

REVISED Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy

NOTES:

This draft document contains all policy provisions included in the existing NORP and guidelines used by OECE (previously HRNI) to guide work with neighborhood associations. It incorporates feedback received via survey and uses a simplified language throughout. Once a new policy document is approved by City Council, OECE staff will work with neighborhood associations to prepare a procedures manual to guide the implementation of the revised policy.

New policy language is presented in **bold font** and changes to existing policy intent and definitions are in *italics* with references within parenthesis.

The existing NORP was approved by Resolution No. 2554 (August 23, 1976) and amended by Resolution No. 3746 (January 26, 1983) and by Resolution No. 5140 (October 12, 2015).

Section 1. Neighborhood Association Purpose and Responsibilities

- a) Neighborhood Associations are advisory to City Council and other City boards and commissions on matters affecting their area. Those matters can include land use, zoning, parks, open space and recreation, annexation, housing, community facilities, transportation and traffic, public safety, sanitation, and other activities and public services which affect their neighborhoods. Neighborhood associations must allow all residents and/or members to participate in discussions before issuing an opinion on those matters.
- b) Neighborhood Associations may address themselves to all matters which affect them and may establish relations, not in conflict with city-neighborhood relations set forth in this Policy, with any agency or jurisdiction with which they have mutual concerns. This Policy governs only the relationship between recognized neighborhood organizations and the City of Eugene.
- c) Neighborhood associations are governed by elected boards comprised of members of each association.
- d) *Board elections should be stated and held in accordance with the neighborhood charter with elections held between one and not more than three years for each board position. Notice of elections shall be posted broadly so as to encourage any and all members to participate. (The Model Charter, approved by Resolution 3746, calls for annual elections. The proposed text allows each association to choose between 1 and 3 years for the duration of the terms elected board members can serve)*
- e) **Existing and new neighborhood associations must include an equity statement in their charters.**
- f) Neighborhood associations can develop plans and proposals for their area. Assistance from professional City staff will be offered if available.
- g) Neighborhood associations will inform residents about plans, proposals, and activities affecting their area.

- h) Neighborhood associations may use public funds to organize or sponsor neighborhood events and produce printed or electronic outreach in accordance with the Guidelines for Appropriate Use of Public Funds.
- i) Neighborhood associations can submit requests or proposals for projects needed in their area to City staff. **Such submissions must be filed with Neighborhood Association Program staff and do not include requests for maintenance of existing infrastructure and questions regarding existing services.**
- j) *When the City has timely, neighborhood specific information that is desired to be included in a specific neighborhood association's newsletter, that association must allow the City use of 25% of available space in printed and online communications that are paid for with public funds and sent to residents. (Current NORP states that the City shall have access to space in neighborhood associations publications sponsored by the City without setting a limit. The proposed text adds clarity to that requirement.)*
- k) Neighborhood associations may fundraise and/or include advertising in publications consistent with local and federal laws to finance association activities.

Section 2. City of Eugene responsibilities

- a) The City will provide funding and staff assistance to aid neighborhood association outreach and activities as long as funding is available and allocated through the budget process.
- b) The City will provide training for neighborhood association board members including an annual orientation to acquaint neighborhood leaders with City resources and functions.
- c) The City will notify (and/or support the notification of) neighborhood associations of land use, annexations, and development applications within their neighborhood boundary in accordance with the requirements in the City Code.
- d) The City will notify neighborhood associations of public hearings on land use, annexations, and development within their neighborhood boundary.
- e) The City will notify neighborhood associations of proposed changes in City policies, projects, services, and activities with significant impact to their area with enough time to allow public participation in the decision-making process, **according to the community engagement plan for each policy and service change or project. (Existing NORP states 'ample time' without a definition for it)**
- f) The City will review neighborhood plans that have been recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission.
- g) All City departments will consider all neighborhood plans adopted by City Council as refinement plans.
- h) **Neighborhood Association Program staff will conduct a review of services and policies of the Neighborhood Association Program every five years.**

Section 3. Outreach to residents

- a) Neighborhood associations should distribute a minimum of 4 communications to members of their neighborhood. A minimum of two communications shall be printed and mailed to every address in their area (eligible for Neighborhood Association Program funds contingent on budget allocation).
- b) **Neighborhood associations will request from Neighborhood Association Program staff information on projects and policies included in the tentative agenda for upcoming City**

Council meetings three business days before such information is needed for inclusion in print or online communications with residents. If a neighborhood association publishes content that misrepresents official positions and proposals submitted to consideration by City Council, staff will request that timely corrections be distributed to residents.

- c) Neighborhood associations may present advocacy positions in an editorial format and allow for the timely distributions of opposing neighborhood viewpoints from residents of the area and/or members of the association.

Section 4. Requirements for Maintaining Active Status and City Recognition*

- a) Neighborhood associations must organize a minimum of two general meetings per year.
- b) Neighborhood associations must maintain a minimum level of communication with residents as described in Section 4.
- c) Neighborhood associations must submit a report of activities annually. A format for reporting to the City will be provided by Neighborhood Association Program staff.
- d) Neighborhood associations are required to hold elections consistent with their Charter and By-Laws **and notify Neighborhood Association Program Staff of any changes to their board, including contact information within 14 days of change to board.**
- e) **If staff believes that a neighborhood association is at risk of becoming inactive, staff will notify the association and develop a plan to help the association maintain its active status before using the procedures for listing the association under inactive status as described in f) below.**
- f) **If a neighborhood association fails to maintain their responsibilities in a) through d) above to remain in active status, Neighborhood Association Program staff will:**
 - i. **Send a mailer to all residents in the boundary of the neighborhood association stating their neighborhood association is at risk of being labeled as “Inactive” and could lose their formal recognition status.**
 - ii. **Organize a neighborhood meeting to discuss maintaining recognition and moving towards securing active status.**
 - iii. **If a neighborhood association cannot perform their functions as outlined in this policy within ninety days of that neighborhood meeting, then a determination will be made to move the association into inactive status. At that point, the City is not required to provide official communication to the association and the association's access to program funding will be suspended.**
 - iv. **A process to merge the inactive association with an active neighboring association can be considered if the “Criteria for Establishing Neighborhood Boundaries” is maintained and is voted on by the general membership of the neighboring association.**

* This section replaces the Administrative Guidelines for Initiating and Establishing Inactive Status for Neighborhood Organizations approved by City Council on October 8, 1980.

Section 5. Establishment and Recognition of Neighborhood Associations

- a) Interested parties must notify Neighborhood Association Program staff and schedule a publicized meeting for the purpose of creating, merging, or splitting a neighborhood association. Public notice must be given at least **30 days prior to such meeting.** (Current NORP does not establish a period for such public notice)

- b) The notification to Neighborhood Association Program staff described above must include the names and addresses of at least five people leading the effort to create a new neighborhood association.
- c) The notice and proposal for the creation of a new neighborhood association must identify the boundaries of the proposed association.
- d) Neighborhood boundaries should not be defined by a sole private sector collective. (i.e. apartment complex, homeowners association or gated communities, etc.). Neighborhood boundaries should not divide major natural or artificial barriers (i.e. river, major highway, etc.). New neighborhood boundaries cannot overlap existing recognized neighborhood boundaries without a vote of the existing neighborhood association.
- e) The neighborhood association shall be open to the total area and diversity of interests present in their area.
- f) Any resident, renter, or owner of property or business within a boundary of a neighborhood association may participate fully in that association without conditions. *Existing or proposed neighborhood associations may choose to extend membership to employees of businesses and non-profits located within their boundaries.* (Current NORP is not clear about allowing membership to workers who do not reside in the area of a neighborhood association. Several neighborhood associations have included provisions in their bylaws expanding who can become a member of such associations)
- g) A new neighborhood association must create and submit a neighborhood charter with proof that the document was widely circulated in the proposed neighborhood association area. *The charter will only include the identification of the neighborhood association, its boundaries, criteria for membership, equity statement, and its governing structure.* The charter will be reviewed by City Council as part of the recognition process. A Model Charter will be made available by Neighborhood Association Program staff. (Current NORP allows neighborhood associations to include all provisions typically found in bylaws into their charter. This separation will make the process of updating bylaws simpler and fully controlled by neighborhood association boards.)
- h) Neighborhood associations will develop Bylaws that govern their operations and the implementation of their Charter. **Neighborhood associations Bylaws do not need to be approved by City staff but must be reviewed for consistency with approved charters.**
- i) *There should be no fewer than 500 residential units within a proposed neighborhood association boundary.* (Current Guidelines for Neighborhood Association Boundaries set the limit at 300 residential units)
- j) *A neighborhood association boundary cannot include more than 10% of individual residential addresses within the city limits.* (Current Guidelines for Neighborhood Association Boundaries set the limit at 8%)
- k) **If a neighborhood association boundary is not in compliance with the current policy, Neighborhood Association Program staff will:**
 - i. **Propose a discussion of the criteria for neighborhood boundaries at a neighborhood general meeting and discuss options for the neighborhood association, which could include splitting, merging, establishing conditions to maintain current boundaries or timelines for future boundary reviews.**

- ii. **Work in collaboration with the neighborhood association to create a public engagement plan for feedback on any proposed actions to bring the association into compliance with current policy.**
- iii. **If compliance is not achieved through the process described above, staff may recommend the matter for consideration by City Council.**

Section 6. (References)

- a) The Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy approved by Resolution No. 2554 (August 23, 1976) and amended by Resolution No. 3745 (January 26, 1983) and by Resolution No. 5140 (October 12, 2015) is repealed and superseded by the Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy contained herein.
- b) Administrative Guidelines for Initiating and Establishing Inactive Status for Neighborhood Organizations approved by City Council on October 8, 1980 is repealed and superseded by the Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy contained herein.
- c) The Model Charter approved by Resolution 3746 is repealed and replaced by the Model Charter contained herein **(to be included after this commenting period)**.