experience rapidly changing demographics and welcome a growing population and new and diverse residents everyday. The City will remain strong if our residents are engaged in civic life and understand fully their opportunities for community involvement.

To close race and class gaps and assure that City services are understood, obtainable and equitable, this department will focus on addressing and removing all barriers to full civic participation and meaningful engagement. In the recent past, the City has made substantial headway in assuring that all language barriers are removed through a comprehensive approach on limited English proficiency planning and implementation. In addition, we are noted as a City that is accessible to those with physical disabilities. That said, the coordination and

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communication effort to assure all barriers are removed can be renewed and re-energized through a matrixed effort in this new department.

Finally, multicultural barriers exist today that didn't twenty years ago. Because of our strong belief that we all benefit from a population who understand civic responsibility and the value of contributing to community strength, it is important that we look anew at ways to bridge cultural differences and embrace new definitions of what real community means.

Multicultural Services & Outreach

Strengthen the ability of diverse cultural communities to participate fully in the civic and economic life of our community through sustainable outreach strategies, coordination with other governmental jurisdictions and their services, and education about community-based programs aimed at increasing the self sufficiency of minority and immigrant groups.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan Implementation & Interpretation Services

Continue interpretation and translation activities while pursuing the integration of this work into all City departments. Finish implementation of departmental LEP plans focused on the removal of language barriers.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

Provide a point of contact and communication for people with disabilities. Serve as a supportive link to all City departments in removing all barriers to employment, movement throughout the City, and full and complete participation and compliance with federally-prescribed (ADA) mandates. Work closely with the City's Commission on People with Disabilities to address concerns and seize opportunities for change and improvement in our environment.

Welcoming & Orienting New Residents

The City of Minneapolis has experienced extraordinary growth in the past ten years. Downtown population has soared and the number of residents arriving from foreign countries has exploded. We have an expectation of community responsibility that is unique from many parts of the country or world, and we should not be timid about providing good information regarding civic opportunities for participation and contribution. From education about the services offered by Minneapolis 311 to an invitation for participation in neighborhood organizations or block clubs to assistance with library services or access to technology, proactively welcoming new residents will go a long way to assuring community strength and vitality.

Community Participation and Engagement

Community participation and engagement serves to strengthen Minneapolis. The City's formal adoption of core principles for community engagement reflects the shared beliefs of the Mayor and City Council on how the City should engage the community and how the community can participate in the City's decision-making process. The principles serve as a guide for community engagement and establish a foundation for expectations that the Mayor and City Council hold of City staff, department leadership and elected officials.

- 1) RIGHT TO BE INVOLVED** – Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- 2) CONTRIBUTION WILL BE THOUGHTFULLY CONSIDERED** - Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will be thoughtfully considered.

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- 3) **RECOGNIZE THE NEEDS OF ALL** - Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
- 4) **SEEK OUT INVOLVEMENT** - Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- 5) **PARTICIPANTS DESIGN PARTICIPATION** - Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- 6) **ADEQUATE INFORMATION** - Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- 7) **KNOWN EFFECT OF PARTICIPATION** - Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Not only do these principles help to capture the viewpoints and concerns of those who are potentially affected, they also foster communities that are involved in the business of government and should lead to more sustainable policies, programs and services which take into account diverse community needs and views.

Connection to Neighborhood Groups & Community Organizations

All City officials and departments will continue to have multiple points of contact with neighborhoods and community organizations. That said, there is room for better coordination of multi-department efforts, support for resident initiatives, and assistance to external stakeholders who are experiencing a breakdown in meaningful engagement activities. This department will not only organize the breadth of information about neighborhood and community partners, but also serve to troubleshoot when conflicts or problems arise.

Boards & Commissions: Mission-Driven, Well-Oriented, Quality Public Service

The City utilizes the volunteer efforts of hundreds of residents who serve on more than fifty advisory boards and commissions. These board and commissions represent the key core of community engagement activity, especially in regard to City actions and decision-making. Residents should have good information about service opportunities and be well-oriented once selected to serve. In addition, the missions of our boards and commissions should be clear and relevant to the City's need for meaningful input. Finally, staff that supports this component of community engagement should be trained and supported in their efforts.

Citizenship / Citizens' Academy

In cooperation with the Clerk's division on elections and all departments of the City, Minneapolis should do more to educate those interested in the activities of a municipal corporation, the partnership goals we have with City residents, the expectations of citizenship, and the opportunities available for community engagement.

City Staff Education & Training

Coordinator departments provide assistance to all City departments in the key areas of business planning & performance management, finance, personnel, technology, intergovernmental relations and more. In addition, Coordinator staff serves as consultants around enterprise initiatives such as sustainability, community engagement, enterprise information management and others as needed. It will be valuable to have a team of staff who can be helpful throughout our organization on matters of meaningful resident connection and communication.

Internal Services

To be expanded [Description of what is meant by “internal services.”]

Data & Information Management

Keep comprehensive and updated database and contact information about all neighborhood and community organizations for use by all City departments. Work to establish easy systems for use of communications tools.

Two-Way Communications

Research and identify tangible ways to communicate to residents and expand opportunities for the City to hear from Minneapolis residents. Address the “feedback loop” that is desired by those who provide input and is frequently missing after decisions get made.

Accountability and Performance Measures

Establish measurement and evaluation tools for use by all City departments. Offer a forum through which City departments can share lessons learned from their respective community engagement activities.

As with all City departments, a strong set of outcome measures will be established against which progress will be measured. Department leadership will appear at *Results Minneapolis* progress conferences to discuss trends, progress on goals, and departmental programs and practices that are producing the greatest results or determine and eliminate problems getting in the way.

Staff Collectives and Coordination Teams

Staff teams from across the enterprise should be organized to support the achievement of neighborhood development, board and commission vitality, accessibility goals, and specific initiatives related to community connectedness.

Training and Resources

Aid in the planning and implementation of community engagement activities and enhance the community engagement skill sets by coordinating training sessions, cross-departmental collaboration, and up-to-date contact information and meeting resources.

Analysis of Community Engagement Practices

To be expanded Conduct ongoing analyses of City processes to increase two-way integration of neighborhood and City goals, priorities, plans, programs, projects and activities.