

# Advisory Information

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**Agenda Item:** Draft Community Participation Program Guidelines

**Title:**

Action    Discussion    Informational

**Date:** June 23, 2016

**Prepared By:** Robert Thompson

**Attachments:** CPP Guidelines DRAFT, CPP Guidelines DRAFT with Comments

## Requested Action

For discussion and recommendation to NRP Policy Board and City Council.

## Background

On February 8, 2016, NCR staff sent a notice to all funded neighborhood organizations that NCR was proposing revisions to the Community Participation Program (CPP) Guidelines for the 2017-2019 funding cycle, and hosted two informational meetings. The notice included clean and redline versions of the draft CPP Guidelines for review.

The current draft of the CPP Guidelines was presented at the April 21, 2016, meeting of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC). At that meeting, NCR staff reviewed how early input from neighborhood organizations, the NCEC Neighborhoods 2020 Committee and others was incorporated into the May 6 draft of the CPP Guidelines:

- Page 1: Revisions based on comments from meetings and written comments to the Program Purposes. The third program purpose, "increasing involvement" was revised to stress inclusive planning and use of tools such as creative placemaking.
- Page 3: Revised the language of the fifth bullet under Eligible Expenses section to include "placemaking," and changed the word "event" to activity.
- Page 4: Revisions to Section IV. A Application based on comments from meetings and written comments. Participants questioned definition of "community building" as vague. Revised the third bullet to include language on neighborhood planning, implementation and placemaking to be consistent with new language in third program purpose.
- Page 5: Revisions to language in paragraph 5, and in other sections of the document, based on comments from meetings and Neighborhoods 2020 committee regarding use of term "members." Concerns were raised by participants that "members" felt too restrictive when intention was to provide for broader participation. Revisions to section B at request of Neighborhoods 2020 committee and NCEC CoW meeting to have NCR staff distribute applications to NCEC Chair and the elected Commissioner for that District.
- Page 7: Added language based on comments at meetings and written comments to description of Neighborhood Priorities, to clarify that neighborhood organizations must submit at least one Priority per funding cycle. Consolidated the following paragraph.
- Page 8: Revisions to language in response to comments from meetings and Neighborhoods 2020 committee that "members" felt too restrictive when intention was to provide for broader participation.
- Page 9: Moved fourth bullet point up to second bullet to make clearer that board discussion and votes could be limited to board members, in response to comments at meetings that its location lower in the order made it less clear that board meetings were different from committee meetings.

Page 11: Added language that NCR staff will inform NCEC when NCR is initiating a review. Revised language to allow a neighborhood organization 45 days to respond to findings of a review, rather than 30 days, in response to comments at meetings and Neighborhoods 2020 Committee.

Page 12: Revised language to show 45 days instead of 30 days for appeal on grievance procedure, in response to comments at meetings and Neighborhoods 2020 committee.

Following these revisions and discussion at the April 21 NCEC meeting, NCR staff sent the draft Community Participation Program (CPP) Guidelines to all funded neighborhood organizations on May 6, 2016 for formal review and comment. As of the deadline on June 20, 2016, NCR had received eight written comments on the Guidelines.

Following our review of the comments, NCR recommends not making any revisions to the Draft CPP Guidelines as sent to neighborhood organizations on May 6. Many of the comments, however, merit additional follow up from NCR as they represent legitimate concerns.

- At least three of the eight comments indicated broad support for the draft Guidelines with no comments for revisions. Others expressed support, with requests for clarification or further information.
- Comments on the program purposes expressed either support for the program purposes, or questioned the purposes without specific recommendations for changes. The comments addressed apparent contradictions between program purposes and expenditure restrictions or level of resources and support provided.
- One comment included several recommendations for clarification of language, providing definitions and providing references to best practice guides.

Typically, NCR has provided clarifications as sidebars in the final publication rather than as text in the actual guidelines; we will include sidebars in the final published CPP Guidelines. Additionally, some of the clarifications requested can be referenced through the publicly available standards referenced in the guidelines.

- Some comments expressed disappointment we cannot fund food and entertainment.

Past legal opinions state that these expenses are not eligible using the current source of funding as a matter of state law. Even substituting City General Fund dollars for the current source (tax increment revenues) would involve significant restrictions and additional reporting requirements for neighborhood organizations.

- Two neighborhood organizations provided written comments on Neighborhood Priority Plans, one regarding potential obstacles to implementing projects, and the other regarding the need for additional funding to support NPPs.

When Neighborhood Priority Plans were added to the CPP Guidelines in 2012, NCR discussed with NCEC that approval of Neighborhood Priority Plans would not always lead to implementation of projects, but would open a feedback loop on why a project might not be implemented, or may not be implemented in the way a neighborhood organization requested. During these same discussions, NCR made the recommendation to incorporate programming and funding for the Neighborhood Investment Fund as identified in the Framework for the Future into the CPP Guidelines. As a result, the overall allocations to neighborhood organizations was increased above the \$3 million annually that was identified as a base in the Framework for the Future.

- One comment stated that there is no protection for neighborhoods from unethical treatment by NCR.

A new section to the CPP Guidelines (Section VI.D. on page 11) was included even in early versions of the Draft CPP Guidelines reviewed by neighborhood organizations and the NCEC to address such concerns.

- Comments on the funding formula included support for and questions about the minimum \$25,000 allocation.

NCR proposed the minimum allocation at the request of some neighborhoods that typically fell below that allocation level.

- Other comments on the funding formula suggest changes to the variables in the allocation formula.

Previous discussions with neighborhood organizations and the NCEC indicated a desire to maintain the same variables to keep funding for individual neighborhood organizations relatively stable, while also updating the underlying data sets each funding cycle with the most currently available data.

- Several comments questioned how the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement, Neighborhoods 2020 input and the Neighborhood Evaluation were used to inform the revisions to the CPP Guidelines.

As noted previously, NCR staff reported at the April 21, 2016, meeting of the NCEC on how feedback from neighborhood organizations and Neighborhoods 2020 Committee were incorporated into the draft Guidelines. The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement and the Neighborhood Evaluation were still in progress during early development of the CPP Guidelines.

- One neighborhood organization noted they were having difficulty accessing American Community Survey data for neighborhoods.

The source of American Community Survey data used by NCR staff can be found on the Minnesota Compass website at this link:

<http://www.mncompass.org/profiles/neighborhoods/minneapolis-saint-paul#!community-areas>.

## Next Steps

- NCR staff will prepare a final draft of the CPP Guidelines and prepare allocations for review and action as necessary by the NRP Policy Board and City Council in July 2016.
- Approved CPP Guidelines will be published and delivered to neighborhood organizations immediately following City Council approval.
- Neighborhood organizations may begin submitting funding applications in September 2016.
- New 2017-19 CPP contracts will be implemented with a start date of January 1, 2017.

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department at 612-673-3737. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

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