

# CLA REPORT

June 12, 1996

TO: Councilman Joel Wachs  
Attn: Greg Nelson

FROM: Ronald F. Deaton *RFD*  
Chief Legislative Analyst *by S. Long*

Assignment No. 96-02-0247

SUBJECT: Neighborhood Councils

## *Summary*

Many cities across the nation have created a system of neighborhood councils or other citizen participation structures in an effort to increase the level of citizen participation in local government affairs. This effort is designed to increase citizen involvement in government and the responsiveness of local government in addressing the concerns of its residents and to give the residents a forum to present their ideas regarding local issues. This effort has also focused on overcoming citizen apathy, feelings of noninvolvement, and feelings of not having a stake in the community.

Neighborhood councils are representative bodies whose geographic boundaries are determined by cities or residents. They are forums for neighbors to become informed on a variety of issues and for neighbors to communicate their concerns. The elected neighborhood council members represent residents, businesses, and a variety of associations and civic groups within the districts. The neighborhood councils usually work with the cities' decision makers and elected representatives on an advisory basis.

Before the City decides to create such a system, it is important to assess what is currently in place in the City's departments, how the community is involved with the City's current structure, and what exists within the community that is independent of the City government. A city as large and diverse as Los Angeles may have difficulty creating a uniform neighborhood participation system that addresses the unique needs of the residents and does not duplicate the functions of any current City citizen advisory committees and boards. Therefore, Los Angeles must tread cautiously and take a different approach to creating a framework or system to increase the level of resident participation in local government. In the end, the Council members are more aware of their constituents' needs and should decide if any further structure is required in their Districts. If the current system of departmental advisory boards and committees is sufficient, the issue may then be one of resident awareness that can be improved by an outreach program.

## *Recommendations*

1. The decision to create neighborhood councils or any other citizen participation structure should be left up to the discretion of those who are in the best position to determine if they

are needed in certain areas of the City - the Council members. The Council members and their District staff interact with the residents of their areas on a daily basis and can best determine what is needed to meet their constituents' needs. Neighborhood councils should be tailored to meet the unique needs within each Council District. In order to decide if neighborhood councils are suitable for their districts, each Council member should do the following:

- A. Be provided with a thorough description of the neighborhood council concept.
  - B. Take inventory of the number of citizen groups currently in the District. Note if any group is divided along geographic lines. Examples of citizen groups with geographic boundaries would be property owners associations, block clubs, and neighborhood associations. This will give an idea of how organized the District's residents are. Through this process a pattern should emerge showing which areas have very active residents and which areas do not.
  - C. Identify the issues and concerns that are important to residents. This would help in deciding the advisory capacity of the neighborhood councils, if this form of citizen participation structure is chosen.
2. The City departments should assess the way they conduct their outreach and recruitment for their advisory boards and committees and, if necessary, encourage the departments to change their strategy and broaden their concepts to encourage greater citizen involvement.

### *Findings*

#### 1. Neighborhood Councils

It is important to note that there is no national model for creating neighborhood councils or other forms of citizen participation structures. Neighborhoods USA is a national organization that functions as a networking service. It organizes an annual conference to bring together cities with various forms of citizen participation structures, neighborhood council and association representatives, and anyone else that is interested in sharing their experiences, successes, failures, or ideas on citizen participation structures. Included at these annual conferences are cities who are contemplating establishing neighborhood councils and are interested in finding out the experiences of others to get an idea of what would work for them. A spokesman for Neighborhoods USA pointed out that it is difficult to create a national model because all cities and their residents are unique.

Neighborhood councils are umbrella organizations with geographic boundaries that are established by cities. They usually function as forums for residents and independently established citizen groups within their respective geographic areas to come together and express their concerns, work together and with city agencies to create solutions to existing problems, and to advise city government on

policy and budget issues. These citizens groups include, but are not limited to, property owners associations, neighborhood associations, block clubs, civic associations and business associations. All citizen groups and residents usually have the opportunity to be elected as a member of the neighborhood council.

Cities with neighborhood councils tend to have populations that are no larger than the population of two of Los Angeles' Council Districts. Their small size, and even smaller scale problems, gives them the opportunity to delegate decision-making authority on important matters to their residents. Los Angeles, on the other hand, is larger and the solutions to its problems may not lend themselves to be reviewed by dozens of neighborhood councils.

Unlike Los Angeles, many of these cities have a council-manager form of government and their councils are part-time and elected city-wide. Because many of the cities are not divided into city council districts, this creates an opportunity to establish "neighborhood council districts." These cities' neighborhood council district systems are all unique and tailored to meet the needs of their respective residents. Their citizen participation structures were designed to complement what the city already had in place, departmental community based committees and other advisory committees with residents as members.

The cities' role in establishing neighborhood councils is either limited to creating neighborhood council boundaries and providing informal technical support for organizing the first citizen group meetings or the cities' role is very formal and includes but is not limited to the following activities: requiring citizen groups to meet certain guidelines to participate in the neighborhood councils; requiring citizen groups to register with the cities; establishing and distributing agendas; establishing guidelines for and conducting elections; writing and distributing newsletters; assigning city staff to city-financed neighborhood council district offices; and establishing direct communication links between neighborhood councils and city decision-makers.

Citizens groups are usually formed independent of city government. Some cities provide technical support to help residents create citizen groups without establishing guidelines governing their membership, meetings and how their officers are selected. Other cities establish guidelines for citizen groups that establish requirements for membership, elections, meetings and the goals and objectives of the groups.

The cost for operating neighborhood councils is usually covered by the city. The city generally pays for: the salary of involved city personnel, the cost of correspondence (newsletters, agendas, invitations, etc.), the operating costs for district offices (if applicable), and all election expenses if elections are conducted by the city. The cities tend to finance neighborhood councils through the general fund budget or with the Community Development Block Grant. Citizen groups, if formed independent of the city government, are financed by the resident members of those groups. When a city is involved in assisting citizens in forming these groups, the city may cover the initial costs incurred in notifying residents and setting up the first meeting. After the first meeting the citizen groups are responsible for all costs.

The authority delegated to neighborhood councils is determined by the type of input the cities' elected leaders would like from the residents and whether other structures exist within the city that give residents access to decision-makers. Because many of the cities' councils are part-time, the council members often have no staff to work on assessing resident feelings on issues to go before the councils for a vote. In this instance neighborhood councils are used to monitor community feelings on issues and to let elected officials know what are the concerns of the residents as soon as those concerns surface.

Most neighborhood councils are given advisory authority. They advise the cities' decision makers on policy issues ranging from police to parks. They also give opinions on candidates for appointed positions and recommend candidates as well. In some cases, the neighborhood councils have the authority to approve planning and zoning applications for their specific neighborhoods. The cities in these cases reserve the right to override a neighborhood council's decision against a proposed project if they feel the project would contribute significantly to the cities' economic health.

## 2. What Presently Exists in Los Angeles

Before the City of Los Angeles embarks on a course to establish a new system or framework to enable the residents to increase their level of interaction with and participation in local government, it is important to take inventory of what the City already has in place. A preliminary look at some City departments whose activities directly impact the public shows that many have a framework in place that allows the City's residents to communicate their concerns and play a role in advising these departments on policy and program issues.

- Los Angeles Police Department

Administrative Order #10 instructed each of the Los Angeles Police Department Divisions to create a Community Police Advisory Board. Each Board consists of resident and business representatives from that area and meet with that Division's Captain once a month. The representatives are selected by the Division Captain. This is a forum that allows the community's representatives to identify potential high crime activities and areas to the police and to participate in the formation of plans to address potential and existing problems. The Los Angeles Police Department's divisions have also worked closely with the community through neighborhood and business watch groups.

- Los Angeles Library Department

The Los Angeles Library Department has over 65 branch libraries throughout the City, including the Central Library in Downtown Los Angeles. Each branch is capable of establishing a Friends Group. A Friends Group consists of volunteers from the neighborhood surrounding the branch library. All but three branch libraries have established Friends Groups. Their activities include fundraising, book drives, and creating programs for children

and the elderly.

- Department of Recreation and Parks

The Department of Recreation and Parks has over 150 recreation facilities throughout the City, including the Cabrillo Museum, Travel Town, the Greek Theater, the LA Zoo, the Observatory, and the City's golf courses. Most of these have some form of advisory board that consists of volunteers from the surrounding neighborhoods. These boards are called Sports Boards, Advisory Boards, or Center Service Associations. They are involved in fundraising, recruiting volunteers, or planning activities and programs for their respective facilities.

- Community Redevelopment Agency

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has 26 Redevelopment Project Areas and three Revitalization Project Areas. State law mandates that each Project has a Project Area Committee or PAC (required when redevelopment could negatively affect surrounding residents and businesses) and/or a Community Advisory Committee or CAC (created when low income groups and the neighborhood will *not* be adversely impacted). Each Committee has about 25 to 35 members. Members of PACs are local residents and business owners and are elected for one to two year terms. Members of CACs are appointed by the City Council member whose district the Redevelopment Project is located. Both Committees help the CRA draft and implement the redevelopment plan for that area. After a Project Area has existed for three years, the City Council can disband its PAC or CAC.

- Community Development Department

The Community Development Department (CDD) has six Community Improvement Planning Areas (CIPA) in the City. A Community Action Board (CAB) with 18 members advises the CDD on the various human services programs needed in each CIPA, such as programs for feeding the homeless. A representative from each CIPA is elected to the CAB every four years. The City Council President assigns six Council Offices to the CAB. Each Office assigns a representative from their staff. The mayor nominates the last six members, but they must be approved by the other 12 CAB members. The CAB meets once a month. Each of the six members representing the CIPAs have established independent committees within their CIPAs. The CIPA representatives meet monthly with their respective committees to present issues discussed at the CAB meeting and to discover future issues its committee would like to see CAB address.

- Department of City Planning

The Department of City Planning has divided the City into 37 Community Plan Areas. Each Plan Area was established last year during the City budget cycle. Each Area will have either

a Community Plan Advisory Committee, a Design Review Board, a Historic Preservation Board, or all. To date the Planning Commission has adopted or approved nine of the Plan Areas' advisory boards. The number of boards in each Area is determined on a case by case basis. The members of the boards are either appointed by the Mayor, Cultural Heritage Commission, City Council or elected at large; this is also determined on a case by case basis. The Planning Department also has a Master List of 641 homeowners and neighborhood associations that worked with the Department during the General Plan process. Of these, 40 have given the Planning Department self-addressed stamped envelopes to receive notices on Planning Commission hearings and Board of Zoning Appeals hearings.

- City Council Offices

Several Los Angeles City Council members already have implemented a system similar to neighborhood councils or community advisory boards in place. They use these boards to communicate directly with their constituents and to insure that their needs are addressed. They have also tailored their citizen participation structures to most effectively address the needs of their constituents.

In some Council Districts, the residents are very concerned with planning and zoning, thus those Council members created a system of planning subdistricts within the Council Districts' boundaries. The residents review most planning and zoning permit proposals for their neighborhoods before the proposals are submitted to the Planning Department.

Some Council members have created a more generalized but sophisticated system of neighborhood councils to gather advice, ideas, and concerns from the communities that comprise the Council district.

Other Council members establish issue-oriented neighborhood committees in their Districts to address issues as they arise. Their experience indicates that this system works most effectively with their constituents.

Some Council members rely on informal networks to communicate with the citizen groups in their Districts. In these cases, the Council District staff has expressed that this system is effective for them because their constituents are very organized and independent of any Council District assistance.

- Mayor's Office

In 1994, the Mayor's Office initiated the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiatives Program (LANI). This two year demonstration program focuses on empowering residents in eight low-income communities by enabling them to become involved in the development and implementation of community workplans. Each of the eight communities has a neighborhood advisory board or "Recognized Community Organization" (RCO). The RCOs'

members include residents, businesses, citizen groups and other neighborhood associations. The workplans developed by the RCOs recognize the need for transportation amenities for their areas and long term small business technical assistance, employment and youth programs. With funding from public and private sources, the RCOs, once their workplans are complete, send contracts out to bid to implement their plans.

- Citizen Groups Independent of the City

Currently, the Planning Department has a Master List of 641 citizen groups in the City of Los Angeles. These groups include homeowners associations, neighborhood associations, property owners associations, block clubs and community-based associations. These groups were involved in the updating of the City's General Plan. However, the City of Los Angeles has far more citizen groups that are not on this Master List. Most Council District Offices are aware of citizen groups in their Districts that are not on the Planning Department's Master List. Most Council District Offices, as well as some City Departments, have their own Master List of citizen groups that they communicate and work with.

### 3. Issues to Address When Deciding Whether to Create Neighborhood Councils

Before any city takes up the task of creating citizen participation structures, there are several issues that should be addressed. First it must determine if it is necessary by taking inventory of what it already has in place within the City government and within the community. It is important to note if the city currently has structures in place, such as departmental citizen advisory boards, that already offer the opportunity for citizens to become involved in their neighborhoods. If the structures already exist, the issue may be a lack of City outreach and recruitment of citizens to participate in these structures.

Second, as will be demonstrated by the profiled cities, the form of government of the city is a key determinant of whether a city should create citizen participation structures. If the form of government does not offer the city's citizens access to decision-makers and their representatives, then creating neighborhood councils, for example, may be justified. It is more difficult for citizens to access their elected representatives and present their concerns if the representatives are part-time. Another issue is whether the city councils are elected at large or by district. City councils that represent districts appear closer to the constituents in their respective districts, and seem more aware of their constituents' concerns than city councils elected at large.

Third, any form of neighborhood councils or other citizen participation structures selected by a city would depend on the amount of funding available. Some of the cities profiled in this report have very formal and elaborate participation programs that require many city employees and are costly. Others have created informal systems that require the involvement of very few city employees and are not so costly. The size and formality of these structures were based on what each city felt they needed to complement what already existed in the city government structure and the community at large.

#### 4. Profiled Cities

Based on the chart in Attachment 1, several important factors about the profiled cities stand out (Please see Attachment 1 for chart, and attachment 2 for further literature for the profiled cities). Their populations are no larger than the population of two council districts in the City of Los Angeles. Their city councils are part-time, with the exception of Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. However, Seattle and Portland have city councils that are elected at large. Most of these cities' departments, according to their respective city employees, have no extensive network of citizen advisory boards that offer the citizens the opportunity to advise, for example, on the type of recreation activities they would like to see supported at their local parks.

The cities with neighborhood council districts created this system, according to their respective city employees, to bring government closer to the residents and to help the city better assess the needs of the residents. They also wanted to insure that the concerns of all residents were well represented, particularly in the cases where the city councils are part-time. These neighborhood council districts offer the citizens of these cities the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process for the cities' annual budget, planning, zoning, recreation, redevelopment, community policing, or any other issue important to the residents.

Those cities who had limited general fund dollars restricted neighborhood councils to areas of the city with severe deterioration problems. According to their representatives, improving deteriorating neighborhoods through initiatives created by the residents was of the highest priority for their cities. Through a general fund grant program, the residents in targeted areas can submit neighborhood proposals for beautification projects such as painting and graffiti removal.

#### 5. Los Angeles and How it Differs from the Profiled Cities

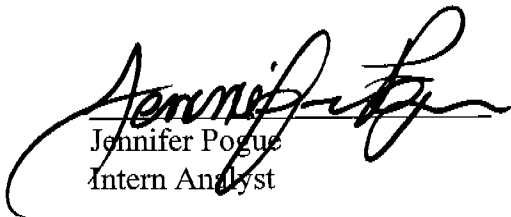
Los Angeles, on the other hand, has a full-time Mayor and a full-time City Council that is elected by districts. Each of the 15 Council members represent districts with populations of at least 250,000 residents. Each Council member has at least one District Office with a full-time staff that is there to address the needs and concerns of the constituents and neighborhood groups within the respective council districts' boundaries. Many Council Offices also have a citizen advisory network established for their Districts that is either formal or informal. Council District Office staff also take an active role in securing City services for constituents.

Los Angeles also has an extensive system of departmental citizen advisory boards. Each police division has a Community Police Advisory Board and numerous neighborhood and business watch groups. Most of the 65 libraries and over 150 parks and recreation centers have volunteer groups consisting of local residents that are involved in initiating and participating in programs for their respective neighborhoods. The Community Development Department, the Community Redevelopment Agency, and the Department of City Planning have many advisory committees that offer residents the opportunity to participate.

Thus if the City of Los Angeles were to create a system of neighborhood councils or other citizen participation structure, it could become a complicated and costly effort based solely on the City's size. It would also be difficult to assign responsibilities to the neighborhood councils without duplicating the responsibilities and duties of existing City advisory boards and committees. Los Angeles already has in place a network of citizen advisory and empowerment committees in its City departments, the Mayor's Office, and the Council members' Offices that perform the same functions of many of the profiled cities' neighborhood councils.

It would also be difficult to create a uniform city-wide system. Each Council District is made up of areas that are economically, geographically, and demographically diverse. Each Council district has residents that are more active than others and need different levels of support. It would be difficult to create a uniform structure that would address all of these differences without duplicating the tasks of the current departmental advisory committees and boards.

For Los Angeles, the issue is not whether a citizen participation structure should be created because a series of structures already exists. Through the current systems, residents can communicate with their representatives by contacting the appropriate Council District Office; or if residents want to initiate a program at a local park or library, they can volunteer; or if residents want to take a proactive stand on a local crime issue, they can contact their local police division captain. But residents can not participate in the City's current system if they are not aware of its existence. Thus, the issue may be one of outreach and recruitment.



Jennifer Pogue  
Intern Analyst

- Attachments: 1. Profiled Cities Chart  
2. Literature for the Profiled Cities

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A Profile of Citizen Participation in Profiled Cities

City	Population	Government	Program Information
Austin, TX	500,000	Council-Manager	<u>Neighborhood &amp; Youth Support Program</u> - a grant program funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); restricted to 8 city-established target areas in the City with severe deterioration.
Birmingham, AL	288,000	Council-Mayor	<u>Citizen Participation Program</u> - a sophisticated three-tier system of 99 Neighborhood Associations, whose members make up 23 Community Advisory Committees, whose presidents make up the citywide Citizens Advisory Board; funded through the CDBG and general fund; supported through full-time City employees; advisory.
Dayton, OH	182,500	Council-Manager	<u>Priority Beard System</u> - 7 neighborhood council districts with full-time City employees; elected members; umbrella organization for independent citizen groups; funded through CDBG and the general fund; advisory.
Honolulu, HI	372,000	Council-Mayor	<u>Neighborhood Board System</u> - 33 neighborhood councils whose elected members work with the City Council and Mayor on an advisory basis; funded through the Mayor's Executive Program and the operating budget for the Neighborhood Commission; advisory.
Portland, OR	497,000	Council-Mayor	<u>Neighborhood Association Network</u> - 7 neighborhood councils which are umbrella organizations for all city-recognized neighborhood associations; neighborhood councils have non-profit status and have offices staffed by City employees; funded through the general fund; advisory.
St. Paul, MN	262,000	Council-Mayor	<u>Citizen Participation Program</u> - 17 districts with offices staffed by City employees; umbrella organization for citizen groups; advisory and participates in Capital Improvement Budget Process; funded through the CDBG and general fund; advisory.
Seattle, WA	550,000	Council-Mayor	<u>Neighborhood Matching Fund</u> - 50% matching fund from the general fund; 13 district offices staffed by city employees; any independent citizen group can apply.
Tempe, AZ	153,000	Council-Manager	<u>Neighborhood Program</u> - grant program funded by general fund; neighborhood and homeowners associations recognized by city, neighborhoods receive 100% grant and homeowners receive 50% grant.

**NEIGHBORHOOD AND YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAM****Part II - Program Guidelines****SECTION 1 - DESCRIPTION**

**1.01 General.** The Neighborhood and Youth Support Program (NYSP) is an activity funded by the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which is made available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City utilizes CDBG funds to provide an array of housing, economic development, and public service activities chiefly in targeted areas. It is in the best interest of the City of Austin to solicit and encourage participation by citizens who are the intended beneficiaries of CDBG activities.

NYSP was designed to facilitate the revitalization of Austin's low income neighborhoods by supporting activities selected, operated, managed, and evaluated by Neighborhood Improvement Committees (NICs) in each targeted neighborhood. Allocations of NYSP funds are available to NICs for projects which increase public awareness and enhance the effectiveness and scope of CDBG funded programs.

**1.02 Activities.** The following lists appropriate objectives and types of activities considered to accomplish the overall goals of the NYSP when carried out by neighborhood residents. Projects involving the public right-of-way or facilities must be coordinated with the responsible City department.

a. Enhance the appearance and beauty of the neighborhood through activities such as:

- clean up of vacant lots and public areas
- landscaping vacant lots
- recycling drives
- painting of public structures

b. Increase and improve the flow of information between the City and the neighborhoods on publicly funded City projects through:

- newsletters
- brochures
- fliers
- banners
- signage
- public service announcements

- c. Increase resident participation in all phases of CDBG funded projects by:
- publicizing available CDBG programs
  - providing information and referral activities
  - coordinating or conducting neighborhood meetings
  - gathering and disseminating application forms, brochures and public information packets.
- d. Foster and strengthen neighborhood identity through organizational development and activities such as:
- resource development
  - recruitment of volunteers
  - youth employment and training
  - coordination of eligible NYSP activities
  - volunteer recruitment and training
  - anti-drug campaigns and/or training for children and parents
  - neighborhood watch and other anti-gang/anti-crime activity
- e. Increase the impact of other CDBG funded activities on a neighborhood through:
- research and planning when tied to a specific public project or to the elimination of blight
  - assistance to applicants for CDBG loans/grants
  - participation in the annual assessment of community needs to be addressed by the City
  - recommendations to the City on threats to public safety - abandoned buildings, vermin, potential code violations
  - conservation of housing stock - when associated with CDBG funded projects
- f. Increase and improve the availability of child care within target neighborhoods by providing grants for:
- acquisition or relocation of a child care facility
  - certification or training courses for child care staff
  - acquisition of playground equipment or educational materials
- g. Other projects designed by the NIC and deemed by the City to be eligible for funding and in the best interest of the community.

1.03 Limitations. Proposals will not be considered unless at least 25% of the funds requested are matched by other funding sources. Applicants may use volunteer labor as a matching fund source by calculating the cost of the laborers as if they were to be paid.

Communication activities are limited to 25% of the annual NIC grant with a maximum project amount of \$1,000.

Newsletters and other communication media may not support candidates for elected office.

Newsletters may contain paid advertisements from local businesses to defray the cost of publication, with prior written permission from the City.

Income derived from any NYSP activity must be recorded and reported to NHC. Such income may not be retained or disbursed by the NIC without written approval from NHC and is subject to the same controls and conditions as the NIC grant allocation.

NYSP funds may not be used for lobbying or for any activity designed to influence legislation at any government level.

NICs may charge nominal membership and other fees, provided they are affordable to all low income residents. Income from such fees may be used as supplement NYSP project funding.

All fees are subject to the same prohibitions against lobbying and endorsement of candidates for elected office as the annual NIC grant.

## SECTION 2 - NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE (NIC)

2.01 Requirements. The City will recognize only one Neighborhood Improvement Committee as representing a Target Area. Target Area maps are available to the public at the offices of the Neighborhood Housing and Conservation Office.

NYSP allocations are available to NICs representing the following target neighborhoods:

Blackshear/Prospect Hill	Montopolis
Blackland	Guadalupe
St. John's	Dove Springs
Springdale/Webberville	Anderson

The NIC must be incorporated as a non-profit organization serving a specific area delineated in its by-laws or charter.

The by-laws must also state the organization's policy to offer membership to all persons residing or operating a business in the neighborhood, whether or not they own property in the neighborhood.

The majority of the NIC membership, governing body, or clientele must be residents of the area.

The NIC must submit documentation of the method by which it was selected to represent the area.

All NIC business must be conducted at meetings which:

- are open to, and consider opinions by all residents of the neighborhood, whether or not they are members of the NIC.
- are publicized in advance

2.02 **Proposals.** Any individual, group of individuals or block associations may propose a project for funding. The project and intended outcome must be described using forms approved by NHC.

Once an individual or group proposing a project has completed the project description it must be presented to the Neighborhood Improvement Committee (NIC) for consideration. Only a Neighborhood Improvement Committee may recommend a project for Neighborhood and Youth Support Program funding.

The NIC must submit a complete proposal and budget for review and funding approval by the Neighborhood Housing and Conservation Office (NHC).

All activities approved by NHC will be developed into a contract between the NIC and NHC Office.

The proposal must clearly demonstrate the benefits to the neighborhood of each activity.

The NIC must enter into a written contract with the subcontractors carrying out all or any part of a NYSP project.

2.03 **Appeals.** Any conflicts within a neighborhood concerning applications for NYSP funds will be addressed to the City's Community Development Commission. Appeals will be heard at a specially convened meeting of the CDC.

In order to request an appeal, organizations must submit a written letter stating their reasons for appealing an NIC's decision concerning NYSP funds. All

# QUESTIONS



- 1. What are Neighborhood Associations?*

The City of Birmingham is divided into 99 geographic sections called neighborhoods. Each neighborhood has three volunteer officers (president, vice president, secretary), elected biennially, to serve as official representatives of that Neighborhood Association.
- 2. What do Neighborhood Associations do?*

Monthly meetings are held in each neighborhood to give residents a forum to discuss local and city wide issues and to initiate projects/activities which will be beneficial to citizens in the area. Through the Neighborhood Association, residents are informed of city policies and procedures, and make recommendations to city officials concerning requests and/or plans which will directly affect the neighborhood or the city.
- 3. What are membership requirements for Neighborhood Associations?*

Residence within the neighborhood; there are no dues or fees. Residents 16 years of age or older are voting members.
- 4. What are the benefits of attending Neighborhood Association meetings?*

By attending neighborhood meetings, residents are given the opportunity to participate at the "grassroots" level in formulating city policies and programs. Each resident is allowed to express his/her opinion on matters brought before the association and is eligible to vote on all neighborhood issues. Participants also receive current information regarding neighborhood and city projects and plans.

*5. How do Neighborhood Associations' concerns reach city officials?*

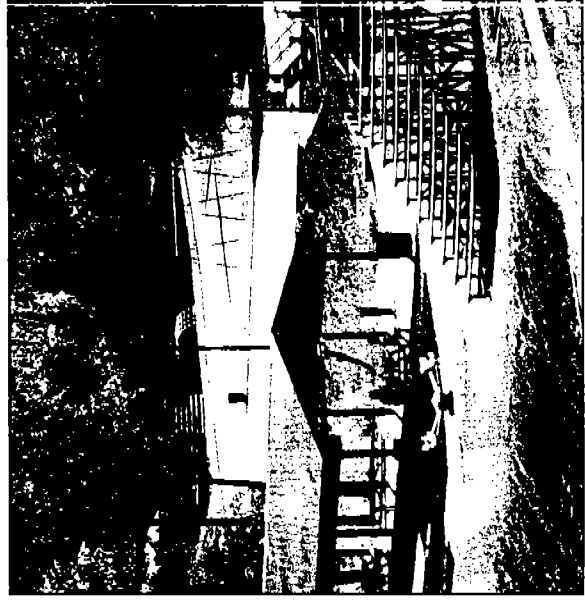
The staff, Community Resources Officers (CRO), of the Community Resources Division in the Community Development Department, provide technical assistance to aid neighborhoods in addressing their concerns. This is a direct link to Neighborhood Associations and city officials for resolving local problems and obtaining/relating information.

*6. What are Neighborhood Allocation Funds?*

Each year the City allocates funds to Neighborhood Associations. These funds are maintained by the City and are disbursed by the City for approved neighborhood projects/activities.

*7. How does the Neighborhood Association determine the use of funds?*

Participating residents of the Neighborhood Association vote to recommend to the City how these funds will be spent.



Improved community facilities are a direct result of active citizen participation.





City officials and community leaders work together to discuss and resolve pertinent issues.

8. *What is a community?*  
 A community is defined as a geographic area made up of two or more adjoining neighborhoods.

9. *What is the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)?*  
 The presidents, vice presidents and secretaries of the Neighborhood Associations within a community compose the CAC.

10. *What is the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB)?*  
 The CAB represents the city-wide level of the Citizen Participation Program.

Membership of the CAB is composed entirely of the presidents of all Community Advisory Committees. Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Quarterly meetings are held with the Mayor and members of the City Council.

11. *How do I find out what neighborhood I am in and when and where my Neighborhood Association meets?*  
 Call 254-2564, Community Development Department, City Hall.

12. *Where is the Community Development Department located?*

The Community Development Department is located on the Tenth Floor of City Hall. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Airport Authority.....	595-0533
Arlington Antebellum Home and Gardens.....	780-5656
Birmingham Board of Education.....	583-4600
Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.....	328-9696
Birmingham Community Education Department.....	583-4776
Buildings and Inspections.....	254-2211
Chamber of Commerce.....	323-5461
City Clerk.....	254-2290
City Council.....	254-2294
Civic Center CTO.....	458-8401
Community Development Department.....	254-2309
Community Resources Division.....	254-2564
Economic Development.....	254-2799
Emergency Police and Fire.....	Dial 911
Grants Division.....	254-2608
Housing Authority of the Birmingham District.....	324-0641
Housing Division.....	254-2312
Jazz Hall of Fame.....	254-2731
Jefferson County Department of Health.....	933-9110
Keep Birmingham Beautiful Commission.....	254-2472
Law Department.....	254-2369
Library (Central Office).....	226-3600
Manpower.....	254-2396
Mayor's Office.....	254-2277
Mayor's Office of Citizens Assistance.....	254-2633
Museum of Art.....	254-2566
Park and Recreation.....	254-2391
Planning and Engineering Department.....	254-2342
Street and Sanitation Department.....	254-6314
Southern Museum of Flight.....	833-8226
Traffic Engineering.....	254-2450

Department of Community Development  
 Community Resources Division  
 City of Birmingham, Alabama  
 Tenth Floor, City Hall  
 Birmingham, AL 35203  
 205 254 2564

# NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

## THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Birmingham, Alabama

to such information. Honest communications includes transmitting information through a variety of media, including face-to-face presentations held in locations and at times convenient to most citizens.

Communications between neighborhoods will also be crucial as scarce resources are employed in new and innovative ways to solve community problems. Mutual understanding of the needs of others must occur to avoid parochial and adversarial relationships between neighborhoods. Priority Boards are the central forums enabling neighborhoods to develop collaborations, resolve conflicts, share information and learn from each other.

If community institutions are expected to consult and form partnerships with community-based groups, the institutions must be afforded easy access to those groups. Grassroots groups, in turn, must be given opportunities to develop expertise and understanding on sometimes complex issues. The Priority Board system offers those forums and provides the on-going opportunities for education and understanding necessary for a vibrant and meaningful community dialogue.

## Roles of Priority Boards

The City Commission's 1975 Informal Resolution established Priority Boards as the official voice of Dayton's neighborhoods, although the City Commission carries the ultimate responsibility for public policy decisions. The Priority Board system is a unique asset which provides representative forums for consideration of differing interest and developing partnerships and consensus on complex issues. Through its communication networks, key parties are kept informed of actions which affect their neighborhoods and solutions are developed which balance the interest of all those affected. The following defines the roles performed by the Priority Boards:

- a) Through their Chairpersons, act as the official voice for their neighborhoods
- b) Identify and prioritize needs, goals and objectives that represent what citizens believe to be important in the preservation of high quality neighborhoods and present those priorities to City government, other local public agencies and Dayton's State Legislative Delegation
- c) Through the Citizens Financial Task Force, Community and Neighborhood Development Task Force, and other established citizen review processes, identify and present the neighborhood view as to which public services require continuation and which could be cut or reduced; make recommendations as to neighborhood variations in service or expansions as appropriate
- d) Identify and advocate the assets of their neighborhoods to community institutions, such as the Board of Realtors and lending community
- e) Form partnerships with Neighborhood Development Corporations to assure desirable and affordable housing by preserving the existing housing stock, creating in-fill housing and increasing home ownership for all income groups
- f) Participate in neighborhood empowerment efforts through self-help programs designed to address community problems or neighborhood needs
- g) Provide the vehicle and opportunity for all citizens to become involved in government decision-making, ensuring that the Boards reflect the broadest possible representation of their neighborhoods
- h) Provide the vehicle and opportunity for City government, public agencies and community institutions to disseminate information to neighborhoods on actions that concern citizens
- i) Make recommendations to City Commission, City Administration, and other agencies on any public action as well as on issues and decisions which affect neighborhood living conditions, including but not limited to:

- Appointment to boards and agencies
  - Ordinances and Policies
  - Expenditures, budget and financial planning
  - Liquor license renewals, transfers and other changes
  - Planning and Zoning decisions and priorities
  - Environmental Issues
- j) Assess the responsiveness and effectiveness of City and other public services; identify patterns of inadequate service delivery and advocate for improvements
  - k) Provide advice to community institutions on issues and decisions which affect the quality of neighborhood life
  - l) Through their Chairpersons, meet monthly with the City Manager to discuss items of mutual concern as soon as they arise, including: major policy changes, community problems and development proposals
  - m) Empower citizens to take an active role in maintaining and improving the quality of life in their neighborhood, thereby increasing the positive perception about neighborhoods, government and City
  - n) Encourage citizens to have a community-wide perspective by communicating with other Priority Boards in a manner to ensure mutual respect and understanding of issues facing other neighborhoods

## Roles of Neighborhood Groups

Neighborhood groups play a vital role in the functioning of the Priority Board system by communicating directly with the Boards and taking direct action in smaller, clearly defined neighborhoods. The City encourages involvement at every level in the citizen participation process with as much representation of the views and opinions of the community at large as possible. The neighborhood groups provide a vast personal and close knowledge of the community. Priority Board will work with their neighborhood groups to define the roles of each. Among the roles performed by neighborhood groups are:

- a) Act as the official voice of the neighborhood to the Priority Boards
- b) Identify and prioritize needs, goals, and objectives through the Need Statement Process that represent what the community believes to be important in the preservation of high quality neighborhoods and present those priorities to the Priority Board for action; Work with the Priority Board to take action on top priorities
- c) Function as a communication tool to all residents
- d) Identify and advocate the assets of their neighborhoods
- e) Form partnerships with Neighborhood Development Corporations to assure desirable and affordable housing by preserving existing housing stock, creating in-fill housing, and increasing home ownership for all income groups
- f) Identify key areas and assess housing needs with Neighborhood Development Corporation's and use that partnership to access funding available
- g) Participate in neighborhood empowerment efforts through self-help programs designed to address community problems or neighborhood needs such as Saturday clean-ups, self-help tree planting program, etc.
- h) Encourage neighborhood residents to develop their leadership skills and interest in working on neighborhood problems
- i) Encourage neighborhood residents to run for Priority Board seats

- j) Have representatives attend Priority Board meetings to maintain an effective community information system and to foster mutual dialogue regarding community issues and problems
- k) Make recommendations to Priority Board, City Commission and other boards and bodies regarding issues which affect the quality of neighborhood life, such as:
  - Liquor license issues
  - Plan Board cases
  - Board of Zoning Appeals cases
  - EPA hearings, and surplus land sales
- l) Form partnerships with resident councils and other subsidized groups to assure equal voice of all residents
- m) Address public safety issues by assisting in the implementation and networking of neighborhood watch groups
- n) Sponsor events and activities to put a positive focus on the community and show the advantages of City living
- o) Sponsor social activities that build a sense of community and reach out to all residents
- p) Develop close working relationships with adjacent business districts to improve the quality of neighborhood life
- q) Identify projects/events and make application to obtain funding for these through various funding sources such as Neighborhood Initiatives, Festival of Neighborhoods and Cultural Event programs, neighborhood marketing grants, and/or other non-city funding programs
- r) Support Priority Board activities by attending events and/or providing volunteer assistance
- s) Assist in the education of residents regarding programs/resources available to address identified needs such as the Volunteer Insulation Program, Recycling Education Programs, Adult Basic Education Programs, or Neighborhood Lending Program
- t) Submit complaints to the Priority Board for processing and referral to proper agency

## Role Of Priority Board Chairpersons Council

The Priority Board Chairpersons Council is a unique forum which regularly brings together the chairpersons of the seven Priority Boards. Through this forum, the citizen participation network has access to the highest levels of government and the community and the opportunity to speak with one voice on issues that affect the entire city or all neighborhoods.

It is also an important communication linkage, and fosters greater understanding among areas which include people of different social, economic, racial and cultural backgrounds. Among the roles played by the Chairpersons Council are:

- a) Meet monthly with the City Manager to discuss items of mutual concern as soon as they arise, including: major policy changes community problems and opportunities and development initiatives
- b) Make recommendations to City Commission and City administration regarding issues and decisions which affect the quality of neighborhood life or would benefit from citizen input such as:
  - Appointments to boards and agencies which serve neighborhoods and citizens in general

- Review new or amended city ordinances and policies
  - Work with city agencies to develop appropriate ordinances and policies to address citizen and neighborhood concerns
- c) Review recommendations for amendments to the Consolidated Plan
  - d) Form city wide task forces to address city wide issues and concerns such as the Citizens' Financial Task Force
  - e) Keep individual Priority Boards informed of a wide variety of issues and concerns
  - f) Meet periodically with Dayton's state legislative delegation
  - g) Identify ways that the Priority Board system and citizen participation in general may be improved
  - h) Encourage citizens to have a community-wide perspective by communicating with other Priority Boards to ensure mutual understanding of problems facing other neighborhoods
  - i) Approve the annual Priority Board elections plan, and Code of Operations and Candidate Conduct.

## Role Of Priority Board Staff

The Division of Neighborhood Affairs is the City agency responsible for the administration of the Community Involvement Strategy. Towards that end, Priority Board staff will perform the following activities:

- A. Participation in Community Decisions - Dayton citizens should be involved in community decisions which affect their lives and neighborhoods. Dayton residents should participate in political and community decision-making processes to ensure some control and "ownership" of decisions and actions rendered.**
- 1) Conduct an annual election in each Priority Board area to identify representatives who will act on behalf of their neighborhoods.
  - 2) Identify and recruit persons with leadership skills and interest who are seeking opportunities to work on community problems.
  - 3) Provide technical assistance in the operation of Priority Boards, Priority Board committees and neighborhood groups. Assist in the organization and maintenance of neighborhood groups and other neighborhood-based interest organizations.
  - 4) Facilitate citizen participation into the Community Development Block Grant Application, neighborhood needs assessment, ongoing reviews of the Consolidated Plan during its development and implementation, General Fund Budget, Human Service Levy, Children Service Levy monies, CIP Program and other processes by which government allocates resources.
  - 5) Assist Priority Boards, neighborhood groups and public housing resident councils with presentation of concerns to officials.
  - 6) Monitor operations of other governmental operations and assist Priority Boards and neighborhood groups in presenting concerns to public agencies and community institutions; assist in developing legislative priorities to transmit to Dayton's state legislative delegation.
  - 7) Ensure consideration of neighborhood concerns in Plan Board, Board of Zoning Appeals cases, liquor license issues, land sales and other issues of importance to neighborhood. Provide prompt notification and technical assistance as requested.
  - 8) Ensure timely input of citizens concerns regarding the development, and review of the Consolidated Plan; especially those citizens living in the area of proposed projects of the Consolidated Plan.

**B. Quality Neighborhood Life** - Citizens primarily determine the quality of neighborhood life and are the major resources in achieving the City Commission goal of neighborhood vitality. They have the greatest stake in neighborhoods and can best ensure the vitality of the area in which they live. Citizens are the "senior partner" in the neighborhood vitality effort, working along with government and other community institutions. Government actions should support the efforts initiated by neighborhood residents and encourage cooperation of other community institutions with neighborhoods.

- 1) Assist Priority Boards in the development of annual Needs Statements which indicate priority neighborhood concerns and suggested approaches for addressing those concerns; package the statements to be readily usable by City officials, other public agencies and community institutions.
- 2) Assist Priority Boards neighborhood groups, public housing resident councils, and low/very low-income residents in identifying high priority capital projects; assist Priority Boards and all those groups in recommending neighborhood funding priorities for Community Development Block Grant and other funding sources.
- 3) Foster partnerships between neighborhood business districts and adjacent residential areas.
- 4) Provide access, information and other assistance to Priority Board members and other neighborhood residents in understanding the Consolidated Plan.
- 5) Assist Priority Boards and neighborhood groups in the development of neighborhood marketing plans and work toward their implementation. Provide technical assistance to neighborhood groups for marketing activities holding open houses, tours or other neighborhood events and encourage neighborhoods to sponsor such activities.
- 6) Provide clearinghouse information as to the advantages and opportunities available for moving into Dayton neighborhoods.
- 7) Assist Priority Boards and, neighborhood groups in obtaining resources to accomplish neighborhood goals.
- 8) Assist in other activities which help build a sense of community and neighborhood.

**C. Neighborhood Leadership and Empowerment** - Direct work and leadership on the part of citizens provides the best approach to achieve community goals and addressing community problems. Government actions should empower and encourage neighborhoods to determine their own destiny.

- 1) Empower citizens to develop appropriate means of neighborhood self-help and organize Priority Boards, neighborhood groups and other citizens to perform same.
- 2) Develop community education efforts which help citizens help themselves.
- 3) Help citizens understand and access government service delivery.
- 4) Work with City organizations, public and private agencies, and public housing authorities to structure programs that encourage neighborhood self-help, such as neighborhood tree planting, Saturday clean-ups, neighborhood maintenance of parks, etc.

**D. Communication Networks** - Communication among neighborhoods, government and other institutions revolves around Priority Boards. Priority Boards are uniquely situated to provide a communications infrastructure for their communities and ensure that information is communicated quickly and effectively.

- 1) Maintain an effective community information system for timely communication of information concerning government and other community actions to neighborhoods.

- 2) Assist Priority Boards and neighborhood groups in channeling and expressing their concerns to the proper person or agencies.
- 3) Provide expert referral of service inquiries and/or complaints to the proper agency.
- 4) Work with City and other public agencies to ensure responsiveness to citizen service complaints.
- 5) Manage the Administrative Council process.
- 6) Inform administration officials about problems affecting the quality of life in neighborhoods.
- 7) Assist Priority Boards and neighborhood groups in communicating their needs to non-governmental community institutions.
- 8) Enable dialogue among Priority Boards and neighborhood groups to ensure mutual understanding of the problems of other areas.
- 9) Assist neighborhoods in resolving conflicts.

## Resolutions Recognizing Priority Boards

To facilitate development of a systematic and orderly process, on June 25, 1975, the City Commission passed an Informal Resolution officially recognizing the Priority Boards as Dayton's Citizen Participation structure. The Resolution also provides a general framework in which Priority Boards are expected to operate.

On June 7, 1978, the City Commission adopted a Resolution establishing the Downtown Priority Board. Subsequently, on June 1, 1988 by Commission Resolution, the structure of the Downtown Priority Board was changed to allow more representation of downtown residents.

The City Commission, by resolution, has also recognized various neighborhood councils authorized to elect representatives to the Southeast, Northwest and FROC Priority Boards.

All aforementioned resolutions are reproduced in the appendix.

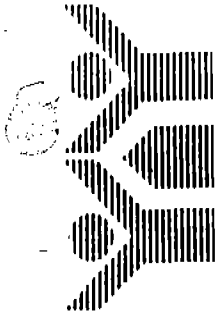
## Priority Board Election and Representation Process

The Priority Board election process is designed to allow citizens to be represented and become involved in the governmental decision making process on a city-wide basis. The boundaries of each Priority Board assure a broad diversity of socio-economic groups. The Priority Boards' individual election plans, largely by precinct, guarantee representation from all the different groups. Additional efforts are made to obtain representation from very low and low-income areas. City Commission policy dictates that in order to be eligible, citizens must be registered voters and have a petition signed by registered voters in the area which they represent and must be elected to their seat.

The annual Priority Board elections shall be conducted by the City of Dayton Division of Neighborhood Affairs which shall be responsible for planning and administering the elections and announcing the results.

Each year, about four months prior to the start of the election season, each Priority Board is asked to prepare an election plan consisting of:

- 1) A representation plan which divides the entire Priority Board area into smaller election districts and establishes which seats are to be filled in the coming election.
- 2) A determination of the length of the term which new members will serve.



# Oahu's Neighborhood Board System



NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

City and County of Honolulu  
City Hall, Room 400  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

## **YOU ARE THE DIFFERENCE**

The theme, "The Responsible City," was chosen by the City Charter Commission when it presented the revised City Charter to the voters in 1972. A major component of this concept is full citizen participation in government so that the powers of the City shall properly serve and advance the aspirations of its citizens.

However, the initiative for action must come from the people themselves. While neighborhoods and neighborhood boards were established under the Charter as a means to increase and assure effective citizen participation, their creation and implementation are optional.

The Neighborhood Plan, which designates boundaries and provides for neighborhood formation, leaves many decisions open to the community so that an individually designed approach, suited to each neighborhood can be implemented.

In 1984, Oahu's voters approved a City Charter amendment expanding the role of the neighborhood boards to include all levels of government. Every Oahu resident has the opportunity to participate in governmental decision making which affects their community. You can play a significant part in making government more responsive to community needs. The decision is up to you.



JEREMY HARRIS, Mayor  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

## WHAT IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD SYSTEM?

Oahu's Neighborhood Board System was created to assure and increase community participation in the decision-making process of government. The system applies the concept of participatory democracy, involving communities in the decisions affecting them. It establishes an islandwide network of elected neighborhood boards as communication channels, expanding and facilitating opportunities for community and government interaction.

## HOW WAS THE SYSTEM CREATED?

The process for development of the Neighborhood Board System began when the Revised City Charter of Honolulu (1973) called for the establishment of a nine-member Neighborhood Commission. The Commission was responsible for developing a Neighborhood Plan outlining a uniform system of neighborhood boards on Oahu. Neighborhood boards were then formed in accordance with the Plan.

## WHAT ARE THE MAJOR POINTS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN?

The Neighborhood Plan designates neighborhood boundaries throughout Oahu and provides procedures for forming neighborhood areas and neighborhood boards. Some of the Plan's major points are:

- Thirty-three neighborhood areas (boundaries)
- Initiative petition of 100 registered voters or five percent of voters within the area (whichever is less) for the formation of a neighborhood.
- Election of board members by residents 18 years and older.
- Two-year terms for board members.
- Advisory role for all neighborhood boards.

## WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF A NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD?

Neighborhood boards may serve as a key mechanism (through which each neighborhood may communicate its needs and desires, both in the delivery of basic government services and in economic development and land use questions. While the Neighborhood Plan emphasizes the advisory nature of the boards, suggested activities include study and review of capital improvement projects and zoning concerns. In addition, boards may conduct informational forums on governmental decision making processes and may establish community goals, objec-

tives, and priorities.

Neighborhood boards are required to hold monthly meetings.

## WHO CAN SERVE ON A NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD?

All residents of Oahu, including military personnel and legal resident aliens, who reside in the neighborhood board area and subdistrict and who are at least eighteen (18) years of age are eligible to serve on the neighborhood board. Neighborhood board elections are conducted biennially through a mail ballot system. A candidacy declaration form must be filed but no filing fees or nominating papers are required.

## HOW CAN A CITIZEN PARTICIPATE IN THE SYSTEM?

Community participation is encouraged and welcomed by the boards. There are many ways in which the community can participate, some of which are:

- Voicing your concerns to your board representatives through personal contact or letters.
- Attending the regular monthly meetings, public forums and other community events sponsored by your board.
- Volunteering to participate on a board committee. You can help resolve community problems or work on a community project.
- Responding to surveys conducted by the board.
- Be a candidate and/or vote in your board's election.

## WHAT IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION?

The Neighborhood Commission consists of nine members. Four are appointed by the Mayor, four by the City Council, and the ninth member is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. One of the appointees for both the City Council and Mayor and the ninth member must have served on a neighborhood board. Each member serves a five-year term. The Commission is responsible for the periodic review and evaluation of the Plan and neighborhood boards, and assists in the formation of neighborhood boards upon request.

Administrative services and technical staff to support the mandated functions of the Neighborhood Commission and the neighborhood boards are provided through the Neighborhood Commission Office.

## NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD

NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD	DATE FORMED
25 Mililani/Waipio/Melemanu	4/23/75
24 Waianae Coast	5/9/75
15 Kalihi-Palama	5/16/75
2 Kuliouou/Kalani Iki	5/16/75
32 Waimanalo	7/18/75
29 Kahaluu	9/8/75
28 Koolauloa	2/10/76
30 Kaneohe	2/10/76
3 Waialae/Kahala	4/16/76
16 Kalihi Valley	5/4/76
8 McCully/Moiliili	5/4/76
31 Kailua	8/24/76
1 Hawaii Kai	3/1/77
7 Manoa	3/1/77
14 Liliha/Kapalama	3/22/77
10 Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus	9/20/77
11 Ala Moana/Kakaako	9/20/77
9 Waikiki	9/20/77
20 Aiea	9/20/77
6 Palolo	9/20/77
21 Pearl City	9/20/77
4 Kaimuki	9/20/77
12 Nuuanu/Punchbowl	9/20/77
23 Ewa	9/20/77
13 Downtown	9/20/77
5 Diamond Head/Kapahulu	9/20/77
27 North Shore	9/27/77
18 Aliamanu/Salt Lake/Foster Village	10/1/77
22 Waipahu	1/30/79
26 Wahiawa	10/23/84
34 Makalio/Kapolei/Honokai Hale	3/19/85
•17 Mosmanua	8/29/94
•19 Airport	
•33 Mokapu	

• The initiative for forming these neighborhood boards must come from the residents, as specified in the Revised City Charter.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL OR WRITE:

Neighborhood Commission Office  
City Hall, Room 400  
530 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 527-5749 Fax: (808) 527-5760

INTRODUCTION  
to the 1991 Revised Guidelines

The purpose of Neighborhood Associations is to consider and act upon citizen needs. A main function of Neighborhood Associations is to assist and broaden communication between citizens and government on matters affecting neighborhood livability and to encourage citizen participation in many levels of decision-making. Neighborhood Associations are open to everyone and are representative of those citizens who choose to be involved. Through an Ordinance adopted by the Portland City Council in 1974, the Office of Neighborhood Associations was established, as well as a process for recognizing Neighborhood Associations and providing support and assistance to them. Over the years, concerned and creative citizens have made many positive improvements in the livability of Portland. Assisting in such efforts is what the neighborhood program is all about.

These Guidelines for Neighborhood Associations, District Coalitions and the Office of Neighborhood Associations describe the components and the procedures for the smooth functioning of this neighborhood program. The Guidelines acknowledge and respect the inherent diversity within the neighborhood network. They establish a common base from which each Neighborhood Association and District Coalition can carry out its own activities.

The Guidelines provide a regulatory framework for the Neighborhood Associations, seven District Coalitions, the Office of Neighborhood Associations and thousands of citizen volunteers seeking information about and an understanding of the different components of the neighborhood system.

It is important to note the legal status of these Guidelines as they apply to Neighborhood Associations, District Coalitions and the Office of Neighborhood Associations. The Guidelines have been adopted by City ordinance to govern the expenditure of public money provided by the City of Portland to assist Neighborhood Associations and District Coalitions in carrying out their activities. Therefore, the Guidelines have the status of minimal legal requirements for Coalitions and recognized Neighborhood Associations.

The neighborhood movement has grown and evolved over the past eighteen years. These Guidelines are the first update and describe the way the system works today. Over the coming years, as needs and structures continue to evolve, future changes may be incorporated into the Guidelines.

It should be noted that nothing in this document shall limit the right of any person or group to participate directly in the decision-making process of the City Council or any City agency.

## I. DEFINITIONS

### **NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

A neighborhood association is a group of people organized for the purpose of considering and acting upon any of a broad range of issues affecting the livability and quality of their neighborhood. A neighborhood association normally functions as a non-profit organization or is incorporated as a non-profit.

### **RECOGNIZED NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

A recognized Neighborhood Association is one which meets the minimum standards of the City of Portland Code (Chapter 3.96) and applicable guidelines adopted by the Office of Neighborhood Associations and is currently recognized by ONA. ONA formally recognizes the Neighborhood Association with a Letter of Recognition which remains in effect unless the Neighborhood Association fails to meet the minimum standards and guidelines.

### **DISTRICT COALITION**

A District Coalition is an independent non-profit corporation which contracts with the Office of Neighborhood Associations to facilitate citizen participation and neighborhood crime prevention services to Neighborhood Associations and citizens within a geographically defined area. The Board of a District Coalition (DCB) is primarily composed of representatives from its member Neighborhood Associations.

### **OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (ONA)**

ONA is an agency of the City of Portland whose purpose is to facilitate citizen participation and improved communication among citizens, Neighborhood Associations, District Coalitions and the City.

**Strengthening  
Seattle's  
communities,**

**erving  
Seattle's  
citizens . . .**



**City of Seattle**  
Norman B. Rice, Mayor

**Department of Neighborhoods**

Jim Diers, Director

400 Arctic Building, 700 Third Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98104-1848

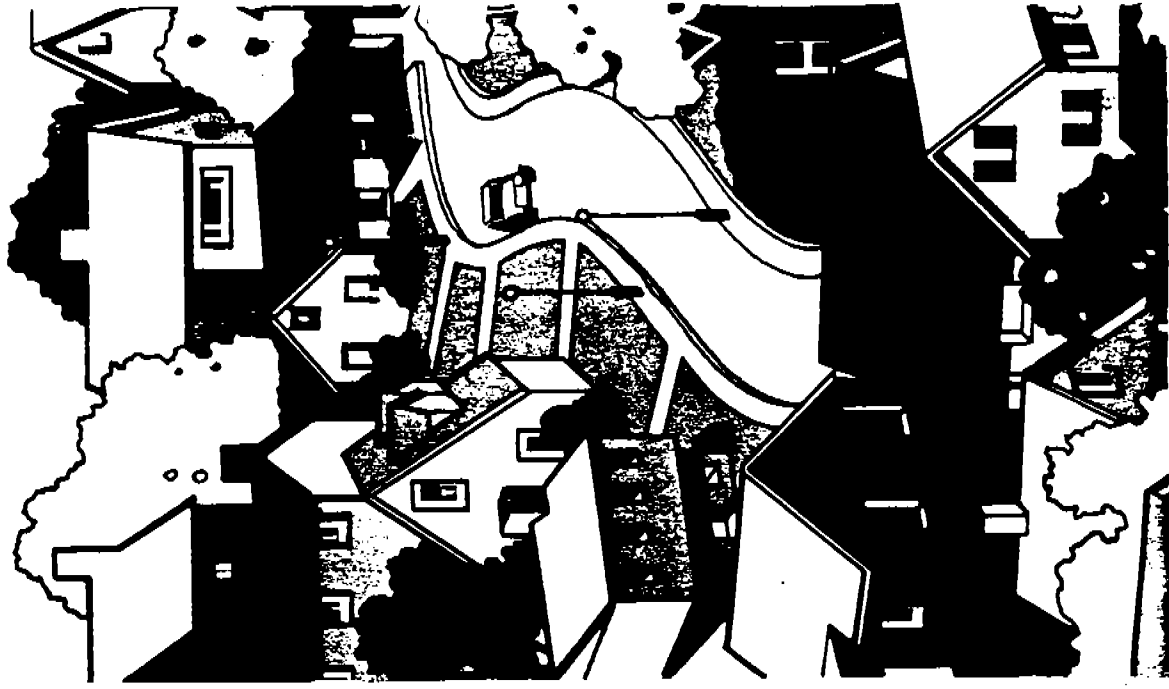
(206) 684-0464

TDD/684-0464 FAX 233-5142

Accommodations for persons with  
disabilities provided upon request.

SEATTLE'S

**Department of  
Neighborhoods**

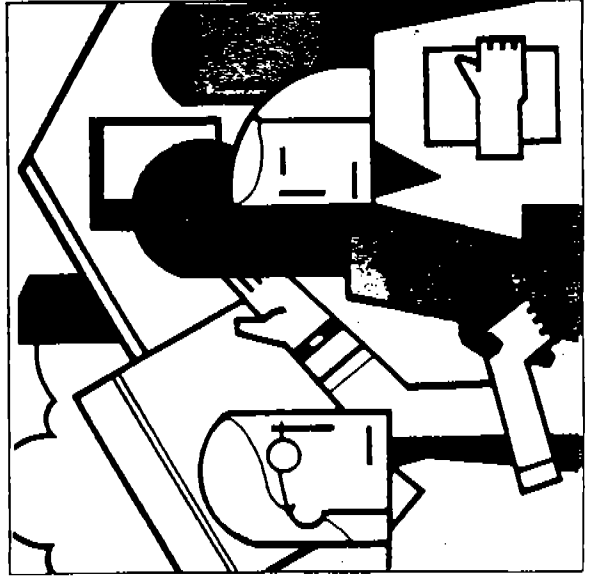


# Department of Neighborhoods

Our diverse neighborhoods and their active citizens are what make Seattle such a livable city. Each of Seattle's more than 100 neighborhoods has its own distinct character fostering a strong sense of community. Through their community organizations, merchants and residents strive to keep their neighborhoods vital places to live, learn, work, and play.

The Department of Neighborhoods was established to further empower Seattle's citizens, to improve communication with City government, and to facilitate neighborhood preservation and development.

**The Department is here to serve you.**

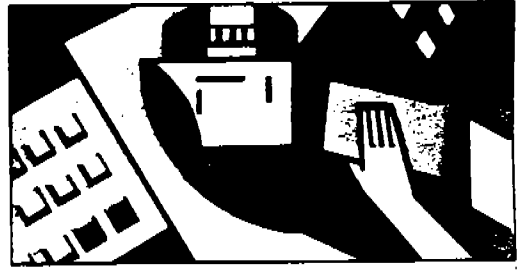


## Citizens Service Bureau

*One call does it all.*

**Call 684-8811**  
V/ROD

- Provides information and referral regarding City services.
- Investigates complaints about City policies, procedures, and service delivery and advocates for citizens.
- Assists citizens to navigate their way through the bureaucracy.
- Provides information and referral on hate crimes — 233-1080.

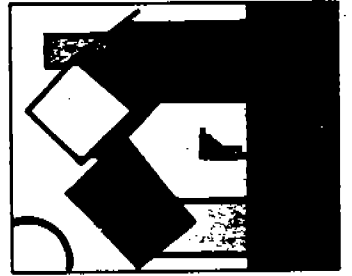


## Neighborhood Programs

*Providing skills and resources to strengthen neighborhoods.*

**Call 684-0464**  
V/ROD

- Provides resources for leadership and organizational development.
- Manages the Neighborhood Matching Fund supporting self-help projects.
- Involves neighbors in facility planning for schools and major institutions.
- Coordinates community development in low-income neighborhoods.
- Acts as City liaison with development projects including Port of Seattle projects.

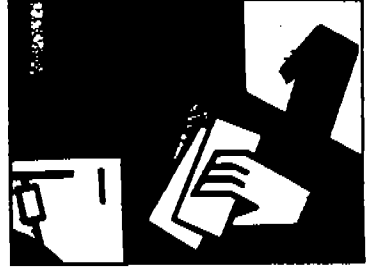


## Neighborhood Service Centers

*Linking City government to Seattle neighborhoods.*

**Call 684-0719**

- Facilitate communication between citizens and their government.
- Help community groups network with one another.
- Assist with neighborhood improvement efforts.
- Act as collection sites for City Light and Combined Utility Bills, parking tickets, pet licenses, and purchase of garbage stickers.
- Make referrals to local human services.
- Serve as staff to District Councils.



## Urban Conservation

*Safeguarding the past for the future.*

**Call 684-0228**

- Implements the City's historic preservation program.
- Encourages rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties.
- Promotes recognition, protection, and enhancement of landmark buildings and sites through the Landmarks Preservation Board.
- Provides assistance to Seattle's historic neighborhoods (Ballard, Columbia City, Fort Lawton, Harvard-Belmont, International District, Pike Place Market, Pioneer Square).



**If you live in Seattle you'll find plenty of opportunities to volunteer to improve your neighborhood ... Here are some of the programs offered by the City.**

## Adopt-A-Park

### Department of Parks and Recreation

Adopt-A-Parks Coordinators:

Christina Gallegos, South, 684-4557

Joy Vanderwerff, Central, 386-1419

Janine VanSanden, North, 233-3979

100 Dexter Ave. N

Seattle WA 98119



Adopt-A-Park can help your group do a maintenance or an improvement project in a Seattle park, such as litter control, beautification, vandalism monitoring, trail and playground rehabilitation, bench and tree donations, or beach cleanups.

## Adopt-A-Street

### Solid Waste Utility,

### Engineering Department

Conrad Lee, Coordinator, 684-7647

710 2nd Ave.

505 Dexter Horton Building

Seattle WA 98104



Through Adopt-A-Street, your group can adopt a one-mile stretch of street, on which you will pick up litter at least four times a year, plus do special projects like graffiti paint-outs as you choose.

## Block Watch

### Police Department

684-7555

610 3rd Ave.

Seattle WA 98104



Contact to get in touch with or to organize your neighborhood's Block Watch.

## Neighborhood Matching Fund

### Department of Neighborhoods

Bernie Matsuno, Coordinator, 684-0464

700 3rd Ave.

400 Arctic Building

Seattle WA 98104



Pick up or call for information about how to apply to the Neighborhood Matching Fund for cash awards for neighborhood-based self-help projects.

## Neighborhood Planning Office

### Office of the Mayor

Lawrence McGuire, Public Relations

Specialist, 233-0037

600 4th Ave.

219 Municipal Building

Seattle WA 98104



Call or write the Office to find out if neighborhood planning is going on in your community and, if so, how you can get involved.

## P-Patch Program

### Department of Housing and Human Services

Barbara Donette,

Program Manager, 684-0264

618 2nd Ave.

Seattle WA 98104



Call for information or to get an application to participate in community gardening in your neighborhood.

## Paint-Out Program

### Solid Waste Utility, Engineering Department

Graffiti Coordinator, 684-7587 (leave message)

710 2nd Ave.

505 Dexter Horton Building

Seattle WA 98104



The graffiti Coordinator can help your organization organize a paint-out or fund funding for anti-graffiti projects. To report graffiti or illegal dumping, leave a message with the City's Graffiti Hotline at 684-PKUP.

## Recreation Advisory Councils

### Department of Parks and Recreation

Call your local Community Center

(listed in the phone book's Blue Pages)

to find out how to get involved with its

Recreation Advisory Council.



## Spring Clean

(Seattle's Cleanup of Public Spaces)

### Solid Waste Utility, Engineering Department

David Hunter, Anti-Litter Coordinator, 684-4163

710 2nd Ave.

505 Dexter Horton Building

Seattle WA 98104



The Anti-Litter Coordinator can give you information on the annual Spring Clean cleanup of Seattle's public spaces.

## Tree Stewards

### Engineering Department

Liz Ellis, Program Coordinator,

684-5008

600 4th Ave.

410 Municipal Building

Seattle WA 98104



Tree Stewards  
Program  
for the City of Seattle

The program trains volunteers to help the City care for trees growing along streets, in parks, greenbelts, and in other public spaces; in turn, Tree Stewards work with neighbors and existing organizations to teach others about Seattle's urban forest, plan and implement tree planting and care projects, and serve as tree information resource people.

## And more ...

Of course, there are many more community-based organizations and projects through which you can contribute to your neighborhood. A good place to start is with your local community council or business association, but your local school, human service provider, organizations for the arts, recreation, environment, history, or seniors would welcome your involvement as well. To learn more about volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood, call your local Neighborhood Service Center.

## Neighborhood Service Centers

Ballard*	2305 NW Market St., 98107	684-4060
Capitol Hill	501 19th Ave. E, 98112	684-4574
Central*	1825 S Jackson St., 98144	684-4767
Downtown	1825 S Jackson St., 98144	233-8560
Fremont	708 N 34th, 98103	684-4054
Greater Duwamish District	3801 Beacon Ave. S, 98108	233-2044
Greenwood	8505 Greenwood Ave. N, 98103	684-4096
Lake City*	12707 30th Ave. NE, 98125	684-7526
North King County	12707 30th Ave. NE, 98125	684-0785
Queen Anne/Magnolia	708 N 34th, 98103	684-4812
Southeast*	4859 Rainier Ave. S, 98118	386-1931
Southwest King County	9609 16th Ave. SW, 98106	296-3325
Southwest*	9407 16th Ave. SW, 98106	684-7416
University*	5214 University Way NE, 98105	684-7542
West Seattle*	4454 California Ave. SW, 98116	684-7495

For general information about the Neighborhood Service Centers, call the Department of Neighborhoods at 684-0719.

\* Sites assisting utility customers.

# Get Involved

## Help the City Help Your Neighborhood



City of Seattle  
Department of Neighborhoods



# SAINT PAUL'S CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS

St. Paul, MN

## AND DISTRICT COUNCIL SYSTEM

The City of Saint Paul established a citywide citizen participation process by City Council Resolution in October 1975. Seventeen citizen participation districts were established. District lines were drawn by neighborhood, not by population, by a task force of neighborhood residents. District populations range from 4,300 to 27,000.

Each district has a neighborhood council selected at yearly district elections. The number of citizens on each of the district councils is determined by the district council bylaws. The average number is fifteen. District Council members volunteer their time.

Each District Council plans and advises on the physical, economic, and social development of its area as well as on citywide issues. In addition, these neighborhood groups identify neighborhood needs, initiate neighborhood programs to meet these needs, and recruit volunteers when needed by these programs.

Citizen participation districts are a vital part of the city's communication network. Each neighborhood office serves as an information and referral resource. Each district either uses a neighborhood newspaper to communicate at its district level or it publishes and distributes a neighborhood newsletter.

The City also established by resolution an Early Notification System that requires city departments to notify a list of district councils, neighborhood organizations and residents of pending city actions that will affect them. This ENS list is maintained by City staff.

Each District hires its own Community Organizer (C.O.). Most districts also hire some clerical assistance and a crime prevention coordinator. District Council employees are not city employees.

The District Councils were allocated \$658,718 by the City in 1995. This money, distributed on a formula basis to the districts, is for staff, space, supplies, and neighborhood communication. Districts receive from \$33,000 to \$43,000. Sources of funds include CDBG, city general funds and transfers from other funds. Since 1990 each District Council contracts with the City for the money it receives. Contracts include districts' goals and objectives. District Councils report on their goals, objectives and activities each year to the Mayor and City Council.

Many District Councils do local fundraising as well as apply for and receive foundation and corporate support for projects and programs. The amount varies among the districts. They also receive City funds for crime prevention and neighborhood development through a competitive process.

Questions about the Citizen Participation Process and the District Councils should be directed to the citizen participation contact in the Department of Planning & Economic Development, 612-266-6693.

### **Functions of the Neighborhood Program:**

- Providing information on how to start and sustain a neighborhood association
- Duplicating and mailing neighborhood associations' newsletters and announcements
- Mailing agendas of all Planning and Zoning Commission, Design Review Board, and Board of Adjustment meetings to all neighborhood and homeowners association chairpersons
- Holding monthly "drop-in" meetings, where chairpersons can discuss common problems and exchange information
- Conducting an annual citywide workshop for all neighborhood and homeowners associations
- Coordinating meetings between neighborhood representatives and City staff or elected officials concerning issues of interest to specific neighborhoods
- Producing a quarterly newsletter updating chairpersons on government and association activities
- Coordinating neighborhood planning efforts to identify neighborhoods' short- and long-range goals
- Arranging mediation through the Community Services Department to help resolve conflicts between neighbors
- Maintaining a registration database of neighborhood and homeowners associations

- Creating and maintaining mailing lists for neighborhood associations
- Providing insurance coverage for use of school facilities for neighborhood meetings
- Chairing the Interdepartmental Service Team, a task force representing several City departments focusing on solving neighborhood problems
- Coordinating the Neighborhood Grant Program, which allocates \$100,000 in capital improvement funds for projects requested by associations and approved by the Interdepartmental Service Team
- Representing Tempe as a member of Neighborhoods USA, a national organization dedicated to exchanging ideas that have helped strengthen neighborhoods in cities across the country

# **City of Tempe Neighborhood Program**

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

- **What is a Neighborhood Association?**
- **What is a Homeowners Association?**
- **What is the Neighborhood Program?**

For more information on the City of Tempe Neighborhood Program, please call 350-8234 or

Maryanne Corder  
Neighborhood Program Administrator  
350-8223

Gary Davis  
Management Assistant  
350-8883

Tempe Neighborhood Program  
31 E. Fifth St.  
P.O. Box 5002  
Tempe, AZ 85280  
(602) 350-8234



### What is a Neighborhood Association?

A neighborhood association is a voluntary organization of residents who work together to improve and maintain the quality of life in their neighborhood. Associations can form out of concern over a particular issue or as a means of enhancing a "sense of community."

Features of a Neighborhood Association:

- Membership is open to all residents and property owners in the neighborhood, but participation is optional; boundaries are established by the association (usually 40 - 400 households)
- Dues are voluntary
- There is no legal authority to enact or enforce maintenance or design requirements beyond those established by City ordinances
- To ensure a visibly democratic process, the organization establishes formal or informal bylaws to provide for at least one general membership meeting per year and to require an annual election of officers
- Associations create their own newsletters (NO advertising or political campaigning) which the Neighborhood Office duplicates and mails to all households in the area
- Association position statements are reached through consensus; any dissenting statements are also attached and sent to the City

If you would like to know if you live within a neighborhood association area, or would like information on how to form one, please call the Neighborhood Program at 350-8234.

### What is a Homeowners Association?

Homeowners associations, unlike neighborhood associations, are formal legal entities created to maintain common areas and enforce private deed restrictions (CC&R's). Most condominium and townhome developments and some newer single-family subdivisions have homeowners associations which are usually created when the development is built.

Features of a Homeowners Association:

- Membership is mandatory for all property owners within the boundaries of the development
- Members are usually charged mandatory fees
- Homeowners associations have the legal authority to enact and enforce maintenance and design standards in addition to those established by City ordinances
- Homeowners associations are corporations with formal bylaws - there is usually a governing board which hires a property management company to handle maintenance and enforcement issues
- Many homeowners associations publish a newsletter, which is sent to members at the association's expense

If you would like to register a homeowners association with the Neighborhood Program to receive information on neighborhood-related issues, please call 350-8234.

### What is the Neighborhood Program?

Created by City Council resolution in 1987, the City of Tempe's Neighborhood Program is designed to help preserve the integrity of Tempe's residential areas and to promote a sense of community. It provides technical and informational services to over 40 neighborhood associations (ranging in membership from 35 to 2,000 households), over 50 homeowners associations and 5 affiliate groups. It also supplies clerical support to neighborhood associations.

The Neighborhood Program's key job is to maintain clear communication lines between neighborhood groups and City Hall. By linking Tempe residents with City officials, the Program helps associations identify and resolve neighborhood problems and determine future goals and priorities. Informed citizen participation is the Program's goal.

The partnership between City Hall and neighborhood groups continues to grow stronger. Every year four to five new neighborhood associations form. In addition, an increasing number of neighborhood leaders serve on the City's various boards and commissions. Most importantly, more and more Tempe residents are finding that one doesn't have to "fight City Hall" but rather work with it to improve and maintain the quality of life in our community.