

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Service Description

Neighborhood Services currently serves two primary groups of customers: Neighborhood Associations and City departments. Neighborhood Association support is focused on providing resources to build and maintain organizational capacity, communicate effectively with other residents and the City organization, undertake neighborhood improvements and empower neighborhoods to effectively advocate for issues of importance to them. The work of Neighborhood Services is vital to neighborhood organizations fulfilling their role in building community at the neighborhood level and improving the livability of the City's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Services provides an important communication and coordination role that serves many areas of the City organization by informing residents about initiatives, programs and services that affect them directly and facilitating connections and collaboration between residents and City staff and departments. Neighborhood Services is critical to fulfilling City Council's vision of *Effective, Accountable, Municipal Government* by improving Eugene residents' access to, understanding of, and participation in City affairs.

The City's Neighborhood Associations were formed in response to a desire for residents to be involved in neighborhood planning. Council initially adopted a Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy in 1973, which was repealed and replaced in 1976. Over the years the program's scope was expanded to include broader quality of life issues that affect neighborhoods.

Beginning in 2005, a Neighborhood Empowerment Initiative (NEI) has been identified as a Council priority. To provide a framework for this initiative, staff developed an Action Plan that has been refined with neighborhood input and undergone a prioritization of action items at the 2007 Neighborhood Summit. The focus of the plan is on creating and sustaining strong neighborhoods, with an emphasis on building partnerships motivated to collaboratively problem-solve and develop solutions that benefit a broad representation of the community. A Neighborhood Empowerment Committee, comprised of representatives from multiple City departments and neighborhoods, meets monthly to develop strategies to address issues in the plan.

There are currently 19 City-recognized Neighborhood Associations and 2 business associations. Each organization operates according to its own charter. Neighborhood leaders have also organized themselves under the umbrella of the Neighborhood Leaders Council (NLC). This group meets monthly to discuss current City policies or initiatives of importance to neighborhoods, and provide updates on activities within each of the associations. The NLC is not formally recognized by the City and operates

under its own bylaws. Staff provide limited material and logistical support to the NLC.

Neighborhood Services current program areas include:

- Neighborhood Association Support - Neighborhood Services supports the viability of the City's neighborhood associations through training and strategic support. The program seeks to build capacity of existing associations by fostering leadership development and encouraging good governance while pursuing opportunities to revive dormant associations.
- Neighborhood Newsletters and Public Information - Neighborhood associations are required to produce at least 4 pieces of public information annually, two of which are to be mailed to every address within their boundaries. Neighborhood Services provides editing and production assistance and funds for copying and mailing of Neighborhood Association correspondence. In FY08, \$105,000 was spent printing and posting nearly 420,000 newsletters or postcards to over 78,000 addresses throughout the City.
- Information and Referral - Staff provides basic information about City services and programs and refers residents to the appropriate departments for additional information. It is not uncommon to have residents approach Neighborhood Services for assistance when they are having difficulty navigating the City organizational structure and are not receiving a satisfactory level of service. In such cases, staff serve a liaison function and provide follow up to see that an issue has been resolved.
- Grant Programs - Council established the Neighborhood Matching Grants program in 1999. Funds are available for neighborhood physical improvements, school partnership projects, events and capacity building initiatives. The program requires a 50/50 match in funds, volunteer time, materials, supplies or services. To date, over \$350,000 has been awarded to 69 projects including all City-recognized neighborhoods. Staff also manage a grant program that provided \$60,000 of the remaining sewer bond funds for projects in the River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods designed to implement the goals of the River Road/Santa Clara Transition Report.
- Neighborhood Empowerment Initiative (NEI) – As previously mentioned Neighborhood Empowerment has been a Council priority since 2005. For the three fiscal years beginning in 2007, the NEI has received annual funding of \$100,000, \$100,000 and \$225,000, which supports Neighborhood Services staffing in the delivery of neighborhood support and provides resources to implement

strategies that address action plan items.

- Neighborhood Planning and Land Use Outreach – In December 2007, a Neighborhood Planner was hired to focus on informing neighborhoods earlier regarding land use proposals (a top NEI Action Plan priority item) and to facilitate understanding of land use changes proposed in neighborhoods. In October of 2008, a second Neighborhood Planner was hired to develop neighborhood plans that identify current neighborhood needs and create action plans to inform City programs and budget priorities.
- Community Outreach - Neighborhood Services staff are regularly consulted by other Departments for input on public outreach to neighborhoods and to contribute to the design and delivery of outreach methods.

While not currently an active program area, it is worth noting that from 2001-2006, Neighborhood Services managed the Bethel Weed & Seed Initiative. The program was a cross-departmental federally-funded strategy that brought together residents, business owners, and representatives from schools and neighborhood not-for-profits to define problems and create solutions around public safety, community-oriented policing, prevention and intervention programs for community members, and neighborhood restoration efforts. Three programs have been sustained beyond the life of the Initiative: We are Bethel Community Celebration, Club Bethel youth programs, and the Bethel Public Safety Station.

Historic Perspective

1973	City Council adopts the Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy (NORP).
1976	City Council repeals and replaces the 1973 NORP.
1977	Neighborhood Leaders Council established.
1983	Model Charter for Eugene Neighborhood Organizations approved.
1999-2003	Neighborhood Matching Grant program funded.
2001-2006	Bethel Weed & Seed Initiative
2005	Council launches Neighborhood Initiative (later renamed Neighborhood Empowerment)
2007-2009	Neighborhood Matching Grant program reinstated.
2007	Neighborhood Services moved from Community Development to Planning Division
2007-2008	Two Neighborhood Planner positions created and filled.
2008	Neighborhood Services Program Assessment completed.

Community Involvement

The City Council sets the mission and direction of the neighborhood association program, within the overall community involvement structure.

Community Involvement is a primary focus of the Neighborhood Services program, with Neighborhood Associations a primary customer group. Program focus and activities regularly incorporate neighborhood input through the Neighborhood Empowerment Initiative, Neighborhood Leaders Council and Department Advisory Committees.

Customer Input

The annual City of Eugene Community Survey collects data to assist in determining community perceptions regarding quality of life issues and the quality of city services. The Survey collects information on residents' awareness of their Neighborhood Association its perceived effectiveness and the degree to which residents read neighborhood newsletters.

In the past, the Program solicited feedback from Neighborhood Associations via an annual service survey. This tool was discontinued in 2006. Current plans are to re-institute a formal process for regularly seeking feedback from the program's primary customers.

Neighborhood Associations, Neighborhood Leaders Council, and Neighborhood Matching Grant recipients informally provide feedback to staff on how to improve program services.

In 2008, the City contracted with JLA Public Involvement to complete an assessment of the Neighborhood Services Program. The final report analyzed program strengths and challenges, identified best management practices at model programs in similar cities and made 23 recommendations on organizational structure programs and staffing. The implementation phase of the report will begin in 2009.

Mission

Our mission is to build community at the neighborhood level and improve the livability of the City's neighborhoods. Neighborhood Services accomplishes this by empowering Neighborhood Associations, local businesses, community groups, schools, property owners and residents to better communicate, define neighborhood issues, identify opportunities, inform City policies and services and implement change.

Outcomes

- Foster a feeling of connectedness to the community among residents.
- Improve community safety and other quality-of-life factors in neighborhoods.
- Enhance the City's community involvement programs.
- Further understanding, dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Empower Neighborhood Associations and other groups, to better communicate, define issues, identify opportunities, inform City policies

- and services, and implement change.
- Increase civic responsibility.
- Tailor City services to meet the unique needs of neighborhoods.

Operating Principles

- Build community one relationship at a time.
- Embrace the diversity of opinion, lifestyle, and values that are our neighborhoods.
- Believe the best decisions on how a neighborhood will evolve come from involvement of those who live and work there.
- Respect the time, efforts, and ideas of those who volunteer to make their neighborhoods better.
- Tailor our actions to meet the needs expressed by our clients.
- Exemplify personal integrity by sharing information, openly discussing differences, and honoring commitments to both colleagues and clients.
- Recognize the necessary balance between creativity and details.
- Seek innovative ways to improve our effectiveness and efficiency.

Current Operating Environment

External Trends

Neighborhood Needs and Priorities

City policies, services and budget priorities may not align fully with varying neighborhood needs, conditions and desires. In addition, Neighborhood Associations may not fully understand the needs and desires of their members depending on the size of membership and level of participation. Neighborhood-based planning can help identify neighborhood priorities, better align the work of Neighborhood Associations with the desires of a broad-based membership and improve service delivery. Many neighborhood plans were completed years ago and some areas have no plans at all. To address this issue, Neighborhood Services hired a planner in October of 2008 to focus on collaborating with neighborhoods in the development of the next generation of neighborhood plans.

Growth and Development

As Eugene grows, there is increasing tension between preserving the character and livability of existing neighborhoods and accommodating new residents. This tension can present challenges to building collaborative working relationships among community members, including neighborhoods, the development community, and the city in administering the regulatory framework for land use planning. Recently, City growth management policies promoting density have led to conflicts regarding residential infill in established neighborhoods. Land use issues have risen to prominence on Neighborhood Association agendas and are likely to remain a high priority. To improve neighborhoods' ability to track and participate in the land use

proposal process, Neighborhood Services added a planner to their team in December 2007.

Sustainability

These uncertain economic times have fostered an increase in neighborhoods becoming more self-sustaining. Several Neighborhood Associations and the NLC have created committees to focus on this issue, particularly local food production. Sustainability has also risen as a topic of interest for the next Neighborhood Summit, scheduled for March 2009.

Neighborhood Association Participation

Neighborhood Associations provide an important grassroots organizing framework for residents to participate in local governance. However, the degree of participation in Neighborhood Association varies and the level of activity may not represent the diversity of views of those within a given neighborhood boundary. That should not diminish the volunteer effort that neighborhood leaders put forth to improve the livability of their community. Participation (or lack of) has many causes, including little to no free time, high resident turnover, low levels of home ownership, perspective that one's own views and issues are not represented, and a lack of knowledge or understanding of the work of Neighborhood Associations. The sheer size of some groups (11,000+ households) may be undermining their ability to effectively organize. While the challenge of maintaining high levels of participation in voluntary organizations is not unique to these groups, Neighborhood Services will continue to explore strategies to foster and expand a healthy, active network of Neighborhood Associations.

Internal Conditions

Role of NLC

The Neighborhood Leaders Council (NLC) is not an officially recognized body by the City. Members of the NLC value its independence and the forum it provides for elevating neighborhood issues before the City and other entities (EWEB, for ex.) and for sharing information. However, the recently completed Neighborhood Assessment identified some challenges presented by the lack of formal recognition of this body that render its role and responsibilities unclear to the City, other residents and stakeholder groups. This finding has generated much discussion within the NLC, whose members are weighing the pros and cons of formal recognition.

Funding and Staffing

Historically, neighborhoods have not been a focus of a significant portion of the City budget. In 1999, services and funding were expanded as part of the effort to redesign the Neighborhood program. The Neighborhood Empowerment Initiative provided additional resources that allowed additional staff to be added and a significant expansion of services in the areas of land

use notification, neighborhood planning and support. Current funding and staffing are sufficient to maintain quality levels of service in the foreseeable future.

The total FY09 Neighborhood Services budget is \$669,500. The program includes 3.65 FTE and includes a full-time Program Manager, 2 Neighborhood Planners and a Program Coordinator.

Performance Measures

Core Processes

- Number of public information pieces (newsletters, post cards, flyers, press releases, PSAs, etc.) produced annually.
- Number of Neighborhood Associations that meet Council criteria for an “active” association.
- Number of Neighborhood Associations that comply with boundary guidelines.
- Number of trainings offered to Neighborhood Associations.
- Two Neighborhood Leader Orientation sessions provided annually.

Total System

Effectiveness

- Total number of participants attending meetings or events sponsored by their Neighborhood Association.
- Percent of residents aware of their Neighborhood Association.
- Percent of residents that feel their Neighborhood Association is having a positive impact.
- Percent of residents that report reading their Neighborhood Association newsletter.
- Number of Neighborhood Associations that have a current needs assessment.
- Broad distribution of Matching Grant funds among all neighborhoods.

Efficiency

- Neighborhood Services budget per capita.
- Percent of neighborhood information materials (including leader packets) distributed electronically.

Customer Satisfaction

- Percent of Neighborhood Services customers (by type) who are satisfied or very satisfied with services delivered.

Strategy 1: Provide support in the areas of communication, public outreach, and skills development/training to build capacity of all Neighborhood Associations.

Objective: Ninety percent of all Neighborhood Associations meet Council

criteria for an “active” association by FY13.

Work Activities:

- Provide regular neighborhood leader orientation sessions that clarify neighborhood association responsibilities and requirements.
- Enhance newsletter/mailling production processes and marketing efforts to increase attendance at neighborhood association meetings and events.
- Effectively utilize the internet to improve information, marketing, and application processes.
- Increase training opportunities in areas such as, of public outreach, effective leadership and meeting facilitation, resolving conflict, website development, electronic communication tools, event planning, developing and delivery surveys, newsletter layout and design, land use, fundraising and grant writing, etc.
- Facilitate linkages between other community organizations and Neighborhood Associations.
- Promote Neighborhood Association involvement through media campaigns and recognitions programs.
- Collaborate with neighborhoods on techniques to assess members’ needs and desires.

Strategy 2: Collaborate with existing Neighborhood Associations that exceed Council adopted guidelines for neighborhood boundaries.

Objective: Achieve 100% compliance with the boundary guidelines by FY13.

Work Activities:

- Clarify current Neighborhood Associations that are not consistent with guidelines.
- Open a dialogue with leadership of noncompliant neighborhoods and begin discussing options for addressing the issues.
- Convene a committee of representatives from the Neighborhood Association Executive Committees, Neighborhood Leaders Council, Neighborhood Services staff and Councilor(s) representing the neighborhoods to determine how to approach a boundary change.
- Initiate boundary change process.

Strategy 3: Implement a neighborhood planning process that identifies current neighborhood needs and creates action plans to inform City programs and budget priorities.

Objective: Engage all active Neighborhood Associations in a neighborhood action planning process by FY13.

Work Activities:

- Create a guide for neighborhood action planning.
- Present neighborhood planning process to Planning Commission.
- Create outreach trainings for neighborhoods that will facilitate broad involvement in neighborhood planning.
- Engage neighborhoods in the neighborhood action planning process.
- Work with other City departments to establish the use of these programs for budgeting and project/program priorities.

Strategy 4: Enhance communication and outreach between City Departments and neighborhoods.

Objective: City Departments are directly connected to all active Neighborhood Associations through meeting attendance, City-sponsored events or public information sessions, and regular information updates by FY10.

Work Activities:

- Coordinate development of Neighborhood Liaison Program.
- Explore additional opportunities for program coordination and collaboration with other Departments.
- Regularly utilize newsletters as forum for communicating City programs and services.
- Explore revisions to current newsletter guidelines to allow greater flexibility in use of funds and enhance program efficiencies.

SYSTEM MAP

FEEDBACK
Customer satisfaction surveys, Input at neighborhood meetings, NLC, direct contact, email, etc.

Core Processes

SUPPLIERS

INPUTS

OUTPUTS

CUSTOMERS

City Departments & staff

City program and project information

Disseminate neighborhood-specific Information on City Services

Attendance at NA meetings
Neighborhood newsletters
City newsletters/publications
City & Neighborhood web content
Updates on Neighborhood CIP expenditures

Neighborhood Associations
Community at large

City Departments & staff
Neighborhood Associations
Community at large

Needs Analysis
Community Survey
Neighborhood Summit

Gather input on neighborhood service needs and priorities and identify strategies to address them.

Neighborhood plans
Neighborhood Empowerment Action Plan
Summit priorities

City Departments & staff
Neighborhood Associations
Community at large

Neighborhood Associations
City Departments & staff
Candidates
Elected officials

Organize/facilitate meetings
Develop working agreements & public processes

Provide a forum to identify, discuss, and resolve neighborhood issues and raise awareness on public process and local elections

NA meetings
Newsletters
Town halls
Community meetings

City Departments & staff
Neighborhood Associations
Community at large

Elected officials
City Departments & staff
Neighborhood Associations
Community at large

CIP
Grant allocations
Grant proposals
Neighborhood plans

Sponsor neighborhood improvement projects

Neighborhood Matching Grants
Volunteer programs

City Departments & staff
Neighborhood Associations
Community at large