

Neighborhoods 2020

Community Review Panel Report

Summary of Public Comments with Panel Recommendations

Background

In January 2019, the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department (NCR) released a draft Framework for Neighborhoods 2020, informed by the recommendations of three work groups convened early in 2018. Public comment closed on March 31. During that time, NCR received over 300 comments from the general public, community organizations and neighborhood organizations. Comments were submitted by letter, email and comment cards during public events.

NCR staff requested the assistance of a small body of volunteer community representatives, led by a third-party facilitator, to objectively analyze them, extract actionable feedback/suggestions and process that for NCR use. In addition, NCR encouraged this “Community Review Panel” (CRP) to offer suggestions on how NCR could apply this information to improve the Framework.

The CRP met for a total of four hours, as well as spent time reviewing the initial analysis of comments, original comments, and drafts of this report. This report contains the analysis process CRP used, a summary of comments, and a list of suggestions for improvement.

Community Review Panel Participants

(Facilitator) Lisa Tabor, CultureBrokers LLC
Gary Arntsen, NCEC Representative
Cassandra Belyeu, NCEC Representative
Courtney Cushing Kiernat, Pohlad Foundation
Nicholas Campbell, City of Minneapolis – Division of Race & Equity
Stacy Sorenson, City of Minneapolis – NCR
Nicholas Ngo, City of Minneapolis – NCR

Analysis Process

1. Extract discrete feedback from all comments received and place into an excel file.
2. Indicate whether the comment showed high confidence, low confidence or made any kind of suggestion (“Neutral”). All comments were logged as one of these.
3. Identify which comments suggested specific changes to the Framework.
4. Indicate which component(s) of the framework the comment referred to or seemed to be related to.

Due to the large quantity of comments, the short turnaround time for CRP analysis, and the desire to not unduly burden these volunteers, NCR staff performed actions 1 – 3.

Key Principles

The facilitator asked CRP members to consider all suggestions as valid, and to objectively analyze them against NCR's framework as written in the document at

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@ncr/documents/policydocument/wcmsp-216785.pdf>.

The team worked through a process of reconciling differences that existed between the comment and NCR's framework. The results of that process are laid out as suggestions for improvement in the table farther below.

Summary of Public Comments

Total comments extracted 700+ from over 300 public submissions. The comments extracted, which had suggested actionable changes, were reviewed by the CRP.

Consultant-only Analysis

The CRP focused only on analyzing suggestions about the Framework content. Also, we were only able to consider Framework items with the greatest number of suggestions. However, other kinds of comments, such as about the process itself, are important for NCR to consider for future initiatives.

The consultant also will be providing NCR further recommendations for improving CRP process. Given that this was the first time the City has used a Community Review Panel to assist with comment review, there were lessons learned for strengthening the process.

Public Comment Analysis & Suggestions

Item	Ref #	Object of Concern	Source(s)' Positions	NCR's Position (Reference Page(s))	CRP's Suggestion for Improvements to Neighborhoods 2020 Framework
1	771 101 103 141 21 26 149 242 427	Bylaws (minimum standards, consistency, Member approval)	Retain Full Customization (Status Quo) Retain current bylaw change rules (Status Quo)	Install basic consistency via a minimum standard set of requirements (p10) All changes [to the organizational meeting process] must be approved by membership at a meeting. (p10)	<p>Bylaws are a legal document that dictates how the organization must be governed. They should include official meeting requirements, membership provisions, voting rights and more. According to Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, "Bylaws are not required, but they can help define the organization and its governance structure... Organizations that do not have bylaws must legally default to Minnesota Statute 317A, known as the Nonprofit Corporation Act." https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/317A</p> <p>The intent of the commenters and NCR seem to be substantially the same: that each NBO's bylaws does need to reflect the way it runs. However, NCR proposes that NBOs choosing to receive City funds ensure their bylaws contain some standard components and/or rules (such as regular member meetings). This may mean that some NBOs will need to change some of the way they run to be consistent with all other NBOs.</p> <p>Requiring NBOs that want city funding to have bylaws with some consistent components that make it easier for people to be involved, and simplifies the experience for residents, no matter where they go in the city makes complete sense to us. Beyond these minimums, NBOs can and should customize their bylaws. Perhaps NCR can say what it means in a different way to make this intention clearer.</p> <p>In addition, in the framework, we suggest NCR either identify a set of existing good practices or standards NBO bylaws will follow or present a process for how that will otherwise be determined.</p>
2		Organizational Health	Formally assess individual organizations and use those results to inform <u>funding</u>	N/A	<p>The commenter did not clearly define "Organizational Health" and how one would measure that, so we are unable to provide a suggestion about it. However, this idea may be useful to pursue. Assessment of NBOs that objectively identifies to what extent each one meets or exceeds operational best practices for nonprofits (such as those defined by an industry expert like Minnesota Council of Nonprofits) could help NCR more effectively evaluate support service needs and funding requests. See MCN's Principles of Nonprofit Excellence http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/nonprofit-resources/principles-and-practices/principles-and-practices-for-nonprofit-excellence-2014/principles-and-practices-for-nonprofit-excellence</p>

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3		Organizational Health	Formally assess individual organizations and use those results to gauge need for amount of city oversight	All organizations will get the same level of <u>oversight</u>	Consistent with its responsibilities to taxpayers and other funders, NCR should provide meaningful, objective, standardized, respectful and efficient oversight of the money it is investing in CBOs and NBOs. That said, such oversight should be no more and no less than the oversight the City conducts for other kinds of grants or contracting.
4		Funding Allocation Framework	2-prong formula: Project, Overhead	3 -prong formula: Base, Impact, Discretionary (pp7, 9)	NCR's suggested three-prong formula is not unwieldy. However, with any allocation scheme, we see potential challenges with objectively identifying what activities are defined as Base, Impact and Discretionary, and how NCR will ensure NBOs are appropriately allocating these funds.
5		Board Diversity	Remove requirement because it might become a quota system (Status Quo)	Board makeup must closely mirror the neighborhood demographics (p11)	<p>NCR's requirement linking funds to board diversity is consistent with the City's racial equity and inclusion commitment and its responsibility to all its residents and taxpayers.</p> <p>While achieving such diversity can be challenging for organizations who have historically not had it (or have been unable to sustain it over time), it is not at all impossible to achieve. We suggest NCR take a developmental approach with NBOs, considering that NBOs are 1) making year-over-year improvements in board diversity based on where they are at, and 2) demonstrating learning and adaptation based on the results they get from their efforts.</p>
6		NBO Funding Amount	Need enough funding to meet new community engagement and demographic representation requirements	N/A	<p>NCR's new requirements for funding translate as permanent changes to NBOs' business operations. Therefore, NCR should ensure that enough Base funding is provided to NBOs to cover expenses for required activities. We acknowledge that NBO's, to maintain and improve their valuable role as bridge between city government and residents, will require significant Base funding. We agree with the suggestion from other commenters that at least \$35,000/year would be necessary, with increases to that amount made based on key characteristics similar to what currently exists in the Community Participation Program Guidelines (pp16-17)</p> <p>http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@ncr/documents/webcontent/wcmssp-185278.pdf</p> <p>NCR should include a reference to its current funding allocation table to help readers understand how N2020 funding allocations could be similar and different. NCR should agree that the (admittedly specific) detail of funding levels is important to evaluating the potential of the program's success.</p>

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7		NBO Board Term Limits	No standard term limits are required (Status Quo)	No more than 25% of board serves more than 6 years; set officer term limits (p11)	<p>According to MCN, "Minnesota Statute 317A.207 stipulates that a term of a director may not exceed ten years. An organization can set its own term length for board members. One recommendation is to set term lengths at three years and allow members to be eligible for re-election for up to three consecutive terms. In reference to practice #9, nonprofits should also implement staggered board terms." http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/nonprofit-resources/principles-and-practices/principles-and-practices-for-nonprofit-excellence-2014/principles-and-practices-additional-resources/governance-board-operations#GovernancePractice20</p> <p>NCR's intent is to make space for new and evolving leadership. NCR should require its funded NBO's to <i>at minimum</i> meet the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits best practice of term lengths of no more than nine consecutive years and require staggered board terms. If an NBO follows this best practice along with other NCR requirements for outreach, member meetings and board diversity efforts, these term requirements should be enough to help achieve broad participation, vitality, and diverse representation while retaining institutional memory.</p> <p>That said, nine consecutive years may be higher than desired, especially when NBO elections happen annually. Many other kinds of nonprofits typically have board terms of 2 or 3 years (rather than 1), with caps of three consecutive terms (that's where the nine years come in).</p>
8		NBO Membership Meetings	Status quo	Quarterly meetings – total of 4 per year (p11)	<p>Typically, NBO's elect the board at an annual meeting of the "members" (residents). This means there is already likely 1 meeting of members per year. Member meetings require significant coordination and planning, and good practice suggests hospitality and other considerations be made to support attendance and participation. If NCR makes this a requirement, just as suggested in item #6 above, this function now becomes part of NBO normal operations and should be sufficiently covered by Base funding.</p> <p>One option to ease the costs, acclimate NBO's, and still engage residents is to require at least 2 member meetings per year. Should an organization choose to increase that number, they could be awarded additional funding via Impact or Discretionary lines of funding. Alternatively, NCR could consider these four member meetings as actually delivering on the direct outreach requirements.</p>

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9		Direct (Face-to-Face) Outreach	Re-evaluate this requirement	Must be a part of an engagement outreach plan; to include diversity efforts (p12)	<p>NCR is correct to require face-to-face communication between NBOs and their residents – especially diverse residents. Face-to-face conversation is excellent for getting people's attention, listening to them, conceiving and sharing ideas, and actively exchanging information.</p> <p>However, NCR should also acknowledge that written communication is one of many forms of outreach and is in fact an excellent way to get across complicated information. It can be just as valuable as face-to-face conversation when it is provided in the languages and lay-person vocabulary of residents.</p> <p>NCR should clarify what would <i>minimally</i> constitute direct outreach and/or identify expected results. NCR should also find ways to encourage/reward NBOs to get better than expected results (especially in non-monetary ways).</p>
10		Financial Management (Policy & Practice)	Require	Recommend	<p>NCR should require <u>all</u> its funded organizations to meet best practices in financial management as recommended by Minnesota Council of Nonprofits http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/nonprofit-resources/principles-and-practices/principles-and-practices-for-nonprofit-excellence-2014/financial-management.</p> <p>NCR should provide enough base funding and support services to NBOs needing to make those improvements.</p>
11		Community Engagement Commission	Elected and Appointed members	Appointed members	<p>We are unable to adequately consider and reconcile this question without knowing what will be the specific, unique role and responsibility of a community engagement commission – especially as it differs from the current NCEC.</p> <p>Why, specifically, does the NCEC's <u>purpose</u> not meet current needs? What are current needs? What will be the purpose of a new commission so that it does meet these current needs? Are the problem(s) predominately operational ones? (And, the hard question: is a commission really necessary?)</p> <p>We suggest NCR first answer these questions in this Framework and wait to address the membership of such a group for the next phase (Developing Program Guidelines). We believe being clear on the commission's charter is more consistent with the goals of this Framework document, and that knowing the commission's function would more easily inform its makeup in the next phase.</p>