

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**  
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

<b>AGENDA TITLE:</b>	Neighborhoods Program Update
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Community Services Division, City Manager's Office
<b>PRESENTED BY:</b>	Julie Underwood, Assistant City Manager Rob Beem, Community Services Division Manager Nora Smith, Neighborhood Coordinator

**PROBLEM / ISSUE STATEMENT:**

From time to time the City Manager and staff provide an update on the background and current status of City programs.

The Neighborhoods Program was established in February 1996, shortly after the City incorporated. The newly established City Council recognized the interest of city residents in improved access to government decisions affecting their lives and wanted to support a high level of citizen participation.

The Neighborhoods Program continues to support neighborhood organizations and encourage community building. In the last year and a half there has been a high level of activity in neighborhoods. Examples include the re-activation of three neighborhood associations, four new neighborhood association Web sites as a result of city-sponsored training, a variety of Neighborhood Mini-Grants and new partnerships between schools, faith communities and neighborhoods. Community Services Division staff will report on the current program and recent activity.

**RECOMMENDATION**

No action is required. The purpose of this presentation is informational and provides and update to the Council on current activity in the neighborhoods program.

Approved By: City Manager  City Attorney \_\_\_\_\_

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Neighborhoods Program was established soon after the City of Shoreline incorporated. The Neighborhoods Program includes staff support to monthly meetings of the Council of Neighborhoods, a Neighborhood Mini-Grant program, and support and assistance to neighborhood groups. Community Services Division staff will provide an update on the Neighborhoods Program to the City Council.

## **BACKGROUND**

Resolution No. 54, adopted in 1996, established "a policy for the City's support of neighborhood organizations." The resolution spelled out key elements of the Neighborhoods Program to include:

1. Defining neighborhood organizations as formal groups of citizens which have organized for the purpose of improving and/or developing services and amenities for their respective communities.
2. City "support for and feedback to City service delivery functions" to meet three goals
  - a. Create a positive working relationship between the City and its neighborhoods;
  - b. Foster cooperation and consensus;
  - c. Facilitate communication between neighborhoods concerning common concerns.
3. Neighborhood Matching Grants administered by the Neighborhoods Program and approved by the City Council.
4. A Council of Neighborhoods for the purpose of communication among neighborhoods.

A current City of Shoreline guiding value is "strong neighborhoods, citizen partnerships and active volunteers." The Neighborhoods Program implements this value by providing support and assistance and acting as a conduit of two-way communication for citizens and neighborhood organizations with the city, and each other.

## **DISCUSSION**

Through the Neighborhoods Program the City provides support and assistance to neighborhood groups and residents to meet the City's Strategic Objective for "safe and attractive neighborhoods." Neighborhood Associations, through activities, projects, meetings and information build community cohesion, civic awareness and resident involvement. Through programs, training and support the City's Neighborhoods Program focuses on neighbors helping neighbors, neighborhood improvements, and clear and informative communication between neighbors, neighborhoods, and with the City.

### **Neighborhood Assistance**

The City has provided support with organizing, meeting planning, facilitation and brainstorming that has resulted in creation or rejuvenation of three neighborhood associations in the last 18 months: Briarcrest Fall 2006, Hillwood 2007, and Meridian

Park 2008. Two additional groups are slated for fall 2008 organizing efforts: North City and Richmond Highlands.

The City has provided direct support for neighborhoods assisting with design and production of flyers, signs and newsletters for events and meetings. In addition program supply money was budget in 2008 for supporting neighborhood-wide events by assisting with entertainment and material supplies for events such as the Richmond Beach Strawberry Festival and the Briarcrest 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party.

Through 2007 and 2008 the City has designed and sponsored a series of trainings geared to improved neighborhood leaders skills and communication. Trainings included writing and graphics, Web site development, nonprofit incorporation, and Asset Based Community Development. As a result there are four new neighborhood association Web sites, more effective communication techniques, and several new incorporations which protect leaders from personal liability.

### **Neighborhood Mini-Grants**

Over the last three years there has been renewed interest in Neighborhood Mini-Grants. Projects have ranged from new "improvements" such neighborhood banners with artwork from a local artist to collaborative projects such as helping fund playground equipment at local elementary schools in partnership with PTAs and School District. In 2008 it is anticipated that the City will receive five Mini-Grant requests for the entire \$20,000 budget.

### **Neighborhoods Communication Plan**

In an effort to provide information about support and services available to neighborhoods, a variety of efforts will be implemented in 2008. A new Neighborhoods Program brochure has been developed in time for distribution at Celebrate Shoreline. A list of neighborhoods-related topics has been developed and articles will be published in Currents, starting with information about Environmental and Neighborhood Mini-Grants in the May issue. By the end of 2008 a more dynamic Neighborhoods Web page with resources, organizing information, event ideas and individual pages for each neighborhood will be launched with the new City of Shoreline Web site redesign.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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