

Dear NCR, NCEC, CPP Staff and City Council, I am not able to access the contact information for NCEC Commissioners on the NCR web site.

I have read the Community Participation Program draft guidelines and herein submit my comments.

I hope you will recognize the continuing efforts of neighborhood organizations to reach out to & effectively represent our communities and allow us to use community input we have already gathered to support our priority plans. Per this document it appears that NCR is purporting to establish communications among neighbors that already exist and is asking neighborhoods to duplicate work many of us have already done for NRP Plans to create the 3 year plans.

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A1. Are all the funds being distributed to the neighborhoods to implement their priorities?

This is good, but a grand departure from the last guidelines. I've been working with neighborhoods and the city since 1999. In my experience 3 year turn around is too fast. 10 year plans make more sense. Examples: SNO has been actively working with the city and park board on developing a park since 2005. In 2012, I expect we will be about half way to completion. Also, the only reason it didn't take SNO 7-10 years to get our street lights (like Logan) is because we just paid for the whole thing with NRP money.

2. Because neighborhoods have been organized around NRP, we already participate in voicing our positions to the city. The city is not bound to recognize our positions any more under NCR than it was under NRP. NCR could really add value to our work by instituting some kind of requirement that community voices be heard and given specific weight.

3. The best participation happens when we are doing something. We get more community participation when we are creating a plan to spend our capital, than we do when we give away free ice cream. Both are good, but one has better and more lasting results for building relationships and improving our community.

I read the section in green and can't help but think that these are things we already do well through NRP. On whole it seems that we are dismantling a better organization than we are creating. What's more, we seem to be doing it with great haste. Neighborhoods are not ready for NRP to close down and NCR is not ready to take over. Nobody seems to know what is going on. Why, again, are we doing this?

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B. Again, this all looks like objectives that have been better met under NRP than they will under NCR. There is one positive possibility here, a commitment to facilitating jurisdictional partnerships. The city could have made a better effort of that under NRP.

If NCR finds a good way to help make those connections, that will be an improvement.

II. A. 2. This needs to be clarified. What exactly is this provision's objective? If the intent is to ensure organizations are inclusive, that's great. I don't think you mean that we would need to have a foreign language interpreter for every language spoken in our neighborhood at each meeting in the case that a resident speaking that language happened to attend, but it could be interpreted that way.

4. This seems to bar the neighborhood board from holding what we call interim meetings, unless related to labor or legal issues. Sometimes our board meets between public meetings to do board education, catch up on issues, and conduct business allowable under our by-laws in a timely manner.

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It is critically important that some portion of the NRP Policy Board (50%) be elected by neighborhoods and not appointed. Neighborhoods will be best represented by those elected to represent them, rather than even community members who are appointed.

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5. SNO has tried many different avenues over the years to engage under represented groups, with very limited success. NCR could help by researching and helping communities implement effective strategies for outreach to different under represented groups.

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A. What about work with MPRB, Schools or other governmental groups?

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VIII. Please ensure that policies around the ability to roll over funds do not penalize organizations like SNO that have committed to having an all volunteer organization in order to channel all funds directly into improving the neighborhood. This decision means that we do not spend funds as quickly as other organizations, but we do get a lot of bang for our buck.

Due to the fact that the guidelines for different years of funding allow for differing uses of the funds, it seems wise to me that SNO would want to reserve some of the year one allocation to, for example, purchase food in future years. Please help us take advantage of the various guidelines and make best use of the money allocated to us. Rollover guidelines should accommodate these considerations.

NCR, NCEC and CPP are supposed to replace NRP. NRP inspired and empowered neighborhoods to create priority plans and implement them. So far, NCR, NCEC and the CPP burden neighborhoods with onerous processes and meetings to develop a structure to do the same thing as NRP was already doing well. In fact, it seems that the only problem NRP really had was an appropriate revenue stream. This problem has not been addressed by NRC at all. NCR is just being paid for by NRP dollars taken from neighborhood priority plans. Who thought this made sense?

Sincerely,

Jenny Fortman, President

Sheridan Neighborhood Organization

& SNO CD Committee Member