

ANNUAL REPORT AND 2013 ACTION PLAN BETWEEN THE OLYMPIA COALITION OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (CNA) AND THE CITY OF OLYMPIA

I. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A. Nature and Purpose of the Action Plan

On July 10, 2012, the City Council approved the MOU that establishes a city – neighborhood association partnership for conducting forums and other activities affecting neighborhoods. This annual report and action plan for 2013 is being submitted under Section VI A.3 of the MOU. Full implementation of sections II B and II C assume the City Council's approval of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan during 2013

B. Activities Completed or Planned from the Inception of the MOU

CNA has completed, assisted or offered to hold community forums concerning the following issues:

- **Development Forum:** The Proposed Boys and Girls Club facility in the Northwest Olympia Neighborhood Association, next to Garfield School: forum held on September 17, 2012. A report of the forum was sent to the City Manager in October of 2012
- **2013 Budget Forum:** Originally scheduled for October 23, 2012, this forum was postponed due to other pressing city business. The city decided to have a public hearing on November 13th concerning the Operating Budget, Ad Valorem Tax usage and other matters.
- **Code Enforcement:** Changes to Sections 4.44.020 and 4.50.060 of the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) to allow higher civil infraction penalties for repeat code violators
- **Graffiti:** Changes to Section 9.40.090 and adding a new section (9.40.095) of the OMC to provide a new definition of physical damage and to make graffiti a gross misdemeanor
- **Neighborhood Pathways:** Partnered with city advisory committees and city professional staff to inform neighborhoods about neighborhood pathways
- **Comprehensive Plan:** Developing comments from neighborhoods concerning the Comprehensive Plan and briefing of the Planning Commission concerning sub-area planning

II. Proposed Goals and Activities For 2013

A. Public Forums

We expect to organize several forums for citywide or regional issues, and development projects, such as the Bing Street apartment complex. The following forums are being proposed:

1. Citywide Forum: The City of Olympia 2014 Budget and Future Budgets

(a) Timing and Nature of Forum

Citizen involvement in the city budget development process needs to occur during the development stage, rather than at the end. Secondly, we need to create a budget development process where citizen involvement is in the form of dialogue and education, not legalistic hearings where citizens are reduced to “three minutes at the mike”. Finally, citizens need to believe that their involvement is meaningful and their views will be part of the deliberative process. The forum will cover the following questions:

- What needs to be done to make Olympia financially sustainable?

- What are the reasons for city budget deficits?
- What should the process be for getting citizen input on the budget?
- What areas of city spending are the most important to residents?

(b) Structure of Forum

Citizen involvement in city budget processes has been limited. In addition to answering the questions noted above, citizens will be asked how they wish to interact with government by addressing the following:

- What are the core principles for effective and efficient public involvement?
- What can we learn from other communities (Bellingham, Spokane, and Portland) who have studied ways to improve public engagement?
- What can we learn from innovative programs like the Participatory Budgeting Process now being used in Chicago, New York City, and Vallejo CA, to meaningfully engage citizens in developing the City of Olympia's budget?
- What practices should be used to gauge public sentiment (informal dialogue, monthly leadership meetings, hearings, social media/Internet email, mobile device applications and polling etc.)

2. Code Enforcement and Public Safety

This forum will cover the changes to city ordinances and whether they have been effective in curbing repeat offenders. Also, we will discuss the best ways to inform citizens about crimes in their neighborhoods, measures to help prevent crimes, self-protection and effective use of the emergency response system.

3. Development Forums

Developers are being encouraged to contact CNA to arrange a public forum on a proposed development project. The purpose of these forums is to solicit public comment early in the process before substantial investments are made. A forum concerning the Bing Street project is possible in 2013. The structure of the forums will be as follows:

- The developer will present a summary of the proposed project
- The Coalition of Neighborhood Association members will ask questions of the developer
- Citizens will ask questions concerning the proposed project
- A summary report will be prepared by CNA which covers the forum, citizen recommendations and comments will be sent to the City Manager, the City Council and the developer

B. Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategy

The Comprehensive Plan's Vision Section provides that "Neighborhood groups [should] take an intimate role in the planning and decision-making affecting their neighborhoods. The vehicle for this will be an Action Plan or Implementation Strategy. When the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategy is prepared by the city, neighborhoods will focus on the following key areas:

- Ensuring that development regulations are made consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Making city programs more neighborhood centric
- Incorporating neighborhoods in the land use decisions of government organizations

C. Sub-Area Plans

1. A new Organizational Structure for Neighborhoods

CNA has been working to increase the number of areas in the city which are covered by a neighborhood association. In some areas of the city, consolidations of neighborhoods are already occurring. The City's proposed Comprehensive Plan includes neighborhood involvement in land use in the context of 10 sub-areas. CNA will propose a

new framework for neighborhoods based on the City of Olympia's sub-area model so that all areas of the city have a neighborhood association point of contact.

2. Working Group for Sub-Area Planning

One sub-area of the city will be selected as a pilot for the sub-area planning process involving neighborhoods and the City Department of Community Planning and Development. CNA will provide assistance to that neighborhood as needed and support the allocation of neighborhood matching grant funds to assist the neighborhood in the planning process. Developing a final sub-area could take 1-2 years.

D. Administrative Matters

1. Updating the 1994 Ordinance Establishing the Recognized Neighborhood Association

The existing ordinance (OMC 18.86.000 et. seq.) needs to be restructured to reflect the 2012 Memorandum of Understanding and to change administrative matters, such as the means of communicating proposed land use proposals to citizens. A separate team consisting of CNA and city staff will review the ordinance and proposed changes.

2. Communication Strategies

Neighborhoods and the city need to examine ways to improve communication. Email delivery is being used but duplication among city Departments and the technical nature of some of the communications is frustrating citizens and the city. Also, neighborhoods are maintaining separate web sites which are not coordinated with the city web site. A new framework needs to be developed to help support neighborhoods.

III. Reports to the City

A. Annual Activity Report

By November 30, 2013, CNA will prepare a written report of the first year of the MOU, including the following topics:

- The success or failure of the forums based on individual interviews with decision-makers and citizens
- Any necessary changes to the MOU
- Changes in the number of neighborhood associations that are participating in CNA
- The budget for the second year of the agreement

The evaluation of the forums will include a debriefing session with city Manager, city staff and City Council and contacts with forum participants to get honest opinions.

B. Using Outcome Based Measures

CNA will collect both quantitative and qualitative measures to assist in the evaluation of the MOU. The measures will include the following:

- The number of attendees for the forums
- The percentage of attendees and citizens who believed that the forum has been effective or worthwhile (citizens are satisfied with the process even if there is disagreement about the conclusions)
- The degree of success in involving all segments of the public
- The degree of consensus and conflict avoidance
- The degree to which citizens feel that they have been heard and that their input has been thoughtfully considered

The MOU is an ambitious first step toward a new form of public involvement in the city of Olympia. As with any new program, it will evolve over time based on experience and feedback from citizens. CNA looks forward to working with the City to improve the quality of life for Olympia's citizens.