

7. Organizational capacity

The South End has a variety of opportunities that can be embraced by the community and result in real positive change in the area. It will take the involvement and commitment of all residents in order to obtain any measure of success. The presence of a strong and effective neighborhood organization is a minimum requirement if a significant amount of improvement is to be achieved. The South End neighborhood faces many difficult issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of living within the community. Among these concerns is the lack of residential participation in confronting these matters. It is therefore a priority to increase participation and involvement in community development throughout the community.

One of the major goals of SENDO is to increase organizational capacity, thus becoming a diverse and valuable resource for future development plans. The following proposals address this.

7.1 Block Captains

This program assigns block captains all over the South End neighborhood. A Block Captain will act as a liaison between neighborhood residents and SENDO, encouraging residents in their block to attend meetings and other activities. The block captain will also relay information to residents unable to attend meetings. In addition to these functions the block captain will facilitate discussions among residents in his/her area on topics that are of specific interest to this smaller area. In this way resident can address specific concerns in a smaller setting and work towards identifying the larger problems that should be addressed at SENDO meetings. Finally it will be an important function of the block captain to organize small events/gatherings such as a picnic or a small clean up project in the area where they live to help attract more residents to become active members of SENDO. Block captains will be valuable members of SENDO in that they can provide insight on the needs of residents in their part of the neighborhood and do focused outreach to help SENDO grow.

7.2 Topic groups

Each focus area of the South End revitalization plan will require a committed group of SENDO members that are particular interested in working towards realizing the goals of the organization in relation to their specific area. It is too time consuming for all members to be involved in all activities, and it is possible to get more accomplished by assigning responsibilities to topic groups. When SENDO starts to work on accomplishing a goal in the plan the fist action should therefor be to establish a topic group of members that are particularly interested in the task at hand. It will be the responsibility of the topic group to work towards implementing the goal of SENDO and to keep an open line of communication with the larger membership (reports at monthly meetings).

7.3 Neighborhood Outreach Initiative

To complete all of the programs outlined in the South End Revitalization Plan SENDO will need the people power and political potency that accompanies the participation of a large number of residents. SENDO should plan on completing a neighborhood organizing initiative annually in an effort to increase and maintain the membership of the organization. This would increase the voice and power of the group and create new leadership opportunities within the community. A variety of activities should be coordinated during an eight-week period in an effort to bring knowledge of SENDO and its mission to as many residents as possible. A comprehensive media campaign including mailings, press releases, door knocking, pulpit announcements and sub-group meetings would all be carried out by SENDO members with the assistance of an ESLARP graduate research assistant or an Ameri Corps volunteer.

7.4 Neighborhood Office

The lack of office space for the organization is a less than ideal situation for a community development organization attempting to build neighborhood capacity and motivation. Members and potential new members who might wish to volunteer on a more regular basis are discouraged by not having an easily identified contact place in the neighborhood. Additionally, an easily identifiable office within the neighborhood

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would increase advertisement of the organization to the South End residents who are unaware of the group's existence. A neighborhood office would be the ideal setting for the monthly meeting and for meetings of sub committees that might need to meet more frequently during implementation phases of programs. It will also be a place where the organization can provide some services for residents such and hand out material about SENDO and the South End neighborhood to newcomers in the community. A longer-range goal and the ideal situation would be for SENDO to be located within the community center that is to be created within the neighborhood. However, this initiative concerns the location of the SENDO office during the interim. SENDO should work to identify an existing structure in the neighborhood that, with some minor rehabilitation, could serve such a purpose.

7.5 Fundraising & Publicity

This section of program development focuses on the various programs designed to develop publicity capabilities and fundraising capabilities for SENDO.

The challenges for neighborhood groups that operate within a weak local government construct are significant. Often state governments provide grants and assistance to local governments for everything from outright purchase to rehabilitate homes to urban forest preservation. Without a strong and networked local government, residents have more difficulties obtaining funds they need to improve their environment; they also lack an advocate whom they can rely on in order to address corporations and related issues.

Fundraising should be understood as a comprehensive package to obtain funds. And fund raising should also include the social capital of the residence as well as services, and goods they can provide. Funding can include non-monetary assistance as well as the typical monetary grants and assistance.

Publicity for a neighborhood group is similar to that of a non-profit radio or television station. Some residents may be aware of the group and yet know little of the more exact purposes and aims. Most residents have a more vague or altogether absent understanding of the group. Publicity is the actions taken to make an action or idea known or commonly understood in the public arena. Marketing is the action of a

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producer selling to a consumer. SENDO wants to be a common, household known group and as such, will undertake a publicity development process and seek to make their agenda and accomplishments well known throughout their neighborhood, city and region.

7.5.1 Donation Boxes & Pennies Campaign

By encouraging young people, small businesses or individuals can accumulate small donations that involve segments of the neighborhood that might be unable to donate larger amounts to SENDO. Donation boxes provide awareness that SENDO is in the neighborhood and working for the residents. Also, by specifically targeting small donations such as a pennies campaign, children become involved in SENDO efforts and they become part of the neighborhood development process.

7.5.2 Organization & Individual Sponsors

By creating a base of organization and individual sponsors, SENDO can build a more dependable expected cash flow. SENDO can build their cash reserves to accomplish immediate goals by soliciting monthly or annual contributors, obtaining commitments from churches or other non-profit organizations in the community as well as targeting individuals and businesses that have established history in the neighborhood and city.

7.5.3 Resource Survey

There are people with talents and resources within the South End neighborhood that may be outside of the SENDO membership core group. A resource survey could locate willing and able talented residents for SENDO projects. A survey of residents would identify those who may be able to provide home repair or gardening skills. People who are unable to donate money to an effort may be able and willing to donate their time and skills to an effort. Donations of time and skills can often close the gap if money is unable for a project. A resource survey will help to identify residents in South End with talents and resources that could support SENDO efforts. Often times, residents have skills, hobbies or networks that can provide services or support in-kind which allows

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SENDO to keep their cash for other projects and activities. A resource survey can also indicate what projects or efforts that residents are willing to provide assistance and support. Another important aspect of a resource survey can identify a list of “go-to” people that SENDO could call on for work on an ad hoc project of more urgent needs.

7.5.4 Training Workshops

There are a number of training workshops that can benefit the members of SENDO and other residents that are interested in specific areas of neighborhood development. While these workshops may not provide actual dollars in terms of say ticket sales or donations, the workshops will enable the SENDO organization to build grant writing and fundraising skills that can provide them with substantial funding. Typically, neighborhoods groups can depend on a strong commercial district or rich city environment to provide occasional donations or even more substantial grants. SENDO is lacking that substantial pool from which to draw on for monetary and provisional support. Grant writing and fundraising skills are critical for creating a sustainable organization.

7.5.5 Logo Development

SENDO will need to create a sense of identity and recognition within the neighborhood and larger community. An important aspect of establishing the group’s presence as a major contributor to the development of the area is to establish a consistent presentation in communications and fundraising efforts; a logo helps to promote SENDO as an active and easily identifiable organization. Design a logo for the South End Neighborhood Development Organization representative of the mission and characteristics of the South End neighborhood. Logo should be designed for letterhead, publicity, t-shirt screening, newsletter and media release purposes.

7.5.6 Logo Implementation

Once a logo has been selected, SENDO needs a directed set of activities to utilize that logo to the maximum benefit. SENDO should implement use of selected logo throughout various SENDO functions and activities to easily identify SENDO. Another

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aspect of dealing with a logo is learning how to create publicity such as flyers, letterhead or business cards. So program development should include some basic graphic arts sessions on “how-to” design publicity materials. A suggested list of publicity items that need to be designed is as follows:

- ✂✂ Letterhead
- ✂✂ Business cards
- ✂✂ Press releases – media
- ✂✂ Church bulletin announcement
- ✂✂ Business & organization bulletin board flyers
- ✂✂ Newsletters
- ✂✂ Window static sticker
- ✂✂ Volunteer / member t-shirt
- ✂✂ Vision and Goal tri-fold
- ✂✂ Fact Sheet for grant writing and publicity
- ✂✂ Home page for future SENDO web site

7.5.7 Publicity Materials Distribution Plan

In order to keep distribution of publicity materials organized and involve residents in the distribution process, SENDO will have a distribution plan. This plan will determine the frequency of use for each specific publicity material type and when to use the materials. The plan will also direct SENDO members where and when to distribute specific items such as a static sticker or business card. Part of the plan also involves soliciting a vendor to provide printing services on an on-going basis.

7.5.8 Membership Items

In order to promote SENDO and the activities SENDO undertakes, the organization should create several items that members can display to show their association with SENDO. The items create a sense of identify and recognition for SENDO and as such should be given to SENDO members and auxiliary volunteers for special events. Such items might include t-shirts, window static stickers, bumper stickers or coffee mugs. Members of SENDO suggested that t-shirts could be sold to raise funds and to that end, some concept of the South End neighborhood should be incorporated into the design.

7.5.9 Internet Strategy & Design

SENDO members recognize the power of the Internet for providing information and allowing interested persons to learn more on subjects. Web sites are a viable means of promotion of SENDO to the community, foundations and other resources. Another positive aspect of having an active web site is that people of all ages, particularly younger residents may become involved with SENDO in order to obtain experience with computers and web page design. SENDO wants to build a website and a current project of the Graduate Library & Information Sciences program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will provide access to internet and related technical support.

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