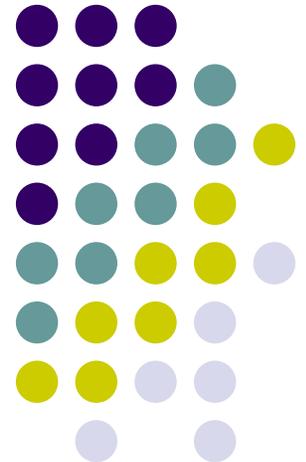


Community Engagement Report



Summary presentation prepared by the
Office of the City Coordinator

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Background



- Because of *changes in the population* and *declining funding* for current engagement activities, the City Council has begun to review its community engagement system.
- As a first step, in May 2006, the City Council directed staff to *summarize four years of previous community feedback*, reports and recommendations on the subject.
- When the report was completed, in November 2006, the City Council and the NRP Policy board decided to distribute the report and *invite additional community input* using a written survey and a series of public meetings.
- The City Council *does not plan to discuss the report or to make any decisions* about community engagement until it receives this additional input.



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- Definition of Community Engagement (CE)
- Description of Current CE Activities

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Section I: The Current Minneapolis CE System



- **Definition of Community Engagement (CE)**
- **Description of Current CE Activities**

Definition of Community Engagement (CE)



- There are many possible definitions, but the primary purpose of community engagement is to empower people *to influence decisions that shape their city and their lives.*
- With that in mind, the definition used in this report is *community engagement always involves a city government decision.*

Types of Community Engagement Activity



Ten types of activity make up the current CE system:

- Activities of Elected Officials and their Offices
- Standing Committees of the City Council
- Formal Public Hearings of the City Council
- Official Advisory Boards and Commissions (over 50)
- Temporary Advisory Groups or Committees
- Citywide Communication and CE Activities
- Citywide and Small-Area Planning Activities
- Department-, Program- or Project-Specific Activities
- Neighborhood Citizen Participation Program Activities
- Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) Activities

Section II: Recent Reports and Recommendations



- **Summary of Recent Reports**
- **Observations and Recommendations**

Summary of Recent Reports



This report summarizes a number of previous reports:

- Strengthening Community & Economic Development in Minneapolis (McKinsey & Co. 2002)
- NRP Focus Minneapolis Working Group Report (2003)
- Community Engagement Staff Work Group Report (2003)
- Community Summit Report & Discussion Paper (2003)
- City Council Study Session on Community Engagement & NRP Phase II (2003)
- Minneapolis Community Engagement Project Report (2004)
- New American Collaborative: Principles & Recommendations (2005)
- Minneapolis CE Process-Model Guidebook & Report (2005)



Observations and Recommendations



- Section II of the report *summarizes observations and recommendations* the City has received from these community stakeholders.
- The summary is organized using the eight *principles of community engagement* identified during the City Council Study Session on Community Engagement in July 2003*.
- The following slides summarize some of the most common observations; the complete report includes many other observations and recommendations as well.

** These principles are based on common elements from the reports listed above, but have not been formally adopted by the City Council.*



Principle 1: Decision processes must be clear, open and predictable



Related observations from report:

- Many people find City decision-making processes complex, confusing, inaccessible and hard to predict.
- As a result, many people feel excluded or lack confidence that their involvement – if they do participate – will actually influence decisions.
- Uncoordinated activities of multiple jurisdictions compound the problem.

Principle 2: Roles and authority must be clear and well understood



Related observations from report:

- There is confusion about who has the authority to make different decisions, and about when community engagement is required (by law) and when it may be beneficial, but is not required.
- The roles, procedures and accountability of official boards, commissions and advisory groups – including community organizations – vary widely, adding to this confusion.

Principle 3: Communication must be two-way and consistent



Related observations from report:

- There is a general sense that official City communication about community engagement opportunities is not accessible or consistent.
- Communication tends to be a “one-way” flow of information rather than a “two-way” flow that encourages participation and demonstrates the impact of the input received from the community on the decisions made.

Principle 4: Representative participation is needed at all levels



Related observations from report:

- As Minneapolis becomes more diverse – ethnically and culturally – it becomes more important and more challenging to ensure representative participation.
- There is a growing awareness that some communities are “geographic” while others are “non-geographic” and may require different community engagement strategies.

Principle 5: Participants at all levels must be held accountable



Related observations from report:

- There is general agreement that all participants in the community engagement system – including city government and its community organizational partners – must be held accountable.
- There is also agreement that accountability can only be achieved by establishing clear, publicly-stated performance expectations.

Principle 6: Genuine engagement (not just input) is essential



Related observations from report:

- This relates to several previous observations including the importance of role clarity, two-way communication, representative participation and accountability.
- Some believe it is necessary to “think outside the box” of conventional community engagement processes when truly collaborative decision-making is needed for the decision at hand.

Principle 7: Local and citywide plans should be related, consistent



Related observations from report:

- There is general agreement that government jurisdictions (city, county, parks, schools, libraries) should conduct coordinated planning.
- Many also agree that neighborhood-level and citywide plans should be coordinated, but there are differing views about how to accomplish this.

Principle 8: Change must occur to build trust and participation



Related observations from report:

- Many stakeholders agree that some significant changes are necessary to improve the City's community engagement system.
- Some stakeholders also believe there is a need to build trust between members of the community, the City, and organizations that are seen as part of the current community engagement system.

Section III: Improving the Minneapolis CE System

- **Summary Recommendations**
- **Next Steps**



Summary Recommendations



- While there are some conflicting views in the observations and recommendations outlined in the report, there is widespread agreement about five summary recommendations.
- In order to improve its community engagement system, most internal and external stakeholders agree that the City of Minneapolis should:
 1. Explain the decision-making authority for each type of decision
 2. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all official advisory groups
 3. Establish “base-line” CE expectations for each type of decision
 4. Develop accessible, consistent, two-way communication systems
 5. Coordinate planning and priority setting with other jurisdictions

#1. Explain the decision-making authority for each type of decision

- The decision-making authority for most major City decisions has already been established by law, ordinance or policy.
- What's missing is a clear, consistent explanation of who has the authority to make each type of decision, and of the decision-making process.
- There are many ways the City could accomplish this and suggestions are welcome.



#2. Clarify roles and responsibilities of all official advisory groups



- To establish clearer expectations – and ensure accountability – it will be necessary to clarify the roles and responsibilities of official advisory groups that the City identifies as part of its community engagement system.
- Official advisory groups may include permanent boards and commissions, temporary advisory committees, and both “geographic” and “non-geographic” community organizations.

#3. Establish “base-line” CE expectations for each type of decision

- To bring consistency and predictability to the system, the City should establish “base-line” CE expectations for each type of decision.
- Departments or elected officials might choose to go beyond these “base-line” activities for a particular decision, but at least these “base-line” CE activities would always occur, and the community could count on them.



#4. Develop accessible, consistent, two-way communication systems

- The City should provide clear, easily accessible (and multi-lingual) information that explains decision-making processes and base-line CE expectations for all interested stakeholders.
- The City should provide current information on upcoming decisions and opportunities for engagement around these decisions.
- The City should consider providing new, more accessible engagement opportunities using online participation tools.



#5. Coordinate planning and priority setting with other jurisdictions

- Local government partners (city, county, parks, schools, libraries) should pool resources and coordinate community engagement activities.
- Opportunities range from simple procedural steps – like publishing a consolidated calendar of community engagement activities – to more ambitious changes in practice, like convening joint visioning and priority-setting events.



Next Steps



- Eight public meetings are being held in late January and early February *to invite additional observations and recommendations* from the community.
- Written feedback and responses to the community survey are also welcome; *responses are due Feb. 8, 2007.*
- Staff will document the results of these meetings and all written responses, and provide this information to the City Council.
- The City Council will *begin its discussion* of community engagement *after it receives this information.*
- To influence *planning for the 2008 budget*, the Council needs to give direction to City departments by May 2007.

Contact Information



- The complete Community Engagement Report is available by calling Clara Perrin at (612) 673-3163 and is also online at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/CE_Report_final.pdf
- The Community Engagement Survey is available online at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/CE_SurveyJan07.pdf
- You can also mail written comments on the report – or on the subject of community engagement in general – to Clara Perrin, Community Engagement Coordinator, 350 South 5th Street, Room 301M, Minneapolis, MN 55415.
- To be included in the staff summary that will be prepared for the City Council, ***all surveys and written responses must be received by February 8, 2007.***



Clarification Questions?

- *Do you have any questions about the content of the report?*

