

**Connecting Tucson's Urban Neighborhood
White Paper from Urban Neighborhood Symposium
April, 2013**

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1. Introduction

The paper is one of the products from the Urban Neighborhood Symposium (UNS) held on Saturday, January 26, 2013. Leaders from over 40 Tucson neighborhoods attended the symposium and shared their expertise and experience in eight workshops. The day culminated in a working lunch where next steps were identified.

A final meeting of the planning committee was held on April 2, 2013. Symposium attendees, who indicated an interest in assisting with future symposia, were also invited to this meeting. A draft of this white paper was presented to the UNS planning group and final changes were made to it. The White Paper was then made part of the final report for the PRO Neighborhood grant, published (in whole or part) on the NSN website, sent to identified neighborhood entities, and made available to all members of the City Council.

This paper presents the background for the symposium, the PRO Neighborhoods grant requirements and a summary of the symposium. In addition, the results of the evaluation and needs assessment are presented along with three recommendations, summarized below, for how this work can be sustained.

1. **Improve communication** among and between neighborhoods by revitalizing the Neighborhood Support Network run by Don Ijams, who will take the lead on this effort.
2. **Improve support at grassroots neighborhood level** in two ways: an events focus through NSN and in concert with Judith Anderson in the city.
3. **Develop a political voice for neighborhoods.** Many good efforts are underway and we recommend these coalitions and groups continue their work to be inclusive and representative of neighborhood interests. At this time one group to represent neighborhoods is not seem possible.

2. Background

Board members of the Friends of Jefferson Park, Inc. (FJP) undertook to organize a symposium of Urban Neighborhoods.

The symposium effort grew out of the experience of board members of the FJP, who sought out experience from other neighborhood leaders to plan events and activities in support of the neighborhood. FJP is a non-profit entity with this purpose:

"The purpose for which the corporation is organized is to preserve the historic integrity of the Jefferson Park Neighborhood and improve the quality of life of its residents. "

It became clear that to achieve its purpose, FJP needed to network with other neighborhoods. Board members, for example, have been holding an annual home tour to raise money to support the neighborhood. However, there was no central way to coordinate with other neighborhoods on holding events or even to learn from neighborhood leaders who had conducted similar efforts. Contact information for neighborhood leaders was not readily available and the City of Tucson website was not up to date. Individuals knew of some associations, alliances, coalitions, but no one group had a way to interact and network. It was decided to seek funding for a symposium to bring together and organize the many entities working for neighborhoods.

3. PRO Neighborhoods Grant

Joan Daniels, Past President of FJP, authored a grant, which was funded, to PRO Neighborhoods to create a gathering of neighborhood leaders. FJP identified a “planning committee” with representation from over 15 neighborhoods and coalition representatives. The committee met monthly from September 2012 – January 2013.

The committee decided to organize a one-day Urban Neighborhood Symposium. The committee cast a wide net with the help of the Neighborhood Support Network (<http://neighsupport.net/>) listserv to find and invite leaders from all Tucson neighborhoods to participate. The committee also organized in kind donations for a continental breakfast and lunch for attendees, sponsored by Sausage Deli, Albertson’s and Walgreens.

PRO Neighborhoods Grant Obligations were to:

- create a system of communication and learning which will strengthen participating neighborhood associations,
- educate new leadership, and
- provide a model for future symposiums and establish peer coaching.

The deliverables were to make available the following:

- leadership contacts using both e-mail and postal mail,
- support functioning websites for neighborhoods and other relevant groups, and
- set a follow-up symposium.

4. Urban Neighborhood Symposium

Invitations were emailed to all neighborhood leaders using the NSN contact list. A flyer was disseminated through this list, was posted to the NSN website, and leaders were encouraged to share with appropriate individuals. The symposium was held at the International School of Tucson on Saturday, January 26, 2013 from 9 A.M. – 1 P.M.

Registration and Attendance

Preregistration was available online using Google forms or email. Individuals could register on site the day of the event. There were 62 of the 85 pre-registered individuals who checked in; an additional 14 people registered on site for a total of **76 attendees**, representing just over 40 neighborhoods.

Workshops and Sessions

The descriptions of the workshops and sessions, along with the presenter names are presented below.

An **opening session** was for everyone and covered two topics listed below.

1. **NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT NETWORK (NSN)**: Learn about the NSN - its activities and maintenance, its original intentions, where it is today and what potential there is for it to serve our needs for the future. Presenter: Donald Ijams, NSN Coordinator

2. **NAVIGATING THE CITY WEBSITE**: Review of the City of Tucson's neighborhood support efforts, website offerings, and the latest on budget availability for neighborhood mailings. Presenter: Anna Sanchez, City Housing and Community Development

Participants had **two opportunities** to select from the following break out **workshops**.

- **BROADWAY COALITION** -Hear how this volunteer group is working with others to have a say in how Broadway will look. They are creating an ongoing force for neighborhoods and businesses. What happens on Broadway will affect transportation and land use planning across the city for generations. Presenters: Margot Garcia, former Tucson City Council Member and Professor of Urban Planning; Colby Henley, President of Rincon Heights NA; Mark S. Homan, retired Professor of Community Organizing and Development; Jessica Shuman, business owner.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD INFILL COALITION (NIC)** –NIC representatives network with neighborhoods on civic/community-building issues, including such things as crime alerts and household hazardous waste collection projects. With this grassroots effort, we have combined our energy and expertise to give voice to a neighborhood perspective, which has been lacking in Tucson's decision-making process. Community Advocates: Colette Altaffer
- **NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE NEWS** for work with developers, mini-dorms, and school closures - Two neighborhoods share their experiences. You read the news, now hear it from the people who worked with it! Their experiences are coming to a neighborhood near you...or yours! Presenters: Jefferson Park – Joan Hall, Steve Prendergast, Bob Schlanger; WUNA –Richard Mayers
- **GOOD NEIGHBOR VENTURES** –Our mission is to act as a "catalyst" to increase social and economic development in neighborhoods by building a collaborative network. Through our Neighborhood Community Action Group program we offer neighborhood groups 6-year service grants. These partnering neighborhoods strategize to 1)decrease and prevent crime; 2) increase healthy lifestyles; 3) improve education; 4) increase job skills and employment. Join us to learn about building a collaborative network to meet neighborhood d needs Presenter: Miline Simms
- **WARD 3 NEIGHBORS ALLIANCE** Ever thought of an alliance or coalition as a platform for action and to coalesce resources? The Ward 3 Neighbors Alliance has existed for more than 10 years. Learn a bit of its history, recent expansion of the

breadth of its activities and purpose, and what the future holds for this alliance. An interactive breakout session for learning and networking. Presenters: Armando Vargas Jr, Carlos Nagel, John Kovacik

- **DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS AND RESIDENTS COUNCIL** - Downtown Neighborhoods and Residents Council (DNARC). The Council is a standing committee of the Downtown Tucson Partnership and meets the first Monday of every month at 5:30 PM in the ParkWise conference room, 110 E. Pennington Street. DNARC is a conduit for downtown area neighborhoods and residents to stay informed about the current and future plans for downtown. The council also provides a forum to ensure that neighborhoods are heard regarding the issues that accompany downtown development. This workshop will provide an update on DNARC's effort to work with downtown neighborhoods to envision their fit into the new transit oriented development that is planned or already occurring along the Modern Streetcar corridor. Presenters: Gene Einfrank, Laura Tabili
- **Core BARRIO and NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION (CoreBaNC)**—Learn about this grass roots coalition which advocates for the neighborhoods located in Tucson's "Core". Presenters: Richard Mayer, Mark Crum, John Burr, Community Advocates

The symposium concluded with a **Working Lunch** where participants identified top areas for future skill building and completed an evaluation of the day.

In addition, Access TV attended the symposium and will produce a 30 sec PSA, air spot on Local Matters, create a Channel presence logo page, offer an eNewsletter feature, and create a short overview video of the participating neighborhood for the symposium. Membership at the \$250/year was purchased through the PRO grant.

5. Results from Evaluation & Needs Assessment

Forty percent of the participants turned in an evaluation at the symposium.

- All participants rated the **registration process** as positive ("easy", "good", "excellent").
- The **range of topics** were rated as good to excellent, several people noted they were appropriate for a first symposium and that more in depth workshops might be available later. One response noted the topics did not reflect the seriousness of the issues facing neighborhoods.
- The **site** was rated from good to excellent.
- **General comments** fell into these categories: Thanks (9); interaction with others valuable (4). One person noted the presentations felt rushed while another person noted the introduction was too long. In addition participants noted that:
 - hoped to see a super coalition emerge.
 - Presence of city staff of concern if they were 'on the clock' to report back to the city.
 - Wanted a directory at the event.
- Topics suggested for a future symposium are listed below.
 - leadership training, Overlays, influencing
 - citywide tree planting, Neighborhood beautification

- practical tips, less esoteric info
- Request for current topics in advance, like today, that have an open session for “breaking issues” Brainstorming
- use our skill-building sheet as a guide. Invite speakers to tell their stories of neighborhood successes
- sign code enforcement by city. Transportation, bus, bike
- how to better push and pull the levers of power
- communication
- Sign and billboard enforcement
- how to engage more neighbors and a changing world of volunteerism
- Pima County involvement
- different means of communication, digital, electronic, telecommunication. Leadership styles

Neighborhood Needs Assessment

The top ten needs, listed below by rank, were identified during the working lunch. The format for the “needs” questionnaire was taken from previous surveys done by Neighborhood Support Network, and the Neighborhood Infill Coalition/ Drachman Institute project. The results were made public on the NSN website.

Rank / Votes	WORKSHOP	COMMENTS
1 / 30	GETTING NEIGHBORS ENGAGED <i>From cafecitos to world cafes, here’s how to give Everyone a voice</i>	Esp apt. complexes, families w/ children
2 / 26	LANDLORD ACCOUNTABILITY <i>Roundtable w/ renters, TPD, Code Enforcement, Crime Free Multi-Housing</i>	Tracy Williams Becky Noel
3 / 25	PRESERVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD <i>Code Enforcement: Resources & Guides to Help You Work the System</i>	Tracy Williams “let people be unless there’s a real problem
4 / 23	TRANSPORTATION PLANNING <i>Who Is in Charge? Great Streets / Livable Streets How to Get Your Streets Fixed (potholes) Traffic Calming</i>	Added to wallboards by Participants
5 / 22	ATTRACTING THE RIGHT LEADERS <i>Figuring Out Who You Need and How to Get Them</i>	
6 / 19	CREATING A SHARED VISION FOR YOUR NBH <i>Step-by-step to a specific community improvement plan</i>	Reps from NBHs w/ success in this, e.g. Flowing Wells
7 / 18	DEVELOPMENT & THE CITY <i>What’s the process COT uses when considering new housing, infill, mini-dorms, big box stores . . . ?</i>	Adam Smith Jim Mazzocco

8 / 17 DIGITAL ORGANIZING

Getting the word out through newsletters, Websites, blogs and social media

9 / 16 CIVICS 101: HOW CITY GOVT WORKS

Andy Squire, council aides

What are the roles of the "Elected" and the "Professionals, and how do you get access to any of them?"

9 / 16 REALLY KNOW YOUR NBH: Eval. Existing Conditions

Anna Sanchez, HCD
Drachman Institute

In a computer lab and on the streets, learn to identify assets and challenges the way the professionals do

6. Outcomes & Recommended Next Steps

During the planning process it became clear that efforts have been ongoing but sporadic to create a neighbor networking system. Various coalitions knew about one another but had not worked together. Some coalitions/alliances were well defined, while others were still in the process of establishing their mission and activities. Some groups had good knowledge of other entities others were operating in isolation

The symposium achieved the PRO Neighborhood grant obligations by:

- Providing a model, through the successful Urban Neighborhood Symposium for future annual symposiums. The UNS also provided education for current leaders and identified needs for future symposiums.
- Identifying the NSN as an existing system of communication that can be used by all neighborhood leaders.
- Proposing to support the NSN, through the expansion of its Advisory Committee, to provide the overarching communication and networking needs for Neighborhood leaders and to hold annual symposia.

On April 2, 2013 the UNS Planning Committee met for the last time and agreed to the following three recommendations.

Recommendation 1. Improve communication.

ACTION: *Don Ijams, with the NSN* will take the lead to 1) hold an open meeting to develop passive and active content on NSN so that next steps are results oriented, 2) hold a meeting to enhance the Core Group (currently 8 people) to serve as advisory and 3) to plan events for neighborhood leaders – that may arise from grassroots needs (related to # 2 below).

Jim Chaffee volunteered to be involved.

The **Neighborhood Support Network** has been in existence for eight years. This website has served as a clearinghouse for information on neighborhoods and already has an established representative group to address issues common to all neighborhoods. Its goals are in line with the goals of the grant project. The NSN has already created some of the infrastructure to accomplish the goals. It is in need of support, funding and organization and re-invigoration to sustain the efforts.

Discussion on:

- Desire for a monthly calendar across neighborhoods, e.g. Planning Commission meetings. Perhaps events across all neighborhoods could be designed into NSN.
 - Managing a calendar is labor intensive – will it be an email (active) or passive (web site calendar).
- Desire for Meetings/Professional Development: Perhaps educate folks on things like Twitter, etc. to communicate. Perhaps a workshop.
- Neighborhood Association meeting agendas to show topics of interest across neighborhoods.
- Develop a team to organize passive and active content on the NSN Website.
- Ideas for neighborhood radio. Chet & Lisa & Chet to get with Don to promote the idea about potential to apply for a low frequency radio station(s) for a neighborhood radio. Up to six available but have to apply by mid October; \$2-3K to apply for an application and then up to 18 months.
- Need for financial and human resources to seek out information from neighborhoods for the website and possibly funding.
 - Internship through UA (Eller or Journalism) to help provide resources?
 - Contacts at School of Planning at the UA, Department of Urban Planning?

Recommendation 2: Improve support at grassroots Neighborhood Association Level.

Decided two part way to move forward:

1. Part of the event focus by NSN.
2. **Judith Anderson** will identify workshops from needs assessment to organize.

Recommendation 3: Individuals to represent neighborhoods to city.

Action: Did not come to a consensus on a single group. Decided to encourage entities that presented at the Symposium, like CoreBank, Ward III, Broadway Coalition, NIC to serve as a voice for urban neighborhood issues.

For all advocacy efforts we discussed the importance of being respectful to city staff; focused with requests; seen as a good partner to develop relationships with city. Also mentioned a need to engage University of Arizona in this work as partners.

Marc Fink, JD Garcia, Margo Garcia willing to serve as resources to develop community voice. They have experience with the city, with urban neighborhood issues, and facilitation.