

Clark County Neighborhood Outreach Program

Overview

Marilee McCall, Neighborhood Outreach Program Coordinator I

County Council Annual Planning Meeting

January 28, 2020



NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATIONS COUNCIL
OF CLARK COUNTY



When the Neighborhood Program started in 1995 we had a lot less technology and we offered more in-person, on-site services. Although our day-to-day operations were different, our relationship with the associations was much the same. Here's what was provided, with comments included about what we do now, or why we discontinued the service.

Early Days

Hard copy "weekly information packets" of all countywide events were compiled and distributed to neighborhood leaders. They included county activities, projects, news events, available special services such as cleanups, and opportunities for involvement in county projects and processes.

Annual leaf collection event.

Annual Chipping/Neighborhood Clean-up event (with use of county's wood chipping equipment).

Newsletter printing of five or six newsletters per year, including mailing. Because of lesser technology, this involved printing and peeling address labels for each mailing address. Neighborhood volunteers came in to assist with the task.

Posting of four neighborhood identification signs posted at the property boundaries of the neighborhood.

Other logistical support services subject to availability of resources.

Present Practice

We now have a resource page on the county website with links to this information. Neighborhoods have been asking for a weekly update that is all-inclusive and that compiles the information on one notification, but we don't currently have resources to complete this task.

We now provide leaf disposal coupons so residents can dump them for free at various collection sites.

Due to expense of staff overtime (weekend events) and liability and other equipment concerns, we no longer provide this service.

We have limited neighborhoods to three newsletters and mailings per year, and are strongly encouraging use of post-card notifications with links to the neighborhood webpage. The print shop now loads an Excel spreadsheet of the mailing addresses and prints them directly onto the mailers.

We have continued to provide these. There has been discussion of re-branding and updating the signs. They would be smaller, brighter, more noticeable, and potentially less expensive.

This includes assistance with scheduling county speakers for meetings, help with layout of newsletters, tech assistance with social media, advising referrals to mediation services, code enforcement and other county departments, and many other services via phone, email, and in-person meetings.

21 Neighborhood Associations held 35 neighborhood meetings in 2019 with multiple topics of interest and outreach.

Our neighborhoods range in size from 497 households (East Fork Hills) to 9,868 households (NE Hazel Dell).

With an average attendance of 40 residents, the outreach and education effort of neighborhood meetings touched more than 1,400 people.

The Neighborhood Coordinator attended 23 of these evening meetings either in a support function or to give a presentation on neighborhoods or emergency preparedness.

For the most part, agenda topics are determined by the neighborhoods and questions they are receiving from the residents; but neighborhood leaders also accommodate speaker requests from our county departments to attend their meetings as an outreach opportunity.

Topics covered:

- Clark County Public Works Project updates (7)
- Meet Your Sheriff Deputy Liaison (6+)
- CRESA, CERT, 911, Fire Safety (5)
- Joint PW and WSDOT information: SR500 project and 179th St. Interchange project (3)
- Yacolt Mountain Quarry updates (3)
- Code Enforcement (2) & Animal Control (1)
- Property Tax Assessments (2)
- Community Development (2)
- Naturescape & Master Gardener program (2)
- Homelessness
- Accessible Housing—adjustments for aging residents
- Korean War Memorial
- Heritage Farm Master Plan
- Mt. St. Helens Institute
- Cascadia Tech Programs
- Chinook Trails
- Clark County Amateur Radio Club
- Community Planning: Growth Plan 101
- Camp Bonneville
- Transitional Youth Program
- Moulton Falls trail maintenance
- Septic Inspection rules and Water Table information
- Informational Councilor Candidate Forum for District 4

Neighborhood web pages:

In 2019, after almost two years' of work and collaboration with Communications, GIS, and the web team, we launched a new neighborhood directory page with an interactive look-up function where residents can enter their address and find out what Neighborhood Association they reside in.

We've had a 47% increase in web traffic since redesigning the directory.

This effort included creating a new web page for each neighborhood association that includes its history as well as:

- Newsletters
- Officers and contact information
- Bylaws
- Sheriff Deputy Liaison officers' names and contact information
- Parks within their neighborhood boundary, with hot links to the Parks page which shows location and amenities available.
- Quick map of the neighborhood boundaries
- Hotlink to their neighborhood association's Facebook and Twitter (if applicable)

The screenshot shows the Felida Neighborhood Association page on the Clark County website. The page features a navigation bar with links for Home, A-Z Index, Calendar, Mission, and a search bar. Below the navigation bar are tabs for How do I..., Services, Departments, Elected Offices, and Maps & Records. The main content area is titled 'FELIDA' and includes a photograph of people at a park. Below the photo is a paragraph of text describing the association's history and mission. To the right of the text are sections for Newsletters, Parks, Neighborhood Sheriff Liaison, and Neighborhood Fire Station. At the bottom of the page are sections for Neighborhood Association Officers, Social Media, Bylaws, and Quickmaps. The footer contains information for residents, businesses, and volunteers, as well as links to online services and contact information for Clark County.

Newsletters:

In 2019, we sent out 108,095 postcards and newsletters.

We've transitioned most of the mailers to postcards at this time.

With 50% adoption of associations using postcards, we've dropped the print shop cost for 2019 to \$5,641.14—

a 76% cost savings from the \$22,999.36 costs in 2011.

Maple Tree Neighborhood Association

We're voting on a new Board to serve our neighborhood association at the February meeting. If you are interested in helping with this community effort, we would like to hear from you!

Our goals for the next year:

- Organizing the association and creating a board/council.
- Creating a current events newsletter on a quarterly basis.
- Holding neighborhood meetings at least 3 times a year.
- Gathering information from you about topics that matter to you, and bringing in speakers to present information and answer your questions.
- Working to build community/Get to know our neighbors
- Organizing an annual picnic if there's enough interest!

Please send an email with your name and telephone number to MapleTreeNeighborhood@gmail.com

We'd like to hear from you!

Did you know? Neighborhood Associations are NOT an HOA!

Neighborhood residents have formed our neighborhood association and Clark County's Neighborhood Program Coordinator works with us as a liaison for information to be shared with citizens. Everyone in Clark County is in a neighborhood association, and there are no dues or fees to attend. Volunteers regularly receive information from Clark County so their members can be better informed on issues such as annexation plans, new housing or business development, etc. **Whether you own or rent your home, all are welcome!**

Please join us for our
Neighborhood Association's 2nd meeting
Tuesday, February 4, 2020
at the Gold Cup Coffee House
10805 NE 4th Plain Blvd., Vancouver from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

For our second meeting agenda:

- Clark County's Public Works division will attend to give us updates about current and future road maintenance and improvement,
- We will elect our first neighborhood board officers, and
- we will also continue to talk about ideas and needs for our neighborhood.

Check out our page on the county's web site!
www.clark.wa.gov/county-manager/maple-tree



Neighborhood association newsletters are copied free of charge by the Clark County Neighborhood Outreach Office and Clark County's Print Shop. The information and views expressed are solely those of the neighborhood association and not of Clark County Government.

To make the postcards more effective, we include a link leading to the county's neighborhood pages and the neighborhood's Facebook page, if applicable. (Multi-level outreach!) Research shows that asking the recipient to follow a link or take an action online expands the outreach and response to this simple postcard.

There is still very much a place for newsletters in neighborhood outreach. Mailed notification for neighborhood association meetings is essential in the rural area. It's not possible to hand-deliver notices to rural residents within one afternoon like it is in the urban area, and there aren't a lot of commercial business "gathering" sites with bulletin boards to post notices. In some neighborhoods there's a significant number of residents without email or high-speed internet.

Direct mail to all residents within neighborhood areas assists in building familiarization with county programs, recognition that there is an active neighborhood resource for information, and building trust with residents.

With fewer marketers sending mail, our mail has a higher chance of standing out. The internet and our email are all full of marking messages, but mailboxes aren't. *In a recent marketing study, *73% of people said that they prefer direct mail as an advertising method.*

Interesting notes: **Email's click through rate is about 2-3% with a response rate of 0.6%, compared to a response rate of 5.3% for mail sent to homes.*

**In 2016, the Data & Marketing Association reported that the direct mail customer response rate increased by 43%. Even better, the response rate increased by a whopping 190% compared to 2015.*

**Marketing data pulled from "13 Reasons Why Direct Mail Isn't Dead" Neil Patel, co-founder of NP Digital, recognized as one of the top 10 marketers by Forbes magazine and a top 100 entrepreneur under the age of 35 by the United Nations.*



Nextdoor App—What's that all about?

The Nextdoor app is a new addition to our outreach toolbox, used in concert with the county's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Nextdoor is unique in that residents create their own "neighborhood" boundary so that they can communicate with each other. Residents can post about neighborhood information, concerns or complaints to their own neighborhood—or also include their surrounding neighborhoods. These posts are only viewable with the neighborhood(s) where they're posted.

This forum has become increasingly popular with our residents, with 105,410 members in Clark County, and this number continues to grow on a weekly basis. Our number of "hits" on our posts is 5,000 to 15,000 readers.

We started with only three employees posting on this format, but now have 11 people posting information from Neighborhoods, Public Works, Public Health, Recycling and Solid Waste, and Clean Water. Our most recent addition has been the Assessors office, so that they can publicize their outreach meetings on the new senior tax exemption laws.

We use Nextdoor to post information about:

- Meeting dates: work sessions and hearings of high interest, forums and open houses.
- Meeting/event cancellations: snow or winter storm/flooding conditions that require "day-of" cancellations.
- Events: Recycled Arts Festival, State of the County, ribbon cuttings for parks, bridges, sidewalks.
- General safety information: winter driving conditions, burn bans, heat wave cautions.
- Public Works projects, including road closures and detours.
- Volunteer opportunities such as park clean-ups.
- Informational classes: Composting, Master Gardener, Recycling.
- Openings on county commissions and boards.

At this point, the majority of posts are not open for comment/two-way discussion with the residents, as we don't have staffing available to monitor the level of activity that occurs on this format, as well as issues with recording interaction for response to public records requests. However, those interested in asking questions can message the person posting information and it will come through the county's email system and automatically be archived.

Neighborhood Association outreach to their neighbors:

Our Neighborhood Outreach office and multiple county departments use the neighborhood association meetings to reach out to our residents on a regular basis to educate on processes or to update neighbors on projects that impact them.

Our Neighborhood Associations do a lot on their own by scheduling their meetings with speakers of interest. Neighborhood leaders are responsible for calendaring these events, reserving the meeting space, and keeping up on what their neighbors are interested in to ensure their meetings are of interest.

We currently offer no grants or monetary assistance with payment for space rental for meetings, and some neighborhoods pay \$50 or more per meeting, depending on what locations are available to them within their boundaries.

The only county funds available to neighborhood associations is a \$120 reward for attending a recycling class that they can earn on an annual basis. *Clark County Solid Waste sends them a check after verification that they have posted recycling information in their newsletter.*



Here are examples of Neighborhood Association outreach:

Truman’s Bike Safety Fair had more than 400 attendees at last event; a bike “rodeo”, bike raffles, Lions Club eye exams, and it was coordinated with an open house for the plans for the new elementary school



Connection with school districts’ Family-Community Resource Centers to assist with student needs; shoes/ clothing/books

<https://vansd.org/fcrc/>



Assistance with organization and information on parade routes and traffic plans for the **Hazel Dell Parade of Bands**, a huge community effort every May

Felida 4th of July Kids Parade, a kids-only parade that attracts more than 500 people

NE Hazel Dell Holiday Giving event, in it’s 21st year working with many community partners to provide a happy holiday season for one of our lowest income neighborhoods. Highlight of the event is a bike raffle where more than 100 kids receive a new bike.

Green Bag food program, also known as the Clark County Food Project, started in one neighborhood with a small group in 2017. This program now has more than 900 households regularly donating food and over 56 neighborhood coordinators collecting about 30,000 pounds of food every two months for distribution to local food pantries in Clark County.



Green Bag Program/Clark County Food Project:

This project has blossomed in the last two years and has grown to be quite an effort, starting with a neighborhood leader and branching out into all of Clark County.

How this works: Food donors get a green bag to store in their pantry and they put a few non-perishable items in the bag every time they go to the store. A neighborhood coordinator organizes the pick-up day every two months to collect bags from their neighbors. The food is taken to a collection site and sorted and then distributed to the food bank that the neighborhood has selected. All donations stay local.

This has been a completely community-led effort by neighborhood residents. The neighborhood associations have assisted with getting the word out and helping recruit volunteers at their meetings and in their newsletters.



The Clark Neighbors Food Project
GREEN BAG REPORT

UPDATE: DECEMBER 2019

You Neighborhood Coordinators and Food Donors are positively amazing, donating and delivering an incredible amount of healthy food to help feed neighbors in need. This month you helped collect over TEN THOUSAND POUNDS OF FOOD - a new record! *Thank you!*

OUR NEIGHBORS FOOD PROJECT TOTALS
 Here's what we've accomplished together:

December 14th Pick-Up	10,069 lbs Food Collected	8,357* Meals Delivered
Since 2017 Inception	62,838 lbs Food Collected	52,156* Meals Delivered

*100 pounds donated/collected = 83 meals (Food Bank Standards)

Note: Next pick-up is February 8th. Please let your Neighborhood Coordinator know if you'll be out of town, and if you need an early (or late) pickup.

Clark Neighbors Food Project: clarkfoodproject@gmail.com, (360) 699-5441
 Ridgefield Neighbors Food Project: ridgefieldfoodproject@gmail.com, (360) 887-4444

Our Neighbors Food Project started August 2017 and is growing because of folks exactly like you. Thank you for your food and cash donations! 100% of your food donations go to local food pantries & School Family Resource Centers to help feed local neighbors.

www.clarkfoodproject.org
 Like and Share our Power of One Green Bag
www.facebook.com/clarkfoodproject

501c3 Non-Profit—donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law
 Clark Neighbors Food Project, PO Box 817, Ridgefield, WA 98642
 Tax ID#45-3683583

The numbers don't lie; this has truly been an amazing effort that not only is feeding the hungry, but is connecting neighborhood residents as they organize and work together.

<https://clarkfoodproject.org>

35 by the United Nations.

General Neighborhood Program Outreach and Training:

Responded to requests for more information on the county's Neighborhood Outreach Program:

February 4: "Neighborhoods and Civic Engagement" presentation to **Clark College Senior Education program**

February 19: "What is a Neighborhood Association?" presentation to **Lewis River Rotary** meeting in Battle Ground

April 25: **CVTV Clark County Close-Up** interview on the Neighborhood Outreach Program focusing on the new neighborhood web pages, emergency preparedness, and the Green Bag food collection program. View at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPODZXt1e3M>

May 3: Participated in **Leadership Clark County's** Round Table discussion on city and county services, focusing on Neighborhood Associations and Parks



Assistance with a new Public Forum outreach effort:

Community Development initiated a new town-hall, round-table discussion process regarding Surface Mining issues that included staff, operators, business owners, other regulatory agencies, and residents. These forums are held to discuss issues, fact-based reports from the associated agencies, and have open discussions on potential solutions.

I assisted with these efforts in the planning stages, coordination of public notice and broadcast over Nextdoor social media, and creation and compilation of a survey taken by residents prioritizing their concerns and which items they wanted to discuss and address first at the forums.

After the success of the format in gathering information on Surface Mining, another set of meetings was scheduled and publicized regarding Rural Event Venues.

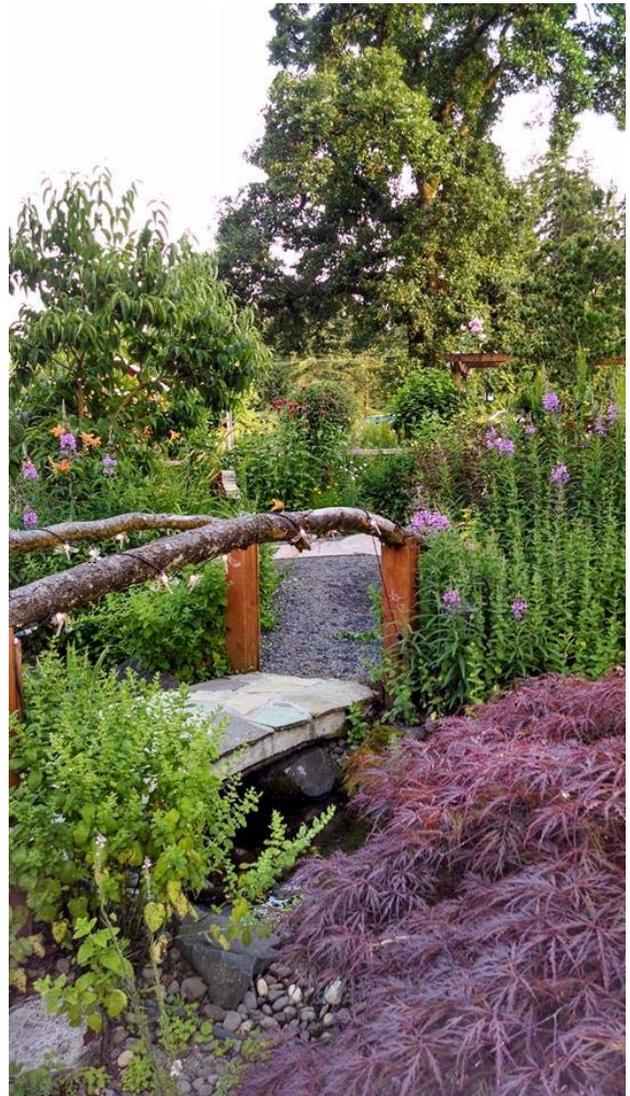
March 22: Surface Mining Advisory Council Forum

April 11: Surface Mining Advisory Council Forum

May 30: Yacolt Quarry Surface Mining Advisory Council Forum

July 31: Rural Event Venues Forum

October 23: Surface Mining Advisory Council Forum



Emergency preparedness outreach:

In the last two years, our neighborhood outreach office has partnered with CRESA and the City of Vancouver to expand our outreach opportunities as well as to maximize use of limited staff and funding resources.

All events also reached out to neighborhood, CERT, Fire Department, and other volunteers. We would not have accomplished these outreach events without their very generous donations of time and effort.



Photo May 2019 with (l to r) Judi Bailey, Vancouver Neighborhood Coordinator, Eric Frank, CRESA Public Outreach, and Marilee McCall, Clark County Neighborhood Program Coordinator

February 12: Map Your Neighborhood presentation with City of Vancouver to CERT attendees at Fire Station 6

March 16: Joint event with CRESA and City of Vancouver: Map your Neighborhood Open House at Evergreen School District offices (Saturday)

May 15: Map Your Neighborhood presentation at Neighborhoods USA national conference in Palm Springs with CRESA and City of Vancouver

September 14: Neighborhood office assisted with coordination of the first annual Ridgefield LDS Stake's emergency preparedness fair. Map Your Neighborhood presentation, CERT and emergency storage displays, CPR demonstration, fire trucks and safety presentations by Clark County Fire and Rescue, display and Q&A from HAM radio operators, and kid's activities. (Saturday)

September 17: Map Your Neighborhood presentation to WA State Department of Revenue field office's safety team by request.

November 9: Map Your Neighborhood presentation at CRESA's #IAMREDDI one-day preparedness training event. (Saturday)

With the assistance of the county’s graphic designer and input from our attendees, we’ve developed two new tools for use in our emergency preparedness training and outreach:

- A one-page tri-fold handout on the Map Your Neighborhood program and
- A Pledge Sheet for attendees to mark the things that they already have or are already doing, and also mark new things that they pledge to complete within two weeks.

I pledge to:

I WILL	I HAVE		I WILL	I HAVE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep boots under my bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check smoke detectors and change batteries
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep a fire extinguisher in the house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assemble an emergency food supply or update supplies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have a hard hat in my emergency kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Add 5 gallons of water to emergency supply
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Locate my water/gas/power emergency shut offs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify an out-of-area contact and complete contact card
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Talk to two of my neighbors about emergency preparedness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Schedule a Map Your Neighborhood meeting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify a skill or tool I have that is helpful in an emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce Map Your Neighborhood to my community
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in a class to increase my skills (CPR, First Aid, CERT...)			

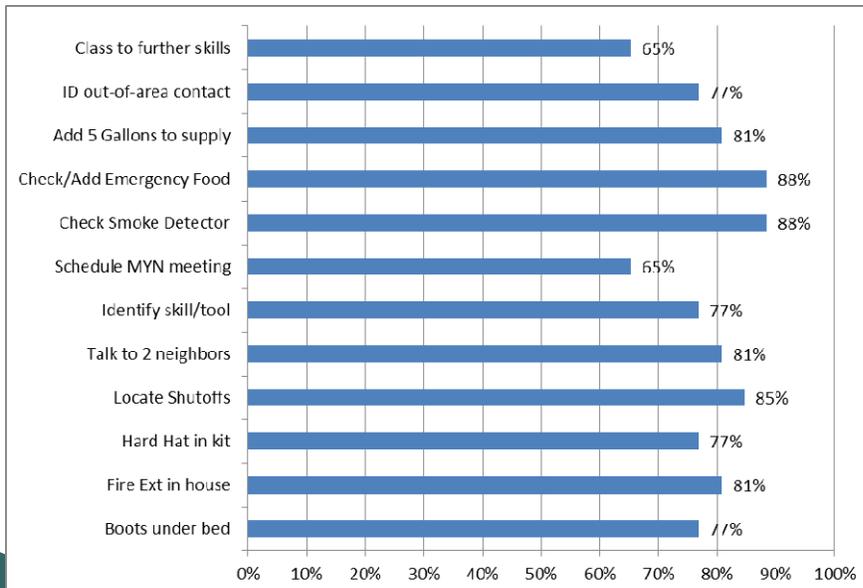
#IAMREDDI!



RESOURCES

cresa911.org/emergency-management/emergency-preparedness/
www.cityofvancouver.us/fire/page/emergency-preparedness
www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/emergency-preparedness-and-response

zip code _____ date of event _____



Exit polling from the March 2019 event: This is the percentage of attendees who pledged to complete follow-up activities to make their homes and neighborhoods safer in the event of a catastrophic event.

Requests from Neighborhoods:

Request for a countywide “Weekly Update” e-newsletter

- This has been provided sporadically and very enthusiastically received. Currently, links are available on multiple web pages and email notices for all of the different work sessions, hearings, commissions, and project pre-application meetings. There is not currently enough staff time to compile and arrange this information on a regular weekly basis without administrative assistance.

Request from residents to establish a Citizens Academy

- This would be a “Government Operations 101” effort with 6-8 evening classes that would educate attendees on multiple departments and introduce them to elected officials, department directors and staff.
- Program would be modeled after several other cities’ successful efforts.
- There would be an entry fee to cover the cost of materials and refreshments, resulting in costs for staff time and meeting room space only.

Administrative Guidelines update—Request for Council’s guidance:

Administrative guidelines for the program should be updated in coordination with NACCC. A few things that have come up in discussion with councilors for you to consider and possibly schedule future council time or a work session on :

- If we are changing the printing agreement to postcards only due to budget constraints, the wording in the agreement should be updated to reflect current process.
- There is no current neighborhood boundary restriction on geographical size or number of households. The only mention is that there must be at least 75 households per neighborhood.
- There is currently no process when a neighborhood association has completed the requirements and been formally recognized by the county. There are multiple options. Are there preferences from council on what you’d like this to look like?

*Letter from outreach coordinator mailed to Neighborhood Association

*Certificate signed by council presented at Neighborhood Association meeting by either outreach coordinator or councilmember

*Neighborhood recognition at next council hearing

*Formal council resolution



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