NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

Local government officials need to inform the public about ongoing activities and involve residents in the process of decision making. Citizens frequently feel that the ballots they cast do not give them enough say in what happens in their communities. The result in many communities is a new appreciation for the role of neighborhood associations. The past two decades have seen a steady rise in local governments' use of structures that help bring officials and citizens together: neighborhood-oriented programs and service delivery that work with and through neighborhood associations.

The increasing complexity of modern life means that informal methods of communication and involvement no longer work very well. The activist ethic of the 1960s made people hungry for involvement in grassroots initiatives. And drug-related crime in the 1980s prompted police forces to look to communities for help. Neighborhood associations provide flexibility and responsiveness as they bring people together to assist local governments. This report examines how several communities have created, supported, and used neighborhood associations to enhance the quality of local decision making.

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Author Contact Information

Kathryn Stratos
1520 Brookside Road
McLean, Va. 22101
703/298-0666
E-mail: kdnomad@yahoo.com

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Neighborhood Associations

Since 1990 Kathryn Stratos, the author of this report, has worked on democratic and economic assistance projects, including projects to assist local governments, in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. During a leave of absence from international development work, she took a 10,000-mile automobile journey around the United States. This report is based in large part on site visits and interviews conducted during her journey.

INTRODUCTION

Neighborhood associations can be valuable for efficient and productive interaction between citizens and their local governments. Although they have a proud history in cities throughout the United States, neighborhood associations sometimes are shoestring organizations, rising like phoenixes only to fade away as the urgency of issues facing a community and the energy of its volunteer activists ebb and flow. In many municipalities and counties, neighborhood associations are one pillar of a greater citizen participation strategy. In these localities, neighborhoods are the smallest units on which local governments focus.

Neighborhood associations are partners of local governments—in participatory planning processes, community policing efforts, and conservation—and because of the associations' value to municipalities and counties, many jurisdictions promote the development and activism of neighborhood associations. They provide model bylaws; in-kind assistance for printing and distributing newsletters; space on the local government Web site; and administrative support, training, and technical assistance to build in support for neighborhoods and their associations. Some even offer grants to civic and neighborhood associations to support citizen participation and spur activism in communities. Cities and counties have also experimented with neighborhoods as a focal point for integrating service delivery. Cross-departmental committees are formed (or satellite offices established) to provide connections with neighborhoods and to consider neighborhood needs in a holistic fashion.

Although cities such as Portland and Seattle have long been known for their neighborhood programs, this report looks at less-known examples and more recently established programs.[1] Asheville, North Carolina, encouraged activists in neglected neighborhoods to form a neighborhood association to energize the redevelopment of a crucial area linking Asheville's historic downtown to its riverfront. Durham, North Carolina, has a 10-year track record of working closely with neighborhoods and integrating service delivery geographically through a community policing initiative. Since 1964, Arlington County, Virginia, has dedicated some of its infrastructure dollars to the citizen-run Neighborhood Conservation Program. The organic nature of Arlington's civic associations offers an interesting contrast with the network of officially recognized neighborhood associations in Eugene, Oregon; yet the incentive that Eugene's new matching grant program offers for neighborhood activism is very similar. In Little Rock, Arkansas, neighborhood associations are a recent phenomenon. Welcomed by local government officials, associations have become partners as the local government has increasingly relied on the help of neighborhood associations to plan development and fight crime. The city, in turn, delivers many of its services through neighborhood satellite centers.

Planning by Neighborhoods

In 2001, the city of **Alexandria, Virginia,** established a division of neighborhood planning and community development. Blessed with a distinctive history and character yet close to the nation's capital, Alexandria felt it was constantly playing catch-up, its city council forced to react to development proposals rather than guide them. In response, the city council adopted a "plan for planning" to aid in being proactive in revitalization and redevelopment by working together with neighborhoods. The council identified eight geographic areas with immediate needs, all of which will be the subject of long-range, participatory planning.

A number of forward-looking local governments, including those described here, have turned to neighborhoods as a logical unit with which to cooperate and serve. Two chief reasons for this are the new ways in which cities approach development and crime prevention. "Smart growth" and "infill development" in urban areas will not work well—and in activist communities will be stymied outright—unless they receive understanding and support from their neighbors. Similarly, crime prevention—an alternative to crime solving—with the use of community policing lends itself to a neighborhood-based approach: to be successful, it requires citizen leadership and involvement focused on a small geographic area.

CASE STUDIES

Downtown Revitalization— Asheville, North Carolina

The city of Asheville, North Carolina (population 69,000; council-manager), came to its neighborhood orientation through its commitment to revitalizing its downtown. Asheville city government does not divide the city up formally into neighborhoods, nor does it seek to define the nature or mission of neighborhood associations. Citizens are free to organize neighborhood associations wherever and however they wish. So far, the city has not adopted a formal recognition policy, nor does it use neighborhoods extensively as an organizing principle for delivering municipal services.

The city has, however, actively encouraged neighborhoods to organize themselves in order to facilitate communication and grassroots participation. Asheville includes associations interested in receiving information on planning decisions affecting each neighborhood on its mailing lists. The Web site for Asheville includes an easy-to-use neighborhood survey that allows citizens to sign up to receive certain types of notices via e-mail (see www.ci.asheville.nc.us/commune/neighbor survey.asp). The city views neighborhood associations as especially useful partners in planning and community policing. By engaging neighborhoods, the city has built bridges with citizens and empowered communities that had previously been passive.

In 2000, the city of Asheville officially adopted a smart growth policy.[2] One of the policies associated with smart growth, as the city defines it, is infill development that emphasizes the development of marginal and underused land in the city center over that of unused land on the outskirts of town. As the Asheville case study illustrates, infill development succeeds best when it receives the support and ideas of the surrounding neighborhood. For a good 20 years, the city has worked intensively to revitalize its historic downtown and, more recently, its riverfront. In the mid-1990s, the city's attention began to shift to the neighborhoods between downtown and the riverfront. In 1995, city planners initiated a general neighborhood plan called "2010" for West End and Clingman, the neighborhoods bordering the downtown area to the east, and Clingman Avenue and the railroad and commercial areas along the French Broad River to the west.

For planners, creating a sense of cohesiveness for these neighborhoods poses quite a challenge for two reasons. First, they are a thoroughfare for interstate traffic, cut off from the riverfront by the train tracks, and intersected by wide avenues that serve vehicular but not pedestrian needs. The other obstacle to cohesiveness was the community itself. The planners were not prepared for the resentment and distrust that many in the community harbored towards the city. Some residents were—and remain—fundamentally suspicious of government. Many felt shortchanged by a city so focused on its downtown. And others in this diverse, low-income community were wary of the city's sudden interest in their neighborhood, which is a prime spot for redevelopment and gentrification owing to its proximity to the downtown area. City planners responded by encouraging the neighborhoods to organize a neighborhood association that would facilitate the involvement of local citizens in planning and decision making.

> **Asheville views neighborhood associations as especially useful partners in planning and community policing.**

Neighborhood activists in West End and Clingman first started organizing in 1995, and the Westend/Clingman Neighborhood Association (WeCan) was formally incorporated in 1997. A staff member of the city planning office served as liaison to the association, attending monthly meetings during its first year. The city liaison brought issues identified by the association to the attention of the appropriate city departments. As part of the city's community policing effort, Police and Community Together (PACT), police officers also attended the monthly association meetings and worked with residents to eliminate prostitution and drug dealing. In 2000, the city secured federal funding, which made material resources available to encourage public involvement in a planning process that would take the general plan developed in 1996 to a higher level of detail. The city selected Mountain Housing, a nonprofit housing development organization that had worked with the association, to facilitate an interactive, participatory planning process.

Mountain Housing recognized that the neighborhoods would require more than just professional planning skills. The community's voice was all too often drowned out in the multitude of opinions offered by developers, city officials, and professional designers. Mountain Housing supported the planning process in a number of ways—including leading a visioning process, advising the association's board, and pursuing

grants that would provide additional support for the neighborhood's revitalization. Over time, the participants concluded that building a consensus for each individual step toward revitalization was not possible; instead, a more holistic approach was required. They therefore redefined the goal to be one of rallying everyone involved to create a visual, detailed, and more site-specific plan for the neighborhoods. The federal funds made possible a participatory process that was able to draw on the talents of a highly reputable design team (Correa Valle Valle of Coral Gables, Florida).

One of the first steps was to establish a steering committee to include neighborhood residents, city employees, developers, nonprofit activists, and other interested individuals. During a charrette—an intensive week during which the out-of-town professional design team completed its first draft of the master plan—the committee met daily with the WeCan steering committee. The first full day of the charrette, which fell on a Saturday, was devoted to public sessions. After an introduction to the design process, the group conducted a walking tour of the area.

Professional planners and participating residents then divided into four groups and brainstormed to identify problems and opportunities. The groups considered topics that included housing, physical improvements, traffic, and landscape design. One group was made up of neighborhood children and teenagers whose priorities, while different from the other interest groups, were equally valid: this group emphasized the desirability of bike paths, green spaces, and recreational areas. From this process emerged common themes out of which the design team chose seven priority projects that included developing a plan for the riverfront area and identifying infill opportunities. Throughout the week, the city encouraged input from different groups: public works groups, environmental organizations, small-business owners, artists and arts organizations, and community service organizations. In the evenings, potluck dinners, receptions, and public presentations of the work in progress created opportunities for a dialogue, not merely one-directional input from professional planners to residents.

So far, the tangible products of the city's collaboration with the West End and Clingman neighborhoods are a detailed master plan for the two neighborhoods (soon to be presented to the city council), several completed housing rehabilitations, and a series of smaller improvements to the infrastructure—mainly to the streets, sidewalks, sewers, and the water supply. The most significant and enduring change, however, is the new sense of confidence and self-initiative in the community.

WeCan, now in its sixth year, continues to thrive. Its executive board meets monthly, and semiannual meetings—part social event, part organizational event—regularly bring neighbors together for an enhanced sense of community. The association has a solid record of achievement. Early on, the group successfully lobbied the county to clear out an illegal dump site containing 20 years' worth of discarded appliances, furni-

Improved Methods of Communication

By surveying citizens' interests on the Internet, the city of **Asheville, North Carolina,** can direct notices and information to citizens in a targeted and cost-effective fashion. On the city Web site, residents can sign up to receive regular announcements on any of the following subjects: the civic center schedule, parks and recreation information, boards and commission information, event information, and planning and zoning announcements in the subscriber's neighborhood.

ture, and the like. Members have built a walking path connecting two dead-end streets and participate in four highway cleanups a year (at one time neighborhood cleanup days were organized on a regular basis; they are now less necessary as residents take greater pride in the neighborhood and city services are more responsive to the community's needs).

Neighborhood Matching Grants Program— Eugene, Oregon

Eugenians pride themselves on their civic activism. The city of Eugene, Oregon (population 138,000; council-manager), estimates that more than half of its citizens volunteer in the community.[3] In 1998, city council members and citizen activists collaborated to develop a *Citizen Involvement Strategic Plan.* This plan systematically put forth a strategy to promote greater and more meaningful participation in all aspects of governing the city. During this process, the city conducted fact-finding surveys and found that citizens were most likely to get involved if the issues at stake related directly to their specific neighborhoods.[4] This is one reason that Eugene so values its neighborhood associations: they are ideal vehicles for gathering citizen input and ensuring grassroots democratic involvement in the life of the city.

The participation strategy also seeks to cultivate citizen involvement through improved communications (city Web site and newsletters), increased use of smaller groups to allow collaborative input, and volunteer programs. The plan also calls for varying the structure and composition of existing commissions and boards as a means of making citizen input more representative, meaningful, and productive. This is pursued through proactive recruitment of underrepresented populations and the training of new commission members.[5]

The city has long encouraged neighborhoods to organize, as evidenced by its adoption of the Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy in 1973.[6] Eugene is divided into 19 neighborhoods, each with an officially recognized association. The 19 associations work together in a coordinating body, the Neighborhood Leaders Council. To qualify for official recognition, the city requires that neighborhood associations

operate openly and seek to represent the interests of the entire neighborhood. To this end, the city distributed a model charter to associations in the 1970s. More recently, the city council adopted a mission statement for neighborhood associations, a move prompted by concerns that the neighborhood associations and the Neighborhood Leaders Council had become too politicized, at times serving as vehicles for a small group of activists with an ideological agenda. The mission statement (see the sidebar on this page) is therefore very neighborhood-focused, defining the associations' purpose as "to build community . . . and improve the livability of the City's neighborhoods."

The Neighborhood Leaders Council works with city employees and serves as a resource for the city council, as well as for other city boards and commissions, on issues pertaining to neighborhoods. Other vehicles for neighborhood involvement, such as the Neighborhood Refinement Plan that once put the full force of land-use law behind neighborhood development plans, are no longer feasible; the city was forced to reduce staff and pare down its workload as a result of a 1996 ballot initiative in Oregon limiting property tax increases and capping overall property tax rates. Today neighborhood associations are encouraged to conduct annual needs assessments of their communities independently, so that they can both provide input to municipal departments' annual work plans and develop their own work plans. This process is purely advisory, however.

Mission Statement for Neighborhood Associations

In May 1999 the **Eugene, Oregon,** city council adopted the following mission statement for neighborhood associations:

Our mission is to build community at the neighborhood level and improve the livability of the City's neighborhoods. Neighborhood associations do this by:

- Sponsoring neighborhood improvement projects and social events;
- Providing a forum to identify, discuss, and resolve neighborhood issues;
- Establishing two-way communication between neighborhoods and the City, and between neighborhoods and other external agencies;
- Educating neighbors on issues, public process, City services, and elections; and
- Identifying and advocating the Neighborhood Association's position on issues such as land use, transportation, public safety, and social services.
- Our neighbors are those who live, work, or own property within our boundaries.

Source: "Eugene's Neighborhood Program, September 1999," Planning and Development Office, Eugene,

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Despite the cutbacks, Eugene devotes significant staff and financial resources to support neighborhood associations and encourage neighborhood activism. Neighborhood services, a section of the department of planning and development, provides training, information referrals, technical assistance, and guidance to the neighborhood associations. The three-person team conducts training sessions in work-plan development and in grant writing for neighborhood leaders and serves as the associations' liaison to other municipal departments. It also assists with publishing the associations' newsletters, a significant time commitment in that 89 newsletters and mailings were sent out last year alone. Neighborhood services also administers the Neighborhood Matching Grants Program, recommended in the 1998 citizen involvement plan and funded through general revenues to encourage proactive organizing and counter the tendency to organize purely for negative reasons.

The matching grants program provides associations with an incentive to plan improvement projects and tap into community resources and seeks "to encourage people to collaboratively identify and actively participate in ways to make their neighborhood better."[8] It funds physical improvement projects, events, and other community-building activities at the neighborhood level. In fiscal year 2001, the city devoted $140,000 to the grants program.[9] There are separate categories for grants under and over $1,000. Twice a year, the city requests proposals and awards grants. Neighborhood associations submit one-third of the proposals; other groups representing certain sectors (for example, parent or business organizations) submit most of the rest, with the remainder coming from informal groups of neighbors. The two requests for proposals (RFPs) outline rigorous selection criteria (see the sidebar on page 5 for the RFP for grants greater than $1,000).

The grant selection committee consists of nine citizens drawn from three pools. The general guideline in putting together the committee is to achieve balanced geographic representation of the city. Three members are drawn from neighborhood associations (past and present leaders); three are "citizen experts" who have served on the budget committee, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) committee, or another citizen commission; and three are drawn from the city's voter pool. The voter pool is part of the city's effort to tap into the aspirations and opinions of the ordinary citizen. The office of the city manager sends a postcard to a random sample of registered voters, inviting them to get involved in citizen commissions. Those who respond are included in the voter pool. To ensure fair geographical representation, the voter-pool participants are selected randomly from areas of the city not represented by the first two groups.

Grants have funded a wide variety of neighborhood improvements and activities (see the sidebar on page 6). To be eligible for city funding, the process of planning and choosing an activity or project must be undertaken in a manner that is demonstrably participatory. The par-

Neighborhood Matching Grant Program
Eugene, Oregon, 2001 Application (for projects over $1,000 total)

Instructions: To submit a grant application, answer the following questions. Please use no more than 4 pages for your basic application. Typed responses (in a font no smaller than 10 pt) are strongly encouraged. Attach budget, project schedule, neighborhood involvement and match documentation. Please submit 10 copies of oversized or color drawings, maps, or photographs.

Note: The committee will rate the applications according to the points referenced.

Total Points

1. **Tangible Neighborhood Benefit (40 points)**

   A. How does the project better your neighborhood? What is the observable physical improvement or measurable change in sense of community or neighborhood identity? Describe both the output (what's being built, nature of the event) and the outcome (measurable impact in neighborhood, number of people attending event). What is the project's continuing benefit? For how long? (25 points)
   B. If it is a physical improvement, how will the project be maintained? If it is an event, how will the activity continue in the future? (10 points)
   C. How does your proposed project align with adopted policies, master plans, projects, council goals and/or neighborhood needs assessments? (5 points)

2. **Community Involvement (35 points)**

   A. What is the geographic area affected by the grant? (Feel free to include an annotated map, instead of text.) How will the proposed project build community among the neighbors affected? How do you know you have the support from the majority of people in the affected area? Please attach any petitions or other relevant documentation. (25 points)
   B. Have you collaborated with other public, private, or non-profit organizations? Please describe who and how. (10 points)

3. **Project Readiness (15 points)**

   A. Please attach budget estimates or spreadsheets for materials/supplies, personnel costs, and construction/capital expenses. (Budget proposals will be reviewed for accuracy, reasonableness, and completeness.) Who will do the accounting? If you have arranged for a fiscal agent, please include name and contact information. (10 points)
   B. What is the project schedule? Please include significant dates (start date, project milestones, end date). (5 points)

4. **Neighborhood Match (10 points)**

   Please attach the documentation for your match. (Documentation may be pledges for labor, pledge/invoice for donated materials/supplies, and pledges or bank statements for cash match.) (10 points)

5. **Extra Credit for more than a 50% match (Up to 10 points)**

   Staff will calculate the extra credit from the information on Page 1.

ticipatory nature of project design and implementation not only ensures community support; it also in itself builds a greater sense of community among its participants. Because the city funds no more than half of any given project, the program also benefits from resources—primarily sweat equity and in-kind contributions—that would otherwise not have been harnessed for the general benefit of the community.

The grant allowing gardeners to compost in Mathews Gardens illustrates the diverse and often unexpected benefits of the program. Mathews Gardens is in a low-income area. In addition to the poor condition of the soil, local residents were concerned about security because a gardener had recently been assaulted. For the city, the cost of intervention was mod-

est: the grant totaled $2,000. The direct benefits to the community may also have been modest but they were quite tangible: a proper fence around the garden, communal composting to enrich the soil, and vegetables grown in a communal section of the garden for local food banks. Far greater were the intangible benefits: a greater sense of security, and even an esprit de corps among the gardeners and between the gardeners and the neighbors in the surrounding area.

The project yielded benefits to the garden and the community even before the grant was made. Laying the groundwork for the project proposal required the support of the appropriate municipal departments—in this case, the solid waste and recycling department, the parks department, and the recreation department.

Past Neighborhood Matching Grants and Current Projects, Listed by Category, in Eugene, Oregon

Events

- Downtown summer concerts
- Friendly area neighbors picnic
- Green the greenway
- Your community puppet troupe performance
- Waste=Food

Garden and Landscaping Projects

- Churchill community garden (phase I and phase II)
- East 33rd Avenue beautification
- Laurel Hill Valley neighborhood beautification
- Mathews Gardens' earth friendly organic waste management project
- Skinner City farm – phase I
- West Eugene bike path beautification
- Whiteaker urban sustainability project

Historic Preservation

- Hope Abbey mausoleum restoration
- South University neighborhood historic designation application

Playground and Park Enhancements

- Danebo fitness track
- Edgewood/Evergreen playground structure
- Refurbish Laurel Hill basketball court
- Spencer Butte Middle School woods restoration
- Trainsong Park tree planting
- Tugman Park enhancements
- Upgrade of Tandy Turn Park playground
- Willakenzie School playground equipment

Public Art

- Whiteaker community art project
- Transportation projects
- Amazon livability project
- Improve school zone (Barger Drive)
- Traffic calming project on West 28th Avenue
- Woodleaf Village bus shelter

Source: www.ci.eugene.or.us/pdd/development/grants/categories.htm.

The organizers shared their plans with the departments, making them aware of needs in Mathews Gardens, needs that the departments addressed in the course of their everyday work. The promise of city support also prompted local businesses to give in kind, contributing manure for the compost bins, food for the initial compost "parties," gravel for paths, and labor.

To fulfill the city's requirement that the affected neighborhood support the project, the gardeners canvassed the neighborhood to inform their neighbors about the garden and their composting plans. The master gardeners invited neighbors to attend workshops on how to compost. The design work and implementation brought people together, including two gardeners who had worked adjoining plots for three years without ever having talked with each other. In many ways, the grant admirably fulfilled the program's goals of building a greater sense of community and encouraging citizen initiatives to improve the neighborhoods.

Focus for Citizen Activism— Durham, North Carolina

In Durham, North Carolina (population 187,000; council-manager), neighborhood activists came together in the mid-1980s to speak out on development issues and stem the rising tide of crime. The umbrella group established by the neighborhood associations, the InterNeighborhood Council (INC), remains active today.

The city adapted its structures in the early 1990s to respond better to neighborhood concerns by taking a more neighborhood-focused approach to service delivery. The catalyst for the city's changes, which bolstered both neighborhood activism and municipal service delivery, was a community policing initiative begun in 1992 called Partners Against Crime (PAC). PAC coordinates service delivery geographically through interdepartmental working groups, which together with volunteer groups periodically review infrastructure and other needs in the city's five PAC districts. While the InterNeighborhood Council represents neighborhoods on citywide issues and provides a counterweight to other interests, the PACs have carved out a narrower, hands-on niche in crime prevention.

InterNeighborhood Council. Neighborhood associations first began to play a major role in Durham local politics in the early 1970s, when outside organizers initiated neighborhood organizations.[10] The presence of professional organizers was controversial because they often took a more confrontational approach to advocating neighborhood interests than did local activists. The current generation of neighborhood associations consists of bottom-up, grassroots organizations that came into their own in the 1980s. In the mid-1980s, several neighborhood associations cooperated to form a bigger voluntary organization called the InterNeighborhood Council (INC).

The INC and the neighborhood associations enjoy collegial relations with the city, and the groups remain independent and unregulated. One neighborhood activist observed that the city recognizes the INC as an asset and uses it to its advantage. The INC, while independent and nongovernmental, is a convenient forum for proactive city officials. For example, the head of solid waste for the city of Durham attends INC meetings periodically. The meetings give him an opportunity to gauge public opinion about the department's

reputation and services. The diverse and outspoken activists of the INC serve as a sounding board for the city on new departmental plans like recycling and composting as well as a way of finding out what the public reaction might be to such changes in departmental services and policies. The INC board, in turn, sends one of its members to city council and county commissioner meetings.

The INC has taken on a broad set of issues, including affordable housing and smart growth. The INC is advocacy oriented and takes an interest in an array of issues—fighting crime, monitoring zoning, protecting historic districts, and preserving the forestlike setting of the city. In its dialogue with the city, it represents the neighborhood perspective. It does not take a stand on questions affecting individual neighborhoods but rather engages in problem solving with individual associations, if the associations request it. To a great extent, the INC views itself as an educational forum for its members—neighborhood association activists who are seeking ways to improve their communities.

One reason neighborhood activists created the INC was to check the temptation, often seen among neighborhood associations, to take a not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) approach to issues like housing and zoning. The INC created a framework within which neighborhood activists sought to strike a balance between the particular interests of each neighborhood and the needs of the city as a whole. In addition to carving out policy positions that are inherently more credible, the INC allows the neighborhood associations to speak with one voice. This creates a more effective counterweight to other organized interests—the business community and real estate developers—on development issues.

Partners Against Crime. The Durham Police Department formally adopted community policing as part of its operating philosophy in 1994. The department decentralized operations and created four separate precincts (today there are five), each with its own district commander. The impetus for this shift was the positive experiences the department and the city had with Partners Against Crime (PAC), a pilot program initiated in North-East Central Durham in 1992 to counteract crime in Durham's most crime-ridden neighborhoods. (It was inspired by a program city officials had seen while on a fact-finding mission to Australia.)

At a time when crack-related, violent crime was at its peak, the program pursued twin ambitions: to eliminate violent and drug-related crime and to reestablish North-East Central Durham as a safe and economically viable community.[11] The program's philosophy followed community policing principles of identifying the conditions that allow crime to flourish and alleviating those conditions. The other operating principle was to involve a number of diverse participants. The Durham PACs received crucial support early on from the mayor, who was interested in integrated approaches to service delivery.

Mayor Kirkhof involved the city manager and the county manager effectively: from the outset, 60 differ-

ent municipal and county agencies agreed to participate in the PAC. One of the city's first steps was to ask department heads to address the community in their annual work plans. When departments began to respond to the feedback of the communities and actually made changes, they gave the PACs credibility from the beginning, something that helped to generate momentum. This evidence of citizens' involvement making a difference was crucial to the primarily volunteer-driven initiative.

In the past two years, the city increased its support for PACs through a federally funded grant program, a local law enforcement block grant, a flexible mechanism that has funded equipment such as bicycles for police officers, self-defense classes, and youth recreation activities such as martial arts programs. The police department grant coordinator facilitates discussion among the police department, citizens, and a citizen advisory board to determine the level of funding provided to each PAC group.

Two years into the PAC experiment in North-East Central Durham, crime had dropped by 58 percent and the community had benefited from $18 million in public and private investments.[12] Impressed, other precincts asked for PACs as well. Today, the PACs foster collaboration and joint problem solving between residents and the city. Activism in the PACs ebbs and flows as volunteers come and go. Neighborhood crime-watch volunteers tend to be the backbone of the PACs, while others volunteer whenever a crime or a controversy motivates them into action. The PACs are not just a vehicle for fighting crime but a platform for community building: they facilitate communication between local government and citizens and generate public-private partnerships through their emphasis on joint problem solving. The local law enforcement block grant program not only supports community-based prevention initiatives, it creates an incentive for involvement that helps sustain activism.

> **Neighborhood activists [who created Durham's INC] sought to strike a balance between the particular interests of each neighborhood and the needs of the city as a whole.**

The citizens active in the PACs choose their own leadership. The cochairs of the original four districts are currently drafting a uniform set of bylaws to govern each of the PACs. Leaders of the PAC districts work with the mayor and city manager to address citywide issues. Increasingly, the PAC leaders set the agenda of this working group to address issues that require city, county, or state attention.

As a city initiative, PACs are supported by a formal structure within municipal government. Each PAC has a community police officer assigned to it—this officer serves as a liaison between the citizens in the PAC and the representatives of local government depart-

ments. Each district's PAC has an interdepartmental team within city government that supports the citizen initiative. Representatives of the local government structures, agencies, and departments are assigned to a particular district. They meet once a month to exchange information and coordinate work by precinct. In one district, this monthly meeting has been eliminated in favor of e-mailed departmental updates that are shared through an e-mail list set up by the PAC, and many of the departmental representatives attend the PAC's public monthly meetings instead. While attendance varies, representatives from the police department, and from the agencies for solid waste, urban

forestry, planning, housing, and code enforcement frequently attend the PAC meetings. Representatives of other municipal and county departments attend on an as-needed basis.

Nine years into the city's community-based approach to crime prevention, the PACs have developed their own vision and sense of purpose. The PACs have become bottom-up organizations despite their top-down origins. The PAC activists are now savvier and better equipped to solve problems themselves. They are more likely to have encountered a problem before and know which agency has jurisdiction over a given area or is equipped to deal with a given situation. The PACs are able to focus attention on a given problem and solve it more quickly. They have learned how to present themselves to the city council more effectively.

Despite the fact that the PACs are, according to one activist, always asking the city for more, the city and its employees appear to value the PACs. The PACs serve as a neutral channel and an educational forum through which the city can reach its citizens. Volunteers monitor developments in their neighborhoods and provide services with a commitment and at a cost that no paid employee or consultant could.

The oldest PAC group in North-East Central Durham, perhaps reflecting its history as the city's original program, is the most structured of the district PACs, having formed a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, a status that allows the PAC, located in a poorer section of the city, to attract outside funding. The other PACs are less formal but are also considered established and sustainable, in part because they were citizen driven from the beginning.

Brooke Whiteford, a PAC activist, commented, "The city, by fostering this group of well-informed solution-oriented citizen advocates, has developed a system for government-community partnership.... The PAC system is a hybrid system that is citizen based and directed but government fostered. It is an amazing success story that the system was initiated, fostered, and grown into a true community-directed system with connections into the government structure."

Neighborhood Alert Centers— Little Rock, Arkansas

As in Durham, community policing in Little Rock, Arkansas (population 183,000; council-manager) has led to geographically focused, crosscutting approaches to service delivery. In Little Rock, a partnership between the Little Rock police department and the city's department of housing and neighborhood programs started in 1992 with the establishment of neighborhood alert centers. The alert centers, originally established in neighborhoods plagued by gangs, serve as hubs for community policing and code enforcement. These crosscutting, municipal teams are so well-received that alert centers now exist throughout all of downtown Little Rock.

Community police officers, code officers, and fa-

Use of Grant Funds by Partners Against Crime Groups

Partners Against Crime (PAC) groups in **Durham, North Carolina,** are funded under Purpose Area #6.... Programs funded under this purpose area must meet two key criteria. First, the activities funded must include the active involvement of law enforcement personnel. Second, program activities must have as their goal the control, detection, or investigation of crime or the prosecution of criminals. An example of an activity that would meet these requirements is a school-based program in which law enforcement professionals are participants or instructors. Another example is a community-based partnership between law enforcement and citizens focused on issues of mutual concern. For instance, law enforcement officers and senior citizens might work together to combat elder abuse and scams targeted at seniors.

Other examples of appropriate PAC initiatives that Block Grant funds have supported include the following:

- The provision of self-defense workshops in conjunction with workshops designed to increase knowledge of basic safety and crime prevention principles
- Purchase of Hearing Assistance Interpreter's System to eliminate the language barrier between English-speaking residents and agency personnel and non-English speaking residents of the community
- Enhancing security within district communities by providing basic security measures such as motion detectors and deadbolt locks in target areas
- Conducting crime prevention workshops within communities
- Purchasing supplies related to the basic administration and operation of the Partners Against Crime organization (such as mailing, printing and copier supplies)

Source: "Procedural Manual for Partners Against Crime (PAC) Use and Management of Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Funds," Durham, N.C.

cilitators typically staff the alert centers. The code officers and facilitators work under the supervision of the department of housing and neighborhood programs. In many ways, the facilitators are the linchpins of the operation because they live and work in the communities they serve and are recruited from within the community, acting as proactive liaisons between residents and city services. Their training is hands-on—departments brief new facilitators on the range and nature of city services, and new facilitators visit more experienced facilitators for on-the-job training.

The facilitators work closely with neighborhood associations: attending their meetings, sharing information, and advising neighborhood leaders how best to act as advocates for their interests. Facilitators organize community events—such as the National Night

Against Crime—that encourage churches and other neighborhood organizations to get involved. Much of their work revolves around troubleshooting: the complaints that facilitators receive about city services are communicated up the chain of command to the head of housing and neighborhood programs, who then passes the complaint on to the respective department head. Facilitators often work together with code officers and police officers, both of whom come across citizens in distress.

The guiding principle of the centers is to provide support as an alternative to enforcement. For instance, facilitators work with homeowners cited for lacking weatherization, to see if they are eligible for a subsidy to help meet compliance. Because facilitators work independently, they need to be creative and resourceful

Job Description
Job Title: Alert Center Facilitator, Little Rock, Arkansas

JOB TITLE: Alert Center Facilitator
  JOB OBJECTIVE: To provide assistance to neighborhood residents by identifying problems and accessing resources and services; to develop plans and strategies to address neighborhood issues and concerns.
  ACCOUNTABILITY: Receives general direction from the Program Assistant I.
  ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

1. Identifies neighborhood needs, problems, and goals through written and oral surveys of neighborhood residents, business owners, and members of social organizations.

2. Coordinates the plans and strategies towards solving neighborhood problems as identified and developed by neighborhood residents.

3. Attends neighborhood meetings to assist with the planning and organization of neighborhood programs, projects, and activities designed to develop neighborhood residents and improve conditions within neighborhoods as identified.

4. Answers questions and provides information to neighborhood residents and the general public regarding City services.

5. Identifies and compiles a listing of neighborhood-based resources such as self-help groups, resident organizations, church and school sponsored activities, family programs, and recreational activities; provides referral services.

6. Works with Police Officers and Code Enforcement personnel assigned to the Alert Center to ensure the needs of residents are met.

7. Initiates the Crack House Elimination Program upon identification of possible drug sales; observes location over an extended period of time to gather evidence; sends letter to property owner upon the gathering of sufficient evidence requesting the stoppage of illegal drug sales.

8. Participates in neighborhood projects as a representative of the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Programs.

9. Inspects neighborhood on foot and by vehicle to observe environmental hazards, potential community issues, criminal activities, and community need.

10. Develops, presents, and coordinates workshops, support groups, and community educational programs to address problem areas critical to neighborhood.

11. Implements plans for relocation assistance to residents affected by disasters, burn-outs, unsafe structures, and the like by providing assessment of needs, referrals for services and housing and providing limited follow-up until placement in permanent housing.

12. Maintains a log of Alert Center activities and a record of the utilization of Alert Center services by residence; compiles activity and progress reports.

Source: Department of Housing and Neighborhood Programs, Little Rock, Ark., 1998.

individuals. One moment they may be called on to do social work, the next disaster relief, as they did in 1997 and 1999 when Little Rock was hit by devastating tornadoes. Facilitators helped residents left homeless locate temporary shelter, provided tornado victims with Federal Emergency Management Agency applications for emergency assistance, and arranged rides to disaster service centers and thus expedited relief.

> **The guiding principle of the alert centers is to provide support as an alternative to enforcement.**

The crown jewel of the Little Rock alert centers is the Neighborhood Resource Center, located in a handsome, newly renovated brick school building. The Neighborhood Resource Center provides many municipal services to residents and serves as a home for several municipal satellite offices and for community nonprofit organizations. It is an anchor in a neighborhood struggling to keep poverty and crime at bay. The University of Arkansas in Little Rock offers business training in the classrooms of the former school; the city runs a small business development office, which serves as an incubator for start-up businesses. A public-private CDBG partnership works together with the kindred spirits of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) office. The center houses a police precinct and a neighborhood library as well as the interdisciplinary alert-center team that consists of code officers, community police officers, and a facilitator. The center is a vibrant place, filled with activity. Neighborhood kids gather on the center's steps—often greeting officers by name—and read, finish homework, and play on computers at the center library. The center is their home away from home.

Neighborhood Conservation Program— Arlington County, Virginia

In Arlington County, Virginia (population 189,000; council-manager), a suburb of the nation's capital, political organizing comes naturally. Virtually all the territory in the county is claimed by one of the 46 neighborhood associations. Although these associations do not have legal status in the county's governance structure, the county board does delegate the authority to recommend funding for small, bond-funded infrastructure projects to the steering committee of the county's Neighborhood Conservation Program (NCP), which is made up of association leaders. The county's influence over participating associations is indirect via funding criteria established to ensure open, democratic processes. Given the associations' long history and comprehensive reach, their influence over the board is no less substantial.

Neighborhood associations have a long history in Arlington County. The first associations sprang up at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since the 1920s, neighborhood associations and other civic organizations have advocated members' interests to the county through an umbrella organization, the Arlington Civic Federation, which has monitored and lobbied policies affecting the county at the state and even national levels. The NCP, begun in 1964, is noteworthy for its longevity, for its funding by bonds, and for its practice of delegating decisions to the neighborhoods themselves. Over the years, many county board members have cut their teeth as neighborhood activists in the federation and the NCP.

The office of neighborhood services, a division of Arlington's department of community planning, housing, and development, is responsible for facilitating communication between the county and its neighborhoods. Its very existence, in the county's own words, "reinforces the County Board's commitment to healthy and vibrant neighborhoods where residents are active in civic and neighborhood affairs and where services are tailored to meet the needs of neighborhoods and coordinated efficiently and effectively among Departments."[13] The division brings several programs—such as its Neighborhood Strategy Area (NSA) for traditional CDBG target areas, historic preservation, and NCP—under one unit. One of the division's goals is to graduate neighborhood groups participating in CDBG-funded initiatives into mature neighborhood associations that can compete successfully for funding in the NCP. Intensive training, funded by CDBG, helps neighborhood activists set priorities in a participatory fashion for their community and integrate into the wider community of neighborhood associations.

Neighborhood associations as institutions come closest to participating in service delivery and decision making through their involvement in the 38-year-old NCP, a citizen-driven process for identifying, selecting, and designing small infrastructure projects. Because it is funded through bonds, the NCP funds projects with a minimum life span of 10 years, something that sets the program apart from other neighborhood programs. Typical projects are sidewalk construction, traffic improvements, neighborhood signs, beautification projects, and park improvements. Within the office of neighborhood services, a coordinator works with three other employees to provide administrative and technical support to the NCP. A planner and an engineer—whose salaries are funded by the NCP—facilitate the integration of NCP infrastructure projects into the public works and transportation department's workload.

A prerequisite for securing funding for a neighborhood is an approved neighborhood conservation plan. Currently, all but 15 of the 46 associations in the county have council-approved plans in place although some of these plans date back as far back as the 1960s. Neighborhood activists interested in developing a plan can turn to staff and veterans of the NCP for guidance. A written guide describes the NCP's proven methodology for surveying neighbors and developing neighborhood conservation plans with ample opportunities for input.[14]

A Look Back

The archives of **Arlington County, Virginia,** give witness to a century-long history of neighborhood associations' contribution to civic life and neighborhood development:

Records of the Fort Myer Heights Citizens Association. History, undated:
"The Fort Myer Heights Citizens Association, formerly know as the Rosslyn Civic League, is alleged to be the oldest citizens association in Arlington County. ...Records of February 2, 1903 show a called meeting at the home of Capt. Stewart and the following officers were elected: Capt. Stewart, Chairman; Mr. Wadley, Treasurer and Mrs. Lewis, Secy.
"The need of roads, people wading knee deep in mud and the inadequacy of the lantern, were the prime motives behind this group of citizens in their efforts to improve the community. Cinders were donated by the Gas Company and men, women, and children worked to spread them on the old Ballston Road, now Wilson Blvd.
"Later, citizens in other areas of the county encouraged by the Rosslyn group, added their efforts to securing lights and more roads..." (Arlington County Archives: Record group 15, Records of Neighborhood Civic Associations, Subgroup 6, Series 4, File 2.)

Report of the Committee in Public Utilities, Federation of Citizens' Association, Re: Airport at Washington. May 7, 1927, pages 6,7:
"Why Washington should have an airport. It has been selected as a point on the Atlanta Air Route. That it should be a municipal project is a necessity for the reason that the contractor has the right to accept an airport in Baltimore, if none is provided for in Washington. ...The prestige of the National Capital requires that we provide the terminal asked for. ...Speed in transportation and communication has a direct influence on the development of every community, both with respect to commercial and residential growth...swift transportation is bound to have a great effect on the community. It is idle to ignore it....
"May 5, 1927: The Federation of Citizens' Association on motion adopted this report unanimously, and ordered the Acting chairman and committee to present the report to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and to the District Commissioners for approval, as well as to present same to the Senate and House Committees of the District."
Minutes of the December Meeting of the Arlington County Civic Federation, December 4th, 1928: "Mrs. Cannon introduced a resolution favoring a National airport, mentioning particularly the proposed Gravelly Point site, and moved its adoption, which was unanimous." (Arlington County Archives: Record group 14, Records of the Arlington County Civic Federation, Subgroup 3, Series 1, File 1.)

Minutes of the March Meeting of the Arlington County Civic Federation, February 1928:
"Mention was made by Mr. R. L. Eacho the fact that several citizens were being arrested for speeding on Long Bridge, adding that the present speed limit of 12 miles an hour for trucks and 15 for cars was ridiculous and if carried out would tie up traffic to Alexandria." (Arlington County Archives: Record group 14, Records of the Arlington County Civic Federation, Subgroup 3, Series 1, File 1.)

Constitution of the Arlington County Civic Federation, Print of December 1, 1939:
"Article II. Objects. Section I. The objects of this organization shall be to devise ways and means, and to take action, to promote the general welfare of Arlington County and vicinity." (Arlington County Archives: Record group 14, Records of the Arlington County Civic Federation, Subgroup 1, Series 1.)

Arlington County Federation Bulletin, Number 7, September 1953:
"Thirty-seven years have passed since the citizens of Arlington, in an effort to impress upon the governing body of the county the need for civic improvements, banded themselves together and formed the Arlington County Federation. The Federation is the most powerful civic voice in the county. Its forty constituent bodies look to it for leadership. Only through unity in purpose can we hope to continue our civic progress. Remember there are selfish political figures who have no great love of the Federation and would welcome any decrease in its influence. "Divide and rule" is their motto. Let us show them that our Federation is united..." (Arlington County Archives: Record group 14, Records of the Arlington County Civic Federation, Subgroup 4, Series 1.)

Arlington County Neighborhood Services Study Committee Report, 1972, page 7:
"In everyday terms, citizen access has to do with the ease and sureness with which citizens make their wishes, complaints and understandings known to the appropriate officials in time to make it count. Citizen access is only one form of citizen involvement. Citizen participation (as on the various County commissions in the decision-support process) and citizen advocacy are other forms. What we should be after is a County government which permits, encourages and makes the greatest use of all forms of citizen involvement." (Arlington County Archives: Record group 32, Documents from the County Manager's Library, Subgroup 20, Series 15, File 3.)

The process for reviewing draft plans is extensive. County staffers review each plan to ensure good planning practices and identify possible conflicts with county policy. All residents and property owners of the area are notified of the final, public community review to be held before adoption. Once the plan is officially adopted by the neighborhood, it is presented to the NCP advisory committee, then the planning commission, and finally the county board.

With an approved plan in place, a selection committee made up of representatives of participating neighborhood associations reviews and prioritizes the proposals for funding. An association's representative must attend these advisory committee meetings regularly; in fact, attendance is a prerequisite for funding.[15] The selection panel uses a numerical system that awards additional points if a project proposal meets certain criteria such as cost sharing, ranking first in a neighborhood's own list of priorities, or coming from a neighborhood with historically lower funding participation in the program. Two rounds of project review and approval are conducted each year. Given the transparent selection process, the county board has rarely challenged or overturned the advisory committee's recommendations.

Until recently, $2 million from the county bond issues was set aside every two years for the NCP. One coordinator dedicated to the NCP served as the program's liaison to other county departments in realizing the neighborhood projects. In the most recent bond issue, $5 million over two years was set aside to fund NCP projects. In addition, three staff employees now assist the coordinator. One of their goals is to urge the few Arlington neighborhoods not yet included in

an association to join an existing one or to start a new one; the staff also encourages more of the associations to participate and benefit from the NCP. This expansion of the program has made it difficult for departments such as public works to keep up with the volume of approved NCP projects, which are labor-intensive because of the emphasis on individualized design and attention to detail. Therefore, the trend points toward contracting out the construction and implementation of NCP projects.

Observers credit the success of the NCP to its truly grassroots, bottom-up nature. As neighborhood concerns have evolved, so has the program. The NCP was originally founded to address the infrastructure needs of underserved African-American neighborhoods in Arlington. Many of the roads in the African-American neighborhoods were unpaved and lacked streetlights and sewers. As subway and highway construction cut through the county's old neighborhoods in the late 1960s and 1970s and as developers lobbied for commercial expansion, the program became a built-in platform for neighborhood leaders to advocate successfully for the conservation of their neighborhoods. The program reflected a determination to preserve the neighborhoods by funding sound barriers, park improvements, and other beautification measures to ameliorate the impact of the new transportation corridors.

Today, the streets that parallel the subway and its stations constitute a commercial corridor, buffered by multiunit residential dwellings and followed by the traditional Arlington neighborhoods of single-family homes. Today the chief preoccupation of neighborhood activists is traffic, as is reflected by the many speed bumps and traffic circles recently constructed in Arlington's residential neighborhoods. Clearly, the NCP framework is sufficiently flexible to adapt to new priorities, as new times bring new issues.

Although many products of the NCP are tangible, in many ways the intangible benefits are more important. The program serves as a proactive mechanism for communicating citizens' needs to county staff as they work with neighborhood leaders to provide technical input in planning and project design. The plans allow neighborhood representatives to present their concerns to county leadership in a concise, professional way. Communication between constituents and local government leaders takes place in a constructive and forward-looking framework. The demand-driven nature of the program creates a safety valve of sorts, allowing citizens to direct funding to projects, such as park improvements, that might be low-priority items for the county. The bottom-up nature of the design process allows for creativity and new approaches: for example, in one neighborhood, the five-to-ten-year-olds chose the equipment and colors of the (very popular) community park.

Since the resources of the NCP create an opportunity to "do something," it invigorates existing associations: dormant civic groups spring back to life as new activists emerge through the planning and prioritizing

How to Get Started

Arlington County, Virginia, provides neighborhood groups with advice about organizing:

- Establish a working committee to create the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan; utilize an existing civic group or neighborhood organization.
- Meet with NC Staff and complete a timeline for plan development.
- Develop, distribute, and evaluate a written questionnaire to all property owners and residents in your area.
- Complete an inventory of existing physical conditions.
- Prepare a demographic profile of your neighborhood.
- Synthesize the data gathered in steps two through four; identify problems and solutions and formulate goals.

Source: "Citizen-Initiated Community Planning" (Arlington County, Virginia: September 18, 2001), 5.

process. The completion of material improvements gives volunteers something concrete to point to and fosters a sense of accomplishment. By bringing citizens together to improve quality of life in each area, the NCP is an engine for civic life in Arlington—building identity and community in participating neighborhoods.

LESSONS LEARNED

The mission and scope of local governments' neighborhood outreach is shaped by the demand for such services and the resources local leadership is willing or able to contribute. Organizational adaptations within local governments to accommodate neighborhood-based citizen participation first sprang up in cities that already had active networks of neighborhood associations. Neighborhood-based citizen participation first evolved to meet needs for physical improvements and future development. Planning departments created processes to facilitate public review of proposals.

The presence of local government offices dedicated to supporting neighborhood activism and/or integrating local government services geographically is increasingly common in urban jurisdictions, often growing from the realization that police departments could not deal single-handedly with the drug-related crime wave of the 1980s. Community policing created new neighborhood-based approaches and reinforced existing ones, as police departments proposed interdisciplinary approaches and solicited citizen involvement and cooperation to turn crime-ridden areas around. Such collaboration has also grown from the backlash against sprawl and hasty development. In activist localities, local governments usually seek neighborhood approval for projects from the very beginning of the planning process.

Administrative Issues

Many cities and urban counties provide two types of support to neighborhoods: they support associations as institutions for channeling citizen participation and nurturing a greater sense of community; and they (re-)structure service delivery to consider the material, security, and social service needs of neighborhoods as distinct units.

Institutional support to neighborhood associations. Support can take various forms: information and access to policy makers; administrative and in-kind support; training; or grants and other material assistance. Some cities create neighborhood boundaries by dividing up the territory into neighborhoods for planning and information-sharing purposes—Asheville's e-mail-list approach to sharing zoning and other information with neighborhood activists is a typical example. Eugene's approach to defining not just neighborhood boundaries but the mission and structure of neighborhood associations formalizes the associations as institutions crucial to the cities' decision-making processes

and reflects a commitment to ongoing dialogue with citizens. Grant programs, as in Durham and Eugene, recognize neighborhood and other civic associations as alternate service providers in hard-to-reach niches.

Once in place, neighborhood service departments help ensure future neighborhood activism. Municipal staff provide institutional memory and administrative assistance to volunteer initiatives. A new generation of activists can access proven structures and procedures for a quick revival of local associations. Neighborhood service departments encourage passive neighborhoods to organize and take advantage of the opportunities and resources that active neighborhoods already use.

Neighborhood-based service delivery. Functional divisions of labor that rely on a series of technical departments strengthen technical proficiency and create efficiencies of cost and time. The downside to this common organizational arrangement is a tendency toward "stovepiping." Integrating service delivery geographically, as in a neighborhood-based service delivery system, counteracts stovepiping by creating opportunities for communication and collaboration across technical

Neighborhood College

To train community members in **Hampton, Virginia,** to contribute more effectively in the community, in 1995 Hampton's neighborhood office (itself only two years old) founded the Neighborhood College, a school dedicated to building partnerships within the community. One important goal of the school was to replace the citizens-complain-and-city-pays model of governance with one in which citizens take a more active role in identifying problems in the community and working to solve them.

The college offers a wide variety of courses about city government, neighborhoods, and the community, including classes on neighborhood planning, community policing, and city services. All students must complete homework assignments such as writing a history of the neighborhood or meeting with a housing specialist or city official.

Graduates become members of the alumni association; as they learn more about how to interact with local government, they pass that knowledge on to current attendees of the school.

Response generally has been positive, among both students and those already working within the community. Students are often surprised to discover that there are so many ways to contribute. Two years after the start of the program, the neighborhood services department concluded that the school "was successful in getting people willing to do business [in] a new way," but that it "needed to be complemented with a range of community education and skill-building opportunities."

Source: Neighborhood Initiative of the City of Hampton, Virginia, "A History of Hampton's Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative: July 1997," p. 7.

areas. Little Rock's network of alert centers, established in satellite locations, puts employees of different municipal departments under one roof and represents a dedication of funds and adaptation on the part of managers. Although separate service locations can increase overhead costs and make oversight more difficult, supervisors who were interviewed are comfortable with the arrangement because code officers and community police officers would be in the field in any case. Employees derive satisfaction from the close relationships they develop with clients in their districts and from the sense of ownership and responsibility that comes from representing their departments in given areas.[16]

Durham's monthly interdepartmental PAC meetings, in which members review needs across departments by precinct, are a less elaborate but equally valid approach to integrating service delivery geographically. The chief cost of this approach is not higher administrative costs or blurred organizational lines, but time. Employees in departmental offices scattered across a locality must regularly take time out of their busy days to gather for still another meeting. However, the parallel presence of a group of citizens interacting with the interdepartmental team creates a demand and momentum for its continued existence.

Organizational features of neighborhood outreach programs. Regardless of the specific issue that prompted the creation of the neighborhood association, neighborhood services divisions are typically found in planning departments. Little Rock's alert centers were created to fight crime, yet organizationally much of the responsibility for managing them falls to the departments of housing and neighborhood programs. Eugene's support of neighborhood associations is an integral part of the council's citizen involvement strategy, as it brings its staff into contact with departments throughout city government; nevertheless, the office remains in the planning department.

Local government staff charged with outreach to neighborhood associations must master a delicate balancing act. One supervisor of a neighborhood services division cited the danger of employees considering themselves internal advocates for neighborhood interests rather than representatives of the local government to the neighborhoods. Neighborhood services employees should view their colleagues, as well as the neighborhood activists, as clients. Neighborhood liaisons will not succeed in facilitating communication between neighborhoods and local government departments if they are seen as biased. In any case, their status as local government employees will often prompt activists and other citizens to regard them with a certain distance. Particularly in controversial situations, it may be in the interests of a locality to keep the line between citizens and employees clear and use outside facilitators to bridge gaps. The Portland, Oregon, planning department, for instance, often hires outside consultants to facilitate public-private planning committees.

Economic Issues

Neighborhood associations, as grassroots organizations, are financially viable propositions almost anywhere. Most neighborhood associations are more akin to committees than they are to organizations. They can be called into life when a cause beckons and later fall dormant when volunteers lose interest, perhaps because success has been achieved or volunteers have grown discouraged. The monetary costs are negligible. The structure of neighborhood associations is derived from bylaws, the activities fueled by the energy of volunteers. Occasionally, neighborhood-based groups such as one Durham PAC district register formally as a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization in order to hire staff, offer ongoing services, or raise money privately.

Once they exist, neighborhood programs sponsored by local governments serve a constituency by definition dominated by politically active citizens. Once created, such programs may be difficult to abolish, absent abuse or fiscal shortfalls. As the Arlington Neighborhood Conservation Program illustrates, the longevity of a program reinforces its effectiveness. It is therefore important to ensure that the resources will be there to support municipally sponsored programs over the long term.

> **Neighborhood associations, as grassroots organizations, are financially viable propositions almost anywhere.**

Funding sources. Sources of funding for the programs are as varied as the programs themselves: Eugene devotes general revenue funds to staff its neighborhood outreach but draws on other sources, such as state transportation funds, to supplement its grant program. Diversity of funding sources enhances the viability of such programs. Arlington's chief outreach mechanism to neighborhoods—including some staff salaries—is entirely bond funded. By consistently setting aside a portion of infrastructure bonds for allocation by the associations, Arlington has created a steady stream of funding that has supported neighborhood activism for over 37 years. By taking advantage of a federal crime prevention grant program, Durham has breathed new vitality into its crime-fighting community PACs. The PACs existed long before the grant program, however, and will likely continue to exist long after that program ends. Little Rock's alert centers, which serve as satellite offices of the city, came about in part because of public-private partnerships. For example, churches and businesses, eager to attract alert centers in their neighborhoods, offer space to the city at below-market rates. And bundling several services in one easy-to-visit location creates a more effective satellite, one that is more cost-effective as well.

Cost-effectiveness. The cost-effectiveness of Eugene's matching grant program and Little Rock's alert cen-

ters is difficult to assess because the chief benefits cited in both cases are intangible: citizen satisfaction, increased trust in the local government, and a greater sense of community and security. Yet these intangible factors are the reasons that such programs are not just surviving but growing in popularity.

Political Issues

Relationship of the local government to neighborhood associations. The relationship of a jurisdiction to its local neighborhood associations is often shaped by the history of neighborhood associations in the community. In jurisdictions with a long history of neighborhood organizing, these associations value their independence and keep the local government at arm's length. Other cities and associations have well-defined relationships and work together very closely. In developing Eugene's *Citizen Involvement Strategic Plan* in 1998, activists, city council members, and staff agreed that the mission and role of the city's officially recognized neighborhood associations needed to be better defined, a decision that has led to a more harmonious working relationship between the city and the neighborhoods. Some cities have such a strong tradition of independent-minded neighborhood associations that they are considered a major factor in the local political calculus. For example, the city council of Austin, Texas, has not approved a comprehensive plan since 1979, in large part because of outspoken but not necessarily coordinated opposition by neighborhood associations.

Incentives and standards. By encouraging associations to be proactive instead of reactive, grant programs can turn a negative impulse—criticism of existing programs, for example—into a positive one. Resources give cities greater influence over associations in other ways, too. To compete for grants, associations and other groups often must agree to minimum process standards to ensure that they are operating transparently and giving all residents an opportunity to participate in their decisions. This process serves the interests of the local government as well as those of the ordinary citizen because it acts as a check on smaller groups of activists whose views do not reflect the community as a whole.

Superstructures, coordinating bodies of neighborhood associations. Parochialism is one possible consequence of organizing by neighborhood. Citizen groups may resist efforts to improve a locality's overall welfare if they perceive a disadvantage to their own neighborhoods. A lack of an effective body for balancing parochial interests among associations often hinders attempts on the part of a city council or county board to make effective policy. Industrial development, homeless shelters, and low-income housing frequently trigger neighborhood opposition. Cities often attempt to counter such attitudes by creating mechanisms that bring association leaders together for, at a minimum, an exchange of views to make neighborhood leaders

aware of larger issues facing the locality. Durham's INC is an example of associations recognizing the NIMBY tendency on their own and organizing their own educational and coordinating body.

> **By encouraging associations to be proactive instead of reactive, grant programs can turn a negative impulse— criticism of existing programs, for example—into a positive one.**

Political implications of powerful associations. Umbrella groups also serve as a clearinghouse for associations to harmonize their views on pending issues and thus spare the local government from drowning in a torrent of competing views. In addition, they strengthen the political clout of the neighborhood associations. The Arlington Civic Federation, for example, serves as a noted advocate for its members' interests with respect to county board activities.

Conclusion

Citizen-organized neighborhood associations and government-organized, neighborhood-based service delivery strengthen the sense of community, channel conflict, tap into residents' creativity and volunteers' energy, and even the playing field between developers and residents. While the presence of neighborhood associations does not guarantee an advantage for local jurisdictions, they do allow government and citizens to work creatively to ensure that neighborhood activism is a positive force in the life of the community.

NOTES

1 See the Management Information Service report, "A Framework for Citizen Participation: Portland's Office of Neighborhood Associations," vol. 18, no. 9 (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, September 1986) for more on the history and structure of Portland, Oregon's Office of Neighborhood Associations.
2 "Smart Growth Definition and Policies" (Planning and Development Department, Asheville, N.C.), 3, www.ci.asheville.nc.us/planning/new.htm.
3 *Citizen Involvement Strategic Plan* (Eugene, Oreg., October 1998), 16, www.ci.eugene.or.us/NEIGHBOR/index.htm.
4 "Issues hitting close to home (neighborhood issues), are the most likely factors which would induce people to get more actively involved in city government." See "Survey of Citizen Involvement for the city of Eugene, June 1998" (Advanced Marketing Research, Inc., 1998), 13.
5 *Citizen Involvement Strategic Plan,* 8–20.
6 "Eugene's Neighborhood Program, September 1999" (Planning and Development Office, Eugene, Oreg.).
7 Ibid.
8 See the Eugene, Oreg., Web site at www.ci.eugene.or.us/pdd/development/grants/index.htm.
9 There are four sources of funding: the general fund, the solid waste and recycling fund, the public works fund, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

10 James V. Cunningham and Milton Kotler, *Building Neighborhood Organizations: A Guidebook Sponsored by the National Association of Neighborhoods* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 33–4. The Association of Community Organization for Reform Now (ACORN) started a North Carolina chapter in Durham in 1972.

11 "Overview of Community Policing Initiatives" (Police Department, Durham, N.C.), 6.

12 Ibid., 8.

13 See www.co.arlington.va.us/cphd/ons/index.htm.

14 "Citizen-Initiated Community Planning: A Guide to the Neighborhood Conservation Program Planning Process" (Arlington County, Virginia, September 18, 2001).

15 "Neighborhood Conservation Program Manual: Rules and Bylaws of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee" (Community Planning, Housing and Development, Office of Neighborhood Services, Arlington County, Va., May 10, 2001), 3: "16.b. Any neighborhood which is not represented by their primary or alternate member for three consecutive regularly scheduled monthly meetings of the Committee will be placed on probation. ...Neighborhoods on probation will be designated inactive unless represented at the next monthly NAC meeting.... Their projects that are in process of being 'scoped out' by county staff will be immediately put on hold until such time that they are reinstated into the NCAC. Projects already funded will continue to completion...."

16 See the Management Information Service report, "Neighborhood Service Delivery," vol. 25, no. 4 (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, April 1993) for more information on the advantages of integrated service delivery.

ADDITIONAL ICMA RESOURCES

Building Citizen Involvement: Strategies for Local Government Training Workbook. This training workbook, developed jointly by ICMA and the National League of Cities (NLC), is designed to give elected and appointed local government officials the information, tools, and skills needed to be effective in promoting citizen involvement and community problem solving. This comprehensive training tool: outlines the building blocks for creating a collaborative environment, explores your changing leadership role in this environment, shows how to engage citizens in policy making, presents ten practical steps for connecting citizens to government, describes how and when to select an outside facilitator, and provides examples of new techniques and programs used successfully by local governments. This cost-effective workbook is designed to meet the needs of local government officials and staff at all levels as well as neighborhood/citizen groups. Training Workbook. 1997. Item no. 41296. Members, $40.00; nonmembers, $50.00.

Catalog of Data Sources for Community Planning. Intended as a reference for managers, elected officials, department heads, planners, community groups, and citizens, this report is a convenient guide to federal, state, and local administrative sources of data needed in community planning and development. The data sources are described and evaluated in terms of type, level of detail, quality, and availability. IQ Service Report. 1998. 19 pages. Item no. 42345. $14.95.

Citizen Academies. Because informed citizens are a valuable resource for a community and can make the local government's job easier, communities throughout the country are establishing citizen academies. Open to citizens of all ages, occupations, and interests, citizen academies have two goals: to educate citizens about municipal services and programs and to attract and train future community leaders. This report describes the development, content, and administration of citizen academies in five different communities: Sarasota, Florida; Troy, Michigan; Watertown, New York; Highland Park, Illinois; and Hickory, North Carolina. IQ Report. 2001. 16 pages. Item no. 42667. $14.95.

Community Visioning: Citizen Participation in Strategic Planning. Case studies from six local governments demonstrate different approaches to community visioning and planning. MIS Report. 1994. 15 pages. Item no. 40893. $14.95.

Establishing Effective Citizens' Advisory Committees. This report provides a blueprint for establishing a citizens' committee that can assist in solving community problems. Samples are provided for bylaws, meetings agendas, and orientation materials. Includes three case studies. MIS Report. 1996. 12 pages. Item no. 42059. $14.95.

Neighborhood Association Tool Kit. Phoenix, Arizona's tool kit to provide residents with step-by-step instructions on how to start a neighborhood association. Clearinghouse Report. 1997. 18 pages. Item no. 42148. $14.00

Neighborhood Service Delivery. How to get neighborhood residents involved in the planning and implementation of local government service delivery. MIS Report. 1993. 10 pages. Item no. 40804. $14.95.

Responsive Service Delivery: A Community Orientation for Problem Solving. How to translate community-oriented policing or neighborhood service delivery concepts into action. Examples. MIS Report. 1993. 16 pages. Item no. 40825. $14.95

Righting the Wrong: A Model Plan for Environmental Justice in Brownfields Redevelopment. A guidebook for local governments and communities that outlines steps that a local entity can take to develop successful policies and practices to address existing environmental justice issues and avoid future instances. This guidebook can be adapted to address a number of service delivery and social equitability issues. It was written after a three-year pilot project with the city of Clearwater, Florida; that city's community groups; and two Florida universities including the University of South Florida's Center for Brownfields and Florida A&M University's Center for Environmental Equity and Justice. 2001. Item no. 42637. $19.95.

Traffic Calming Request and Review Procedure. A document from Champaign, Illinois, describing the procedure for citizens who want to request traffic calming devices in their neighborhoods. Defines neighborhood criteria, presents several traffic calming solutions for a variety of traffic problems, and provides photos of alternatives. Included also are descriptions of traffic calming alternatives, advantages and disadvantages, and impacts on local government budget and staffing. Clearinghouse Report. 2001. 28 pages. Item no. 42686. $14.00.

To order the above publications, write the ICMA Product Fulfillment Center, P.O. Box 931897, Atlanta, GA 31193; phone 1-800/745-8780; fax 770/442-9742; or visit the ICMA Bookstore at bookstore.icma.org.

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