

Neighborhoods 2020 Public Comment Summary and Framework Recommendations

Neighborhoods 2020 Public Comment Summary

Neighborhoods 2020 Public Comment Period

- The public comment period was open from February 28-September 30, 2020.
- The new coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic and civil unrest, after the death of George Floyd, extended the public comment timeline by 119 days.
- 245 public comments were received
- 26 individual neighborhood associations submitted independent comments
 - Two neighborhood associations submitted two letters
 - Four letters from neighborhood organizational staff
- 20 neighborhood associations signed on to a coordinated letter (some also sent independent comments; Elliot Park submitted two (2) public comment letters)
- Nine comments from community based organizations, although none culturally representative
- Four Business Owners submitted comments
- 237 resident comments

Neighborhoods 2020 Framework equity goals are supported

- There is overall positive sentiment from the public comments regarding the equity goals discussed in the Neighborhoods 2020 Guidelines. Commenters recognize that the equity goals help address some of the issues the City needs to address between the community and neighborhood associations.
- Furthermore, some commenters believe that the goals outlined in the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework do not go far enough to hold Neighborhood Associations accountable. In particular, a handful of commenters articulated the need for the equity goals be more detailed and should be connected to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs should be tracked overtime in partnership between the City and Neighborhood Association leadership.

Neighborhoods 2020 Funding formula and total funding

- There was noticeable disconnect about the differences between base funding and equitable funding and the City's rationale for capping the total funding at \$4.1 million. Comments request the funding formula be more transparent within the document. In addition, the baseline funding being increased to support the both the core functions of Neighborhood Associations and the City's equity goals outlined in the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework.
- Many of the public comments requested that the City increase the total funding from \$4.1 million to "\$4.1 million +\$3 million" or \$7 million. In the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework, commenters focused most of their time on the baseline funding given to Neighborhood Associations and their impact on core activities. Commenters were concerned that with the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework changing the way funds can be used to help the City reach its [Strategic Racial Equity Aaction Plan](#) goals, Neighborhood Associations will struggle to provide

traditional core services and keep the Neighborhood Association's functioning. To mitigate funding concerns, some Neighborhood Association commenters stated they will be increasing their fundraising efforts or determine whether it is best to merge with another Neighborhood Association.

- The need for an increase in total funding to \$7.1 million was further supported by Neighborhood Associations stating that their importance to their communities has been elevated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest as a result of the death of George Floyd. Commenters articulated that Neighborhood Associations have encouraged small business support as well as basic resources and community safety.
- An interesting set of comments came from the Armitage Neighborhood. Commentors requested a base fund of \$15K while simultaneously increasing the total finding to \$7 million, which further indicated support for the equity goals in the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework.

Neighborhoods 2020 Support and Technical Assistance

- Some commenters articulated concerns that the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework did not outline how the City or NCR would support Neighborhood Associations' implementation of the Framework. Sentiment from the comment infers that the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework is a drastic change from Neighborhood Association's normal practices, and that for the equity goals to be successfully implemented, some form of direct help and written guidance from either the framework or another document would be useful.

Profile of the commenters and perceptions

- The Tangletown, Armitage, Victoria, and Nokomis East neighborhoods contributed considerable public comment reading the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework.
- Comments from residents represented by NENA were particularly interesting to the reviewers because many comments clearly reflected underrepresented voices which is in contrasts to the more affluent comments that were reviewed by the working group. NENA also was the only organization that submitted resident comments in another language (Spanish).
- When providing input on the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework, there was a noticeable number of commenters including the length of time they have lived in or owned their home in a Neighborhood. Many commenters were proud to say how long there were homeowners.
- Most of the comments focused on increasing the overall funding to Neighborhood Association to \$7M using the \$4.1 + \$3 formula.
- Neighborhood Associations are perceived as important to community connectedness and can provide a sense of security as well as providing economic support to small businesses in the community.
- Some commenters also expressed that Neighborhood Associations do not represent the totality of the neighborhood and there are enough social issues (COVID- 19 and unrest) that \$4.1 million would be better spent on addressing those issues than continually funding Neighborhood Associations. Several commenters also stated that although Neighborhood Associations play a quasi-governmental role, they misinform and block the dissemination of information to residents.

Suggested Neighborhoods 2020 Framework changes

Transparency and revisiting the equity formula

- Most of the public comments expressed the need for an increase to the \$4.1M total funding and many commenters suggesting the use of \$4.1M + \$3M formula. The commenters indicated that changes being proposed the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework would impact the basic operations and services currently provided by Neighborhood Associations. Comments further indicated a need for a transparent view of the equity formula.
- The reviewers discussed the widespread support for the equity goals coupled advocating for an increase in funding reflected in the comments. Increasing the total funding could disincentivize the need for Neighborhood Associations to adhere to meeting the equity goals in the framework that are already race neutral.
- Reviewers have recommended departing from the ACP formula and using the ACP50 formula initially recommended by [Center for Urban & Regional Affairs](#). This was supported by public comments highlighting Neighborhood Association efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the unrest from the death of George Floyd, that disparately impact BIPOC residents. Applying ACP50 would help appropriately fund Neighborhood Associations and SREAP goals.

Incentivizing Neighborhood Association to implement equity goals

- Reviewers support including language in the Program Guidelines that explain the incentives of being recognized as a Neighborhood Association by the City. The Neighborhoods 2020 Framework operates under assumption that additional funds are incentive to do racial equity work whereas the reviewers believe that there are sufficient incentives for Neighborhood Associations in being recognized as such, and that a commitment to racial equity work should be the basis for accessing additional funding.

Providing technical assistance and support

- Public comments expressed the desire for additional assistance and technical support that would be needed for Neighborhood Associations to implement the equity goals in the Neighborhoods 2020 Framework. If Neighborhood associations are going to be held accountable for meeting the Frameworks goals, some language should be added to at least outline the support that could be provided to Neighborhood Associations to ensure they are achieving the goals laid out in the Framework.

Neighborhoods 2020 Public Comment Review Committee

- Membership included inter-disciplinary City staff
 - Jonathan Williams-Kinsel, Program Manager, Office of Performance & Innovation
 - Gina Allen, Program Manager, Office of Performance & Innovation
 - Nicholas Campbell, Program Manager, Division of Race & Equity
 - Taylor Crouch-Dodson, Planner Analyst, Office of Performance & Innovation
 - Julianne Leersen, J.D., Promise Zone Director, City Coordinator's Office
 - Nicholas Ngo, ADA-Language Access Coordinator, Neighborhood and Community Relations

- Michelle Rivero, J.D., Director, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA),
Neighborhood and Community Relations Department
- The public comment review team met six times to review comments, identify themes and summarize comments.