



City of Vancouver
Office of Neighborhoods

NEIGHBORHOOD
ACTION PLANNING
KIT



You don't have to move to live in a better neighborhood

Preface

The intent of the Neighborhood Action Planning Kit is to act as a guide for Vancouver neighborhoods as they prepare their Neighborhood Action Plan document. The recommended process is not a formula to be rigidly followed, but only a suggested approach that can be adapted to fit the needs and participation in your neighborhood association. We encourage neighborhoods to bring their own creativity to the process and to remain flexible.

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Chapter



Introduction to the Neighborhood Action Planning Process

This Plan will be developed by your Neighborhood with assistance from the City of Vancouver's Office of Neighborhoods and Other City Staff from City Service Areas.

This manual will serve as a guide during your neighborhood's journey through the neighborhood Action Planning process. At first glance, this process can seem like a daunting task, but it is a significant opportunity to voice your collective vision and to build a plan of action for your neighborhood. No one knows better than you the assets and opportunities within your neighborhood. This guide is provided to answer questions about the process, provide examples of other neighborhood Action Plans, and give general information on neighborhood planning.

We have developed a list of "Commonly Asked Questions" about the process and how it can work for your neighborhood.

Commonly Asked Questions about the Neighborhood Action Plan (NAP)

What is the purpose of the Neighborhood Action Plan?

The purpose of creating your neighborhood's Action Plan is to develop a long-range plan. Your Action Plan will be used by City Departments, Commissions and City Council to guide future decisions involving development proposals, budget approvals and plan amendments affecting your neighborhood.

Why should our neighborhood spend time creating an Action Plan?

The plan gives the City and its departments a collective document outlining your neighborhood's values and priorities. An Action Plan enables a neighborhood to create an internal vision and define the steps to achieve goals.

Is the Neighborhood Action Plan limited to issues about planning, zoning, and traffic?

No, the Neighborhood Action Plan can deal with any issue or opportunity within the borders of your neighborhood. Possible areas you might consider are issues such as traffic flow and safety and physical improvements, such as adequate lighting and sidewalks. Other issues might be housing, zoning, community appearance, crime and safety issues (such as accessibility for the elderly and disabled), open space and sensitive land opportunities and community building efforts.

Does having a Neighborhood Action Plan guarantee funding?

Funding is not guaranteed. City Council does appropriate grant dollars annually for implementing action steps. City Council and city departments use the Action Plans as an advisory guide to allocate or budget funds for the neighborhoods by integrating your neighborhood's needs into the City's budget process, Six-Year Street Improvement Program, Neighborhood Traffic Control Program, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. In addition, your neighborhood may be eligible for many private, federal and state funding programs.

Is the Neighborhood Traffic Plan the same or included within the Neighborhood Action planning Process?

Previously, the Neighborhood Traffic Planner prepared a separate document at the neighborhood's request. However, Traffic safety issues and mobility management issues can be identified early within the Neighborhood Action Planning process by working with the Neighborhood Traffic Planner to identify feasible action steps to meet the traffic and mobility issues of the neighborhood.

Overview of NAP Process

The process is loosely defined, allowing flexibility to meet the needs of each neighborhood. However, each neighborhood Action Plan should include the following specific components.

You will accomplish several things during the process. Some of them your neighborhood may already have done.

Determine Neighborhood Readiness - Conduct a self-assessment of your neighborhood association to determine whether your organization is ready to commit to the neighborhood Action Planning process.

Agreement to Plan - Agree as a group to commit to creating a neighborhood Action Plan and working with your neighborhood coordinator to develop a representative neighborhood document.

Form your Neighborhood Action Planning Committee - Organize a Neighborhood Action Planning Committee, which will assess the neighborhood and its issues to develop a plan of action to maintain and/or build the assets and opportunities within your neighborhood.

Tip:

The NAP process involves an intensive hands-on collaboration between the City and each neighborhood.

Community Building - Provide an opportunity for neighbor participation and encourage collective planning.

Understand your Neighborhood - Develop a community profile- a summary of what your neighborhood is all about - land uses, services offered, diversity found in the neighborhood -age, ethnic background.

Create a Vision Statement - a statement of what the residents of your neighborhood want to achieve over the coming years.

Identify Issues and Opportunities - Develop Objectives and Goals for your Neighborhood.

Create a Plan of Action - Identify specific action steps to accomplish your objectives.

Prioritize - You will prioritize your action steps and identify who will be responsible for accomplishing the action steps.

Seek Plan Approval – Representatives from various City Departments will review and comment on the neighborhood Action Plan prior to it's final approval by your neighborhood association. The Neighborhood Committee should seek overall neighborhood approval on the final Action Plan and make necessary changes before the plan is accepted by City Council.

Implement your Neighborhood Action Plan - Work together as a group and involve appropriate responsible parties to help realize the neighborhood's vision for the future.

Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

It is necessary to identify the roles for the neighborhood Action Planning process and clearly define the responsibilities of each role. The roles in the process will be the Neighborhood Action Planning Committee, the committee's Chair, as well as, the Chair of the neighborhood association, the Neighborhood Coordinator assigned to work with your neighborhood, and the residents of the neighborhood.

Suggestion:

Remember your task. Role of Committee Members

The NAP committee's purpose is to give advice and make recommendations. The neighborhood as a whole makes the final decision.

- ◆ Show respect for members: value everyone's contribution even if you disagree. Make it acceptable to differ with the group. Avoid interrupting and allow others to speak and give their opinions.
- ◆ Come prepared: read minutes, reports, and other documents in advance. Be ready to contribute your ideas and research. Be ready to share the results of the assignment from the last meeting.

Role of the Committee Chair

- ◆ Encourage Balanced Participation: make sure everyone has a chance to speak or discuss the topic at hand. Avoid letting a few people dominate the meetings.
- ◆ Deal with Conflict: Don't let hard feelings simmer. Listen for an opportunity to clarify information. If things get hot, call a time out.
- ◆ Value everyone's contribution even if you disagree. Make it acceptable to differ with the group. Guide discussions to allow equitable participation.

Role of the Office of Neighborhoods

Formats and creates the final planning document in a consistent format.

Provides necessary technical information needed to complete the plan.

Provides information and resources to the committee about the neighborhood action planning process.

Acts as a liaison between City departments and the neighborhood association during the planning and implementation process, including providing copies of the draft plan to representatives of various City departments for review and comment.

Assist the Neighborhood Committee with gaining City Council acceptance of their plan.

Role of Neighborhood Residents

- ◆ Agree to allow the NAP Committee to create a plan based upon resident input.
- ◆ Provide NAP Committee with your opinion. Tell them what you think the issues of relevance are in your neighborhood.
- ◆ Review and comment on the Neighborhood Action Plan document as it is made available.
- ◆ Let the NAP Committee know they are on the right track by attending meetings to provide input and vote on plan.

Chapter

2

Getting Organized and Creating Enthusiasm

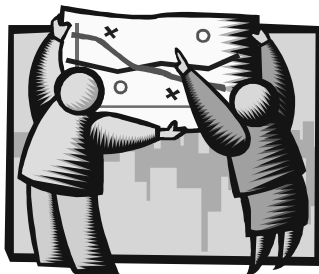
Organizing and encouraging participation for the neighborhood action process.

Your neighborhood may be extremely enthusiastic about the prospect of creating a neighborhood Action Plan, yet members must ask themselves key questions to determine if their association is organized enough to proceed.

I. Is your Neighborhood Ready?

It is critical that the neighborhood be ready to move forward when its turn is next. A self-assessment is necessary to decide whether enough participation and commitment exists within the neighborhood association to begin this process. If there is not adequate commitment and participation, the plan will not represent the entire neighborhood's needs, therefore, producing time delays in the process. This will also allow neighborhoods that are ready to move forward. An honest self-assessment will reduce time delays and allow the participants to create a plan that reflects everyone's needs.

The following checklist can be helpful in determining the readiness of your neighborhood association's ability to move forward. To create a complete plan that encompasses all the issues relevant to your neighborhood the following items should be discussed and organized prior to working with your neighborhood coordinator.



Suggestion:

Diverse Participation:

Seniors – Ask neighborhood senior housing project to appoint a representative.

Youth – Ask high school and/or middle school to suggest a representative

Renters – Ask neighborhood apartment managers to encourage residents to participate or represent the apartment project.

The following characteristics are typically evident in neighborhood associations who are ready to move forward through the NAP process.

- ◆ The Neighborhood Association has formed a Neighborhood Action Planning Committee representing a broad range of interests in the neighborhood.
- ◆ The NAP Committee is ready to make a commitment to at least six months of possibly bi-monthly meetings.
- ◆ The Neighborhood Association conducts regular meetings to encourage feedback from, not only residents, but also businesses within the neighborhood boundaries.
- ◆ The NAP Committee is ready to work with staff to create the NAP document.

2. Creating Enthusiasm

Participation is critical to the success of your neighborhood Action Plan. It is important to encourage interest in the process and ask stakeholders in your neighborhood to get involved. Advertise the impending process to educate residents as to the importance of their role in the plan.

Suggestion:

Methods of Advertising and Educating the Neighborhood

- ◆ Include updates of the NAP process in the neighborhood's newsletter as needed.

Borrow planning and participation resources from the Office of Neighborhoods.

- ◆ Ask the neighborhood coordinator to speak at a general neighborhood or board meeting about the process.
- ◆ Work with the Office of Neighborhoods to contact the media to advertise your NAP plan process.
- ◆ Ask local news media to do a neighborhood story.
- ◆ Post the announcement on your neighborhood web page.
- ◆ Ask your neighborhood school to include an article in their school newsletter, which is sent home with all students.

3. Forming a Neighborhood Action Planning Committee

Your Neighborhood Action Committee should consist of at least three members. The members must understand that the process often requires four to eight months. It is critical that an attempt be made to attract a **broad representation** of the neighborhood on the committee. Information for the plan should be presented through this committee. Staff will work directly with the committee, assist in developing a plan, and help to format the final plan.

The NAP committee is critical to the success of building the NAP document. While it is important to gauge the neighborhood's collective values and priorities, a committee must actually create the draft document and present the document to the neighborhood for approval. This group will work with the neighborhood coordinator to define a set of goals, objectives, and specific action steps based upon a set of guiding principles set by the neighborhood.

Suggestion:

The following suggestions may help in making the committee experience a fulfilling one:

The Selection Process

Approach potential committee members from a broad representation of community's civic, business, and neighborhood groups and individuals. The committee should reflect the diversity of the neighborhood. Encourage a balance of community members who represent a broad geographic distribution within your neighborhood.

Explain the Commitment

When issuing the invitation, be specific about the time commitment and workload expected. Tell people how often you plan to meet. You want people to see the process through to the end.

Establish Ground Rules

Develop and agree upon a set of procedures. This important initial first step not only builds trust but also sets the expectations for the group. It will set the tone for decision-making, record keeping, and overall participation.

Ground rules attempt to make each committee member's contribution valuable and, at the same time, move the group toward its goal. Ground rules must be simple, friendly, and brief.

Set Schedule

Establish a consistent meeting time and place in the beginning to avoid any confusion later. Meetings should be accessible to all members of the committee (i.e. location on bus route).

Ask People with Differing Perspectives:

Keep Good Records

Appoint a dependable record keeper to keep accurate records of attendance, decisions, and discussions.

◆ Principal and Teachers of local schools

Choose a Leader

Pick someone to chair the committee. Pick someone who can demonstrate appropriate leadership skills and can keep the committee on task.

◆ Residents (tenants and property owners)

Agree on How to Make Decisions

Decide whether to use a consensus or voting method. When it is time to make decisions, abide by ground rules and the decision making process.

◆ Property managers

◆ Business Owners

◆ Employees of neighborhood businesses

◆ Community Organizations

◆ Social Service Providers

◆ Religious Institutions

Chapter

3

Understanding Your Neighborhood

Gathering Information about your neighborhood and its residents.

1. Identifying Neighborhood Characteristics

Tip:

Promoting or investigating your neighborhood's rich historical background can create a strong sense of identity.

In order to plan effectively for your neighborhood it is necessary to know the characteristics of your neighborhood. Understanding the predominant age, ethnic background, economic background and other aspects of your neighborhood can help you to determine the assets and opportunities available in your community. A variety of information can be used such as a list of existing City plans affecting the area, area maps, history, demographic (census) information such as housing affordability, existing housing types and age built. Your Neighborhood Coordinator can provide you with the necessary information.

2. Identifying Issues

The objective of the NAP planning process is to produce a plan that reflects the neighborhood to the greatest extent possible as well as comply with the City's Comprehensive Plan. If the plan reflects the values and priorities of the entire neighborhood, it will aid efforts toward support and implementation. This planning opportunity establishes partnerships and links between citizens and officials to allow give and take, shared planning, and opportunities to make recommendations and present alternatives to city council. Thus, it is important that this planning process include effective citizen participation.

All neighborhood Action Plans must include public participation and approval. There are several ways to encourage public participation and involvement. A concerted attempt at informing as well as encouraging feedback from all residents is critical to making your plan a success.

When identifying issues, it is critical to focus on the priorities and needs of your neighborhood. As you analyze each issue, discuss the possibilities for action: no action, immediate action, or action as part of regular business.

Suggestion:

Process for defining issues

1. Lead the group in a discussion of the issues using the vision statement as a basis for discussion.
2. Start by having each person identify an asset and opportunity in your neighborhood.
3. Continue round robin discussion until all issues are listed.
4. Go through each issue, rephrase it as a question, and list the consequences of not addressing the issue.
5. Select issues on which most people agree.
6. Reach agreement on the major issues that your neighborhood needs to address in its plan.

Issues to Think About

In order to get started here are a few priority areas with relevant questions to ask yourselves as you start to identify areas of priority and issues in your neighborhood. This is not an exhaustive list of questions but just a few to start the brainstorming. Note that some issues may belong in more than one category.

Traffic Management Issues

Is traffic management a problem in your neighborhood?

Public Facilities and Service

Do you feel there are enough sidewalks and crosswalks?

Do you feel disabled access is adequate?

Do you feel maintenance of public streets is adequate?

Is there adequate lighting in your neighborhood?

Land Use

Do you like the balance of zoning legislation and current land uses in your neighborhood? (i.e.: residential, multifamily, commercial, and industrial).

Housing

Do you like the range of housing opportunities in your neighborhood? (affordable rents, senior housing, etc.)

Sensitive Lands or Environmental Protection

Do you have wetlands or other sensitive lands within your neighborhood boundaries?

Do you want to see environmental standards increased in your neighborhood?

Community Building

Have you assessed the opportunities and assets in your neighborhood?

Have you encouraged a partnership with your neighborhood school to utilize the school as a community center?

Have you utilized youth in your neighborhood to create community service learning projects?

Community Appearance

Are there areas in your neighborhood which need improvements to their appearance? If so, where?

Would you like to see some home and business design and landscaping standards in your neighborhood?

Historical Preservation

Does your neighborhood want to pursue historical preservation?

Would you like to see design standards that fit the historic character of the neighborhood?

Preserving and Enhancing Cultural Diversity

Does your neighborhood encourage and promote diversity?

Does the neighborhood association consistently invite renters to the meetings?

Does your neighborhood promote a distinct cultural identity?

Do you want to identify or promote the history of your neighborhood?

Public Safety

Are there positive and/or negative areas in your neighborhood that have pedestrian, bicycle and automobile safety issues?

Is there an increase in crime in your neighborhood?

Has your neighborhood participated in the Crime Watch Program?

Is there drug traffic in your neighborhood?

Open Space and Recreation

Does your neighborhood have adequate access and recreational opportunities within walking distance?

Do you use the neighborhood parks? Why or why not?

Economic Development

Are the businesses in your neighborhood involved in the neighborhood?

Noise and Other Nuisances

Have you assessed neighborhood noise problems due to traffic, air traffic, and animals?

Chapter

4

Creating Your Neighborhood Action Plan

Drafting the elements of your Neighborhood Action Plan.

All neighborhood Action Plans need to include specific elements prior to City approval such as a profile, vision statement, objectives, action steps, priority, and responsible parties. In an effort to maintain a consistent format and ensure all elements are included, your neighborhood coordinator will format the final document for your approval. During the process of developing your plan a template is provided to help define the format.

I. Creating a Neighborhood Profile

The purpose of the neighborhood profile is to establish a factual snap shot of your neighborhood as it exists today. The community profile should include, but not be limited to, information on what the Comprehensive Plan expects for the area.

Your neighborhood coordinator will have appropriate demographic statistics; GIS Maps such as neighborhood boundary and Comprehensive/Zoning map. Your profile may include information that the committee decides paints a picture of the neighborhood including history and issues.

Sample Neighborhood Profile:

The Shumway neighborhood is located approximately 10 blocks north of the downtown central business district. The neighborhood, which consists of approximately 71 square blocks, is bounded on the south of west Fourth Plain Boulevard, on the west by Main Street, on the east by Interstate 5 and on the north by 39th street. 33rd and 29th streets are additional main arterials, which exist within the neighborhood boundaries.

Residents in Shumway have relatively excellent access to local shops and services within the downtown central business district and the Hazel Dell area. On-ramps to Interstate 5 are located at the north and south ends of the neighborhood off of 39th street and Fourth Plain, providing easy commuting to other parts of Clark County and Portland, Oregon. Many residents are able to walk, bicycle, or use public transit in traveling to business, shopping, or entertainment destinations. The neighborhood is characterized by vintage homes and mature

trees with a peaceful, quiet atmosphere. The homes throughout the neighborhood represent a diverse architectural style lending to an overall traditional feeling. The tree-lined streets enhance the urban neighborhood characteristic. On-street parking is allowed and most housing includes off street parking as well. The housing stock includes a number of houses, which date back to the 1920 era as well as some contemporary infill homes. Although a fair amount of single family housing exists, a healthy amount of fairly new multi-family housing, primarily duplexes, is included. Multi-family housing appears to be mixed within the single family. Approximately, 40.75 % of the housing units are owner-occupied (city-wide average is 46%).

The predominant zoning in the neighborhood is R1-5 (low density Single Family Residential, 5,000 square foot lots), but smaller areas of higher density residential zoning (R-18 and R-22) exist. A small pocket of area is zoned Community Commercial. This area is predominately located in the northwestern corner of the neighborhood boundary, which lies along Main Street. Shumway is entirely developed, with the exception of a few vacant lots.

The Shumway neighborhood is home to the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, the YWCA, four churches, two large retirement and assisted living facilities, a large grocery store, video store, fire station and medical office building.

2. Create a Neighborhood Vision Statement

Prior to creating a plan of action, it is helpful to identify the opportunities and positive characteristics in your neighborhood. A vision statement provides framework for direction and creates a picture of what you would like to see your neighborhood become in the future.

Suggestion:

Five Guiding Principles of Visioning

1. **A vision should be inclusive.** It must seek out and involve all members of a community, including those members who feel isolated and disenfranchised. Inclusiveness creates ownership of goals and the vision. Ownership, in turn, translates into support for the implementation of projects and initiatives, continuity over time, consistency in the decision making process, and a strong sense of community identity.
2. **A vision should have a flagship idea.** A flagship idea bridges all key issues in your neighborhood. A succinct statement about your neighborhood's direction will establish a focal point for cooperation and participation.
3. **A vision should be comprehensive:** A vision must deal with all areas of concern to residents-economic development, job creation, the environment, recreation, education, social life, etc. An open and comprehensive vision will tap the knowledge and good will of residents, provide a complete picture of the needs and aspirations of a neighborhood, link issues back to the community as a whole.

4. **A vision should be community-driven:** It must be implemented and managed by citizens who reflect the economic, social and diverse makeup of the community. The leadership of the vision must include established private and public sector leaders, residents, and professionals.
5. **A vision should address implementation:** A vision must lead seamlessly into an implementation phase. The participation and involvement of community leadership must be harnessed to move beyond defining a generic plan to implementing a concrete strategy. A process that ensures accountability and sustainability must drive implementation.ⁱⁱ

A sample vision statement

The Bagley Downs Neighborhood Association envisions a bustling, innovative community, which is vital and well blended. We embrace and nurture the diversity of our multi-cultural residents. The community-generated murals and artwork enrich and enliven our neighborhood.

Through good communication, cooperation and participation, we will create a neighborhood that is safe, friendly and clean. Our parks and community centers are respected, appreciated and well employed: fulfilling the activity, recreation and education needs of all peoples. Our protected green spaces provide natural beauty, recreation and relaxation. Sensitive wild areas cultivate rich habitats for native plant and animal species.

All traffic (automobile, pedestrian, bicycle and buses) moves smoothly and safely throughout our neighborhood. In the spirit of a thriving community, we join other neighborhood associations to make Vancouver, USA a first class city.

Suggested Activities for Visioning:

The following pages contain successful activities other neighborhoods have used in their NAP process to help to define their neighborhood's vision statement.

Vision Statement Exercise #1

Purpose: To identify issues or opportunities in your neighborhood

Imagine Your Neighborhood

Have all the participants sit at tables with large pieces of paper and colored markers. Ask them to recall the image they have of their neighborhood. Invite them to imagine that they are taking a walk through the area as it now exists. What is it about the neighborhood that they notice? What do they find important? Is the image positive here, less so in another place? Tell them to sketch the image or images on the large sheets of paper, telling a story with pictures and symbols, keeping words to a minimum. Their paper can look like a

storyboard or comic book with a series of pictures showing different snapshots of various places. Or it could be a single image like a bird's eye view or plan view, showing the whole neighborhood or just a portion of it. Allow perhaps twenty minutes for drawing, more if they want. Then one by one have them tape the pictures to the wall and describe how they feel about them.

Variation: If you do not want to spend a lot of time creating the maps and want to give participants more time to think about what they imagine of their neighborhood. Assign this as homework for the next meeting. Ask each person to describe his/her contribution. In some instances, individuals do not feel comfortable displaying their artwork. This also allows different kinds of medium to be used.

The point of this exercise is to give each committee member a chance to think about his or her image of the neighborhood and to share that image with the group with whom they will be working intensely for the next six months. It is best to do this at the beginning of the planning process to help the committee come together as a working unit. They may find that they all have a similar image of the area. They may see that there is great disparity in their views. That is important information. It will help later when discussions arise later about identifying issues and opportunities. Knowing where each other is coming from will help resolve conflicts, speed the decision-making process and foster tolerance of other views.

Vision Statement Exercise #2

Purpose: To identify issues, opportunities and core values to the neighborhood

Brainstorming

Create slips of paper with priority areas to be identified in the neighborhood action plan such as:

Traffic Issues

Public Facilities and Service - Water, Sewer, those things provided by the City

Land Use - Zoning in you neighborhood is there a balance of uses

Housing - Does your neighborhood provide a range of housing opportunities for its residents?

Community Appearance

Public Safety - Pedestrian, Bicycle and Automobile safety

Open Space and Recreation

Economic Development

Noise and Other Nuisances

Other Issues or Opportunities

Divide larger group into small groups of 4 to 6 people. Have each group pull a slip of paper out of a bowl to identify which priority area they will be discussing. Provide large piece of paper and markers to each group. Ask groups to take 20 minutes to brainstorm issues, opportunities of that process is at hand. Or if vision statement is the agenda item, than have group brainstorm values for that particular area. Remember that no idea contributed is bad or eliminated. After time is up, have each group present items to the larger group and then add additional items as needed. At this point the group can then discuss the items presented to fuel the topic of neighborhood values and direction. Explanations of why a particular value is important can be discussed at this time.

By splitting the larger group up into smaller groups you will see more participation and less conflict. It establishes a guideline for discussion.

Vision Statement Exercise #3

Purpose: To easily manage discussion of neighborhood assets and opportunities.

Focus Group

Pass out 3X5 index cards and pencils at a meeting with at least 10 members present. Have each member list one positive asset they like about their neighborhood. A neighborhood asset they would like to maintain or preserve. Then have everyone list one opportunity for change or an aspect of the neighborhood they would like to improve. Give at least five minutes so that people can thoughtfully contribute their ideas. Gather the cards together. The leader of the activity needs to read off each card and list the different ones on a white board where everyone present can see their ideas on the “table”. After all ideas are listed then open the floor for discussion. Remember there are no bad ideas.

This exercise will give everyone present a chance to contribute their ideas without speaking up in front of the entire group. It will curb over talking and irrelevant discussion that can often run for extended time. This will identify key components to your vision statement by including assets to preserve and turning opportunities into goals for the future.

3. Creating Objectives

After the NAP committee has identified the issues to be addressed, the process of turning the issues into positive objectives can take place. Each objective should be specific and consistent with the opportunities and assets of the neighborhood and contain the following elements:

- ◆ Measurable
- ◆ Result-oriented
- ◆ Realistic

The Plan should include a narrative for each objective that describes the rationale for the objective. This provides insight to future neighborhood leaders, City staff members, commissions, council members, and the rest of the community as to why this objective was important to your neighborhood.

Suggestion:

1. Have each person tackle an issue or priority area and apply the following :
 - ◆ What is the issue or conflict?
 - ◆ Frame it as a question.
 - ◆ What are the consequences of not addressing this issue?
 - ◆ Brainstorm possible solutions or answers to the question.
2. After all issues are processed then present your ideas to the committee and open for round robin discussion
3. Weigh the consequences of not addressing the issue against addressing the issue.
4. Use the committee's agreed upon decision making process to address this objective.
5. Do not limit the group to one or two objectives as solutions for an issue. Develop several objectives to create many different solutions.

Sample Objectives

Public Safety

Curb crime in the neighborhood.

Make neighborhood streets safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile traffic.

Maintain a high level of public safety within the neighborhood.

Open Space and Recreation

Develop a community park in our neighborhood.

Community Appearance or Housing

Preserve and enhance the character of the neighborhood.

Ensure that new single-family residential construction is consistent with the architectural character of the neighborhood.

4. Creating Action Steps

Action steps will outline “how” you intend to accomplish the objectives your neighborhood desires to achieve. Action steps are specific, measurable, and realistic statements, which are results-oriented and related to a specific time frame. As you create your action steps list them where indicated on the NAP document worksheet.

Be innovative and creative when developing your Action Steps.

Action Steps need to be directly related to the objective and your neighborhood.

It may be helpful to review other neighborhood Action Plans to see the types of action steps they have used, but do not limit the plan to those found in other neighborhoods’ plans.

Brainstorm some action steps and then discuss the logistics of each one relevant to the abilities of your neighborhood association.

Do not limit yourself by trying to come up with a specific number of action steps. Some objectives will have several while others will have one or two.

Think partnerships and combining resources when creating action steps. There may be opportunities to create solutions with groups or organizations such as your local school by combining efforts.

Research programs and initiatives currently available to your neighborhood on all levels: local, city, state, etc. Tap into programs that are already existing and support or create partnerships with other public or private organizations.

Sample Action Steps

Encourage City Council to strengthen ordinances to reduce on street parking, and the storage of recreational vehicles and boats in the neighborhood.

Maintain the current amount of single-family zoning within the neighborhood.

Participate in the development review process for in-fill housing.

Establish visual symbols for neighborhood identity.

Install bike lanes along the following arterials

Increase police visibility in the neighborhood.

5. Prioritizing your Action Steps

The committee will assign a priority to each action step. Priority must be assigned by the Neighborhood Association for each action step without regard for the time frame within which the recommendation can realistically be accomplished (short-range, long-range) and without concern for whether funding sources can be practically identified. Accordingly, it is possible that a "High" priority may not be realized for many years. In contrast, some "Low" priorities could be potentially accomplished in a relatively short amount of time without significant capital expense.

Recommended action items identified as having a "high" priority are considered by the Neighborhood Association short range and the most important. "Medium" priority action steps are mid-range and somewhat less important. "Low" priority action steps are considered least important and to be long-range.

Suggestion:

The following guidelines should be considered:

1. Be realistic – Do not make all action steps a "high" priority. Consider your neighborhood association and City's ability to commit to the effort and workload required.
2. Assign a "high" priority to any action step that is safety related.

3. Understand that the Neighborhood Association and City may address action steps with “medium and low” priorities if the funding or resources become available.

6. Identifying Responsible Parties

It is important to identify the appropriate parties responsible for implementing specific action steps. A list of parties includes, but is not limited to, neighborhood associations, resource organizations, city departments, schools, and other community organizations. Be specific as to who are the responsible parties. Instead of saying “the City”, you would define what department in the city would have the power make changes. For instance: “Improving playground equipment at neighborhood park” would be an item under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Department.

The NAP Committee can go through the action steps and identify what parties they believe are responsible for implementing an action step. Office of Neighborhoods can review the list and finalize it by eliminating or adding parties accordingly.

In addition, in many cases there may be action steps that only the neighborhood can address. For example: “Educating residents about the importance of supporting neighborhood business through the monthly newsletter”.



TEMPLATE Neighborhood



NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

City of

VANCOUVER

WASHINGTON

Date

Template Neighborhood Action Planning Committee

City Council

Royce E. Pollard, Mayor

Jeanne Lipton
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Introduction

The purpose of a neighborhood action plan is to identify issues that are of concern to the residents of the neighborhood, and to devise strategies for addressing these concerns. In conjunction with broader policies and implementation measures contained within the City's comprehensive plan, the neighborhood action planning process is intended to protect and enhance the livability within specific neighborhoods, as well as to help fulfill the overall community vision and to create a more livable city. More specifically, neighborhood action plans are intended to:

- Educate both city government and neighborhood residents about each other's concerns and visions for the future.
- Promote collaboration between the city and the neighborhood in order to achieve mutual goals and a shared sense of responsibility.
- Create a "sense of place" within the community by identifying and developing the assets within each neighborhood.
- Initiate change, rather than simply reacting to it, by addressing specific issues and opportunities.
- Achieve sensible and coordinated project and program planning within each neighborhood and between all the city's neighborhoods.
- Strengthen neighborhoods.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

In general, a comprehensive plan is intended to provide broad policy direction, which is implemented through more specific development regulations and capital expenditure programs. Comprehensive plans do not, however, typically address the more immediate needs and concerns of individual neighborhoods. This is the purpose of a sub-area or neighborhood plan.

The City's comprehensive plan, entitled *Visions for the Vancouver Urban Area*, was adopted in December of 1994 and scheduled to be updated in 2002. The Plan specifically states that the City should: "*create neighborhood plans by assisting neighborhood organizations in identifying issues, policies and implementation measures specific to their areas.*"

The purpose of the _____ Neighborhood Action Plan is to integrate neighborhood needs into the City's budget process, Six-Year Street Improvement Program, Neighborhood Traffic Control Program, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and other planning and funding programs. The general policy statements included in the Action Plan may also be used by the City Council to guide future decisions involving development proposals and plan amendments affecting the neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Action Planning Process

The _____ Neighborhood Association with assistance from the City of Vancouver Neighborhood Services has developed this plan. The actual preparation of this plan is being coordinated by the Neighborhood Action Planning Committee, whose members were appointed by the Neighborhood Association to represent the interests of the neighborhood as a whole.

A survey was taken and a draft version of this Action Plan has made available to each household in _____ for review and comment by all residents of the neighborhood. After considering and reconciling comments from the residents, the plan has been endorsed by the Neighborhood Association according to their specific by-laws. After neighborhood approval the Plan will be forwarded to City Council for consideration and acceptance by resolution.

It is intended that city agencies will utilize the action plans as input in developing more specific work programs and helping to establish citywide funding priorities. It is recognized that many of the recommendations contained in the action plans are conceptual only and may need to be analyzed in greater detail, both individually and in relationship to other recommendations. It should also be emphasized that financial resources may not exist for implementing all of the recommendations identified in the plan.

Overview of the Plan

This Plan contains four components. The NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE contains a general description of the current conditions within the neighborhood. The VISION STATEMENT describes the neighborhood's sense of identity and vision for its future. The NEIGHBORHOOD OBJECTIVES identifies issues that are of concern to the residents of the neighborhood. The NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION STEPS includes specific potential strategies for accomplishing the identified objectives. Each Action Step is prioritized and identifies the responsible parties for implementing those strategies.

Funding and Financial Resources

Having the Neighborhood Action Plan does not guarantee the funding. The Vancouver City Council does appropriate grant funding annually to help implement action steps. In addition, your neighborhood may be eligible for many private, federal and state funding programs

Neighborhood Profile

Neighborhood Zoning/Comp Map

Vision Statement

Objectives and Action Steps

The following recommended action items identified as having a "high" priority are considered by the Neighborhood Association to be most important. "Medium" priority action steps are somewhat less important. "Low" priority action steps are considered least important.

Priority has been assigned by the Neighborhood Association for each action step without regard for the time frame within which the recommendation can realistically be accomplished (short-range, long-range) and without concern for whether funding sources can be practically identified. Accordingly, it is possible that a "High" priority item may not be realized for many years. In contrast, some "Low" priority items could be potentially accomplished in a relatively short amount of time without significant capital expense.

Listed below are abbreviations for the various responsible parties used throughout the document:

ABBREVIATIONS:

BC	Business Community
CITY	All Responsible City Departments
CS	Community Services
CMS	Community Mediation Services
CPU	Clark Public Utilities
CTRAN	CTRAN
DRS	Development Review Services
DVP	Developers
LRPD	Long Range Planning Department
OTH	Other organizations
OWN	Neighborhood Property Owners
PMG	Property Management Groups
PS	Postal Services
VCE	Vancouver Code Enforcement
V-CPRD	Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department
VFD	Vancouver Fire Department
VON	Vancouver Office of Neighborhoods
VPD	Vancouver Police Department
VPW	Vancouver Public Works
VSWS	Vancouver Solid Waster Services
VTD	Vancouver Transportation Department
VUF	Vancouver Urban Forestry
WST	Westfield Shopping Town Vancouver
TNA	Template Neighborhood Association

I. TEMPLATE TOPIC		
<u>Objective #1</u>		
<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
•		
<u>Objective #2</u>		
<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
•		

TEMPLATE TOPIC (CONTINUED)

Objective #3

Action Steps:

-

Priority

Responsible Parties

Objective #4

Action Steps:

-

Priority

Responsible Parties

II. TEMPLATE TOPIC

Objective #1

Action Steps:

-

Priority

Responsible Parties

Objective #2

Action Steps:

-

Priority

Responsible Parties

III. TEMPLATE TOPIC		
<u>Objective #1</u>		
<u>Action Steps:</u> •	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<u>Objective #2</u>		
<u>Action Steps:</u> •	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<u>Objective #3</u>		
<u>Action Steps:</u> •	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>

IV. TEMPLATE TOPIC		
<u>Objective #1</u>		
<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
•		
<u>Objective #2</u>		
<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
•		

V. TEMPLATE TOPIC		
<u>Objective #1</u>		
<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
•		

Chapter

5

NAP Approval Process

Gaining approval from the neighborhood and City of Vancouver.

I. Neighborhood Approval

Prior to neighborhood approval, Office of Neighborhoods will distribute the plan to an internal review team made up of staff from various city departments to review the plan, make comments and provide suggestions.

Suggestion:

Giving neighbors adequately time to review the final document before voting encourages agreement.

All neighborhood Action Plans must include public participation and approval. A concerted attempt at informing, involving, and encouraging feedback from as many residents as possible is required if the plan is to represent the neighborhood as a whole.

After the final document is drafted, your neighborhood coordinator will mail out a postcard to every resident in your neighborhood that outlines the objectives addressed in the plan and announces the meeting time to vote on your plan approval. The postcard will also let people know that they can obtain a copy of the draft plan to review by contacting the Office of Neighborhoods

Suggestion:

1. Announce in your newsletter the completion of the plan and provide a point of contact where a copy of the plan can be picked up.
2. Distribute plans to neighborhood businesses and organizations.

Once, the City staff accepts your plan, you and your neighborhood coordinator will present your neighborhood Action Plan with other recently completed plans to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council.

3. City Council Acceptance

After the neighborhood approves the plan, then together with the neighborhood, your neighborhood coordinator will present the Neighborhood Action Plan to City Council for their acceptance. There is a difference between “**acceptance**” and “**adoption**” by City Council. Adoption means that City Council has accepted the document as law. Acceptance demonstrates City Council’s willingness to take the NAP document under advisement when making decisions impacting your neighborhood.

4. Implementing and Updating your NAP Plan

The neighborhood association needs to take responsibility as a proactive partner in implementing the action steps presented in its NAP plan. The identification of the agency or department who may be responsible **does not necessarily guarantee** that they will automatically implement the action steps. However, the neighborhood can begin to implement its Action Plan as soon as the plan is complete and begin dialogues with appropriate agencies or departments.

Ways to implement your action plan:

Utilizing your City Liaison to work on implementing your action steps is an excellent way to cut through the “red tape”.

When attending meetings and hearings with City Staff refer to your neighborhood action plan as a collective voice on specific issues addressed in your plan.

Participating in workshops, programs, and opportunities provided through Office of Neighborhoods and other city services.

Seek funding and resources from sources outside of the city. Work with businesses to implement action steps beneficial to both the neighborhood and business owners.

Contact local youth groups and schools to give the youth in our community an opportunity to participate in their neighborhood.

Be creative when implementing your plan through creating unique or stable partnerships with other organizations, neighborhoods, and local agencies.

The purpose of the your Action Plan is to integrate your neighborhood’s needs into the City’s budget process, Six-Year Street Improvement Program, Neighborhood Traffic Control Program, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and other planning and funding programs. The general policy statements included in the Action Plan may also be used by the City Council to guide future decisions involving development proposals and plan amendments affecting the neighborhood.

It is intended that city agencies will utilize the action plans as input in developing more specific work programs and helping to establish city-wide funding priorities. It is recognized

that many of the recommendations contained in the action plans are conceptual only and may need to be analyzed in greater detail, both individually and in relationship to other recommendations. It should also be emphasized that funding sources may not exist for implementing all of the recommendations identified in the plan. All of the actions identified in the plan are to be initiated and implemented by residents of the neighborhood and the appropriate city departments.

Updating your Plan

As the neighborhood changes, action steps are accomplished, or priorities change, your neighborhood has the opportunity to update their plan. Plans can be updated once a year or every five years whichever is appropriate for your neighborhood. When assessing whether your neighborhood action plan needs updating, the following steps are suggested:

Decide whether your neighborhood has actively pursued implementing the existing plan;

Take the time to go through the existing plan and identify what has been accomplished;

Ask neighbors if there is sufficient interest in updating the plan;

Once you have established your neighborhood's plan needs updating then the following steps need to be followed in order for the plan to be accepted by staff.

1. Notify Office of Neighborhoods that you would like to pursue updating your plan;
2. Establish a Neighborhood Action Planning Committee containing neighbors from the original NAP committee as well as new members;
3. Set a meeting with Office of Neighborhoods and newly formed NAP committee to discuss the current program and process;
4. Eliminate action steps that have been completed;
5. Identify new objectives and action steps;
6. Assess priorities and make necessary changes;
7. Give Office of Neighborhoods changes for the draft copy;
8. A copy of the new draft will be made available to each household in your neighborhood via a postcard mailing and to each city service area for comment and recommendations;
9. Set a meeting outside of your regular general meeting to discuss and approve the amended and updated neighborhood action plan;
10. Work with Office of Neighborhoods to present your plan to the City Council for acceptance.

ⁱ Bedouw, Pam and Robin McClelland. [A Bottom Up Primer: A Guide to Citizen Participation](#). Washington State Growth Management Program, Department of Community Development: Chuck Clarke, Director: October 1991.

ⁱⁱ [In Pursuit of Livability: A Strategic Planning Cooperative – HUD-7726 U.S.](#) Department of Housing and Urban Development