

Neighborhood Enhancement Program



CITY OF CINCINNATI

PROGRAM GUIDELINES & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

About this Document

Introduction

Mission, Goals, and Rationale

Chapter 1 – Planning

- 1.1 Gathering Data and Mapping**
- 1.2 Identifying Stakeholders**
- 1.3 Identifying Community Assets and Services**
- 1.4 Evaluating Data**
- 1.5 Administration Review**
- 1.6 Funding**
- 1.7 Community Review**
- 1.8 Setting Goals**
- 1.9 Establishing a Baseline**
- 1.10 Operations Center**

Chapter 2 – City Property & Infrastructure

- 2.1 Condition Inventory**
- 2.2 Streets, signs and parking**
- 2.3 Street Cleaning and Garbage cans**
- 2.4 Public Lighting**
- 2.5 Vacant lots and buildings**
- 2.6 Parks**
- 2.7 Sidewalks and Other Structures in the Right-of-Way**

Chapter 3 – Implementation

- 3.1 Community Notification**
- 3.2 Public Meeting**
- 3.3 Program Roll Out**
- 3.4 Press Releases**
- 3.5 Events Calendar**

Chapter 4 – Division of Code Enforcement

- 4.1 Inspections
- 4.2 Vacant Buildings
- 4.3 Demolition
- 4.4 Zoning
- 4.5 Business Districts

Chapter 5 – Department of Community Development

- 5.1 Overall NEP Facilitation
- 5.2 Reporting Requirements

Chapter 6 – Health/ Litter Control

- 6.1 Vacant Lots
- 6.2 Health Code Enforcement

Chapter 7 – Keep Cincinnati Beautiful

- 7.1 Blight Index
- 7.2 Clean Up/Beautification Events and Coordination
- 7.3 Educational Programming
- 7.4 Business Districts
- 7.5 CPTED coordination with Police
- 7.6 Mobilizing volunteers

Chapter 8 – Law Department & Community Prosecution Section

- 8.1 Court Watch
- 8.2 Legal Remedies for Code Enforcement, “CERT”

Chapter 9 – Police Department

- 9.1 Community Oriented Policing
- 9.2 Neighborhood Watch
- 9.3 Citizens on Patrol
- 9.4 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- 9.5 Visibility Patrols
- 9.6 Vortex Unit
- 9.7 Prostitution Enforcement
- 9.8 Drug Abuse Enforcement
- 9.9 Youth Issues

- 9.10 Landlord Training
- 9.11 Communications Networks

Chapter 10 – Code Enforcement Response Team

- 10.1 Case Selection Matrix
- 10.2 C.E.R.T. Implementation

Chapter 11 – Other Departments & Agencies

- 11.1 Fire Department
- 11.2 DOTE
- 11.3 Public Services
- 11.4 Duke Energy
- 11.5 Human Relations Commission
- 11.6 Police Partnering Center
- 11.7 State of Ohio Attorney General's Office
- 11.8 Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

Chapter 12 – CDC's Support and Development & Non- Profits

- 12.1 Support and Development
- 12.2 Non-Profit Partners

Chapter 13 - Implementation Time Lines

- 13.1 First 90 Days
- 13.2 6- Months
- 13.3 12- Months and Beyond

Appendix

Flyer Announcing Focus Areas and Meeting Notice

PREFACE

About This Document:

The following represents problem solving tasks, organizational strategies and programs found to be effective. This document contains a “basic program” or compliment of services that each agency offers as a “basic package.” The needs of the neighborhood are paramount and the services offered should be tailored to these needs. The ways communities and cities can work together to improve neighborhoods are endless. In the interest of concise guidelines, this document attempts to keep the solutions to complex neighborhood problems relatively simple while keeping central the vision of exceptional neighborhood quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

Mission

To significantly improve the quality of life within a geographic focus area by strategically deploying public resources to leverage private investment

Goals

- ❖ Create an economic “ripple effect” in the neighborhoods surrounding the focus areas.
- ❖ Build and sustain investor confidence
- ❖ Effect and sustain real and visible improvement in the physical characteristics of the area
- ❖ Reduce the number of vacated buildings and increase homeownership
- ❖ Reduce Crime
- ❖ Increase property values
- ❖ Strengthen the business districts
- ❖ Increase residents’ community pride and self sufficiency

Rationale:

The City does not have the resources to reach the goals stated concurrently in every neighborhood. Therefore, thoughtful and strategic use of limited resources is critical for maximum impact. The program emphasis is on two areas. The first is strategic placement of resources in geographic areas of the City where need and likelihood of success is determined through analysis of data. The second is through heightened cooperation and collaboration among City Departments and public agencies.

The Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) takes discretionary dollars and puts them to work in small, specific geographic areas. These areas are selected by analysis of crime, code violations, economic, social, and

population trends across the City. Experience tells us that stemming the decay of neighborhoods in transition will have a positive economic ripple effect across broader areas of the City, and eventually the City at large. Similar initiatives have been successful in older cities such as Richmond, Virginia, i.e. Neighborhoods in Bloom, The Ripple Effect. However, the focus of services cannot be to the detriment of continuous delivery of basic service across the entire City. Focusing resources is favored over the potential for real change by spreading discretionary dollars thin across all 52 neighborhoods.

Neighborhood problems are complex. A neighborhood in trouble will typically have high crime rates, numerous vacated buildings, blighted housing and businesses and declining and abandoned business districts. An economic development project can be launched in such an area. However, citizens will not purchase the new and rehabilitated housing where they do not feel safe due to high crime. Merchants will not do business in an area where there are few customers due to abandonment, crime and blight. When a code enforcement program conducted in the area without economic development opportunities, many property owners are not willing to invest money to correct code violations where they cannot collect rents, even when faced with jail time. Some owners would prefer to simply abandon the property. If we send in the police by themselves to rid the area of crime, they will have limited impact if the area is run down and abandoned and drug dealers control the streets. As housing and commerce is abandoned, and crime grows higher, the neighborhood continues on a downward spiral as owner occupants with the means to do so flee to the suburbs. As this spiral continues, property values decrease, tax revenue drops and there are even fewer resources for the City to use to leverage positive change.

If we focus our resources and simultaneously deploy police to make the area safe, economic development to encourage the return of law abiding citizens, and code enforcement to correct code violations while partnering with every willing stakeholder in the area, the whole of the positive change will be greater than the sum of its parts. A City neighborhood is a form of “urban ecosystem”; a dynamic complex of homeowners, business owners, renters, visitors and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. These elements have a symbiotic relationship and are dependant on each other to survive and to flourish. So is the case for City Services, public safety and law enforcement is contingent on economic development, high employment rates, and the presence of enough law abiding neighbors on the streets to preserve the peace. Economic development is contingent on the human need for safety, lack of crime, and adequate shelter to be satisfied, and blight to be abated to sell housing and businesses. Code enforcement and blight abatement is contingent on the willingness of homeowners and investors to spend money to make improvements. These investors are by nature primarily driven by profit motive, and commerce is contingent on safety and economic opportunity to succeed.

Since the City has limited discretionary funding, and the health and vitality of a neighborhood is contingent upon the interdependent functioning of social, economic and crime prevention strategies, it follows that the best way to affect positive change is to focus our resources on strategically selected and manageable areas and “hot spots” within those areas, and deploy efforts to simultaneously elevate all of the critical elements and subsystems of a healthy neighborhood. Such an effort fosters hope, enjoyment and excitement as the potential of the neighborhood is realized.

CHAPTER 1 - PLANNING

1.1 **Gathering Data and mapping**

Data is gathered from such sources as crime statistics, foreclosures, vacated buildings, weed and litter violations, population statistics and similar indices of neighborhood vitality or decline. The data is then mapped using the Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System. First the entire City is examined for density of problems, and troubled areas are broken down further and mapped. (see example Price Hill Map in the appendix). Note that while “neighborhood” is important in identifying stakeholders and improving the identity of the area, the data will often show “hotspots” that cross the neighborhood boundaries. “Hotspot” for the purpose of this discussion means a geographic area with high density of incidences of crime and/or blight that show a pronounced spot on the maps.

1.2 **Identifying Stakeholders**

The greater the organizational skill and capacity of the community councils, business associations, and community development organizations, the greater will be the likelihood of success. A listing of all community groups and their accomplishments or capacity should be assembled to pair with the data that has been mapped in the hot spot areas. In some cases, an otherwise good candidate for a focused effort may lack strong community organization and will need assistance in growing and strengthening their own resources.

1.3 **Identifying Community Assets and Services**

Of great importance in evaluating the needs of a focus area are the assets upon which to build. Does the community have a City or River view, historic buildings, art or cultural institutions, parks, and similar amenities around which to build? Are social service agencies, businesses and services operating who have potential to grow and strengthen the neighborhood or provide employment? Are active trends in economic development evident and are active developments already under way?

1.4 **Evaluating Data**

The data that has been assembled should “speak for itself.” However, it is not possible to make decisions on where to focus without weighing the likelihood of success, the potential to leverage private development and other elements that become difficult to quantify. It has been the experience thus far that areas in downward transition who need “a hand up” to change direction, or areas on the way up who need a boost to continue to recover should become evident upon review of all the data.. When evaluating the data, the approach should rely on empirical evidence to the extent possible as opposed to undue political influences.

1.5 **Administration Review**

Once the potential focus areas are selected, the data, and reasoning are presented to the City Administration for review. Once the final areas are selected, the Administration plays a key role in ensuring that all City Departments are deploying the necessary resources to the focus areas.

1.6 **Funding**

As Departments and the City plan their budgets, and make decisions on where to expend existing resources, consideration must be given to the focus areas. A basic premise of this program is to leverage private investment with limited City dollars. The dollars have to be allocated with this goal in mind. Issues such as police overtime for special operations to reduce crime, façade programs to improve the

business districts, demolition of unsafe buildings, various loan products that encourage private investments and smaller grants requiring matching funding or similar incentives, as well as gap funding for rehabilitation, are all important components. Also, without any new programs, what existing programming decisions can be made to enhance the efforts in the focus area? A “Property Maintenance Code Assistance” program should be established to assist the funding of repairs resulting from Concentrated Code Enforcement for lower income homeowners. Every dollar spent should be designed to leverage private initiative and investor confidence.

1.7 Community Review

Once Administration has approved the plans and funding has been identified the program can be offered to the community. The City Focus team meets with an “executive session” of community council members, area agency leaders, business leaders and similar stakeholders in leadership positions to outline the program. If approved, the program is normally presented to the community council and neighbors at large at the monthly meeting. If the community is not interested in advancing the effort, it can be offered to the next prospective area.

1.8 Setting Goals and Objectives

Clear and measurable short and long-term goals should be established. Short-term goals should be able to produce results that are visible to the citizens to begin changing attitudes about the potential of the area. Long-term goals should be directed at solving root causes of neighborhood problems. Specific objectives and programs to reduce unemployment and crime, as well as methods to improve more costly and serious decline in the physical environment need to be established.

1.9 Establishing a Baseline

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful conducts a blight index before the initiative is launched (see Chapter 7). Police store the crime statistics from the year before and for the months leading up to the start of the initiative. A table of property values is created for each and every parcel in the focus area based on the County Auditor’s valuation. The baseline for building conditions will result as building and health and fire inspectors record the condition of each property by conducting house-to-house inspections.

1.10 Operations Center

A Pride Center or Focused City Services Center in the neighborhood is a good way to provide a visible presence, information exchange and meeting point within the area. Weekly meetings of the Focus team and other stakeholders are conducted at the Center. The Center may be staffed limited hours each day on a departmental rotation basis. The center also contains basic office equipment and serves as a field office and neighborhood base of operations.

Chapter 2 – City Property & Infrastructure

2.1 Condition Inventory

As the City is conducting an inventory of private property in the focus area via building and health inspectors, so should the City conduct an inventory of the condition of all structures in the public environment. A comprehensive program such as the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) should be deployed to the focus area. Under the program, defective elements in the public environment should be identified and referred to the proper agency for correction. Also, any City owned buildings in the area should be evaluated and defects corrected. It is important that the City demonstrate good faith in keeping the public environment for which it is responsible up to high standards.

2.2 Streets, signs and parking

Defective streets, sidewalks, curbs and highway signage should be repaired or replaced as needed. Traffic Patterns and parking should be optimized to encourage patronage of legitimate businesses and discourage illegal activity through CPTED (see Section 9.3).

2.3 Street Cleaning and Garbage cans

A rigorous street and sidewalk-cleaning program should be established. Adult Probation has been a source of labor for this activity to compliment the work of automated street sweepers and volunteer clean up efforts. A survey of the number and location of garbage cans should be completed to see where littering is occurring and to ensure that an adequate number of cans are provided. Power washing of sidewalks where needed is also encouraged.

2.4 Public Lighting

An inventory of all inoperable, missing or defective public lighting can be conducted by private citizens or City employees and referred to the responsible agency such as Duke Energy for burnt out light bulbs. Additional public lighting may be recommended to deter crime.

2.5 Vacant lots and buildings

Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System (CAGIS) has developed a layer that identifies all City owned property and the responsible department to ensure all properties are accounted for and evaluated for code violations, weeds and litter.

2.6 Parks

Any park or parkways in the focus area should be reviewed for potential enhancements, deferred maintenance or improvement that may be needed.

Chapter 3 – Implementation

3.1 Community Notification

Using the mailing list feature in CAGIS, a mailing list of all property in the focus area can be generated. A standardized flyer that is customized to each neighborhood is mailed to all property owners in the focus area approximately 2 weeks prior to beginning the initiative. This flyer contains a signed message from the community council president, information on resources for correcting code violations and making improvements to properties and businesses, and general information on the NEP initiative. These flyers can be delivered to business owners who are not buildings owners and tenants of rental property using volunteers or as youth employment activity. (See Appendix). This flyer should contain a public meeting announcement described in Section 3.2 .

3.2 Public Meeting

This meeting is to engage other citizens who may not be active in the Community Council and is scheduled prior to the beginning of the initiative. The agenda for this meeting is an overview of the focus area initiative, available resources for making improvements, and a general question and answer period. Community Councils should use this meeting as an opportunity to recruit new members.

3.3 Program Roll Out

The program is announced via a press release. All stakeholders and participants are invited to attend the “kick off” media event at which the goals and intentions of the project are publicized and celebrated. Press releases should be issued as newsworthy milestones are reached in the process, again coordinated through public relations. A high profile for the Focus efforts is needed to rally support and enlist assistance of all stakeholders and neighbors. The media can be an excellent resource for generating interest in the work.

3.4 Events Calendar

An events calendar showing all NEP related events is maintained for each focus area. The calendar is established using the City Microsoft Outlook system.

Chapter 4 – Division of Code Enforcement

4.1 Inspections

The Department of Buildings and Inspections (B&I) conducts inspections of each building in the focus area. This includes both commercial and residential. The inspections will be exterior of the buildings only and cover all parts of the building and lot visible from the public right-of-way. All violations are noted and orders to correct the violations within a period of 90 days are issued to each property owner where violations are found. If funding permits, a congratulatory letter, explaining the inspection service provided and thanking the owner for maintaining their property is issued to property owners where no violations are found.

4.2 Vacant Buildings

A vacant building inventory is conducted in the focus area. Each vacant building is evaluated for condition, obsolescence, owner plans, neighborhood impact, owner type, intrinsic value and safety. Individual case planning is done on each building to determine the most effective enforcement remedy. These remedies include civil and criminal and well as demolition. Code Enforcement will barricade vacant open buildings and the owner is billed for the costs. The Vacated Building Maintenance License Ordinance is enforced on all other vacated buildings.

4.3 Demolition

The Hazard Abatement Program processes condemned buildings determined to be candidates for demolition by Government action. In every case, except imminent danger of collapse, a public nuisance hearing is conducted to hear from the neighbors as to what effect the building is having on the community. These hearings have been conducted in the neighborhood community center to facilitate the appearance of neighbors and concerned citizens who are encouraged to testify at the hearing. The owner and interested parties, Police, Fire, a Certified Property Manager and Code Enforcement testify at the hearing also. If a building is declared a Public Nuisance, it is demolished using City funds. The Owner is billed for the demolition costs.

4.4 Zoning

Zoning violations associated with illegal land use such as repair garages in residential zones, front yard parking, etc., are enforced as part of the concentrated code enforcement inspections.

4.5 Business Districts

A “sign sweep” inspection program along all business corridors is designed to identify illegal signs. Obsolete signs allowed to remain after a business has long closed are ordered removed, illegal banners and temporary signs, including illegal sandwich boards, are also ordered to be removed so that excess signs do not blight the business district.

4.6 Code Violations Correction Programs

Code Enforcement has partnered with non-profit social service agencies, to do outreach to owner occupants who receive orders to correct violations but have no funding. A list of violations is sent to the agency that is able to assist low-income owners make corrections. A “Property Maintenance Code Assistance” program is important since a building that is blighted and not repaired hurts morale of neighbors and property values in the focus area. Criminal and Civil penalties are not effective when the owner is on a fixed low income with no reserves to make repairs.

Chapter 5 – Department of Community Development

- 5.1 **Overall NEP Facilitation** – the Community Development Department has overall responsibility for facilitation of the NEP through the entire process. This includes setting up all the City team and stakeholder meetings, issuing the initial invitation letters to the property owners, coordinating the early meetings with the community leadership, the property owners meeting, and facilitating the community engagement process. The CD Dept. coordinates the kick off and close out press conferences. Also, the CD Dept. brings a variety of programs to the NEP, including assistance to income eligible homeowners, and to new homebuyers. Also there are programs to assist developers to increase homeownership as well as to improve rental property. Further, business incentives for small neighborhood businesses also exist.
- 5.2 **Reporting Requirements** There are reporting requirements during the NEP. Updates are given at the 30, 60, and 90 day benchmark. These reports are a compilation of the City agencies, non-profit partners and community stakeholders and are distributed to all involved. Two follow up reports occur, one at 6 months and one after one year.

Chapter 6 – Health/ Litter Control

6.1 Vacant Lots

The Litter Control Unit of the Health Department has the regulatory responsibility to uphold sections of the CMC that are related to litter and tall grass/weeds on privately – owned property. As part of their concentrated code efforts within the focus areas, Code Enforcement inspectors will identify and take measures to remedy any weed or litter violations that are observed on private property where there is a structure.

Litter Control staff will do a systematic inspection of each privately – owned vacant lot in the focus areas. The owner of any property found to be in violation will be issued a civil citation and given 10 days to demonstrate to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) that the property has been brought into compliance. If after 10 days it has been determined that the property is still in violation, a referral will be made to the Private Lot Abatement Program administered within the Department of Public Services (DPS). Currently DPS has a contract with an outside vendor that has the responsibility to abate these violations on private property. The cost of clean – up will be billed to the property owner.

6.2 Health Code Enforcement

In addition to litter and tall grass/weed concerns, Health Department staff will address environmental health concerns identified in the focus areas. These include abandoned/junk vehicles, vermin control, trash storage, and dog waste issues.

Chapter 7 – Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (KCB)

7.1 **Blight Index**

KCB will conduct a Blight Index pre and post initiative. It consists of a street-by-street survey of blighted conditions within the focus area. A numerical rating is assigned to each street and provides a baseline of current conditions. For evaluation purposes, KCB will also conduct a Blight Index at the end of the focus period and again, one year after the initial index was taken.

7.2 **Clean Up/Beautification Events and Coordination**

KCB will work with neighborhood stakeholders and City Services to identify and address areas in need of extensive cleanup. This may include illegal dumpsites, graffiti etc. During the Great American Cleanup and Make a Difference Day, KCB will also bring a spotlight component to whatever neighborhood is currently in the focus area.

7.3 **Educational Programming**

KCB will provide environmental programming in the focus area schools, and where appropriate, social service agencies.

7.4 **Business Districts**

KCB will work with Community Development and neighborhood Business Associations to evaluate the aesthetic condition of the neighborhood Business District and identify potential improvements. Projects may include community art, landscaping, façade painting, clean up events etc.

7.5 **CPTED coordination with Police**

KCB will work with CPD and their partners to implement strategies based on CPTED analysis. (See Police Chapter 9, Item 9.4)

7.6 **Mobilizing Volunteers**

a.) KCB will work with neighborhood residents to coordinate events (see above) which will promote community involvement and foster community organizing

b) KCB will utilize various volunteer groups from organizations and entities around the City, depending on availability, to support community efforts in the focus area.

Chapter 8 – Law Department & Community Prosecution Section

8.1 Legal Council

The City of Cincinnati Law Department, through the Economic and Community Development section and the Prosecutors Office provides legal assistance to the NEP.

8.2 Court Watch

The Law Department encourages community members to become involved in the judicial process through the use of the Court Watch program. Court Watch volunteers are trained by the Prosecutor's Office to use the electronic database system to track cases that are of interest to their community. Court Watch volunteers attend court sessions to voice community concerns to the Judge during the sentencing phase of a court proceeding.

8.3 Code Enforcement

The Law Department participates in Code Enforcement Response Team (CERT), provides assistance to Code Enforcement, Police and Fire in the preparation of search warrants, both criminal and administrative. It also advises the departments on the proper charges to file and when necessary, prosecutes cases criminally, or files the appropriate civil action.

8.4 Community Groups

The Law Department regularly meets with community groups and attends Community Council meetings in order to provide another entry point to communicate neighborhood issues to appropriate City Departments.

8.5 Liquor Licenses

The Law Department pursues objections to liquor license renewals and the issuance of new licenses, based on City agency, City Council, and community objections to nuisances involving such establishments.

Chapter 9 – Police Department

9.1 **Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP)**

CPOP looks at a problem and through analysis, attempts to identify its underlying cause(s). Through more rigorous analysis of data used to identify the focus area, the District Commander, Neighborhood Liaison Supervisor, and officers will work with the NEP community using the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) method to identify specific problems in the focus area. Problems will be identified and documented. Responses will be based on review of best practices and can be addressed by a variety of responses not limited to policing responses such as those listed below, but creative solutions including working with various social service agencies and other community resources. The goal is to reduce calls for service to particular locations or in response to repeat victims or offenders to have long term problem solution which will free officers' time resulting in their ability to devote more attention to problem solving.

9.2 **Neighborhood Watch**

The Police Department will host several training sessions within the focus area over the course of the program. The goal is to provide public education regarding crime/trends and prevention methods to reduce victimization. Building safe neighborhoods is the responsibility of the entire community, not just the police. By engaging citizens to commit to Neighborhood Watch, they are encouraged to take a more active role in reporting suspicious activities in their neighborhood or just being a good neighbor to those likely to be victimized. The net effect generally results in more proactive engagement ensuring safety is addressed by citizens and the police.

9.3 **Citizens on Patrol**

Citizens on Patrol is a group of community volunteers who act as extra eyes and ears for the Police Department. These volunteers provide additional walking patrols or surveillance with the goal of reporting activity needing the attention of not only the Police Department but all City Departments. They are not involved in enforcement.

In communities with an established Citizens on Patrol Group, this group will be asked to provide additional patrols or act as resources for other efforts within the focus area such as clean-ups, safety assessments, etc. Efforts will also involve recruiting additional members.

In communities without an established group, efforts will involve the recruitment and training of enough members to form a team for that community.

9.4 **Crime Reduction Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**

The Police Department has numerous officers who are certified Crime Prevention Specialists. These officers will assist in problem solving through analysis of areas or locations that would benefit from some physical changes to reduce crime. In past such efforts creative solutions included street closures to reroute drug clientele from an area, fencing to reduce ingress/egress, enhanced lighting, surveillance camera installation, piped in classical music to deter youth loitering, etc. Communities will be directed toward possible funding and the Department will assist in co-sponsored grant applications where appropriate.

9.5 **Visibility Patrols**

The Police Department will provide enhanced visibility within the focus area to enhance the perception of safety, encourage citizen participation, and deter criminal activity. This will be achieved through a variety of methods not limited to regular patrols/walking beat officers spending all time within the area when not deployed on a call for service, focused attention by the District Violent Crime Unit, additional Police Visibility Overtime details, walking patrols, bicycle officers, mounted patrol, Vortex Unit, use of officers from other districts to assist with curfew or truancy sweeps in the area, to name a few. Officers in the area will address or alert other City team members to items needing the attention of these other City Departments.

9.6 Vortex

The Vortex Unit is a highly visible proactive unit that has a zero tolerance approach to street crimes, drug trafficking, and quality of life issues. Vortex will be deployed into the focus area as deemed appropriate based on the level and types of activity identified where their expertise would be of benefit.

9.7 Prostitution Enforcement

If the area analysis shows prostitution activity, Vice and district officers will provide the necessary response including active attention to the prostitutes as well as reverse stings to address the patrons. Appropriate referrals to programs such as “Off the Streets” are made to address long term effects of this community problem.

9.8 Drug Abuse Enforcement

Complaint locations within the focus area will be given enhanced attention by uniformed and covert officers. Reverse stings will be used as appropriate, to address those coming into the area to purchase drugs.

9.9 Youth Issues

During the time of the focus effort, additional truancy and/or curfew sweeps will be conducted. Efforts will include Department personnel and additional community resources where available and/or appropriate. Efforts include locating resources to assist in dealing with repeat offenders.

The Department will make efforts to provide positive interaction with youth in the area wherever possible including but not limited to initiating Police Activities League projects, invitations to the Police-Youth Live-in, or referral to camps/activities under the direction of the Youth Services Section.

9.10 Landlord Training

The Department will determine the viability of providing Landlord Training based on analysis of rental property problems within the focus area. If determined this training would be useful, the appropriate number of training sessions will be held to educate rental property owners on how to reduce crime at their properties through better screening of renters, security measures, and other available methods to deal with tenants causing or encouraging criminal activity.

9.11 Communications Networks

The Department currently utilizes an “opt-in” communications network called Citizen Observer. This allows participants to receive notifications community/business specific generated by the Department or approved community liaisons via email, fax, or text messages. Examples include financial institutions being alerted to fraudulent check casher operating in the area, a rash of thefts from autos on particular

streets, etc. Efforts will be made to reach out to the community to engage in program participation even to taking an active leadership role in providing information/notifications for the system.

Chapter 10 – Code Enforcement Response Team (CERT)

10.1 Case Selection Matrix

CERT cases are reviewed for the following characteristics: the property is a suspected safety hazard, the problem involves more than one agency, the problem has not been solved under standard code enforcement or the problem is recurring. CERT actions are reserved for more complex problems where expertise of various agencies is needed.

10.2 C.E.R.T. Implementation

The CERT team meets bi-monthly or as needed to review candidates for CERT action and to plan enforcement actions. The standing team is made up of representatives from Police, Health, Fire, Buildings and Law. If a case is selected, an Administrative Search Warrant is obtained and the team meets at the Police District to organize. Once the building is entered under the warrant and Police have cleared the area for inspection, the various agencies conduct a full inspection noting all violations. Often additional agencies are present for the inspection such as Children’s Services, Animal Control SPCA, and services for the elderly or mental health to address issues at the time of the inspection and for follow up. If Criminal Charges are needed to bring about compliance after the inspection, the charges are consolidated and filed together to go before the same judge at the same time.

Chapter 11 – Other Departments & Agencies

11.1 Fire Department

The fire Department works in conjunction with Police, Health and B&I on referral when fire hazards encountered require specialized enforcement. The Fire Department can bring it’s fire safety programs to the community to raise awareness of fire hazards and fire prevention techniques.

11.2 Department of Transportation and Engineering

The Department of Transportation and Engineering can help by replacing defaced, missing or damaged street signage, guardrails, City Stairs and any infrastructure under their control to ensure the area is free of damaged, missing or unsafe conditions. Also, parking and traffic patterns should be reviewed with police and the community to see if there are open air, drug traffic issues that can be addressed.

11.3 Public Services

The Department of Public Services is instrumental in assuring that there are adequate number of public trash cans to discourage littering and that the cans are picked up regularly and that the streets are swept. Public Services also operate the call center 591-6000, to take citizen complaint in the focus area. Encouraging the recycling program and distributing bins is another way Public Services supports the NEP.

11.4 Duke Energy

Duke is the gas and electric commercial utility provider responsible for keeping streetlights on in many areas of the City. Duke conducted a survey of the missing or defective street lights and restored them. Street lighting is an important deterrent to crime.

11.5 Human Relations Commission

The Human Relations Commission has used “Street Monitors” to approach persons loitering on the streets to determine if they are in need of assistance with employment, training or social services to help lead them to more productive and healthy activities

11.6 Police Partnering Center

The Partnering Center has assisted with distributing “safety kits” to citizens as well as education on CEPTD and facilitating crime prevention outreach initiatives.

11.7 State of Ohio Attorney General’s Office

11.8 Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

Chapter 12 – Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

12.1 Support and Development

Community Development Corporations can be active in rehabilitation and production of owner occupant housing as well as development of strategic areas in order to encourage further private development. CDCs may need assistance with legal, technical or organization issues and should be encouraged to grow and provided with support wherever possible.

12.2 Non-profit partners- play an important role in the NEP and can be different depending on the neighborhood. Some non-profits offer services citywide while others are area specific.

Chapter 13 – Implementation Time Lines

13.1 First 90 Days

Much of the work is within the first 90-day implementation period. Reports of accomplishments are created every 30 days.

13.2 6 Month Report

To ensure sustainability and ongoing programs established during the 90 days are evaluated for effectiveness and adjusted as needed.

13.3 12 Month Report

A second blight index is conducted and police crime statistics are reviewed to begin to measure effectiveness. Any Hot Spots identified are addressed and long-range plans are evaluated and adjusted to meet their objectives.

APPENDIX

Flyer Announcing Focus Areas and Meeting Notice

NORTHSIDE Neighborhood Enhancement Team

Improving Quality of Life



City of Cincinnati
Customer Service
513.591.6000



Permit & Development Center
Existing Building Inspections
3300 Central Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45225

Dear Property Owner:

We would like to thank City Manager Milton Dohoney, Jr. and his staff for implementing this new strategy to more efficiently utilize City departments within a focused area of selected neighborhoods. Beginning September 5, 2007 the City will deploy these new strategies whereby all City departments will be working co-operatively within the selected area of Northside for a 90-day period. The goal is to enhance the quality of life, eliminate blight and increase safety in our neighborhood. We are contacting you on behalf of the City and as neighborhood leaders to join us to help and support this effort. There will be an informational meeting at 6:30 pm on August 29th at McKie Recreation Center on Chase Avenue for more information.

Beginning September 5, City inspectors will be going street-to-street within the Project Area noting the condition of each property, including peeling paint and litter, among other building maintenance and safety issues. If you own property that is littered or has tall grass, please keep the property clean and the grass cut for the good of the neighborhood and to avoid fines and citations. To help you comply with building and health code regulations, a list of housing and business development programs, with contacts and phone numbers, is provided within.

We encourage you to become involved in the Northside Community Council and Northside Business Association, both of which are dedicated to improving the quality of life in Northside. It will take your cooperation and dedication, and the support of many agencies to make a real impact. We hope you'll join us!

Sincerely,

Tim Jeckering, President
Northside Community Council

Bob Sala, President
Northside Business Association

Working together

The Neighborhood Enhancement Team is a 90-day focused strategy addressing neighborhood quality of life issues in Northside. The program is designed to jumpstart the community on the road to revitalization and redevelopment through a coordinated partnership between the City of Cincinnati and the Northside community.

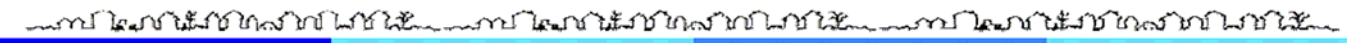
The City of Cincinnati departments of Community Development and Planning, Buildings and Inspections, Health, Fire, Police, Law, and Public Services, as well as the Cincinnati Geographic Information System (CAGIS), Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and other agencies and community groups collaborate under the initiative to maximize available resources for the greatest positive impact in Northside.

The collaborative effort has been designed to meet the needs of the neighborhood. Initiatives include: concentrating building code enforcement; identifying and "cooling down" crime hot spots; cleaning up streets, sidewalks and vacant lots; beautifying landscapes, streetscapes and public rights of way; and engaging property owners and residents to create and sustain a more livable neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Enhancement Team program builds upon other initiatives already in place and serves as a catalyst for community re-building. Covered in this brochure are the guidelines for the property inspections as a part of this project. If property owners receive a violation notice, resources may be available.

If you have any questions about property maintenance or codes, please call or visit the City of Cincinnati, Department of Buildings and Inspections, Business Development and Permit Center, 3300 Central Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45225, call 352-3275 or visit the website at www.cincinnati-oh.gov/buildings.

Homeowner Support Services



Available Resources

If a property owner receives notice of a code violation, there are some programs that may provide assistance. Please note that the following three programs are federally funded and have income eligibility requirements. The household's total income cannot exceed the following limits:

# In Household	Income Limit
1	\$36,200
2	\$41,350
3	\$46,550
4	\$51,700
5	\$55,850
6	\$59,950

American Dream Down Payment Initiative (ADDI) – Down Payment assistance. Grants available to income eligible first-time homebuyers. Contact Roy Hackworth 352-6119.

Emergency Repair Grants – Emergency repairs for income eligible homeowners. Contracted with People Working Cooperatively, Inc. Call 351-7921 for more information.

Homeowner Rehabilitation Loan Program – Low interest and deferred loans for the rehabilitation of income eligible owner occupied homes. Contracted with the Homeownership Center of Greater Cincinnati. Call 961-2800 for more information.

Available Resources

The following resources may provide some assistance, should a property owner receive a code violation notice:

Home Improvement Program – Linked Deposit Program with Hamilton County (946-8234). Provides low interest loans to existing property owners to make home repairs. Five local banks participate. No income restrictions.

Tax Abatement – Abatement on property improvements: 10 years for rehabilitation, 15 years for new construction (up to \$245,970). Contact: 352-5352 or click "I want to apply for tax abatement" upper right of the home page of website: www.cincinnati-oh.gov.

Home Improvement Contracts

Before hiring a contractor to do repairs or improvements to your home, check the requirements of Chapter 891 HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS of the Cincinnati Municipal Code. (View the Municipal Code online at www.municode.com.) These rules assist consumers and contractors with entering proper contracts for home improvements over \$500.00. Learning the elements of a proper Home Improvement Contract may keep you from being trapped in an unfair transaction.

Building Permits

Renovations involving the cutting of structural members or opening of walls, installation of heating, mechanical, plumbing, electrical wiring and equipment, or alterations of structures and room additions require building permits.

Call 352-3275 to learn more about building permit requirements in order to protect your investment and reduce potential for problems at the point of sale.

Boundaries

The area eligible for the Northside Neighborhood Enhancement Team initiative is bounded by the houses south of Chase Avenue on the west side of Hamilton and south of Pullan Avenue on the east.

Get Involved

We hope you will find the information in this pamphlet useful. The City of Cincinnati encourages you to become involved in your community council and neighborhood associations dedicated to improving the quality of life your community if you are not already. It will take your effort and the support of many agencies to make a real impact with the Neighborhood Enhancement Team initiative. We are asking you to please join us to make a difference in your community today.

"The Neighborhood Enhancement Team initiative is a partnership in which the City departments, the residents and the community organizations collaborate to address neighborhood problems, supply information, and arrive at solutions together. By working as one team, we have a greater chance to set the stage for long-term positive changes."

-City Manager Milton Dohoney, Jr.

Available Resources Contact List

- 1. City of Cincinnati- Customer Service**
(513) 591-6000
- 2. Down Payment Assistance**
(513) 352-6119
- 3. Emergency Repair Grants**
(513) 351-7921
- 4. Homeowner Rehabilitation Loan Program:** (513) 961-2800
- 5. Home Improvement Program**
(513) 946-8234
- 6. Tax Abatement**
(513) 352-5352
Website: www.Cincinnati-oh.gov
Click on "I want to apply for tax abatement" in upper right-hand corner of homepage
- 7. Home Improvement Contracts**
View Municipal Code online at www.municode.com
- 8. Building Permits** (513) 352-3275