

# 2015 Annual Report

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This year's CPP Annual Report template and form are designed to streamline the reporting required of neighborhood organizations, cover several NCR reporting needs in one report, and allow us to quickly assemble neighborhood organization feedback, highlights, updates and priorities.

Our goal is to provide neighborhood organizations, local public officials and others with timely reports about work being carried out by organizations, feedback on the services and communications provided by City departments, and a comprehensive look at the priorities neighborhoods share throughout the city.

Although we prefer that you use the survey form we sent out to complete your report, the MS Word template that follows is also an acceptable format.

## Report Basics:

- Please report on activities during the 2015 calendar year.
- Please keep your answers brief. For example, a paragraph or two should suffice for questions requiring a narrative response.
- For your **2015 HIGHLIGHTS**, please think about examples of work that you want to share with other neighborhood organizations.
- **Questions?** Please contact your Neighborhood Support Specialist at NCR if you have any questions.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND SUBMIT YOUR 2015 CPP ANNUAL REPORT  
BY FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2016.

Neighborhood Organization Name:

East Phillips Improvement Coalition

Organization Contact:

Carol Ann Pass

Address

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Organization email address:

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Organization ZIP:

55404

Organization Phone Number:

612 280 8418

Date of Board Approval:

Please provide the date of the meeting the Board reviewed and approved submission of this report to NCR. **Note:** Meeting minutes may be requested by NCR.

Click here to enter text.

## 1. Stakeholder Involvement

### A. Which of the following outreach activities did your organization use in 2015?

**MEETINGS** (please check all that apply)

- Held regular committee meetings or discussion groups that are open to all stakeholders.
- Held at least one general membership or community meeting (in addition to the annual meeting) to gather input from residents and other stakeholders for neighborhood specific initiative.
- Hosted at least one general membership or committee meeting in response to a City request for input (such as a development proposal, transit planning or public works project).
- Conducted one or more focus groups.

What more would you like to tell NCR or the community about your meetings? What are you doing that is new or particularly successful to involve residents and others?

EPIC has remained committed to its rather rigorous meeting schedule of a separate Board meeting and community meeting each month. This means 24 meetings a year for board members. We haven't varied the day, time and usually the place in years so people do not have to check a calendar to know when their neighbors are meeting if they have a special or possibly immediate need to bring forth for help or to offer information. These things can then be included in the agenda by vote of the attendees. These meetings are open to all and frequently have special speakers and guests to address important topics as well as general business.

Two things are, we believe, unique to EPIC. Our Board has advisory powers only over major projects and the expenditure of major funds. Anything above \$1000 dollars requires a board recommendation, a community review-for-approval vote and a month later a final vote up or down. This means the board must inform, educate and persuade the community in order to move ahead and cannot do so without a process very much like the 'plan modification' process. (Legal and financial oversight remain in board hands) While we have been warned about 'gridlock', this has avoided major problems for a long while and provided real stability and therefore progress. We try to move ahead more like a movement, a large group. We believe this process has led to our major successes for such a small neighborhood with no staff like fighting the Midtown Burner installation, or the Xcel overhead powerlines or raising the money for our community Center. Also, when there are objections to the board's actions, we can point to a long line of rigorous motions where the community has been able to decide things and has expressed consistent support for whatever the contested issue or project is. What this means is that all our community meetings "gather input from residents and other stakeholders for neighborhood specific initiatives" and help move projects ahead.

However, EPIC also holds specific meetings or focus groups to respond to City requests, actions, projects and proposals. The Roof Depot site is an example. We have had multiple large and small meetings throughout 2015 to determine the neighborhood 'temperature' and proposed response to this issue. The community chose to hire EPIC's developer of choice and had some special community meetings open to all to formulate an alternative plan in concert with long held hopes to repurpose this site. All of this was done through informing the neighborhood and following the community's directives and motions.

We also held a series of small meetings at Perkins to work on Bylaw revision, a series of small meetings in people's homes to gather and discuss the project to shut down the asphalt plant and foundry and to press the City to include us in decision-making regarding the Roof Depot site, and special meetings to group-write a draft for the CIF grant.

The East Phillips Park Programming Partnership also meets monthly to help determine quality programming for our park. This standing committee of EPIC has been one of our most successful. In 2015 it generated the financial and computer literacy classes, organized a computer give-away program and planned the SummerFest for the year with partnerships with Holy Rosary Church to provide the food, along with the park staff and many local entertainers.

**DOOR-TO-DOOR** (please check all that apply)

Door-knocked or dropped flyers door-to-door:

- At least once with goal of reaching a portion of neighborhood.
- At least once with goal of reaching most or all of neighborhood.
- For more than one issue/outreach effort.
- On a routine basis.

Door-knocking/flyering

- Was carried out primarily by paid staff.
- Was carried out primarily by volunteers.

Door-knocking/flyering

- Was carried out primarily to increase participation and membership.
- Was carried out primarily to gather input on specific city or neighborhood issue.
- Was carried out primarily to inform stakeholders of city or neighborhood issue.

Approximately how many households did your organization reach through door-knocking in 2015?

900

What more would you like to tell NCR or the community about your door-to-door outreach? What are you doing that is new or particularly successful to involve residents and others?

EPIC uses both flyers and broadcast emails for anything of serious importance. Social media assumes that residents both have access and can use facebook and the website and will seek out the information, etc., however, this is not something we can always count on in East Phillips. But flyers, door knocking and email puts information right there in front of folks without their needing to remember to look or even think about it. Our Annual meeting, SummerFest, a forum on pollution, major financial and policy votes get this double treatment of flyering and broadcast email. For our anti-pollution effort we created a petition to survey opinions, disseminated information about pollution, and encouraged participation in an ongoing effort to move the asphalt plant and foundry out of our neighborhood. Our reasons for choosing these as our favorite methods have been formed from experience that strongly suggests that East Phillips

folks, respond best if shared information or calls to join us at meetings, events, planning, etc. are brought right in front of our constituents.

In other words, we try not to require the person to go seeking for information and engagement, which too often doesn't happen. This means sending or carrying information right to them by direct broadcast email, flyering and/or door-knocking rather than depending on folks to go fetch things themselves as must be done in most cases with facebook or the website. Our information can usually be found there, but that may be part of the reason why our facebook page and website are less well developed than our flyering/door-knocking system and our email outreach process.

EPIC's E-News has a 500 person reach and our flyering is also frequent and effective. We have found that Facebook is often encumbered with so much frivolity like weddings, birthdays, romance and vacations that such posts tend to push important things way down the page where they get lost in minutia. We also use smaller email lists and texting for specific groups such as the gardening families in the community garden, the EPIC Board and the East Phillips Park Programming Partnership.

EPIC's door-knocking has involved generating petitions as in the case of building awareness, advocacy and empowerment of residents for trying to get the City to include East Phillips residents in decision-making processes (as described in the City Council's commitment to community engagement passed by the Council in 2007) regarding the City's choice to move the City Water Yard into East Phillips and the effort to move the Asphalt Plant and Smith Foundry, with their serious pollution, out of the neighborhood. These are serious issues for us, so raising awareness and helping to open a way for resident voices is the goal and is critical to protecting the neighborhood. This requires face to face work, which we did a lot of in 2015. In this we partnered with Tamales u Bicycletas, a Latino oriented organization in south Minneapolis, and many others.

**EVENTS** (please check all that apply)

- Staffed a booth or table at neighborhood event or other community event that included sign-up sheets, surveys or information about your organization.
- Organized one or more issue specific event (such as a safety forum, housing fair, Open Streets, Creative Citymaking, etc).
- Organized smaller events for specific outreach to target audiences (e.g., sidewalk tabling to reach renters, lemonade stands, tabling at Farmer's Market, etc.)

What more would you like to tell NCR or the community about your events? What are you doing that new or particularly successful to involve residents and others?

2015 was our second SummerFest. EPIC does this in partnership with the Park Staff at East Phillips Park, Holy Rosary Church along with many talented neighborhood people. EPIC also had a booth there where we showed off EPIC's accomplishments, signed up new members and passed out the EPIC history brochure and our housing program brochures, which are also in Spanish. Our info boards help this

educational process showing before and after places where our housing program has rebuilt the East Phillips area.

All our events and activities are designed to include all members of the community and SummerFest is probably our most successful in accomplishing this goal. It included a talent show with local youth from kindergardeners to late teens and some adult professionals bands willing to play for free. They demonstrated amazing home-grown talent. Friends and parents came and were added to our email list. There were basketball clinics, and ethnic crafts of all kinds. It was a complete success.

EPIC's financial and computer literacy classes really got some struggling people growing in competence and confidence, but in addition there was real bonding and empowering experiences and they functioned almost like little clubs where people got to know and assist one another. We hope to continue and expand these programs.

**OTHER** (please check all that apply)

- Conducted at least one community-wide survey (such as a random sample or all-household survey).
- Conducted another form of survey (e.g., intercept survey).
- Developed partnerships with cultural, religious, professional or business associations to expand outreach into under-represented populations.
- Distributed a quarterly or semi-annual newsletter to all households.
- Other activities (please describe):

**EPIC's Survey**

We attempted along with Tamales u Bicycletas an ambitious community-wide survey asking people how they wanted to be communicated with, informing them of the community votes thus far regarding the pollution issue citing the asphalt plant and foundry as well as the Roof Depot issue. This effort also included a petition for them to sign if they chose. The extensive character of the survey slowed things down as well as the desire of folks to learn more as we went, but this seemed to fill a real need and was an effective educating tool. We covered a lot of ground, going also to other venues in the area such as festivals and meetings, and made good connections, but perhaps only reached a third of the neighborhood, before the ground shifted and the City announced the owner had agreed to sell the Roof Depot to the City. We felt it was worth doing for the raised consciousness of many members of the community and the ground work it laid for the future. We also produced a large protest including many people from the neighborhood at City Hall demanding to be a part of the decision-making process. Many were people we had spoken to, which we felt was an indication of success.

**EPIC's Partnerships**

In mid-2015 EPIC worked with Little Earth of United Tribes to create a partnership for a CIF Grant. Obtaining the CIF Grant has allowed the creation of the Native Youth Arts Collective, bringing together a group of young Native Americans under the direction of Heidi Hafermann and Joe Beaulieu to study the arts of their own and other cultures as well as work on their own art projects. Twenty-nine students have been members of the group with a continuous core of about 6 and at least 10 at every meeting. They began in the latter part of 2015 and have reached a point where there will be an arts opening at MIA (Mpls. Institute of Art) on Thursday, June 9, 2016 beginning at 6 pm and up through July.

Joe and Heidi went back to the Walker to discuss mentorships, and found that Walker was in the midst of redoing their programming. Instead, the students volunteered to become volunteers at the Walker. Now Walker is offering to host teens for an intensive internship for the fall, for which Walker will absorb

cost of stipends, so that the CIF grant can be used to extend the program. All this was put in place in 2015 and without the engagement that occurred so far, this opportunity would not have been possible. EPIC intends to invite the Walker staff to a meeting in September, 2016. They have gotten good feedback from the youth who are enjoying getting out around the city with these opportunities. See youth works at this web address:

<https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?id=464273913767877&tsid=0.973716359352693&source=typeahead>

#### **EPIC's Collaborations-**

EPIC also began a collaborative project of fundraising with Little Earth and the Latinos and others on the on both the 2400 block of 18<sup>th</sup> Ave S. and the 2900 block of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to try to impact crime and the speeding cars it often brings. The Board and residents agreed to pull together enough funding to have Speed Bumps placed on these two blocks to protect the children and to deter the crime. EPIC agreed to pay half the full cost (\$7500 for each block) with EPIC Board Member Rita Ortega getting the petition of names and collecting the dollars for 2400 18<sup>th</sup> and Rob Czertig for 2900 16<sup>th</sup> Avenues. This all took a while. The decision was made in the fall of 2015 and the full amount of funds with petitions were just delivered this June 30<sup>th</sup>. As the saying goes, "Rome wasn't built in a day!" Major contributors in addition to EPIC were Little Earth, Holy Rosary Catholic Church, BabySpace Preschool, the owners of DurDur Bakery and various homeowners and landlords on the 2600 block of 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. We are hoping for installation of the Bumps soon and are now beginning to implement the second half of the project, cameras in the same problematic areas. This time we believe we have the dollars in hand.

The Clean Sweep event, held yearly, is a collaboration of the four Phillips Neighborhoods. We all share funding and organizational responsibilities for this huge event and area churches and even the mosque all also help.

#### **EPIC's 2015 Annual Narrative**

EPIC publishes a "Narrative of the year" once a year with colored pictures and a narrative of the year's doings. This is not the CPP Annual report, but a work done for the neighborhood residents and distributed at the Annual Meeting. It also includes the year's profit/loss and balance sheet. Unfortunately, it only comes in English (we hope to change that) but it is filled with pictures and champions EPIC's accomplishments. We intend to make use of it as a promotional.

#### **B. How did your organization reach out to under-represented groups in your neighborhood? (please check all that apply)**

- Worked on an issue of particular interest to an under-represented group within the neighborhood.
- Provided notices of annual and special meetings in multiple languages.
- Provided newsletter articles or web pages in multiple languages.
- Targeted outreach in apartment buildings or blocks to reach renters.
- Targeted tabling at other events or locations (such as farmers markets, cultural events, etc.).
- Held focus groups or open meeting formats for under-represented communities.
- Met with other agencies in the community that work closely with under-represented constituencies in the neighborhood.
- Included an Americans with Disabilities Act statement on meeting and event notices.
- Reviewed participation activities, and identified new leaders and volunteers for volunteer, committee and board participation.
- Held one-time/pop up events in areas of the neighborhood that don't often have neighborhood meetings
- Other activities (please describe)

### Reaching out to under-represented communities

Because Phillips demographics show a neighborhood with 80 percent of its population from under-represented groups, all that we do is tailored to under-represented people, sometimes as total programs for all and sometimes tailored specifically for one unique group. It would not be possible to do anything that draws people without being mindful of the extraordinary diversity and figuring out ways for the organization to respond to the many needs and opportunities this presents.

Activities and programs tailored to under-represented groups created by EPIC include the following: Financial and Computer Literacy classes in Spanish and English, translating EPIC's Housing Program brochures into Spanish as well as the instructions on finding and contracting with a contractor, working to have more Native Americans on the EPIC Board, partnering with Little Earth on the CIF grant and the speed bumps and cameras, helping the character of the SummerFest Event with its ethnic crafts, foods, and performances to insure all cultures were represented in performances and crafts (no small task), outreaching in the community garden meetings with interpreters, additional work with new Nepali refugees arranging a special meeting with interpreters for MnSure insurance sign-up, Valentine's Day Craft party for Nepali kids, assisting a variety of refugees with finding and applying for school, teaching carpentry and offering stipends to teens to help rebuild the community garden fence, identifying new leaders and working with them in several communities, Native American, Nepali, Latino, and Somali.

What more would you like to tell NCR or the community about your outreach to under-represented groups? What are you doing that is new or particularly successful to involve residents and others?

What we "would like to tell NCR" is taken from our response to the new CPP Guidelines.

#### Determining Funding Levels

"The allocation formula is admirable and appropriate given the effort to increase equity. One variable we wish were included, however, would be numbers of children and the percentage of children to adults. If the percentage of children is very high, and East Phillips is, this indicates how many families have an adult or adults who must spend most of their time working to support these children and cannot volunteer. It also indicates a much larger need for the neighborhood organization to provide meaningful supervised activities for children and youth who currently spend a great deal of time in unsupervised activity. If the neighborhood is not to degenerate into a place with a major amount of youth crime, it really must respond to this situation either by seeking out and helping to engage partners to assist in creating these activities or creating them by itself or both. East Phillips works admirably to do both, but far more needs to be done. This task is huge in all neighborhoods with large diverse populations

Providing these activities is much more expensive than imagined for two obvious reasons: the large numbers of children and the nearly complete unavailability of volunteers. Coupled with the greater language and cultural barriers when linguistically similar parents are all at work, often at two, sometimes even three jobs, and the subsequent exhaustion when they get a little time off, this leaves the neighborhood with a near insurmountable task. Some would say "it's not the neighborhood's job". But then whose job is it? This is one of the most important questions to be settled for the health of the City. That it has been left out of the equation for so long is, to a great extent, why the north side looks the way it does and why the south side to some degree follows suit. Children grow up with many hours in the streets unsupervised by any adult and "supervised" only by older children.

In East Phillips our board members spend a great deal of time hooking kids up, helping them find appropriate schooling, getting them into creative, positive activities, seeking spaces and places for them and trying to create such things ourselves, looking to our very few often weak and impoverished churches. Quite a few neighborhoods could productively use a full time person or more to respond to these needs, but for sure they could use greater funding targeted for them in neighborhoods where numbers and percentages of children are above a certain predetermined level, which would suggest little to no available supervised activity for a majority of children.

### Outreach to under-represented groups

EPIC has worked to create a better relationship with the Little Earth Community. In 2015 we had two Native American community organizers on the EPIC board. We now have three, who have been a major help in the whole relationship and mutual understanding in general. We also have partnered in the effort to get a CIF grant to fund the Native Youth Arts Collective, which is going strong. We are working together on the pollution issue and collaborating on crime stopping efforts with Little Earth, the Latinos on 16<sup>th</sup> Ave, and a Somali business on Lake Street.

The EPIC Community Garden has been a multicultural enterprise for years, but in 2015 became a major part of daily life for the latest group of new immigrants, the Nepalis from Bhutan. There are 7 Nepali families among the 32 families gardening in the big garden on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue among the Latino, Oromo, Native American and Euro-American families gardening there. Most everyone is growing foods from their native land or culture. The Native American preschool is using it to teach the Lakota language. With many of the families averaging from 4 to 7 people, we estimate the garden may serve almost 200 people.

This garden does not resemble the more high-tech gardens that dot some neighborhoods with their hoops and a less diverse clientele. It looks more like our residents' garden patches back home, perhaps in Africa or Bhutan and the food grown is often their culinary favorite from their home country. The garden has come to resemble a village gathering place especially for women and children where gossip, community news and stories are shared and isolation is left behind. It has also become a perfect setting for EPIC's outreach to these communities and a way to learn of their needs, hopes and dreams as well as a place to tell them about the community organization and transfer other important information as we build cross-cultural relationships of mutual trust and friendship.

EPIC's Financial and Computer Literacy classes and the Computer Give-Away were tailored to diverse attendees. Each was offered in both English and Spanish.

Our Annual Meeting notice is in Somali and Spanish as are Clean Sweep and festival flyers. Renters and home owners receive these. The Americans with Disabilities Act statement is included in our EPIC Alley newspaper announcement.

Board members tabled at our SummerFest with our brochures and boards, at the Midtown Festival, and at the City's Neighborhood Conference.

### C. How did you inform the community of discussions, decisions and the status of the organization?

#### BOARD MEETINGS (please check all that apply)

- Board meeting minutes and financial reports and summaries are provided on the organization's website and kept current.
- Meeting agendas and minutes are easily available and posted on the organization's website before and after each meeting.
- Meeting notices and agendas distributed to members prior to each meeting with ample notice.
- Time is allowed at board meetings for stakeholders to ask questions or raise issues.

How many new board members were elected/appointed to your board this year?

3, two Native Americans and one Latino

What more would you like to tell NCR or the community about your board meetings? What are you doing that is new or particularly successful to involve residents and others?

**Board Meetings and Participation, a methodology**

EPIC has depended on high interest projects and successes with those projects to generate interest, participation and leadership. This has in part been due to the fact that we have so many dramatic issues we have both chosen and/or been compelled to deal with... from the development of the Community Center to the battle against the Midtown EcoBurner to the high voltage power line struggle to working to heal the neighborhood's housing crises to taking on crime and poverty. All of these struggles have unified us and brought people out to the EPIC meetings.

Projects where we used this perspective in 2015 are: working on the removal of polluting industries from our neighborhood, trying to impact the Roof Depot site issue, working with Little Earth and the Latino/Somali in the southern part of East Phillips to get the speed bumps in and paid for, supporting the Native Youth Arts Collective and our Somali and Latino sports teams. .

Our first neighborhood specialist under POP came to us after her successful struggle against the metal shredder in St. Paul. The major lesson she imparted was that it is almost impossible to get people from utterly different cultures and racial groups to truly work together and learn to love it or at least see the necessity of this without a clear and much needed goal or project they can believe in and invest in. East Phillips has had both the misfortune and/or also good luck, depending on your perspective, to have been presented with many of these necessary projects and struggles and to have discovered the truth of our early NS's words. Engaging in these projects and struggles has provided many of us with the learning experiences she described, which in turn has helped us, for the most part, build great participation, neighborhood pride, board loyalty and animates our meetings. Arthur Himmelmann was also a mentor of many of us in this direction, with his involvement in helping us get the East Phillips Park Center built. He called on us to have our efforts be "goal driven and goal aligned" and seek unity around these goals. This intentional approach, while sometimes generating controversy, has worked far better than we could have imagined.

We have continued to take on major causes confronting us and found that this helps build capacity and unity as we try to tackle and solve problems and/or seize opportunities. Himmelmann emphasized that people acquire the ability to appreciate one another's skills, perspectives, growth and common humanity through working together and leadership can and will emerge from this experience.

We have been less intentional about directly focusing on creating leadership skills independent of a direct goal to work on. Rather we have worked on many big and small issues and on making a way for those who express concern or value the community's efforts to come alongside to help and, in so doing, discover how valuable they can be in joining with others to make changes in the lives of themselves, others and the community. Our sense is that there needs to be some of both. What's new is that we would like to explore this second focus more, but for sure not losing our main strength with the first approach, the seizing obvious goals and enlisting help from all.

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS (please check all that apply)**

- Meeting agendas and minutes are easily available and posted on the organization's website before and after each meeting.
- Affected residents and other stakeholders are contacted prior to an issue being discussed at a committee meeting.
- Meeting notices and agendas are distributed to members prior to each meeting with ample notice.
- Other (please specify):

**EPIC Board, Committee and Community Meetings**

Eight years of EPIC meeting minutes can be found on our website. They are posted within a few days of meeting's conclusion, often the next day. Our meetings resemble town hall meetings, because, though there is a published agenda, people are allowed to add things at the meeting if the community so

votes. Also people have felt comfortable coming and asking for help. One time someone whose home had just been robbed showed up. People set up a team to go to her home and help out.

We do not have a major committee structure. EPIC has two standing Committees. One is the Community Garden Steering Committee, created to manage the garden owned by EPIC. An EPIC Board Member has to be in attendance for there to be a quorum at these meetings. We just created a policy to rotate this obligation through the board members and it is working well. The garden has been financially self-sustaining, helped by a great grant from Seward Coop. EPIC holds their grants, carries their insurance and manages their accounts. The garden meetings are often attended by non -English speakers, primarily Nepali neighbors, for whom we have interpreters.

The other standing committee is the East Phillips Park Programming Partnership, which works with other agencies as well as park staff to assist us with programming at the Park. They helped with the recent festival and talent show. The Park also staff's a plot in the garden, where area teens learn to garden. This committee has worked hard with the Osiris Organization to be the first park to get high speed internet in our park building. These committee meetings are announced by email, phone and newspaper and occur on a regular basis.

What more would you like to tell NCR or the community about your regular meetings? What are you doing that is new or particularly successful to involve residents and others?

**Some of what was new in 2015**

It has been new in 2015 to have strong Native American representation on the EPIC board. It was and has been a challenging learning experience for all of us, breaking out of stereotypes and flares of mistrust. It takes hanging in there and allowing for mistakes...refusing to give up and realizing that we can't and don't have to be perfect as long as we keep trying. This process for us was not helped by the continuous pressure unfairly placed on the EPIC Board by NCR staff. We all very much wanted to succeed and become compatriots together and it appears to be happening. This was helped by writing a grant together for the Native Youth Arts Collective and working together on a number of issues.

It was new this year to have Nepali interpreters in the garden meetings and to have them on the steering committee. Also rotating EPIC board members on the Garden committee has helped to get the board to take more responsibility for this property. It is also new in 2015 to have the Native American DayCare tilling their own plot. The garden has been a great tool for bringing new residents into the neighborhood and creating familiarity with EPIC. It also has been one of our keys to reaching and responding to under-represented groups and working with them at where they are. New also was working to get refugees and some older residents on MNsure and helping with school enrollment.

New in 2015 was being the first Park Center to get high speed internet and beginning negotiations to get Microsoft Office Suite through EPIC's partnering work with Osiris organization. New also was the financial and computer literacy classes in Spanish and English and the Computer Give-away. These classes really empowered people with very little experience in the internet and how it can open doors to a wider world. The participants raved about the classes and in one case asked for additional classes, which EPIC provided. They stated clearly how valuable this was for them and that they wanted more.

**SPECIFIC ISSUES**

Affected and interested stakeholders are notified and involved in our organization's decision-making process.

What more would you like to tell NCR or the community about your outreach to under-represented groups? What are you doing that is new or particularly successful to involve residents and others?

See the previous responses

**ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION** (please check all that apply)

- An annual report is available to all residents on the organization's website.
- The organization's bylaws, grievance procedures, meeting schedules and contact information are easily available on the organization's website and through other means.

**OTHER**

- Our community events and meetings regularly advertised in community newspapers.
- We use social media (such as e-democracy or Facebook) to share information.
- We share city news and information on our organization's website or through email, social media or other means.

What more would you like to tell NCR or the community about participation in your organization? What are you doing that is new or particularly successful to involve residents and others?

**2. 2015 Highlights**

Please describe one or two major highlights:

- What was the issue or opportunity the neighborhood was facing?
- Who was impacted?
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
- What was the outcome?

**Highlight 1:**

One of the most satisfying of EPIC achievements in 2015 has been working in meaningful partnerships with the Native Americans of Little Earth. This has been helped in a major way by having two and now three Little Earth residents on the EPIC Board who have proved to be a real help on the Board offering new insights on our work. They have helped us with information to co-write the CIF grant, encouraged us to make it work when it proved difficult and helped with keeping us connected with how the program is going. They have also helped us identify new needs we have collaborated on such as speed bumps on 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. where Little Earth kids and others must cross the avenue for school and, then, cameras which will be focused on areas of criminal activity near Little Earth and also down on Lake St. EPIC is proud of our other collaborations, which along with the Native Americans, have included both the Latinos and Somali businessmen on Lake Street. In the process all these groups are working to build trust and a history of joining hands to better the whole community. This may be a first.

**Highlight 2:**

A second major highlight of 2015 was the beginning of the implementation of EPIC's almost lost East Phillips Infill Campaign (the first rendition of the EPIC acronym) the neighborhood's plan to continue filling our many vacant lots with affordable new single family homes. We had hoped to continue East Phillips' heritage of affordable home ownership, where a family could own their own space without being particularly wealthy, but this was struck a major blow when Mayor Rybak chose to take a large bite out of our NRP dollars. The housing program had so little money left that it tanked. When the CPP guidelines offered the possibility of creating an NPP to replenish EPIC's NRP housing program, the neighborhood took advantage and allocated \$120,000 to the plan with a Plan Modification....but it took a while to get going. We worked with PRG in 2014 and 15 and last year we obtained two housing starts. They are nearly completed and due to go on sale with a potential \$40,000 write down. We also invited in (persuaded) Habitat for two additional homes to help spread our subsidy out for greater impact. These are well into

construction and the neighborhood is starting to look better than ever. Four new homes have created greater housing desirability in the surrounding area and home sales have quickened. More new homes are coming next year and we even see rehabs picking up.

#### Financial Reports

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the most recent fiscal year for all funding sources (not just city funding). *Send this via email to: [ncr@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:ncr@minneapolismn.gov), with a copy to your NCR Neighborhood Specialist.*

## 4. City Services and Interactions



**In addition to your annual report, please take time to describe your interactions with City departments and other jurisdictions. Please be frank with your opinion- this section will be separated from your neighborhood annual report, and will not be put online.**

### 1. IMPACT

What interactions with City departments occupied a major part of your time? What worked well? What could be improved?

Regarding both Public Works and the City Council – Because the Roof Depot decisions were In the planning process for more than a decade with no effort to inform, much less allow, the neighborhood residents any part of the decision-making process, the Roof Depot decisions are a complete denial of the City Public Works Department’s will to be transparent and of the City Council’s vote of 2007 endorsing the following principle: “1. Right to be involved: Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process” (Adopted by Minneapolis City Council, December 2007). It was completely disappointing to the neighborhood to see the failure to even acknowledge the total ignoring of this principle. It raises the question: Why did the City make such lofty public commitments, if they were only to be cast aside at the first opportunity to adhere to them, at least as far as East Phillips is concerned. Apparently this vote was just more example of moral posturing by the City and an effort to feel a unique ethical superiority with no real intention to live up to it. EPIC’s and others’ effort to be a part of the decision-making process was a major time and financial investment for this community ...It did not work well. While Public Works began to open up to the community’s efforts to improve the life and health of our citizens, the City Council put an abrupt end to that by voting down even a crack in the door to honor this principle. The City’s understanding of and adherence to their own professed moral commitments need to be broadly and deeply improved.

NCR- First I believe the board would concur that 2015 was a year of steadily improving relations with NCR. After the disastrous year of 2014 for EPIC with NCR’s seriously negative impact on our progress and the morale of the EPIC Board, the EPIC/NCR relationship had a long way to go. While we continued to have a Neighborhood Specialist who still attempted to intervene and undermine our relationship with our new Native American board members, the desire of all EPIC board members to learn to work together seemed to prevail. Our hope to partner together with Little Earth finally found an outlet in funding the Native Youth Arts Collective, an extraordinary adventure made real with the CIF grant. We co-wrote this with Little Earth staff and their Teaching Artist consultant, Heidi Hafermnn. We have worked hard at transparency so mistrust became less likely. This project and other collaborations already mentioned seem to be pulling us together as we try to become genuine and trusted friends.

The CPP Template only allows one number grade. but the template also requests information about more than one City Dept. We would have graded Public Works a #1 for its decade’s long and present practice of not engaging the community and handing EPIC a void of any information or open community involvement in a major decision for the East Phillips community and NCR a #2 for its somewhat improved treatment of the EPIC board. CPP needs to allow more choices if you allow us to give kudos and/or thumbs down on more than one City Dept.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate your overall experience with your interactions with the City? 2

## 2. CITY COMMUNICATIONS - EFFECTIVENESS

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful?

Again, quality changes dramatically from department to department and also with personnel. This means the 1 to 5 scale reveals little more than confusion and obscures problems. That is a problem in itself. We have gone to zoning and received incredible and clear help from Shana Sether, but what seemed like obstruction from some other staff on the same topic and issue. With NCR the issue is the same, wrong information that we have to clear up ourselves from some parties and clarity and accuracy from others. A terribly frustrating situation is when we know at least as much as the staff and know the information we are receiving is wrong, but are forbidden to seek the right information from elsewhere. Eg: we knew our CPP funding was frozen, but for months our Neighborhood Specialist insisted we were wrong...three months and no expenditures later, Bob Cooper told us we were not allowed to spend any money....in other words our funds were frozen. By then we had spent months in bewilderment with no explanation and were not allowed to seek one. This tied our board in knots. Board frustration grew and morale tanked. Response? Apology or explanation? None. Here one member in a department should have a #5 and the other less than #1. While we have a great Neighborhood Specialist now, there still is no policy in place for neighborhoods to handle difficulties with the staff overseeing them to prevent this from happening again to us or any other neighborhood. There is policy to fairly orchestrate complaints of neighbors against their neighborhood organization, but none for a neighborhood to bring a complaint against NCR staff. This seems to embody the dangerous assumption that they cannot possibly do anything wrong.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? 2

## 3. CITY COMMUNICATIONS - TIMELINESS

Do you receive adequate notice of City activities in your neighborhood? If not, did your organization inform somebody at the City of this? Did the City respond in a positive manner? Please explain.

City notices are rarely in time for the organization's Board to learn about the situation or issue and still manage to have our responses include actually engaging the community and so including their response beyond that of the Board. This is frustrating, since one of the City's stated purposes for having neighborhood organizations is to provide community engagement for the City's projects. The 45-day review period was barely long enough and that has been taken away or shortened for many concerns, issues and decisions. By sending out such late information on important issues, the impression has been created that the City is not interested in real community engagement. Sadly, I and others have overheard such talk in the elevators after serious Council meetings, mocking the concerns of neighbors and laughing about citizens' stunned looks at the rejection of their concerns and proposals. More advanced notice, more transparency and more serious listening and inclusion would do wonders for citizen morale.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the timeliness of communications from the City? 2

#### 4. CITY DEPARTMENTS

How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood?

Overall we have had good experiences with most departments. We just worked with Shane Morton in the Traffic Dept. on speed bumps and we couldn't have had a nicer, more helpful person. Shana Sether has been excellent in recent issues, a new building coming in and other zoning concerns. Where we struggle is when the City wants to do something or stop something and our interests do not exactly line up or appear to collide or even if City staff anticipate interests will clash... Then is rarely a genuine effort at working anything out or keeping us fully or even partially informed. An adversarial setting then seems presumed. See my remarks earlier in this report on the Roof Depot site. This is a poster child of 'community disregard' and 'engagement avoidance'. Why was it that no information saw daylight for over ten years and then the community had the action and decision sprung on us. It is impossible to think anything other than this was an attempt to conceal. This is the way to cause a fight. It is a great example of ruining trust and any will to work together. In general there is not enough simple respect for the work we do as **'first responders'** to growing blight, collapsing blocks, damaging and escalating areas of crime that are driving people out of the City. We seek to find and respond to negative health conditions that if not changed and responded to with positive action will metastasize into a growing cancer in the City. We see this happen before our eyes and often have insight that those who observe from afar simply lack. These insights and suggestions should be respected and used to guide policy. When that happens, we have almost always seen projects improve and people brought together, rather than more anger, distrust and people withdrawing from community engagement...After all, if the City Depts, commissions, Council and Mayor imply by their actions that they do not really want or value engagement, that it is only tolerated...folks will vote with their feet.

#### 5. NCR ASSISTANCE

How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a community participation group?

The answer to this is to treat the neighborhoods with greater respect, to value their concerns and guidance and to listen to and act on their suggestions more often. The NCEC passed Bylaws some years ago that included a mission statement committing this organization is to "advocate for neighborhoods". Yet for years this mission statement has not seemed to really inform the words and deeds of NCEC nor does it seem to orchestrate the intentions of most of the NCR department. There has been no real cheering section for the hard work we all do and our accolades come from people elsewhere like Mr. Potts from the UK where EPIC is on the cover of his book, not from our own City Council and Mayor and not from NCR. I have heard too often at various meetings that many all over the City feel like neighborhoods are tolerated and dragged along from another time with a definite sense that many down town officials and staff seem to wish the neighborhoods would go away. The NCEC voted long ago to press the Council to budget in expenditures for food. This would so help engagement, especially for those neighborhoods with a large percentage of diverse people and where it is very difficult to raise alternative funds. ...was this even worked on? Have some of the other areas that would help the health and morale of the neighborhoods been a focus? If the answer is 'no' then the Blueprint for equity is not being carried out. What is NCEC doing to carry out it's mission of 'advocating for neighborhoods'? We need a similar report to this one focusing on these issues for NCR.

Only now with Michelle Chavez as our Neighborhood Support Specialist, do we feel supported and like we have a voice in our court. Speaking for most our board, I believe this is the first time we have

felt supported since the creation of CPP. Many neighborhood staff and residents have expressed the same thing. This should not be the way it is. NCR needs to figure out what to do to improve things. The number, Michelle deserves a #5 and NCR as an institution gets a # 2

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? 2

**6. OTHER COMMENTS?**

I think our comments are already sufficient.

## 5. Engagement Activities and Neighborhood Priorities

### NEW ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

What are the major new engagement activities, if any, that you have planned for 2016?

2016 is already here and EPIC has partnered with Pastor Patrick to help our kids begin to do murals our concrete garbage containers. We have also partnered with Clyde Turner's PACE Basketball Camp and the Shakopee Sioux Community \$9,000 matching grant to offer EPIC funding of \$4500 for half of the match the camps focused primarily on mentoring and teaching Little Earth youth. EPIC partnered with Little Earth again to provide a \$2,000 Crime Prevention partnering match to assist in the implementation of the Byrne grant for their community Youth crime study. EPIC is partnering with Waite House to provide East Phillips youth from low income families with 6 weeks of a day-long program of activities, field trips, lunch and dinner. This will take place at both East Phillips Park Center and Waite with EPIC members recruiting youth organizing family involvement. Finally we will be partnering with staff at East Phillips Park to assist in a summer youth program to provide field trips in return for volunteer assistance working at the park from area youth.

If your neighborhood has current or ongoing Neighborhood Priorities approved by NCR, please contact your NCR Neighborhood Specialist to provide a brief update on the status of each. [The Neighborhood Specialist will send you a link to an online report that lists your Priorities and allows you to enter updated information.](#)

### NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES

**ATTENTION!**

### Priorities for 2016

Please identify up to five Neighborhood Priorities your organization (staff, board, committees and volunteers) will be working on in 2016 that you would like to communicate to the City and other jurisdictional partners. These can be current or ongoing Neighborhood Priorities already submitted to NCR or new priorities for 2016.

#### A Neighborhood Priority may:

- be a project, program, service or activity that has broad neighborhood support;
- involve significant time and effort by neighborhood staff and volunteers; or
- require funding from various public, private or non-profit sources, or from the neighborhood organization, itself.

**A Neighborhood Priority can focus on a variety of things, including, but not limited to:**

- bricks and mortar projects such as housing or commercial development;
- improvements to public facilities or programs;
- a service delivered by a public, private or non-profit entity;
- a public policy, practice, law or ordinance that impacts the neighborhood;
- an issue involving public safety, the environment, land use, etc.; or
- an opportunity or challenge that arises needing timely and coordinated effort.

**Neighborhood Priorities must be developed and adopted through a thorough neighborhood participation process.** Priorities can identify, preserve and build on the existing assets and positive qualities of a neighborhood, or identify opportunities or problems to be addressed. Priorities may identify possible actions and should identify any potential partners. They can be as simple or as comprehensive as the neighborhood organization desires, covering a single issue, or several.

**Formal acceptance of Neighborhood Priorities submitted as part of this annual report will be made through the formal acceptance of the Annual Report by NCR.** Neighborhood organizations also may submit new Neighborhood Priorities at other times throughout the year as opportunities or challenges arise.

**Major 2016 Priority 1:**

Priority Name:

*Crime and Safety Priority*

*This priority remains only partly implemented. It was ambitious and we have a lot more to do. We would like to accomplish more of it before we create a new priority plan.*

Short Description of Priority:

This priority addresses the crime situation in East Phillips in multiple ways reflecting the various perspectives of the East Phillips community. Part of the effort is community building and part is direct crime stopping. We just completed raising the money for Speed Bumps for the 2400 block of 18<sup>th</sup> Ave S and for the 2900 block of 17<sup>th</sup> Ave S. The NPP recognizes that we cannot arrest our way to safety so it calls us to attempt to get to know our neighbors and build relationships through EPIC Ambassadors, a walking group with special vests, called to door knock, make friends and build greater community connectedness in an effort to create greater safety. This part of the program has yet to get off the ground. Speed Bumps have been completely funded and are ready to go category. We have just finished raising the money for them. Part of the funding involved a Plan Modification of NRP dollars to expand the scope of the Crime Prevention NPP. Crime cameras are on the way also with money already assigned. These are more direct attempts to create greater safety for the East Phillips families and children.

## Additional Information for Priority #1

## Public or Private Partners Needed to Address the Priority

Little Earth has partnered with us to work on the speed bumps and cameras as has the 2900 16<sup>th</sup> Ave block club plus a Somali business to help with these ventures. The Police department has been partnering with us and the MPRB may be a necessary partner if cameras are to be located in Cedar Field, otherwise the City will be.

## Amount of Neighborhood Priority Reserve Funds Need

\$43,000 was contracted. It has been partially spent.

**Major 2016 Priority 2:**

*Priority Name: East Phillips Infill Campaign- creating a Housing Legacy*

*New construction of Single Family Homes*

*This priority also remains only partly implemented. We are pressing forward to move it ahead.*

## Short Description of Priority:

The NRP Phase II survey demonstrated that the EPIC community wished to fill the remaining vacant lots in the neighborhood with quality affordable new homes. The neighborhood's dollars to accomplish this were initially taken when the Mayor took a major portion of NRP dollars from many neighborhood plans to offset home owner taxes elsewhere. EPIC chose to make the NRP plan whole again by assigning CPP funds from years 2012 and 2013 to a Neighborhood Priority Plan reallocating \$120,000 back to the original EPIC Phase II NRP Plan. Two houses are being built from this money, using \$15,000 a piece and two more are in the works. The money has to be contracted as the projects go. I believe the money for the two house is contracted out and we are hoping for two houses in the near future from PRG and one or two from GMHC.

## Additional Information for Priority #2

## Public or Private Partners Needed to Address the Priority

Our partner has been PRG so far and we have enlisted GMHC also.

## Amount of Neighborhood Priority Reserve Funds Need

\$120,000 of which \$30,000 is already contracted