



# Request for City Council Committee Action from the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department

**Date:** November 18, 2010

**To:** Council Member Robert Lilligren, Chair, Committee of the Whole

**Referral to:** City Council

**Subject:** Community Participation Program Guidelines

**Recommendation:** Approve the attached Community Participation Program Guidelines.

**Previous Directives:** The December 17, 2009 resolution of the City Council establishing the Consolidated Tax Increment Financing District (Consolidated District) states that “the City’s Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) Department will be bringing forward specific recommendations to the City Council on how Net Tax Increment for neighborhood revitalization purposes should be programmed and spent.”

### Department Information

Prepared by: Robert Thompson and Jennifer Lastoka, Neighborhood and Community Relations Department

Approved by:

David Rubedor, Neighborhood and Community Relations Director \_\_\_\_\_

Steven Bosacker, City Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Presenters in Committee: David Rubedor, Robert Thompson, and Jennifer Lastoka

### Financial Impact

No financial impact to the 2011 City Budget. The December 17, 2009 resolution of the City Council establishing the Consolidated Tax Increment Financing District (Consolidated District) identified “neighborhood revitalization purposes” as a qualifying use of Consolidated District revenues. The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department will direct at least \$3,000,000 from the Consolidated District annually for the Community Participation Program, as reviewed and approved by the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission.

### Community Impact

From May through June, 2010, Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) staff and members of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) met with 64 of the 71 neighborhood organizations throughout Minneapolis and held five community-wide meetings to gather community input prior to developing a first draft of the guidelines. The NCR also received written comments from individual residents and neighborhood organizations. Based on this initial input, the NCEC, working with NCR staff, developed an initial set of guidelines that were sent to neighborhood organizations for a 45-day review and comment period starting August 27, 2010. Comments from the public, as well as ongoing discussions by

Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commissioners informed several revisions to the guidelines.

### **Supporting Information**

The final report of the NRP Work Group provided to the City Council Committee of the Whole on July 24, 2008 (Framework for the Future) recognized that “resident involvement is essential to building a great city. The capacity to organize at the neighborhood level is a basic city service for which the City will provide funding of approximately \$3,000,000 per year to neighborhood organizations.” The NCEC and NCR are pleased to present the attached Community Participation Program Guidelines for approval by the City Council.

Prior to the development of these guidelines, the NCEC and NCR together met with more than 60 neighborhood organizations by attending Board meetings, meetings of their Executive Committees, or at other special meetings to gather input. Five community-wide meetings were also held at various locations around the city to provide opportunities to hear from neighborhood organizations that we could not otherwise meet with.

The input from these meetings confirmed and expanded on the community feedback on the Framework for the Future. The NCEC met and reviewed input from neighborhood organizations, and identified the following themes:

- 1. Frustration with the current community engagement process.** Specifically, neighborhood leaders expressed frustration with their experience with the City’s community engagement and communication practices. Neighborhood organizations were concerned about the potential loss of resources, and that \$3,000,000 in funding would not be sufficient, and that volunteers were overburdened.
- 2. Goals and Expectations for the new program.** Participants during the meetings identified what they felt would be important characteristics of the new program:
  - Preserving organizational capacity and autonomy;
  - Accountability for use of public funds;
  - A strong preference for flexibility and simplification (reflecting their concern about overburdened volunteers);
  - Reflecting the Framework for the Future, participants commented on the importance of using Community Participation Program funds to assist with empowerment and engagement, communication, and engaging and working with diverse communities;
  - Collaborations and partnerships with other neighborhood organizations and other entities should be supported but not a requirement of the program;
  - Networking, training, and information sharing on a regional or city-wide basis was as important as funding;
  - Eligibility should be limited to current neighborhood organizations; and
  - The program should include additional support including continued and expanded administrative services and group purchasing (such as Directors and Officers liability insurance).
- 3. Allocation policy.** Participants offered a variety of possible mechanisms for allocating funds to neighborhood organizations:
  - Develop a “needs based” allocation formula, similar to existing NRP or Citizen Participation Program guidelines (*this option was most frequently offered*);
  - Divide equally between neighborhood organizations;
  - Competitive grants;
  - “Baseline Plus” in which each neighborhood received a minimum base allocation, with an additional needs-based formula determining the remainder;

Participants also frequently commented about the timing of funding, noting that a one-year allocation period was too brief, while the ten-year cycle of NRP was too long. They also advocated for keeping Community Participation Program funding independent of NRP funding or status.

- 4. Guidelines development process.** Participants also noted the need for the NCEC and NCR to communicate regularly with neighborhoods during the process of developing the guidelines, and particularly to let them know how input and feedback were used. They also expressed concern that the transition from NRP to NCR be as seamless as possible.

Following the directives in the Framework for the Future, and input from the summer meetings, the NCEC and NCR developed a draft set of guidelines that were sent out to neighborhood organizations for a 45-day review and comment period. Feedback from several individuals and neighborhood organizations was used to refine the guidelines.

### **What you will find in the Community Participation Program Guidelines:**

- 1. Program Purposes.** The purpose of the program is identified as funding neighborhood organizations to:
  - Identify and act on neighborhood priorities;
  - Influence City decisions and priorities; and
  - Increase involvement.

Neighborhood organizations are given broad latitude to identify the work that is most important to them within these three program areas.

- 2. Eligibility requirements.** The guidelines establish under what conditions a neighborhood organization is eligible to apply for Community Participation Program funding.
- 3. Standards and expectations.** The guidelines establish that neighborhood organizations must make good faith efforts to meet these standards and expectations.
- 4. Funding activities.** The guidelines establish what expenses are eligible and ineligible.
- 5. Requests for submissions.** The Guidelines spell out how neighborhood organizations may submit a proposal. They also identify the process for evaluating and recommending submissions, and the process for contracting and reporting on funds.
- 6. Support and monitoring of neighborhood organizations.** The guidelines provide specific areas where organizations can expect support within this program. The guidelines also outline how neighborhood organizations will report to NCR.
- 7. Grievances.** The guidelines provide a process for considering a grievance against a neighborhood organization, and the conditions under which a grievance can be filed.
- 8. Unused funds.** The guidelines identify how unused or un-contracted funds may be used. A neighborhood can submit a special request for extra funds, can roll funds over to future funding cycles, or funds can be recaptured to be added to the Community Participation Program fund for future funding cycles.
- 9. Administration.** The guidelines identify that the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department will have primary responsibility for administering the program.
- 10. Appendices.** The appendixes include (1) the Core Principles of Community Engagement as adopted by the City Council in December 2007; (2) the Allocation Policy directing how funding levels for neighborhoods will be determined; and (3) a map showing approved neighborhood boundaries.