

Work Group Name: Office of Neighborhood Services
Department Name: ONS/Code Enforcement-Litter Control
Division Name: Economic Development Division

Mission Statement: “The Office of Neighborhood Services fosters a sense of community and stimulates the economy by coordinating city services and engaging citizens in a dialogue with the City of Spokane.”

Customer: Citizens involved in the City’s civil community and civic policy formation.

Product/Service provided: Information delivery systems. Liaison that ensures effective and timely flow of critical information between City and law-abiding citizens engaged in civil community and civic policy formation.

SWOT:

Strengths: Strategic Plan nearing completion; strong and effective communication methodologies; quick and responsive research capabilities; constructive and viable working relationships with all 27 neighborhood councils; well-rounded and managed operation; initial contacts/concerns can evolve into a range of innovations and solutions to problems (flexibility is a hallmark); flourishing Neighborhood Councils, Community Assembly, and related committees.

Weaknesses: Overdependence on a few key staff; lack of staff/hours available to attend key constituent meetings; lack of sufficient resources to reach key customers/citizens in a manner commensurate with growth projection for the City of Spokane; being spread too thinly can result in unproductive activity with limited benefits; fluid nature of neighborhood leadership and contacts; lack of awareness amongst prospective customers/citizens; staff turnover and customer service concerns across City divisions can present challenges to providing accurate and timely information to customers/citizens.

Opportunities: Neighborhoods and Community Assembly poised for rapid growth and leadership maturation; technology has accelerated opportunities for regional and national networking on neighborhood innovations and quality of life issues, NUSA 2009 – Economic Development opportunities and acceleration of a number of improvement projects; diversification of neighborhood councils leading to increased information flow and increased efficiencies in feedback mechanisms to the civic leadership (e.g. CA voting model, neighborhood council chairs).

Threats: Danger of misconception of core values of grass roots program; seasonal/Issue-based participation in neighborhood council program; possible misunderstandings across the various City departments of the value and goals of increased citizen participation in the civic process; budget constraints that could potentially limit possible growth areas.

Department Goals/Strategies:

GOAL 1: Expand our current services through neighborhood volunteerism and Neighborhood Council action without increasing cost to the citizen (leverage the volunteers for maximum return).

1. Actively pursue neighborhood programs that increase membership and civic involvement through education and promotion of issues that affect the citizenry and their ability to improve the overall quality of life:
 - a. Increase membership in council program by ten percent: By (cumulative percentage by year-end 2007).
 - b. Increase community volunteer retreat training (including City government orientation and overview) sessions from 2-4 to help educate civil society participants: By November, 2007
 - c. Reinstigate Neighborhood Council semi-annual networking event: By October, 2007
 - d. In conjunction with the neighborhood councils, increase utilization of the Neighborhood Council clean-up program in key target neighborhood locations, properties, or areas to optimize revitalization efforts (CPTED and Broken Widow theory). The 2006 program removed approximately 926 tons of refuse: By year-end 2007

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GOAL 2: Communicate and market economic, recreational, educational, and civic opportunities in conjunction with the CVB to all potential attendees of the 2009 NUSA conference to encourage extended stays and increase tax benefits to the City commerce for local business as a result of the conference (city-centric).

1. Develop NUSA 2009 logo and theme to create a cohesive message that ties in with all of the aforementioned opportunities:
 - a. Work with local businesses to provide discount for NUSA participants: By Dec 31, 2007
 - b. Monthly e-mail blasts: By rolling – beginning June, 2007
 - c. Coordinate with CVB to send marketing materials to every City in US with a population over 175,000: By Dec 15th 2007
 - d. Redesign and reorganize www.spokaneneighborhoods.org to increase communication efficiencies and include NUSA marketing materials: By completed June, 2007.
 - e. Develop e-mail distribution lists for participating cities and organizations in order to keep them updated on NUSA opportunities: By completed July 1, 2007 – post Baton Rouge.
 - f. Hire Project Employee Conference Coordinator: By May 1st 2007 (done).

GOAL 3: Increase collaboration and cooperation between neighborhood council programs and Spokane businesses, schools, area universities and Spokane's faith-based community to broaden communication/civil society base.

1. Meet with local universities, schools and other community groups to encourage participation in neighborhoods. Show these organizations how participation can advance their agendas and add to quality of life.
 - a. Send out individualized letters and place follow up phone calls to these organizations outlining their stake in local neighborhoods: By November 30, 2007
 - b. Encourage neighborhood leadership to approach their local businesses/universities and invite them to neighborhood meetings: By Dec 31, 2007
 - c. Business development component of neighborhood councils: By (ongoing – establish 3 new collaborations by November, 2007)

GOAL 4: ONS must work closely with other agencies, especially in areas of communication deficiencies (e.g. SRTC, Health District, etc.) Establish one meeting per month to ensure goal attainment. Meetings will begin by June 2007

1. Set meeting dates between service agencies and neighborhood councils with well defined agenda goals and overlapping scopes of interest.
 - a. Potential expansion of 501c(3) status for neighborhood councils will make them eligible for more funding and service opportunities.
 - b. Determine which local agencies provide services that address neighborhood problems/concerns. Help connect neighborhoods with those agencies and set up meeting times: By October 31, 2007