

NOLA CPP

Neighborhood Association

Manual



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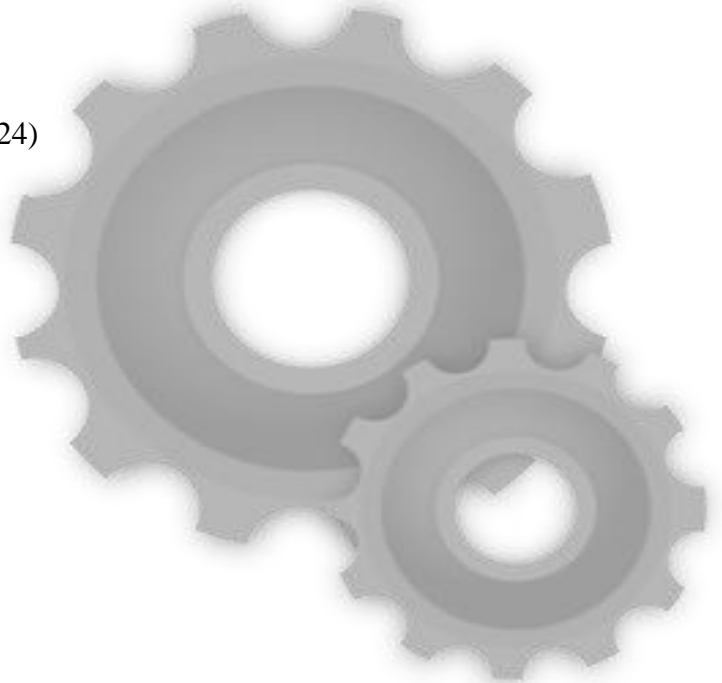
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Introduction

This Neighborhood Manual is intended to be a resource to Neighborhood and Community Organizations as the City of New Orleans continues its development of a formalized Citizen Participation Program (CPP) for its residents. This manual contains information on how to create and run an effective Neighborhood Association, some of the best practices and standards of Neighborhood Associations, a list of additional trainings and resources available to help build capacity within our communities, and the many benefits that a CPP will offer neighborhoods.

At its core, a CPP is a communication tool that enhances the information-sharing process between city government agencies, businesses and residents of New Orleans. This can be done by formally engaging Neighborhood Associations and Communities of Interest in the decision-making process. The goal is that New Orleans will no longer experience “planning by surprise”, where you wake up one day and a major project is taking place in your neighborhood that you had no idea about. Developers and businesses will benefit by knowing who they need to talk to in the community about their projects; and everyone will benefit because good projects will get completed faster, with input from all stakeholders. Citizens will also be able to work proactively on things that will benefit their neighborhoods, even having the opportunity to initiate projects themselves in concert with government and private developers. Because city government will get clear input about what the people want, officials will be able to make the best decisions for the whole community, and everyone impacted by those decisions will know about them as they are being made and have the opportunity to have their voices heard in the process.

While the CPP cannot guarantee that every future decision made by government will reflect citizen input, it will mandate that when decisions are being made that will have an impact on a particular neighborhood or community, the citizens will get information about these issues before the decisions are made; that the information will be clear and accurate; and that they will be able to provide input to government – again, before final decisions are made.

As proposed, the New Orleans CPP is organized by Neighborhood Associations, District Councils, and a central coordinating CPP office charged with making sure the CPP system runs effectively. The current Neighborhood Engagement Office may assume this role.

Since Neighborhood Associations are the foundation on which a robust and effective CPP is built, it is important that all neighborhoods are represented within the system. It is also important that the standards, benefits and resources are clearly explained to current Neighborhood Associations. Hopefully this resource serves our many dedicated residents well during the implementation of New Orleans’ Citizen Participation Program.



How to Start a Neighborhood Association

In general, Neighborhood Associations exist in order to set priorities and accomplish goals for the residents of the geographic area contained within their boundaries. Neighborhood Associations are the foundation on which a strong and effective Citizen Participation Program (CPP) is built. Once recognized by the CPP system, a Neighborhood Association will become the primary place for city government to communicate with residents about important developments that could affect them. Many neighborhoods across New Orleans have already come together and created strong and dynamic Neighborhood Associations that are driving the revitalization of our city. Some areas, however, are not yet represented by a Neighborhood Association, and this section is meant to serve as a guide in how to set up and run an effective Neighborhood Association.

Step 1

Form a “Core Group”

It is important to first identify a small number of neighbors who would be interested in starting a Neighborhood Association. These neighbors should be willing and able to meet regularly and interested in setting some beginning goals for the Association. Either identify people that you know within the neighborhood who you believe would be an asset to the organization, or try to assemble a group via other methods. These methods could include putting up notices at local businesses, churches and other gathering places, asking if anyone is interested in starting a Neighborhood Association. You can also knock on doors and pass out flyers in the neighborhood, explaining why you are interested in starting a Neighborhood Association, and asking people to join.

When you have assembled an interested group of 5 – 10 people, schedule a meeting in a centrally located area as soon as possible. You should make sure that it is at a convenient time for all interested in attending. The meeting should be roughly one hour and have an agenda. The agenda serves to guide the discussion and make sure that the primary business of the meeting is addressed. For a first meeting, agenda points could include basic goals of the Neighborhood Association, identifying problems that the Association is interested in tackling, and how to recruit more neighbors into the Association. Tips on how to recruit neighbors into your Association can be found on page 6.

Step 2

Establish Leadership Roles and Define Responsibilities

There are several leadership roles within a Neighborhood Association. These roles and their responsibilities should be defined within the Association's bylaws. The bylaws should also state how the voting procedure by which leadership roles are determined and how long the terms should be. Common roles and their responsibilities include:

Association President	Responsible for finalizing the agenda, running the meetings, ensuring that the agenda is fully addressed, and maintaining fairness and respectful behavior of the attendees.
Vice President	Serves as an alternate to the Association President.
Treasurer	Responsible for managing and keeping track of the Association's finances, preparing budget reports, and, if necessary, maintaining the organization's tax exempt status and filing tax returns.
Secretary	Responsible for keeping clear records of meetings, including discussions regarding agenda points and decisions that are made, ensuring that the bylaws are being maintained, keeping a roster of Association members, and keeping records of the Association's agreed upon plans.

A sample of parliamentary procedures by which the Association leadership can run meetings can be found on page 35 within the Appendices.

Step 3

Identify Needs and Assets, Conducting a SWOT analysis

Identifying neighborhood needs and neighborhood assets is a good way to figure out goals to accomplish and strategies for how to accomplish those goals. Neighborhood needs could include better signage, improved street lights, blight reduction, parks and other facility improvements, or fixing that pothole that's been bugging the neighborhood for months. These needs will form the basis for many of the initial goals of the organization, and inform the types of committees and kind of skills that need to be developed within your Association. A neighborhood asset refers to institutions, businesses, parks, or other persons/places/things within



your neighborhood that not only benefit your neighborhood, but could be used or leveraged somehow to further your Association's goals. This could include things like neighborhood churches that could be used for meeting space, shopping centers along main thoroughfares that could attract new businesses, schools or colleges that have students that can help with volunteer projects, or nonprofit organizations that have similar goals to your own. More information on how to conduct needs and asset surveys can be found on page 24 in the Appendices.

Another good tool that can map out needs and assets is a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. A SWOT analysis is best when it is a group activity. Collect members of the Neighborhood Association, and lead a discussion around the different Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats both within the organization and external to the organization. Strengths are categorized as things or characteristics that the Association already has and can build upon. Weaknesses are gaps where capacity needs to be built up or other areas in which the Association is somehow vulnerable. Opportunities should be prioritized, capitalized upon, and targeted for success. It is important to also view Weaknesses as Opportunities, since Weaknesses can often be an area where the community can come together and get energized around improving the issue. And Threats should be recognized, minimized, and, if possible, improved upon or neutralized. Conducting a SWOT analysis can be a good way to identify what steps should be taken in what order to ensure a successful outcome. A more in-depth discussion on how to perform SWOT analyses and what can be done with the results can be found on page 33 in the Appendices.

Step 4

Establish a Committee System

Once your Association has identified the primary goals and needs of the organization, a committee system should be developed in order to divide up the necessary work and better manage the workload. For instance, if blight reduction is a goal of the Association, a blight committee could be established. This committee would be able to identify objectives within the main goal, and develop strategies to work on the issues. These strategies could include canvassing the neighborhood to identify blight and working with the city's Code Enforcement office. If another main goal is engaging the youth of the community or increasing opportunities for the youth, a committee could be set up that specifically works on issues relating to the New Orleans Recreation Development Commission or after school programs at local schools.

Committees are headed by Committee Chairs, whose role is to facilitate the work of the committee by assigning jobs that are essential to the goals of the committee to the committee members. Committee Chairs will report on the committee's activities and progress during the Association's meeting, whenever appropriate. More in-depth tips on how to effectively manage the committees can be found on page 8 of this manual.

Step 5

Establish Bylaws



After your Association seems to be coming together, it might be time to consider developing and ratifying bylaws. Bylaws are the rules by which your Association and its members agree to operate. Bylaws should outline the following things:

- Neighborhood name
- Neighborhood boundaries
- Neighborhood association mission and purpose
- Voting process for decision-making
- How often meetings are held
- Requirements for and types of membership (i.e., resident, property owner, business owner)
- How leadership is voted upon and when elections occur
- Responsibilities and term lengths and limits of each leadership position
- Size of the board
- Requirements in order to sit on the board
- Standing committees' roles and responsibilities
- How many people need to be present to form a quorum (i.e. the minimum number of present members acceptable in order for a vote to be considered valid)
- Information about dues
- The process that must be undergone in order to amend or change the bylaws
- The process by which members can lodge complaints, or grievances, against the Association if the bylaws are not being followed
- How the agenda for meetings will be set (as in, how many days prior to a meeting should a possible agenda item be sent to the president)
- How and when notifications regarding meetings will be sent out

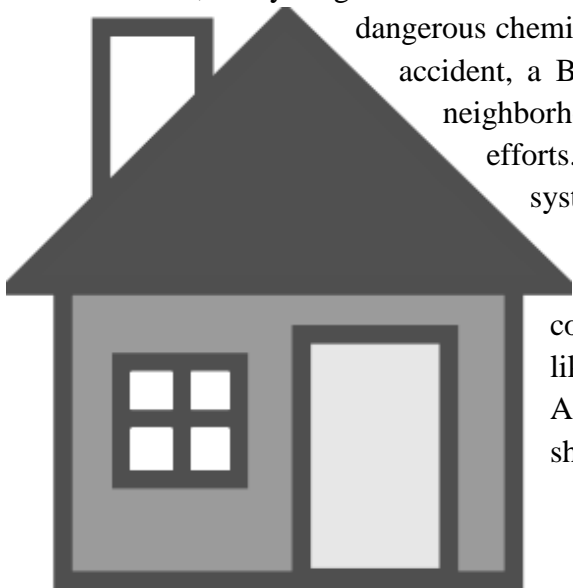
Information on developing bylaws can be found on page 37 in the Appendices.

Outreach and Recruitment

Community outreach and recruitment isn't a step in the sense that it should be occurring all the time rather than at a certain time. Outreach is about making sure that people in your neighborhood know that there is an Association, when and where it meets, and what the Association is concerned about or working on. Some simple ways to increase outreach would be putting flyers up at neighborhood gathering spots, putting up yard signs or signs in front of people's houses to alert people passing by, putting free notices in the local papers, or holding social events like picnics to get the word out and meet neighbors. Websites, email and social media can also be useful tools. Using multiple communication methods means that you will reach different groups of people within the neighborhood, thus creating a more diverse group. Additionally, your Association will become recognized as a legitimate organization if you continue to ensure that it has a high profile within the neighborhood. The best way to grow an organization is to make sure that it is visible and a recognizable space for neighbors to get together.

Another great way to build and retain a roster of your neighbors is by developing a Block Captain system. Block Captains are volunteers from the Association that agree to be responsible for a designated area within the neighborhood. They can serve as a welcoming committee to say hello to any new residents that move to the area, distribute flyers or notices about upcoming meetings, and monitor events that happen in their area. They might also develop a phone tree or email list of residents within the neighborhood. Email lists can also be a great way to send out meeting notices and agendas, or a monthly e-newsletter updating residents on the issues the Association is working on, progress reports and accomplishments, and how residents can get involved or lend their support to the Association and its work.

A Block Captain system can also be useful in the case of emergencies or disasters. Making sure that your Association knows who lives where, and has contact information for the household, would make information sharing much easier both before and after a disaster occurs. For instance, many neighborhoods in New Orleans have trains carrying all sorts of things, including dangerous chemicals, passing through on a regular basis. In the event of an accident, a Block Captain system could be used to send out alerts to neighborhood residents about toxins, road closures, and clean up efforts. In the event of a hurricane evacuation, the Block Captain system could be used to keep track of where residents are going, and whether or not anyone needs special help, or if some residents are staying behind. This information could be incredibly valuable if another large scale disaster like Hurricane Katrina ever occurs again, since the Association would know how to reach members in order to share information and help each other.



How to Run Effective Meetings

It is important to develop a meeting schedule that is predictable and recognizes how often the Association needs to meet. For instance, does it make sense to have a full membership meeting every month? It is important to recognize how busy neighborhood residents might be, and having too many meetings might burn participants out if there isn't also plenty of output and visible work occurring at meetings. It might make more sense to have the Neighborhood Association board meet every month, but only have full membership meetings occur every other month. Meetings should also be held at a regular time and place so that participants begin to recognize a certain date and time as when the Association holds its meetings.



Meetings run best when there is a defined purpose and that purpose is communicated effectively before the meeting takes place. An agenda should be set and made public a few days before the meeting in order to make sure that people who are interested in a particular topic know whether or not they should attend the meeting. Making sure that the agenda is public is also a way to communicate that the meeting is necessary and is working towards a goal, rather than just a meeting in order to have a meeting. The agenda itself should be viewed as a roadmap or guide to what happens at the meeting. It should highlight the issues that will be discussed, the committee reports that will be given, and also have a bit of time at the end for open discussion so participants can have space and time to bring up any thoughts and concerns that are not explicitly on the agenda. It is important to keep track of these thoughts and concerns and include them with the official minutes, since it would be a way to measure how often a specific issue is coming up, and therefore spur a needed discussion on what to do about the issue. It is also a good way to figure out possible work that committees need to address, or agenda points for the next meeting.

Meetings should usually include committee reports. Committee reports will highlight what the committee is working on, the accomplishments so far, and any roadblocks that they might need help with. These reports do not have to go into extreme detail regarding the committee's work; they should be more like a report card or brief update. Committees will have their own separate meetings at which their goals, strategies, problems, and solutions can be discussed in depth.

It is important to make sure that the meetings start and end on time. Starting meetings late is disrespectful towards people that show up on time, and also sends a signal that the meeting isn't that serious and that the agenda isn't to be respected. The Association President should be responsible for running the meeting and making sure the agenda is covered. The meeting should follow a consistent pattern of engagement. This means that how the meeting proceeds should

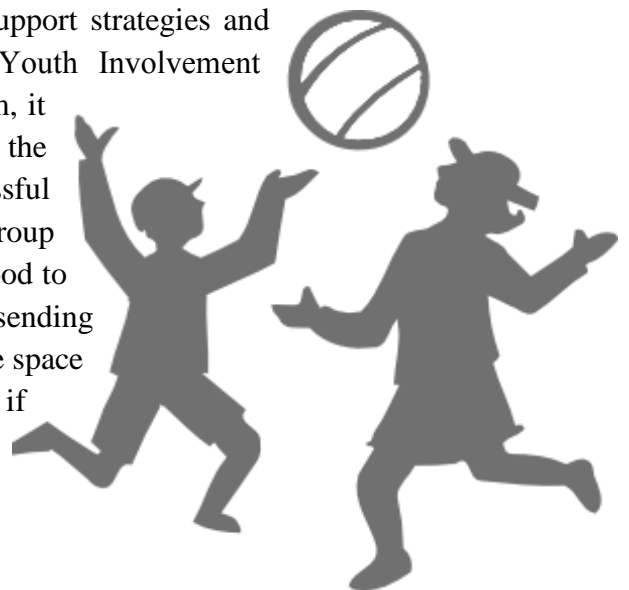
always be predictable and mirror how other meetings are always held. This is so that everyone participating knows how and when it is appropriate to engage. Issues should be discussed in a consistent manner, discussions should proceed in a way that is respectful to everyone interested in participating, and votes should be taken in a consistent manner. Most Associations follow specific procedures in order to run their meetings, with Robert's Rules of Order being the most common format. It could be helpful to review Robert's Rules of Order on page 35 of the appendices as a template on how meetings can be consistently structured.

Meetings should also focus on pushing the work of the Association forward. This means that when a strategy is developed or an event is being planned, the meeting should include time to assign jobs or roles. These jobs should be equitably distributed, and there should be a clear understanding of when they need to be completed. This should all be communicated clearly when wrapping up the meeting to ensure that everyone knows what is expected of them, and what they should be working on prior to the next meeting.

How to Manage Committees

A strong committee system is one of the main ways to accomplish your Association's goals and keep your Association moving forward. Committees work by delegating roles and responsibilities to different groups of people so that their effort can be concentrated on one issue rather than having everyone trying to work on the same issue at the same time, which can create confusion and cause people to assume that someone else is doing the work so they don't have to. Common committees include Membership, Outreach, Land Use and Zoning, Beautification, Blight, Crime, Youth Involvement, Fundraising, and Event Planning, though not every Neighborhood Association has all of these committees.

Encourage as many people to serve on a committee as possible. More people involved means that more people can contribute to the work of the committee rather than having one or two people taking on more than they have time and energy for. The committee should meet together to identify priorities and goals, and to discuss strategies in order to be successful. The strategies should be very clear, and all work assigned should support strategies and overall goals. For example, if an Association's Youth Involvement Committee wants to start an afterschool youth program, it might be good to first identify all of the things that the Committee needs to know in order to run a successful program. This could involve determining what age group you are interested in serving, surveying the neighborhood to figure out how many parents would be interested in sending their child to an afterschool program, locating a suitable space to host the program, securing volunteers, figuring out if there are any local laws or ordinances that need to be



met, and organizing things like first aid trainings for the volunteers who will work at the program. Breaking this work up among committee members would ease the burden of responsibilities on one person in the same way that assigning this work to a committee would free up the rest of the Association to work on other issues at the same time.

Committees should meet outside of the regular Association meetings, and should also strive to have a recognized time and place for the meetings. Each committee should have a Committee Chair that is responsible for organizing and running meetings. Committee Chairs will also be responsible for delivering reports on their work to the Association. These reports may not happen at every Association meeting, but should occur when there is something to report.

It is important for the President and Board of the Association to ensure that the individuals serving on the committees are working well together, and that progress is being made at a reasonable pace. An important way to make sure that the committees are capable of progressing with their work is to develop and support leadership among those involved in the Association and the committees. This can be done by targeting many people to be nurtured by leaders, not just one or two, in order to develop a diverse group of people who may have diverse skill sets and strengths. Ways to nurture these targeted leaders include finding mentors within the neighborhood willing to work with them to expand their skills, encouraging the new leaders to try many different types of tasks to figure out which ones they might excel at, and to break up tasks into smaller tasks to make them more manageable and to prevent people from being overworked and burning out. Another way of growing leadership is by sending members of your Association to workshops and trainings that will give them the necessary skills to address problems. More information on workshops and trainings that can help develop leadership within your Association can be found in the section that begins on page 19 of this manual.

Managing Conflict in your Neighborhood Association

Working with large groups of people to resolve issues that are considered important to the community will usually result in close teamwork and respectful behaviors. Sometimes, however, when many people are passionate about the same issue and equally invested in the outcome, conflict over the best way to achieve the goals can result. The best way to avoid conflict is to try and foster an environment of respectful listening and consensus building.

Respectful listening means that whenever there is disagreement around an issue, the Association should make time and space for a detailed discussion that takes into account the different viewpoints. Each side should be allowed to present their concerns or ideas in a welcoming environment, and each side should allow questions and concerns regarding their viewpoint to be asked in a respectful manner. Conversation should always focus on the issue itself, not the individuals participating in the discussion. This should expand the discussion rather than create more tension.

Once the discussion has covered all of the conflicting viewpoints, steps should be taken to ensure that decisions are made in a manner that builds a consensus. Building a consensus means trying to find the solution to the problem that benefits the most people in the most equitable way. Methods used for trying to find consensus could include surveying as many people impacted by the issue as possible to discover the most desirable outcome, seeking common ground or threads among the various viewpoints, and then working with any stakeholders that consider that outcome to be undesirable to include additional measures that will improve the outcome for them.

Additional ways to help prevent or reduce conflict include bringing the conflicting parties together to speak frankly in a neutral space outside of a meeting, ensuring that no wild accusations or name calling occurs, and that the parties mutually agree on a resolution to the conflict. It is fair and useful to ask people respectfully to give evidence in support of their statements to get an accurate understanding of the situation. Sometimes, even after trying to come to consensus, conflict persists over an issue. At this point, it might be advisable for the Association to bring in a professional mediator to help resolve the issue. Information regarding mediation can be found on page 19 in the manual.

How to Create Public / Private Partnerships

This section was adapted from materials created by the Broadmoor Development Corporation.

Public-Private Partnerships are cooperative relationships between community groups and businesses or private organizations, built on the skills of each partner to meet clearly defined public needs through proper consideration of risk and allocation of resources. Partnerships can be an important component of the redevelopment process in your neighborhood. Partners can provide important support to help the community plan projects, get them underway, and increase the capacity for organizing around and completing the project.

An important distinction about partnerships is that they are characterized by collaboration with the community, not charitable donations or one-time commitments. They should be an added support to the community, and not impose views or opinions from the outside. Partners can serve as an important sounding board to allow the community to float ideas and get feedback from companies and other organizations that have the technical expertise in a range of fields. Partners also can help research and identify best practice models from around the world, assemble resources necessary to complete a project, and prepare any reports on the project that may be needed once it is completed.

Some examples of potential partners would include local colleges and universities, local faith-based or nonprofit organizations, or local or national businesses. Universities, for instance,

might have students that need to complete service hours or are interested in working on a project with your Association for their own educational or professional benefit. Faith-based organizations or nonprofits could offer meeting space or be able to provide and help coordinate volunteers interested in working on a project. Businesses might be interested in donating items or employee time in exchange for publicity in regards to the project. Be creative when thinking about what groups, businesses or organizations could be interested in working with you!

Ten Ways to Build Public-Private Partnerships

- 1** Get a strong commitment from the top leadership executives of a company or organization, and leaders from the community who are willing to support the partnership.
- 2** Identify your needs, and then think creatively about what potential partners who might provide. You can start with smaller organizations and build the number and size of your relationships as your Association grows.
- 3** Be realistic with your requests. Don't over ask – potential partners have limited resources and many good causes to partner with. Think about what's in it for them – it is not charity, it is a partnership. It has to be win-win. Be willing to be flexible to make sure both sides benefit from the partnership.
- 4** Talk about your issues. Invite potential partners to come in and see/discuss the challenges facing the community.
- 5** Tie into your social networks to find potential partners. Someone you already know knows someone who can help you solve a problem in your community.
- 6** Find a partner you like. Relationships take work and effort; finding an organization with values you respect and leaders with personalities you enjoy will make this easier.
- 7** Stay in touch with all stakeholders: a partnership is ongoing and must be maintained.
- 8** Be honest. Prepare partners for the good and the bad, be realistic about your abilities and be accountable to the commitments you make.
- 9** Only work with partners who are respected; a bad or disreputable partner can affect the public's perception of your Association as well.
- 10** Track your success! Make sure you measure your progress and communicate your successes.

Benefits of Becoming a Participating Neighborhood Association

The proposed New Orleans Citizen Participation Program (CPP) will benefit the residents and communities of New Orleans in several ways. An established Neighborhood Association within your neighborhood will be the foundational level through which many of the services and benefits of the CPP will be accessible. This section will review the benefits that come with participating in the proposed CPP via a Neighborhood Association.

Registration and Notification

All participating Neighborhood Associations will register with the central CPP office (this may be the current Neighborhood Engagement Office or a new entity, depending on the final implementation of the CPP), with information regarding geographic location, boundaries, contact information, and other relevant information kept on file by this office. The office will collaborate with Neighborhood Associations to keep this information updated. This ensures that city agencies and project developers know exactly who to contact when projects or issues arise that will affect the geographic area served by the Neighborhood Association.

Capacity Building

Dedicated residents are what make Neighborhood Associations strong, and the best way to build upon that strength is to continually offer trainings and other resources to residents across the city. The current CPP proposal recommends enabling participating Associations to send members to capacity building trainings offered by city departments, the CPP system, or partner organizations that have been contracted to provide these services. Some possible CPP trainings could include how to do community assets and needs mapping projects, grant writing workshops, or outreach trainings. Additionally, there are many great nonprofit organizations across the city that currently offer resources and trainings that are accessible to Neighborhood Associations. A list of some of those organizations and their resources can be found on page 19 of this manual.

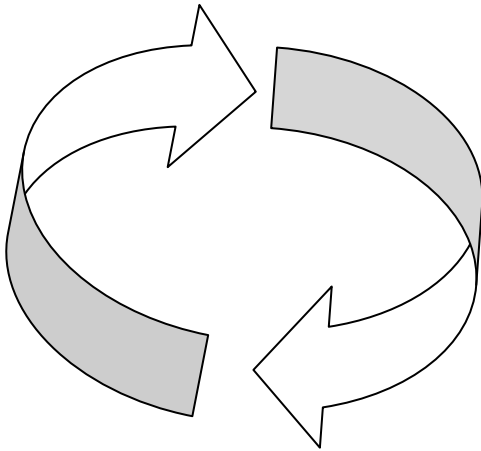
Information Sharing

At its core, the CPP is all about better communication and information sharing between city government, businesses and the residents of New Orleans. Communication and information sharing will be improved due to two main initiatives of the CPP: public access to open records, and a new Early Notification System that will coordinate the how Associations will receive information regarding developments that may affect their quality of life.

Through the Early Notification System – also called the “Neighborhood Participation Plan (NPP)” by New Orleans city government – Neighborhood Associations should receive timely notices about developments or decisions that might affect them. This system should be consistent and reliable in terms of how Neighborhood Associations get contacted, what types of developments or infrastructure projects trigger a notice, when in the development timeline Neighborhood Associations get contacted, and the geographic scope of notification. This means that if a project is slated for a major intersection near but not necessarily in your neighborhood, if the project is large enough to possibly impact your neighborhood, your Association should receive a notification and timeline for public input. Notifications should always be delivered in a predictable manner, such as a letter or email to the Association’s President and Board. Nearby residents should also be notified directly. This will ensure that notifications are consistent, and clarify when an official notification is being given. Being able to rely on a recognized system for information delivery will be a great improvement upon the current situation, which often forces Associations to contend with surprise developments in and around their neighborhoods.

Since Neighborhood Associations will have input on many government decisions, opinions and official statements on developments or other issues that would affect quality of life will become a necessary part of the decision-making process. In other words, decisions should not move

forward until the Neighborhood Association registers its official view and recommendations on the matter. This does not mean, however, that a Neighborhood will be able to stall a decision or a development forever. There will be a time line that the Association must follow in order to make sure that the decision making process is timely and fair to all participants who are affected by the decision. This is especially important for our local business community, since the timeline for rendering official decisions will make the process of business development or expansion more predictable, making planning and budgeting easier overall.

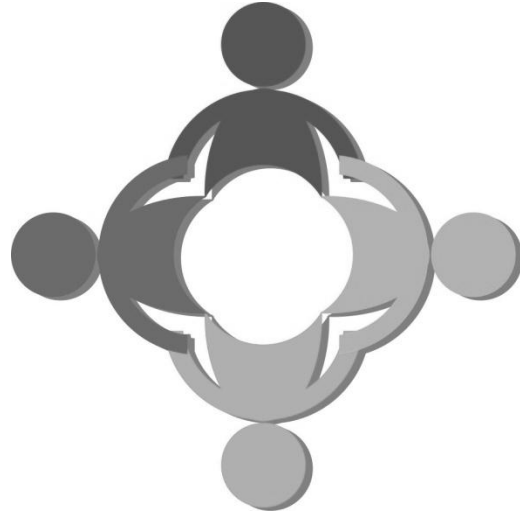


In addition, all Neighborhood Associations – indeed, all New Orleans residents – are entitled to have access to public records that are legally open to the public. Access to public records is a critical component when it comes to making sure that city government is behaving legally and in the public’s interest. For more information regarding public records and to learn the process of how to access these records, please refer to the Public Affairs Research Council’s resources described on page 22 of this manual.

Participatory Budgeting

One of the major objectives of the CPP is to convene a participatory budgeting process. Participatory budgeting is when citizens get to make decisions on how to spend a specified amount of the city's budget. This means that your Association would get to come together with other Associations to discuss potential projects, evaluate priorities and vote how much money should be spent on which projects. It is anticipated that your Association could even propose projects that could receive funding via the process, such as a park or street renovation.

Currently the city releases a projected budget to the public and holds a series of hearings to receive citizen input before the council approves the budget. Under this system, citizens are not given a voice until the end of the process, when many decisions are already made, and do not have the ability to suggest projects and issues that are important to them.



Seats on the District Council

Every city Planning District will be served by a District Council. Each Neighborhood Association will select delegates to its Planning District's District Council. These citizen representatives will hire the District Council staff, guide the spending decisions, and determine the priorities and help define the strategic plan for their District Council. The primary purpose of the District Councils is to be a resource to the neighborhoods in their District. District Councils will:

- Make sure that information about proposed projects or developments, or other important issues, gets to all the neighborhoods who may be impacted by them, on a timely basis (i.e., before decisions are made).
- Make sure that input from the neighborhoods gets to the right decision-makers in city government, and that government is accountable to the neighborhoods.
- Help neighborhood groups with outreach and communication to the people who live in their geographic areas.
- Encourage neighborhoods collaborate on issues or projects of shared interest.
- Assist neighborhoods to resolve disputes between themselves.

District Councils will not make decisions for, or speak for, individual neighborhoods. The only time a decision would be considered by the citizens at the District Council would be if a project

or issue impacted most or all of the entire Planning District (such as a major street or a big park). District Councils do not take positions on political issues or ballot initiatives, but should help Neighborhood Associations to be aware of and informed about these types of issues.

Standards for Engagement in the Citizen Participation Process

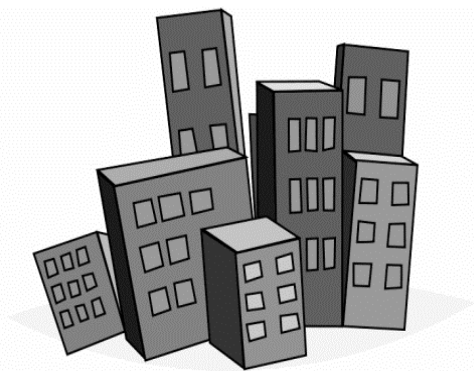
There are several standards that have been proposed for Neighborhood Associations to participate in and be registered as the official voice for the neighborhood within the Citizen Participation Program. These stipulations are meant to ensure that the Association truly represents all residents of the neighborhood, that democratic decision-making is being promoted within the Association, and that the Association is in good standing to receive the resources offered by the CPP office and the District Councils. These standards are simple, based on best practices and simple fairness, and already being followed by the vast majority of New Orleans Neighborhood Associations. Neighborhood Associations are encouraged to employ them on principle. Certain details may added or altered as the final CPP is adopted.

Bylaws

As discussed earlier, Neighborhood Associations should establish and follow their own bylaws. The bylaws should be on file at the Association, with the District Council, and with the CPP office as well. Bylaws are the rules by which your Association and its members agree to operate your organization. To review what Bylaws should include, refer to page 5. Sample bylaws can be found on page 37 in the appendices.

Defined Geographic Boundaries

All Neighborhood Associations should have defined boundaries. This means that current boundary overlaps between neighborhoods should be reviewed and discussed, and resolved wherever possible. In addition, areas that currently do not have Neighborhood Associations will either need to be incorporated into already existing Associations or work with the local District Council to begin an Association.



Boundary overlaps between neighborhoods will be addressed either by the appropriate District Council or by the neighborhoods themselves. Various tools may be used to resolve a boundary overlap, including surveying residents in the area, researching historical maps and documents, and public meetings. Every effort should be made to ensure the participation of the actual residents within the overlap area, and the residents themselves should make the decision as to which Neighborhood Association their area

belongs. It should also be an option that part of the overlap area joins one Association, and part joins the other.

Only if the residents cannot come to agreement should any other entity participate in the final decision.

It is acceptable if the disputing Neighborhood Associations agree to mutually share the overlapping territory. Moreover, public spaces, such as parks and schools, may be exempt from the boundary issue and exist as parts of multiple neighborhoods.

Open Membership & Non-Discrimination Clauses

All Neighborhood Associations must be open to anyone who resides within the neighborhood boundaries. This means that a Neighborhood Association cannot just be open to homeowners, or concerned with only one specific issue, like transportation, beautification, or historic preservation. The Neighborhood Association must also agree to a policy of non-discrimination against any individual or group from participating in the Association on the basis of physical, social, religious, ethnic, or national identity.

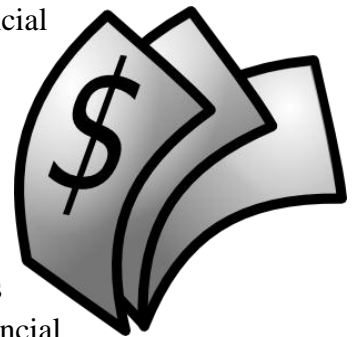
Dues

Neighborhood Associations are encouraged to make their dues voluntary, but may choose to collect mandatory dues. However, whenever a Neighborhood Association is asked for input on an issue that comes to it through the CPP, all residents and property owners within the geographic boundaries of that Neighborhood Association should be informed about the issue, and will have the opportunity to provide their input through the Neighborhood Association, and have their vote counted, whether or not they are dues-paying members.

Neighborhood Associations can continue to generate additional revenues by holding fundraisers or other events, and apply for grants, donations and other sources of financial support outside of the CPP.

Financial Record Keeping

It is recommended, but not required, that Neighborhood Associations have official nonprofit status as a 501(c)3 organization. Associations can register as an official Neighborhood Association without 510(c)3 status by providing financial records and information on their standard financial practices, to ensure that funds are being properly managed within the Association. The purpose of this is to protect the residents and



supporters of Neighborhood Associations as well as the volunteers who give their time to help Associations manage their finances.

Information on how to become a 501(c)3 can be found in the Resources and Trainings Section that begins on page 19.

Meeting & Decision-Making Guidelines

The Neighborhood Association should have a minimum of four general membership meetings per year. These meetings must be open to the public. The Associations must be able to demonstrate that the date, time, location, agenda, and voting schedule were made public prior to the meeting, and that a reasonable amount of outreach and publicity about the meeting was conducted. This includes contacting any stakeholders deemed important when it comes to a voting matter, meaning that if a Neighborhood Association is discussing and then voting on approving or rejecting a development proposal, the developer should be present in order to be able to talk about the development in a polite manner and in a reasonable length of time.

It is understood that some neighborhoods receive frequent notice of applications for zoning changes, conditional uses, and related zoning and land use matters. Neighborhood Associations are not required to publish specific notice of each individual application. Providing adequate notice of a regular meeting of the Neighborhood Association, and indicating that votes will be taken on zoning, land use and/or permit matters, will be considered enough notification. Neighborhood Associations are encouraged to work with their District Council staff to help determine whether or not a specific zoning ordinance or development proposal might warrant more thorough outreach to the neighborhood.

Decisions should be made democratically. This can either be done as a vote put forward to the present membership at the meetings, or a phone/email/paper survey that is circulated throughout the neighborhood prior to the meeting, or a combination of the two.

Meeting minutes must be taken at all times, and kept on file with the Neighborhood Association. Minutes will be considered to be part of the public record, and, if requested, should be available for anyone to see. The minutes must accurately reflect the conversation, and should always report the breakdown of votes. Keeping records of the votes and the minutes will be a way to show that the Neighborhood Association is accurately representing the wants, needs and concerns of the neighborhood. It also helps inform city decision-makers.

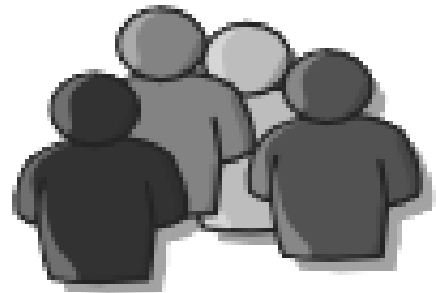
Finally, Neighborhood Associations must adhere to their Association's election cycle, with regular democratic elections occurring for leadership roles. Associations should also consider incorporating term limits for board members and leadership roles in order to prevent the

establishment of entrenched interests within the Association, as well as providing a break to those long-serving and rightfully exhausted leaders within many communities who have served several back-to-back leadership terms. This approach also helps to encourage new leaders to emerge within neighborhoods.

Outreach

Records should be kept regarding how outreach is being conducted and how often it is occurring. This should be part of the records kept on file with the Neighborhood Association in case questions ever arise about the level of outreach being conducted, or as a resource for other Neighborhood Associations to learn from each other as far as what types of outreach work best to grow membership and participation.

Outreach can take many forms. As mentioned before, placing flyers or notices around the neighborhood can serve as an outreach tactic. If your Association has a Block Captain system, it can be used to develop an email and phone tree that can be utilized to communicate with neighbors about the meeting agenda or voting issues at the upcoming Association meeting. E-newsletters, community message boards, and social networking websites can also be a good way to regularly update your members on developments that need immediate attention, or announcements that are time sensitive, such as a city department hosting a last-minute public meeting on a subject that is very important to your neighborhood. Other effective means of outreach include getting local businesses to donate small prizes to your Association and then raffling them off after meetings, hosting yearly social events for the neighborhood such as Night Out Against Crime or even just a neighborhood picnic, or putting doorknockers on houses around the neighborhood once a year.



Grievance Process

Making sure that your Neighborhood Association has a grievance process is just another part of adhering to democratic decision making. A grievance process is the recognized way to file official complaints about how a decision, vote or other official neighborhood business was conducted. A grievance should only be filed if and when the bylaws have been broken, the decision rendered by the Association's vote or survey is not respected by the neighborhood leadership, or other questions about how the Association is being run are raised, such as suspected misuse of funds. The process must clearly state the correct way to lodge an official grievance, and the process by which the grievance will be investigated and resolved.

Trainings and Resources for Neighborhood Associations

This section highlights some of the trainings and resources available to individuals and Neighborhood Associations. These trainings and resources represent the most relevant issue areas for Neighborhood Associations to boost their effectiveness, diversify their skill sets, and tackle different issues within their neighborhoods. It also serves as a guide to many of the organizations dedicated to community engagement and capacity building by highlighting some of their work, sharing their best practices, and explaining what trainings they can provide. The material in this section comes from websites, publications and other information made available by the following organizations.

Beacon of Hope

Beacon of Hope is a community organization that mainly serves the Lakeview and Gentilly areas of New Orleans, but also provides various trainings and resources to other organizations. These workshops include the Neighborhood Impact Workshop, where members of the Beacons and city government work with residents to explain their model for neighborhood redevelopment and revitalization. Beacon of Hope also runs a resource center in Lakeview where interested residents can stop by in order to get more information on programming. Beacon of Hope also works with neighborhoods to map blighted properties in their communities, and assists neighborhoods in addressing these blighted properties. For more information, please visit their website, www.beaconofhopenola.org.

Community Mediation Services

Community Mediation Services offers low-cost mediation services to the communities and organizations within New Orleans. Mediation is a conflict resolution process that encourages the conflicting parties to come together and design and implement their own conflict resolution strategies. Mediation is a way to preserve relationships during and after conflict. Mediation is conducted by a professionally trained mediator, who sits with the conflicting parties and helps them identify issues, determine barriers or problems with communication, explore settlement options, and foster joint problem-solving. The process stresses that decisions are made by the conflicting parties and in a non-adversarial environment. CMS can be reached by contacting Executive Director Lou Furman at furman44@gmail.com.

Dillard Community Development Corporation

The Dillard CDC provides services primarily to residents of Gentilly in the areas of housing assistance, educational workshops, lawn service and case management. Dillard CDC also sometimes has trainings opened to citywide organizations, such as trainings on how to become a

510(c)3, homeownership training, and computer literacy trainings. For more information, you can visit www.dillardcdc.com.

Hands On New Orleans

Hands On is an organization that can help coordinate volunteers for projects that your Association is working on. In order to access volunteers, your Association will need to sign up at their website, www.handsonneworleans.org, and attend a training session.

Louisiana Association of Nonprofits

The Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations (LANO) is a statewide member organization that advocates for the nonprofit community and strengthens the effectiveness of groups and individuals committed to improving the lives of all Louisianans. Membership is offered on a sliding scale according to your organization's budget. LANO offers workshops, seminars and conferences, organizational development products and services, networking and promotional opportunities, research tools and information resources, public policy monitoring, reporting and issue advocacy. LANO also keeps track of local events around the city that might be of interest to Neighborhood Associations. Their event calendar can be found at http://www.lano.org/events/event_list.asp.

Louisiana Secretary of State

Louisiana-based nonprofit organizations must file articles of incorporation with the Louisiana Secretary of State's office. The form can be found here:

<http://www.sos.la.gov/Home/Commercial/Corporations/FileOnline/OriginalFilings/tabid/1009/Default.aspx>.

Neighborhood Housing Services

Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) offers trainings and resources on housing and community issues for both individuals and neighborhoods. For individuals, NHS offers trainings for first time homebuyers, a design/build center that can help with renovation projects, a financial fitness course, help applying for home loans and mortgages, foreclosure prevention counseling, reverse mortgage counseling and help for individuals with Section 8 vouchers to purchase homes. For communities, NHS runs a Community Building Initiative that provides training and professional development services. The training provides tools that build productive relationships and ensure that conflict can be resolved in constructive ways. NHS offers trainings in a wide variety of settings including on-site trainings for businesses, public agencies, and schools as well as city-wide trainings for individuals and neighborhood leaders. Trainings include: an introduction to restorative practices, team-building and facilitating community

conferences. Additional services include community conferencing, which focuses on community dialogue following incidents of crime, and dialogue circles, which focuses on bringing together neighborhoods to discuss issues that affect them. For more information, please visit www.nhsnola.org.

Neighborhoods Partnership Network

Neighborhoods Partnership Network (NPN) is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization consisting of a citywide network of neighborhoods that was established after the Hurricane Katrina disaster to facilitate neighborhood collaboration, increase access to government and information, and strengthen the voices of individuals and communities across New Orleans. NPN offers a number of programs to support neighborhoods, which are described on their website at www.npnola.com.

Capacity College is NPN's comprehensive approach to supporting the development of neighborhood group capacity and cross neighborhood collaboration. Through a series of workshops, information sessions and partnerships, enrolled groups will learn Strong Volunteer Organization Structure and Management, How to Lead a Project or Issue from Vision to Implementation, How to Find New Partners and Allies for Civic Engagement, and much more.

Neighborhood Engagement Office

The Neighborhood Engagement Office (NEO) is the city department tasked with better connecting residents and neighborhoods to city government processes and information regarding city programs and priorities. More information on NEO, including upcoming events, can be found at <http://new.nola.gov/neighborhood-engagement/>.

New Orleans Recreation Development Commission

New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDC) recently approved a public participation plan. The NORDC Neighborhood Participation Process was approved by the NORDC Commissioners in the January 2013 public meeting. This process, known as the NORDC NPP, calls for the creation of community advisory teams (CAT) within each council district. Each CAT will play an advisory role in the decision-making process on recreation issues. The policy for creating CATS calls for the creation of inclusive spaces for everyone interested in recreation to participate. Three CATs per district will be created within each council district, for a total of 15.

The Mayor's Neighborhood Engagement Office will make applications available beginning in February 2013 for individuals and organizations interested in volunteering for a CAT in their area.

For more information on the process and how it will work, you can download the full manual by visiting their website: <http://new.nola.gov/neighborhood-engagement/> and clicking the “What We’re Working On” tab.

Parkway Partners

Parkway Partners is a nonprofit organization that works on preserving and improving green space within New Orleans. This includes improving neutral grounds, planting community gardens, and educational programming that focuses on how to take care of green spaces.

ReLeaf New Orleans is a tree planting program. Neighborhood Associations can receive ten or more free trees to plant in public spaces within their neighborhood. Associations must identify the public space where they would like the trees, the type of tree, and agree to take care of the trees. If the trees are to be planted on private property, the Association must secure written permission from the property owners. Associations must pick up the trees and help plant the trees, and are responsible for taking care of the trees following planting. Before any digging can commence, the Association must contact Louisiana One Call, which surveys the area marked for planting and ensures that underground utility lines will not be disturbed. This free service can be accessed by going to www.laonecall.com.

Tree Troopers is a series of workshops for New Orleans residents on topics including: benefits of trees, physiology of trees, insects and tree disease, urban soils, proper planting, green laws, and pruning and caring for newly planted and mature trees. The workshop is taught by forestry professionals, and results in certification as a “citizen forester”.

Urban Gardens: Parkway Partners will help design and implement a community garden with your Neighborhood Association. The Association should identify an available space for the garden, get permission from the owner of the land, and develop a work schedule prior to contacting Parkway Partners. The gardeners from Parkway Partners will help design and plant the garden. There are currently 33 active community gardens within the city. To learn more about becoming involved in Urban Gardening, call 620-2227 or email Susannah Burley at sburley@parkwaypartnersnola.org.

Parkway Partners offers other programs and services as well. More information can be found at www.parkwaypartnersnola.org.

Public Affairs Research Council

The Public Affairs Research Council (PAR) is a private, nonprofit research group that focuses on Louisiana state government. They are a great place to find research reports on policy issues that affect our state, with many reports available on their online database, <http://www.parlouisiana.com/louisianapolicysurfer.cfm>. Additionally, they run an online portal

dedicated to Louisiana's Sunshine Laws, <http://www.parlouisiana.com/sunshinehome.cfm>. The portal is designed to serve as a guide and resource to citizens. Statutes that require government agencies to do their work in public are called "sunshine laws." These laws typically govern public records and meetings. Each state has its own sunshine laws. The website also contains information on Louisiana's campaign finance laws, public records, and a citizen's rights card that can be downloaded, printed and distributed.

Puentes New Orleans

Puentes' goal is to create an asset base among the Latino community, both in terms of human capital and capital assets, such that Latinos and other underrepresented groups develop and exercise community leadership skills. The organization conducts the Public Leaders Fellowship (PLF), which brings together community members throughout the city of New Orleans with diverse geographic, education, economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. The goal of the program is to generate a new group of public leaders who can build trust within their communities, work in multiple coalitions for the improvement of all, and engage in the public sector. In addition, Puentes through the LatiNola Youth Leadership Council (LYLC) is also investing on creating a new generation of young Latino leaders who can give voice to matters that concern their communities. The LYLC fosters engagement with and commitment to community, promoting good scholarship and access to post-secondary education and preserving Latino cultural identity as well as working with other diverse youth across the Greater New Orleans area. More information about Puentes, and their other programs, at www.puentesno.org.

Whodata.org

Whodata.org is a website comprised of Geographic Information System (GIS) maps that help neighborhoods analyze property data in order to better inform neighborhood plans and strategies. Whodata.org empowers organizations throughout New Orleans by providing them a platform to map and analyze the information they collect on properties in their area. This online mapping tool allows residents to assess their own neighborhoods, highlight properties that show indicators of blight, create their own maps and property lists, and share this information with the public. Residents, volunteers and organizations can receive training on how to collect property condition information using a standard survey format. It is free and open to the public.

Whodata.org was developed by the University of New Orleans Department of Planning & Urban Studies, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Orleans, and the Regional Planning Commission. The site will continue to be updated and improved as participation grows. To learn more about Whodata.org and how you and your neighborhood can get involved, contact Dr. Michelle Thompson at mmthomp1@uno.edu.

APPENDICES

I. Needs and Assets/Resources Assessment Tool

This material was developed by the Community Tool Box at the University of Kansas.

Needs can be defined as the gap between what is and what should be. A need can be felt by an individual, a group or an entire community. It can be as concrete as the need for food and water or as abstract as improved community cohesiveness. An obvious example might be the need for public transportation in a community where older adults have no means of getting around town. More important to these same adults, however, might be a need to be valued for their knowledge and experience. Examining situations closely helps uncover what is truly needed, and leads toward future improvement.

Resources, or assets, can include individuals, organizations and institutions, buildings, parks, businesses, landscapes, equipment -- anything that can be used to improve the quality of life. The library that provides books and Internet access to everyone, the bike and walking path where city residents can exercise, the PTA organization at the local school -- all represent resources that enhance community life. Every individual is a potential community asset, and everyone has assets that can be used for community building.

Why develop a plan for assessing local needs and resources?

There are really two questions here: The first is: Why assess needs and resources? Answers include:

- It will help you gain a deeper understanding of your community. Each community has its own needs and assets, as well as its own culture and social structure -- a unique web of relationships, history, strengths, and conflicts that defines it. A community assessment helps to uncover not only needs and resources, but the underlying culture and social structure that will help you understand how to address the community's needs and utilize its resources.
- An assessment will encourage community members to consider the community's assets and how to use them, as well as the community's needs and how to address them. That consideration can (and should) be the first step in learning how to use your own resources to solve problems and improve community life.
- It will help you make decisions about priorities for program or system improvement. It would obviously be foolhardy to try to address community issues without fully understanding what they are and how they arose. By the same token, failing to take advantage of community resources not only represents taking on a problem without using all the tools at your disposal to solve it, but misses an opportunity to increase your community's capacity for solving its own problems and creating its own change.
- It goes a long way toward eliminating unpleasant surprises down the road. Identifying needs and resources before starting a program or initiative means that you know from the

beginning what you're dealing with, and are less likely to be blindsided later by something you didn't expect.

The second question is: Why develop a plan for that assessment? Some reasons why you should:

- It allows you to involve community members from the very beginning of the process. This encourages both trust in the process and community buy-in and support, not only of the assessment, but of whatever actions are taken as a result of it. Full community participation in planning and carrying out an assessment also promotes leadership from within the community and gives voice to those who may feel they have none.
- A good plan will provide an easy-to-follow road map for conducting an accurate assessment. Planning ahead will save time and effort in carrying out the process.
- A planning process will give community members the opportunity to voice their opinions, hopes, and fears about the community. Their idea of priorities might be different from those of professionals, but they shouldn't be ignored.

Who should be involved in developing a plan for assessing local needs and resources?

As we've discussed, the assessment process benefits greatly when there's full participation from community stakeholders. Among those who should be involved:

- *Those experiencing needs that should be addressed.* It's both fair and logical to involve those who are most directly affected by adverse conditions. They know best what effects those conditions have on their lives, and including them in the planning process is more likely to produce a plan that actually speaks to their needs.
- *Health and human service providers.* These individuals and organizations, especially those that are community-based, often have both a deep understanding of the community and a strong empathic connection with the populations they serve. They can be helpful both by sharing their knowledge and by recruiting people from marginalized populations to contribute to the assessment.
- *Government officials.* Elected and appointed officials are often those who can help or hinder a community change effort. Engaging them in planning and carrying out an assessment helps to ensure that they will take the effort seriously and work to make it successful.
- *Influential people.* These can include individuals who are identified as leaders because of their positions -- college presidents, directors of hospitals and other major organizations, corporate CEOs -- because of the prestige of their professions -- doctors, professors, judges, clergy -- or because they are known to be people of intelligence, integrity, and good will who care about the community.
- *People whose jobs or lives could be affected by the eventual actions taken as a result of the assessment.* These include teachers, police, emergency room personnel, landlords, and others who might have to react if new community policies or procedures are put in place.
- *Community activists.* People who have been involved in addressing policy or issues that could come up in the course of the assessment have a stake in planning the assessment as well.

- *Businesses, especially those that employ people from populations of concern.* The livelihoods of local business owners could be affected by the results of the assessment, as could the lives of their employees.

When should needs and assets be identified?

- *Prior to planning the initiative.* This gives coalition members, community leaders, and those being served an idea of how to improve their circumstances.
- *During implementation of an initiative.* It is important to make sure that you are on target not only at the beginning and the end of a project, but also during its implementation. If car companies only did quality checks on the steel before the parts are constructed and the paint job after it rolled off the line, you might not be inclined to trust the engine. Identifying needs and assets during the life of the initiative helps you use your own resources well, and ensures that you're addressing the right issues in the right way.
- *On an ongoing basis.* During monitoring and evaluation, either ongoing or after the completion of a project, it is important to celebrate successes and to learn from setbacks to further community development.

How do you develop a plan for assessing local needs and resources?

The best way to assess needs and assets is by using as many of the available sources of information as possible. "Possible" here depends on how easy the information is to find and collect, and what your resources -- mostly of people, money, and time -- will support. Developing a plan will allow you to take these considerations into account and use the results to determine goals, devise methods, and create a structure for a community assessment that will give you the information you need to conduct a successful effort.

The following guidelines, while they are laid out in a step-by-step order, may often turn out in practice to take a different sequence. You may find yourself carrying out two or more steps at once, for example, or switching the order of two steps.

1. Recruit a planning group that represents all stakeholders and mirrors the diversity of the community. Try to be as inclusive as you can, so that the group is diverse and truly representative of the community. You may have to work particularly hard to persuade people from groups that are generally not offered seats at the table -- low-income people, immigrants, etc. -- that you actually want their participation, especially if they've been burned by insincere offers in the past. It's worth it to take the time and effort, however, in order to get a real picture of all aspects of the community.

A truly representative planning group is not only more likely to come up with a plan that produces an accurate assessment, but is also a signal to community members that they are part of the process. They are more apt to trust that process and support whatever comes out of it.

2. Design an evaluation process for the assessment, including the development of the plan. Why is this step here, at the beginning of the planning process, rather than at the end? The answer is that evaluation should start at the beginning of an effort, so that you can monitor

everything you do and be able to learn from and adjust any part of the process -- including planning -- to improve your work. That's the purpose of evaluation: to make your work as effective as possible.

3. Decide why you want to conduct the assessment. There are a number of reasons why you might want to conduct a community assessment of needs and resources, among them:

- Determining how to address the needs of a particular underserved or neglected group.
- Conducting a community health assessment in order to launch a public health campaign or combat a particular disease or condition.
- Exploring how to steer the activities of a coalition of service providers or government agencies.
- Understanding community needs and resources as a guide to advocacy efforts or policy change. You can't make credible policy recommendations without knowing about current conditions and the effects on them of current policy.
- Assessing the impact, intensity, and distribution of a particular issue, to inform strategies for approaching it. This may involve breaking the issue down still further, and investigating only a part of it. Rather than looking at the whole issue of violence, for instance, you might want to focus on domestic violence or youth violence or violence among teenage girls.

The reasons for an assessment will affect from whom and how you gather information, what is assessed, and what you do with the information you get. It's obviously important to start planning with a clear understanding of what you're setting out to do, so that your plan matches your goals.

4. Determine what data is already available. The chances are that a good deal of information about the community already exists. Resources:

- Federal government statistics, such as census and public health data. In the U.S., much of this information can be found on the websites of the **U.S. Census**, the **National Institutes of Health**, the **Centers for Disease Control**, and the **Department of Health and Human Services**.
- Assessments or studies conducted by local or state/provincial governments or government agencies.
- Assessments or studies conducted by other organizations. Hospitals, human service providers, Chambers of Commerce, and charitable organizations may all conduct community assessments for their own purposes, and may be willing -- or even eager -- to share their results.
- Studies conducted by researchers connected to local universities.
- What you already know about the needs and assets of the community. The caution here is to realize that what you think you know may either be wrong, or may conflict with the opinions of community members. You should be ready to accept the facts if they conflict with your opinion, or to consider, as we've mentioned, the possibility of yielding to the community's perception of its own needs.

It's important that make sure that whatever data exists is timely. The chances are that if it's more than six months to a year old, it's out of date and no longer accurate. Even census data, which is extensive and generally reliable, is a snapshot of a particular time. Since a full census is a once-a-decade event, census information may be as much as ten years out of date. There are updates in between, but only to selected categories, and not every year.

5. Figure out what other information you need. This is the time to finalize the questions you'll ask your informants, as well as the questions you hope to answer with the assessment. Those questions will depend on your purposes. In most cases, you'll want to find out what is important to members of populations of concern or those who might benefit from or be affected by any action you might take as a result of the assessment. You will probably also want to hear the opinions of the people who serve or work with those people -- doctors, human service staff and administrators, teachers, police, social workers, advocates, etc.

6. Decide what methods you'll use for gathering information. Much of the rest of this chapter is devoted to methods of gathering assessment data. Some general descriptions:

- *Using existing data.* This is the research you might do to unearth the information in census and other public records, or to find information that's been gathered by others.
- *Listening sessions and public forums.* Listening sessions are forums you can use to learn about the community's perspectives on local issues and options. They are generally fairly small, with specific questions asked of participants. They can help you get a sense of what community members know and feel about the issue, as well as resources, barriers, and possible solutions. Public forums tend to be both larger in number of participants and broader in scope than listening sessions. They are gatherings where citizens discuss important issues at a well-publicized location and time. They give people of diverse backgrounds a chance to express their views, and are also a first step toward understanding the community's needs and resources. A good public forum informs the group of where the community is and where the members would like to go.
- *Interviews and focus groups.* These are less formal than forums, and are conducted with either individuals or small groups (usually fewer than ten, and often as few as two or three.) They generally include specific questions, but allow room for moving in different directions, depending on what the interviewees want to discuss. Open-ended questions (those which demand something more than a yes or no or other simple answer), follow-ups to interesting points, and a relaxed atmosphere that encourages people to open up are all part of most assessment interviews. A focus group is a specialized group interview in which group members are not told exactly what the interviewer wants to know, so that they will be more likely to give answers that aren't influenced by what they think is wanted.
- *Direct, and sometimes participant, observation.* Direct observation involves seeing for yourself. Do you want to know how people use the neighborhood park on weekends? Spend a few weekends there, watching and talking to people. If you regularly join a volleyball game or jog through the park with others, you're a participant observer, becoming part of the culture you want to learn about.
- *Surveys.* There are several different kinds of surveys, any or all of which could be used as part of a community assessment. Written surveys may be sent to people via mail or

email, given out at community events or meetings, distributed in school, or handed to people on the street. People may also be surveyed by phone or in person, with someone else writing down their spoken answers to a list of questions. Many kinds of surveys often have a low return rate, and so may not be the best way to get information, but sometimes they're the only way, or can be given in situations where most people complete them.

- *Asset Mapping*. Asset mapping focuses on the strengths of the community rather than the areas that need improvement. Focusing on assets gives the power back to the community members that directly experience the problem and already have the resources to change the status quo.

Each community is different, and so you might use any one or any combination of these and other methods detailed in this chapter, depending on what you're looking for and who can help.

7. Decide whom you'll gather information from. For the same reason that you've put together a planning group that represents all the different sectors of the community concerned or involved with the assessment, you should try to get information from as broad a range of people and groups as possible. The greater the variety of people that supply your data, the better perspective you'll have on the real nature, needs, and resources of the community.

Who the people concerned with your particular assessment are, however, depends on your particular focus and purposes. If you're concerned with domestic violence, you'd certainly want to include those directly or indirectly exposed to it, as well as emergency room personnel and police, in your data gathering. If you're concerned with preserving open space, you might look to include both environmentalists and developers. That doesn't mean you wouldn't want the opinions of a variety of others, but simply that you'd try to make sure that the people with the most interest and knowledge -- and often the most to gain or lose -- could have their say. You wouldn't want to miss valuable information, regardless of the opinions of the informant.

8. Decide who will collect data. Will you use a participatory research process, whereby community members gather data themselves or in collaboration with professionals? Will you hire an individual or a group to gather information? If you choose neither of these, then who will do the work of interviewing, surveying, or carrying out whatever other strategies you've chosen to find information?

These are important questions, because their answers can affect the quality and quantity of information you get. Individuals in the community may be more willing to be interviewed and/or to give honest and detailed answers to people they know or can identify with, i.e., other community members. Participatory researchers may need training to be able to do a good job. You may need an experienced researcher to put together a survey that gets at the issues you're most concerned with. A combination of several types of data gatherers may work best. It's worth spending some time on this issue, so that you can assemble the crew that's right for your community and your plan.

9. Decide how you'll reach your informants. In order to get information from people, you'll have to contact them. There are many ways to do that, and you'll probably want to use several of them. In general, the more personal the approach, the more effective it will be. Some of the most common:

- *Posting requests on one or more local websites or on social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) (See How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media.)*
- *Choosing people at random (e.g., from the phone book) to receive written or telephone surveys.*
- *Mailing or emailing surveys to one or more lists.* Many organizations are willing to share lists of members or participants for purposes like this. Some will mail or email surveys under their own names, so that people receive them from an organization they're familiar with, and might be more willing to complete and return them than if they apparently came to them randomly.
- *Stopping people in a public place to ask them to fill out or, more commonly, give verbal answers to a short survey.* You may have had the experience of being asked your opinion in a shopping area or on a busy sidewalk. People are somewhat more willing to answer questions in this way than to fill out and return a mailed or emailed survey.
- *Putting up posters and distributing flyers in public places (supermarkets, laundromats, bus stops, etc.) and/or sending them to specific organizations and businesses.*
- *Using the media* This can involve holding press conferences and sending out press releases, placing PSA's (public service announcements) and stories in various media, or paying for media.
- *Direct appeal to existing community groups.* Either a member of the planning team or a leader or member of the group in question might make an appeal at a club meeting, a religious gathering, or a sports event for volunteers to participate in a survey, an interview or focus group, or a larger meeting.
- *Personal approach.* Members of the planning group might recruit friends, colleagues, neighbors, family members, etc. by phone or in person. They might also ask the people they recruit to ask others, so that a few people can start a chain of requests that ends up with a large number.

10. Decide who will analyze the data and how they'll do it. Once you've collected the information, you have to analyze it to see what it means. That means identifying the main themes from interviews and forums, sorting out the concerns of the many from those of the insistent few, understanding what your indicators seem to show, comparing community members' concerns with the statistics and indicators, and perhaps a number of other analytical operations as well. Some of these might involve a knowledge of statistics and higher math, while others may require only common sense and the ability to group information in logical ways.

If you've engaged in a participatory research process, the community researchers should also be involved in analyzing the material they've found. They might do this in collaboration with professionals from local organizations, with consulting academic researchers, or with a paid consultant. If you've decided to hire an individual or group to conduct the assessment, then they'll probably conduct the analysis as well.

In either case, the methods used will probably depend on such considerations as how "hard" you want the data to be -- whether you want to know the statistical significance of particular findings, for example, or whether you'll use people's stories as evidence -- how much you think you need to know in order to create an action plan, and what kinds of data you collect.

11. Plan whatever training is needed. We've already discussed the possible need for training. Now is the time to decide what, if any, training is needed, who should be involved, and who will conduct it. In order to keep members of the planning group on an equal footing, it might make sense to offer the training to everyone, rather than just to those who are obviously not highly educated or articulate. It is probably important as well that the training be conducted by people who are not members of the planning group, even if some of them have the skills to do so. The group will function best if everyone feels that everyone else is a colleague, even though members have different backgrounds and different sets of skills and knowledge.

12. Decide how you'll record the results of the assessment and present them to the community. Depending on your goals and what's likely to come out of the assessment, "the community" here may mean the whole community or the community of stakeholders that is represented on the planning committee. In either case, you'll want to be able to explain clearly what the assessment found, and perhaps to engage people in strategizing about how to deal with it. That means you'll want to set out the results clearly, in simple, everyday language accompanied by easy-to-understand charts, pictures, and/or graphs. Your report doesn't have to be complicated or to use technical language in order to be compelling. In fact, the more you can use the words of the community members who contributed their concerns and experiences, the more powerful your report will be.

How will you communicate the results to the community? With the availability of PowerPoint and similar programs, you have the opportunity to create a professional-looking presentation that you can use in a number of ways. It could be presented as a slide show in one or more public meetings or smaller gatherings, posted along with a narrative on one or more social media sites (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) and/or on your website, run as a loop in a public place, such as a local library, or even broadcast on community access TV. Furthermore, it could be used by a number of people without each having to fetch and carry large and cumbersome equipment or signboards and the like.

13. Decide who will perform what assessment tasks. The group should make sure everyone has a role that fits her skills, talents, and, to the extent possible, preferences. It should also make sure that all necessary tasks are covered. If more people need to be recruited -- as data gatherers, survey mailers, phone callers, etc. -- that recruitment should be part of the plan. The point of having a plan is to try to anticipate everything that's needed -- as well as everything that might go wrong -- and make sure that it has been arranged for. Assigning tasks appropriately is perhaps the most important part of that anticipation.

14. Create a timeline. Work out what should happen by when. How long will you spend on preparing for the assessment -- contacting people, training interviewers and/or group facilitators, preparing and printing surveys? How long will you gather information? How long will you take to analyze the data and write up a report? Each phase of the assessment should have a deadline.

That creates benchmarks -- checkpoints along the way that tell you you're moving in the right direction and have gotten far enough along so that you'll finish the assessment on time with the information you need.

15. Present the plan, get feedback, and adjust it to make it more workable. Once the plan is done, it should be presented to at least a sample of those who will be asked for information and those who will have responsibilities for parts of the assessment. This will allow them to consider whether the plan takes the culture of the community into account, and is likely to make data collection and analysis as easy as possible. As a result of their feedback, you can adjust parts of the plan to make them more acceptable to the community or more workable for the assessment team.

Now you can celebrate the completion of the plan, but it's not an occasion for resting on your laurels. There's a lot of work ahead of you as you conduct the assessment, analyze the data you get from it, and make and implement action plans based on that analysis. It's important to have benchmarks built into the assessment plan and the action plans that follow, so you can keep track of your progress. But it's also important to hold your long-term vision in view, and to keep moving toward it until the community becomes what all its members want it to be.

In Summary

Needs and resources are really two sides of the same coin. In order to get a comprehensive view of your community, it is important to look at what you have and what you need. With these things in mind, you can have a positive impact on the problem you wish to address. Understanding the community's needs and assets will also help your organization clarify where it would like to go and how it can get there.

II. Conducting a SWOT Analysis

Strengths are positive tangible and intangible attributes, internal to an organization. They are within the organization’s control. They indicate the scope and specific capabilities of an organization.

Weaknesses are factors that are within an organization’s control that detract from its ability to attain the desired goal. They are the areas where the organization can improve in.

Opportunities are external attractive factors that represent the reason for an organization to exist and develop. They are opportunities that exist in the environment, which will propel the organization. They can be identified as present or future opportunities.

Threats are external factors, beyond an organization’s control, which could place the organization’s mission or operations at risk. Classify them by their “seriousness” and “probability of occurrence.” The organization may benefit by having contingency plans to address them if they should occur.

SWOT ANALYSIS	POSITIVE/ HELPFUL to achieving the goal	NEGATIVE/ HARMFUL/ RISKS to achieving the goal
INTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the organization	Strengths Things that are good now, maintain them, build on them and use as leverage	Weaknesses Things that are bad now, remedy, change or stop them.
EXTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the environment in which the organization operates	Opportunities Things that are good for the future, prioritize them, capture them, build on them and optimize	Threats Things that are bad for the future, put in plans to manage them or counter them

A SWOT analysis is a process to identify where you are strong and vulnerable — where you should prepare and where your best opportunities lie. The intended result of the process is a specific, concrete ‘plan of action’, or ‘action plan’.

How to do a SWOT

Step 1 Information collection

List all strengths that exist now. Then in turn, list all weaknesses that exist now. Be realistic but avoid modesty! You can conduct one-on-one interviews. Or get a group together to brainstorm. A bit of both is frequently best. You'll first want to prepare questions that relate to the specific organization that you are analyzing. You'll find some questions and issues below to get you going. When facilitating a SWOT – search for insight through intelligent questioning and probing

Step 2 Think ahead

List all opportunities that exist in the future. Opportunities are potential future strengths. Then in turn, list all threats that exist in the future. Threats are potential future weaknesses. Be as specific as possible.

Step 3 Make a plan

Review your SWOT matrix with a view to creating an action plan to address each of the four areas. Strengths need to be maintained, built upon or leveraged. Weaknesses need to be remedied, changed or stopped. Opportunities need to be prioritized, captured, built on and optimized. Threats need to be countered or minimized and managed.

A SWOT analysis can be very subjective, and two people rarely come up with the same final version of SWOT. It is an excellent tool, however, for looking at the negative factors in order to turn them into positive factors. Use SWOT as guide and not a prescription. The analysis should distinguish between where your organization is today, and where it could be in the future. Keep your SWOT short and simple – but only as short and simple as the application or situation demands. Be thorough but avoid unnecessary complexity and over analysis.

What makes a SWOT analysis work?

Due to the collaborative nature of this tool, your working group will need certain qualities to succeed:

- ☑ Trust – the questions that SWOT will bring up, particularly in the Weaknesses and Threats categories, may be uncomfortable. Your group must be at a point in its working relationship where weaknesses and potential threats can be faced openly and objectively.
- ☑ Ability and willingness to implement change.
- ☑ Diversity – the team conducting the SWOT analysis should be representative of your entire planning team.
- ☑ Time – taking time to do a thorough SWOT assessment will help your group move forward in developing a workable plan.

More tips for a successful SWOT... Set up meeting times well in advance, especially if the SWOT is not going to be completed in one 'sitting.' Distribute/complete the tool individually, then in the group meeting, combine individual answers. Collaborate on each category. Complete the analysis and discuss the best ways to increase strengths, minimize weaknesses, utilize opportunities and avoid threats as a group.

III. Robert's Rules of Order Motions Chart

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

Part 1, Main Motions. These motions are listed in order of precedence. A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion. § indicates the section from Robert's Rules.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21	Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20	Take break	I move to recess for ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19	Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18	Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17	Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16	Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15	Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14	Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13	Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12	Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11	Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10	Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Part 2, Incidental Motions. No order of precedence. These motions arise incidentally and are decided immediately.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§23	Enforce rules	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24	Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§25	Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26	Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27	Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29	Demand a rising vote	I move for a rising vote	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33	Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33	Request for information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None

Part 3, Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly.

No order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else is pending.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§34	Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35	Cancel previous action	I move to rescind ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or Majority with notice
§37	Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

Chart courtesy of www.robertsrules.org

IV. Sample Neighborhood Organization Bylaws

An organization's bylaws provide the framework for every major aspect of its operation. They ensure that everyone involved in the organization plays by the same rules and help to keep disputes to a minimum. Bylaws protect an organization from unwarranted complaints. Most important of all, they help Neighborhood Associations to be effective, efficient and organized.

Beginning on the following page is a sample bylaws worksheet. This worksheet was adapted from a document put together by [Jericho Road](#) to assist Central City neighborhoods they were working with to develop their bylaws. The bylaws worksheet is a good tool to assist with developing bylaws. Bylaws are a legal document that can have a significant impact for an organization, so it is highly recommended you get professional help from an organization like [Committee for a Better New Orleans](#), [Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations](#), or [Neighborhoods Partnership Network](#) in developing bylaws for your association.

These sample bylaws cover most of the areas that are required of a neighborhood association's bylaws; however, a neighborhood could choose to add or remove sections. This should be done with caution, because once adopted, bylaws should be amended as seldom as possible. Some organizations find it useful to create a separate Policies and Procedures document that has more details about the organization's operation, but do not carry the same weight as the bylaws and can be amended more easily.

Most organizations appoint a committee to develop the bylaws. This committee gives a draft to the membership and/or the board for review and comment, before bringing a final draft up for a vote. Once adopted, the organization has a legal obligation to adhere to their bylaws. The bylaws should be available to anyone who requests them. If the organization is a 501(c)3, the bylaws must be filed with the Louisiana Secretary of State.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION BYLAWS WORKSHEET

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the organization shall be the _____ Neighborhood Association.

Agreed?

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

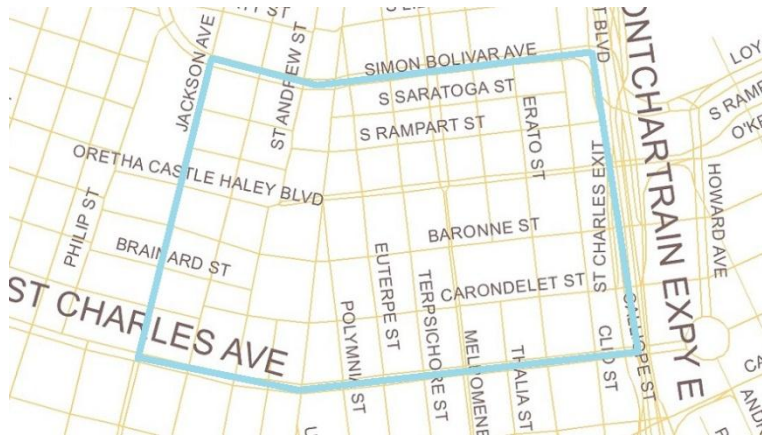
The purposes for which the Neighborhood Association is organized are: [Describe the purpose(s) of the Association].

Agreed?

ARTICLE III. BOUNDARIES

The street boundaries of the Neighborhood will be: _____

Agreed?



ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Qualifications: Membership shall be open to all residents (homeowners and renters) and property owners within the Neighborhood boundaries.

Agreed?

Q: Will any non-residents from Neighborhood organizations be eligible for membership? (ex: Churches, Non-profits) **YES / NO**

If so, who? _____

Voting: All members present at meetings will have one vote. Decisions will be made by a majority vote of those members present at any meeting.

Agreed?

Q: If non-residents can be members, do they also have the right to vote?

YES/ NO

ARTICLE V. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Payment of dues is not a condition of membership in this Neighborhood Association. The Neighborhood Association can collect voluntary dues, apply for grants, and do other fundraising activities. Voluntary dues of \$_____ are encouraged from its members.

Agreed?

ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

General Meetings: At least how many general membership meetings shall be held each year?

4 6 12

Special Meetings: Special meetings of membership, committees, or board may be called by the Chairperson or by majority vote as deemed necessary. At least _____ days of advanced notice for the meeting shall be given.

Agreed?

Agenda: The Chairperson will prepare the agenda for General and Special meetings. Anyone may add to the agenda by submitting the item at least _____ days in advance or suggesting the item at a General or Special meeting.

Agreed?

Quorum: A quorum for any general or special meeting for the Neighborhood Association is:

Simple Majority of Members

2/3 Members

3/4 Members

Participation: Any general, special, Board, or committee meeting is open to any person who may wish to be heard regarding any item on the agenda. Only members will be eligible to vote.

Agreed?

Procedures: Roberts Rules of Order shall be followed in all areas not covered by the bylaws.

Agreed?

ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Election of Board Members: Board members will be elected by a vote of the membership. Election requires a majority vote of the membership present. Election of Board members shall take at the Annual Membership Meeting which shall take place in _____ month.

Agreed?

Makeup of the Board:

Board Members will be selected based on interest committees (ex: Blight, Crime, Events)

-OR-

Board Members will be selected geographically (one from each area of the Neighborhood).

-OR-

There will be no selection criteria for Board Members.



Number of Board Members: 4-6 5-7 6-8

Terms of Office: 6 months 1 year 2 years

Election of Board Officers:

Board members will meet after their election and, by majority vote of the Board members present, elect a Chairperson, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The remaining Board members shall be members at large.

-OR-

The General membership, by majority vote of members present, will elect a Chairperson, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The remaining Board members shall be members at large.

Quorum for Board Meetings: will be:

Simple Majority of Members 2/3 Members 3/4 Members

Termination for non-attendance: Board members who fail to attend _____ consecutive meetings may be removed from the Board upon written notice.

3 4 5

Eligibility for Board Service: Only persons eligible for membership shall be qualified to hold an elected or appointed position.

Board Vacancies: The Board may fill any vacancy on the Board or committees by majority vote of the _____. A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term and until his or her successor is elected or appointed.

Board General Membership

Duties of Board Members: The Board shall have following responsibilities and powers:

- a. Manage the daily affairs of the Neighborhood Association.
- b. Make decisions and represent the interests of the Neighborhood Association on all matters for which it is impractical to present to the membership in advance. All such actions shall be reported to the membership at the next regular meeting.
- c. Appoint committees to perform necessary functions and represent the Neighborhood Association on specified topics.
- d. Establish a yearly work plan of priority issues and projects for maintaining and encouraging involvement in the Neighborhood Association.

Agreed?

Duties of Board Officers:

- a. Chairperson:** The Chairperson shall preside at all board meetings and all membership meetings and shall perform such duties as the Board and the membership from time to time authorizes. The Chairperson shall represent the position of the Board and the interests of the Neighborhood Association.
- b. Vice Chairperson:** The Vice Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence and as authorized by the bylaws or regulations of the Board.
- c. Secretary:** The Secretary shall record and maintain minutes of Membership and Board meetings, assist the Chairperson with correspondence and maintain the non-financial files of the Neighborhood Association. The Secretary will maintain a list of Board members and their terms.
- d. Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall have charge of all funds belonging to the Neighborhood Association and shall receive, deposit and disburse funds for the Neighborhood Association in a bank(s) or financial institution(s) in such manner as designated by the Board. The Treasurer shall make financial reports as directed by the Board.

Agreed?

Special or Non-Regular Board Meetings: Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson or by majority vote of the Board as deemed necessary. Notification shall be by mail, newsletter, posted notices, telephone calls, electronic mail lists or any other appropriate means of communication apt to reach a majority of the members. Notification shall require _____ days advance notice to the general public.

Agreed?

Emergency Meetings: Emergency meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson or by majority of the Board as deemed necessary. Notification shall be by mail, newsletter, posted notices, telephone calls, electronic mail lists, or any other appropriate means of communication apt to reach a majority of the members. Notification shall require not less than _____ hours notice to the members of the Board that is meeting and to individuals and news media that have requested notice.

Agreed?

Voting: Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, decisions of the Board shall be made by a majority vote of those Board members present at any meeting.

Agreed?

Powers of the Board: The Board shall be responsible for all business coming before the Neighborhood Association and for assuring that members are informed of business that affects them through reasonable means of notification. The Board has the responsibility of acting in the best interest of the neighborhood but is not specifically bound to act according to the desire of the majority of members attending a particular meeting.

Agreed?

ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES

There may be standing committees as designated by the Board and/or by the Chairperson. Committees must have at least one (1) Board member on them. Additional Committees can be created by the Board.

Agreed?

The Permanent Committees shall be: [Describe Each]

Membership Involvement	Outreach Event Planning	Beautification Fundraising	Blight Land Use/Zoning	Crime	Youth Nominating
-----------------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------	-----------------------------

Others: _____

Agreed?

ARTICLE IX. CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROCEDURES

A transaction in which a Director may have a direct or indirect conflict of interest may be approved by a vote of the Board if in advance of the vote by the Board all material facts of the transaction and the Director's interest are disclosed to the Board. A conflict of interest transaction is considered ratified if it receives the affirmative vote of the majority of the Directors who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction. A transaction may not be authorized by single Director. If a majority of the Directors who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction votes to authorize, approve or ratify a transaction, a quorum must be present for the purpose of taking action. The presence of, or vote cast by, a Director with a direct or indirect interest in the transaction does not affect the validity of the action taken by the Board. The Director with the direct or indirect conflict of interest should abstain from voting on the transaction.

Agreed?

ARTICLE X. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

1 One-on-One Dialogue and Mediation: Individuals and groups are encouraged to reconcile differences, whether inside or outside the scope of these grievance procedures, through one-on-one dialogue or mediation.

Agreed?

2 Eligibility to Grieve: Any person or group may initiate this grievance procedure by submitting a grievance in writing to the Board. Grievances are limited to complaints that the grievant has been harmed by a violation of these bylaws that has directly affected the outcome of a decision of _____ Neighborhood Association. Grievances must be submitted within _____ days of the alleged violation.

Agreed?

3 Processing the Grievance: The Board shall arrange a Grievance Committee, which shall review the grievance. The committee shall hold a public hearing and give the grievant and others wishing to present relevant comment an opportunity to be heard. The committee shall then forward its recommendations to the Board.

Agreed?

4 Final Resolution: Within 60 calendar days from receipt of the grievance, _____ Neighborhood Association shall render a final decision on the grievance and notify the grievant of their decision. Deliberations by the grievance committee on a recommendation and by the Board on a decision may be held in executive session.

Agreed?

ARTICLE XI. PROCEDURE FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF PROPSALS

1 Submission of Proposals: Any person or group, inside or outside the boundaries of the Neighborhood Association may propose in writing items for consideration and/or recommendation to the Board. The Board shall decide whether proposed items will appear on the agenda of the Board, standing or special committees, or general or special meetings.

2 Notification: The proponent and members directly affected by such proposal shall be notified in writing of the place, day, and hour the proposal shall be reviewed not less than _____ hours in advance.

3 Attendance: The proponent may attend this meeting to make a presentation and answer questions concerning the proposals.

4 Dissemination: The Neighborhood Association shall record recommendations and dissenting views in the meeting minutes.

Agreed?

ARTICLE XII. PUBLIC MEETINGS/PUBLIC RECORDS REQUIREMENT

The Neighborhood Association shall abide by all the requirements relative to public meetings and public records as outlined in State and/or City Code. Official action(s) taken by the Neighborhood Association must be on record or part of the minutes of each meeting. The minutes shall include a record of attendance and the results of any vote(s) and recommendations made along with a summary of dissenting views.

Agreed?

ARTICLE XIII. NONDISCRIMINATION

The Neighborhood Association will not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, legal citizenship, national origin, income, or political affiliation in any of its policies, recommendations or actions.

Agreed?

ARTICLE XIV. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

All amendments to these bylaws must be proposed in writing and submitted to members for a reading at a general meeting before voting on their adoption may proceed at a later general meeting. Notice of a proposal to amend the bylaws, specifying the date, time and place for consideration, must be provided to all members a minimum of seven (7) days before voting. Adoption of and amendments to these bylaws shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote by the members present at a general meeting.

Agreed?