

NEIGHBORS BUILDING *Neighborhoods*

CREATING NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHOICE

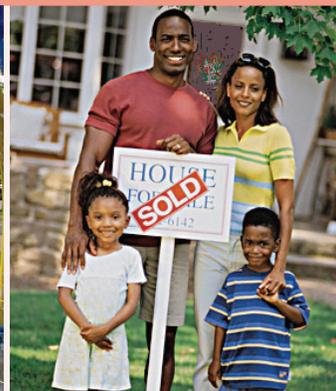


Live! Invest! Participate!



N O R F O L K

Life. Celebrated Daily.



Norfolk neighborhoods are vibrant and sustainable places for caring neighbors of all ages, ethnicities, lifestyles and incomes to live, work, invest, and participate.

CREATING NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHOICE



Live! Invest! Participate!

I. Introduction

Norfolk's new Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Program is a community ownership model for effective neighborhood revitalization. It is based on the Healthy Neighborhoods and Asset-Based Community Development community building principles. These two concepts are making a difference in middle-market neighborhoods, low-income, and undervalued communities by creating an environment where all members of the community work together to identify and mobilize the positive attributes of their neighborhood (assets), look out for each other as good neighbors, invest through improvements to their homes and neighborhood blocks, and position them as excellent places to live.

II. Overview

The City of Norfolk is comprised of over 120 neighborhoods. Although all neighborhoods share some similarities, each is distinguished by unique characteristics. These distinctions may rest in physical conditions, geographic advantages, natural amenities, architectural and historic character, or economic diversity.

NEIGHBORS BUILDING NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) represents a change from the City’s historical approach to neighborhood revitalization. Like most local governments, Norfolk has taken a conventional approach to neighborhood revitalization with the City, not the neighborhood, taking responsibility for planning, decision making and implementing revitalization, typically through major capital projects. Success is based on outputs as opposed to outcomes. Outcomes measure whether the neighborhood is improving as a place where neighbors invest, attract good neighbors, build equity and neighborly relations.



An alternative approach is to reposition the roles of government, external stakeholders, and neighborhood leadership. For the City, this means relinquishing ownership of neighborhood revitalization to the people who live and invest their money there. As described by Henry Moore, among the first practitioners of Asset-Based Community Development in Savannah, government must learn to “lead by stepping back.” For the neighborhood, this means assuming strong neighborhood leadership roles where residents take responsibility and accountability for improving their community.

Issue	Conventional	Healthy Neighborhoods
Purpose	Make houses safe and code compliant.	Restore real estate values so people can invest confidently.
Strategy	Repair as many houses as possible in as large an area as possible.	Select properties for maximum visual market impact.
Consumer	Focus on houses and households with the greatest needs.	Respond to severe problems, but focus on a diverse group of houses and homeowners with good potential for strengthening prices and raising housing maintenance standards.
Programs	Use government subsidies to create standardized programs and distribute grant dollars by regulation.	Develop a variety of flexible incentives for residents to achieve specific outcomes and to serve the desired market segment.
Standards	Enforce minimum standards.	Create expectations of quality and good design.
Support	Assist borrowers with debt problems, affordability, and subsidy needs; provide classes on budgeting and home repair.	Provide all needed consumer support services; market the neighborhood; and encourage block projects, pride in community and resident leadership.

Source: Great Neighborhoods, Great City, Revitalizing Baltimore’s Neighborhoods, David Boehkle 2004.

NEIGHBORS BUILDING NEIGHBORHOODS

Fairmount Park's relationship with the City has evolved into a partnership. The City is held accountable for the efficient delivery of core City services; however, rather than rely on the City to identify and take care of poor property conditions, neighbors are surveying conditions, notifying violators, and helping to provide solutions. While there is an expectation that police protect residents against crime, the neighborhood shares the responsibility by promoting and implementing crime prevention techniques and developing good relationships with the Community Resources Officers.



The objective of NBN is neighbors working with neighbors to create healthy, viable environments where people want to live, find it economically beneficial to invest in their properties, and participate in activities to support the well-being of their neighbors and neighborhoods. NBN provides neighbors the skill sets and tools they need to rejuvenate their neighborhoods.

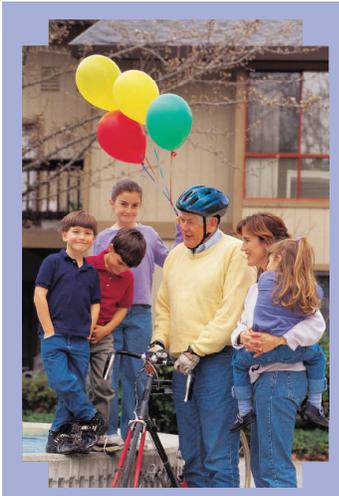


Given limited staff capacity, the NBN approach cannot be simultaneously undertaken in every neighborhood that may request participation.

III. Creating Healthy Neighborhoods of Choice!

How do people decide where they want to live and how much they will invest in their property and neighborhoods? According to David Boehkle, the inventor of the Healthy Neighborhoods approach to community building, the decision boils down to desires and wants; competition between neighborhoods (high functioning vs. low functioning); confidence about the value of homes and future market potential; and predictability about long-term neighborhood conditions.

NEIGHBORS BUILDING NEIGHBORHOODS



NBN is a real estate market-driven model. It focuses on leveraging neighborhood assets, building on neighborhood strengths and encouraging residents to invest in their homes and blocks. It replaces the conventional needs-oriented revitalization strategies with a positive, asset and investment-driven approach.

Neighbors (working together) invest their time, money and other resources in neighborhood regenerating activities and programs. They help other neighbors develop safer places, create beautiful and clean blocks, make the neighborhood and housing more attractive to home buyers, build neighborly relationships, and bring a sense of pride to the entire community.

Guiding Principles:

- All neighborhoods have strengths and assets.
- People make investments and select a neighborhood based on choice, competition, confidence and predictability.
- Neighborhoods are more self-reliant when members focus on solving problems among themselves.
- Effective community revitalization must build on the strengths and capabilities of the neighborhood residents, businesses and institutions, and the strategic mobilization of all community assets.
- Significant community development only occurs when the local community residents are committed to investing themselves, their time and their resources in the effort.
- Neighborhood value is linked to the maintenance of the aesthetic and physical quality of properties and the surrounding environment.
- Community leadership is more effective when government and the private sector value and provide coordinated support for neighborhood associations, their growth and the cultivation of skilled leadership.



Program Goals:

Through regularly working together to plan, implement and manage goals, a sense of community is developed and strengthened among residents. Residents volunteer their skills and talents to the community, solve neighborhood issues, develop self-reliance and become involved with their neighbors and improve relationships with each other. They also develop and build better relationships with the City, businesses, schools and other community stakeholders.

This effort will result in the achievement of the following goals:

- 1 Building resident capacity
- 2 Building strong neighborhood connections
- 3 Building a positive neighborhood image
- 4 Building a viable and competitive real estate market
- 5 Building attractive and quality property improvements

1 Building Resident Capacity

Key to this initiative is the capacity and skills of existing and new neighborhood leaders to effectively lead the revitalization process. Training modules will be offered through the NBN Academy over two to three months. Since NBN is neighborhood-based, workshops require that the core leadership teams of a neighborhood participate together in the same training. Residents representing the NBN pilot neighborhoods will have registration priority. After taking the course, the leadership teams will move forward with the development of their community action plans with the support of City staff.



Neighborhood Revitalization Leadership Development

NBN will provide the training neighborhoods need to lead the development and implementation of their community action plan.

Core Concepts:

- Leading and visioning neighborhood change
- Learning practical methods and techniques to become stronger collaborators, communicators, executors and community partners
- Applying leadership principles and best practices to transform neighborhoods
- Developing neighborhood action plans
- Data collection and analysis techniques
- Inspiring and enabling teamwork, commitment, diversity and inclusiveness

Organizational Development and Improvement

NBN will assist residents with developing the fundamentals and principles of effective community organizing and engagement, which is essential to program effectiveness.

Core Concepts:

- Setting goals
- Reaching out to neighbors; inclusiveness
- Recruiting community volunteers
- Organizing and promoting neighborhood meetings
- Establishing agendas
- Meeting facilitation
- Retaining members



NEIGHBORS BUILDING NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood Revitalization for Youth

To be successful, it is important that residents of all ages be involved. To encourage youth involvement, NBN will offer a specially designed curriculum for youth on leadership and community building. The course will teach youth that they can achieve what they believe if they work hard, never give up and try to help others.



Core Concepts:

- Leadership, teamwork and community service
- The role of local government, neighborhood leaders, residents, businesses and other community stakeholders
- Environmental stewardship
- Working together for community change and improvement
- Anatomy of neighborhoods



2 Building Strong Neighborhood Connections

At its most fundamental level, NBN is about connecting people and resources for the betterment of the community. No community plan, no program or initiative can be successful without relationship building at its core.

Good Neighbors Program

Critical to improving the quality of life in our communities is building positive neighborly relationships. Healthy, livable and safe neighborhoods are neighborhoods where neighbors know, care and support each other and overall community objectives. Each positive relationship helps to manage neighborhood problems and improve the quality of life in communities.

NEIGHBORS BUILDING NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighbors know each other by sight. They check in on residents with special needs. They maintain their properties, and help neighbors maintain theirs. They are friendly to all of their neighbors. They participate.

Good neighbors work together to plan regular events, neighborhood improvement projects, and other activities that provide opportunities for positive interactions.

How does your neighborhood rank? Use a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest rating.

1. My neighbors successfully resolve disputes amongst themselves.
2. My neighborhood welcomes new residents into the community.
3. I know my neighbors, and we are sociable with one another.
4. My neighbors lend a hand when doing home improvements.
5. My neighbors and I strive to embrace diversity.
6. We have planned activities on my block.
7. In my community, people get together for discussion groups and for different neighborhood improvement projects.
8. In my neighborhood, people offer a helping hand when needed.

The exercise above was taken from, "The Livable Neighborhood Workbook" published by Empowerment Institute (New York, 2000)

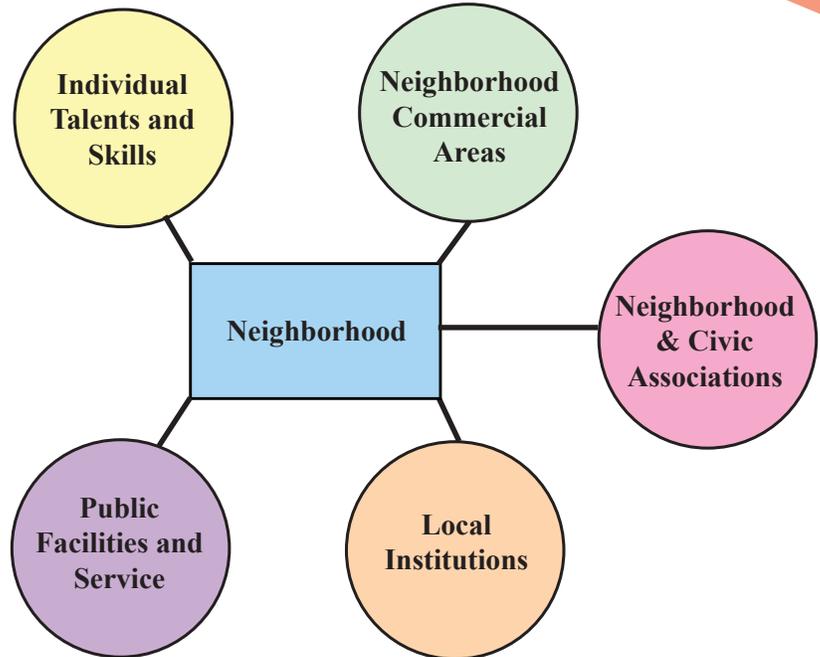
Social interactions are critical to building a strong community. Block parties, activity clubs, festivals, and parades are just a few ways to meet neighbors. It is also an excellent opportunity to welcome new neighbors into the community. The more often a neighborhood gets together for fun, the more unified they will be when issues arise.



Mapping Neighborhood Assets/Nurturing Partnerships

Identifying neighborhood assets and strengths is essential to this community building process. As residents work together to map what is working in their neighborhood and focus on their strengths, they develop a sense of pride, energy, and self-reliance. Too often neighbors are asked to meet to focus on neighborhood problems. As such, they fail to see the unique qualities and strategic advantages inherent in their neighborhood.

Mapping neighborhood assets and advantages provides an inventory of individual skills and resources that can be mobilized to address neighborhood projects and priorities. Developing and identifying these resources help neighborhoods to become more self-reliant and gives them resources that they can direct.



Core Concepts:

- Identifying, marketing and developing community assets
- Building partnerships
- Getting to know your neighbors
- Working together and helping each other
- Competing for, attracting and retaining good neighbors
- Neighborly communications



3 Building a Positive Neighborhood Image

When shopping for neighborhoods, people look at the standards established by potential neighbors. Neighborhood standards are a reflection of community pride. They are how the neighborhood is perceived by potential new residents as a desirable place to live and invest.



Attracting good neighbors is largely determined by the message the neighborhoods sends. People generally choose the neighborhood with the highest standards, or “image,” they can afford. Planting and preserving landscaping, painting the porch, eliminating litter—these are reflections of the pride residents have in their community.

Not only do they help attract new residents, neighborhood standards create an environment where currently vested neighbors want to stay, improve their property and participate in the well-being of the community.



Neighbors Working Together: Block-by-Block Pride Projects

Another way to influence a neighborhood's image is with neighborhood enhancement projects. Whether a project addresses litter control, peeling paint, park clean-up, weatherization, or crime prevention, improvements made to a community symbolize to residents and visitors alike that people care about their neighborhood.



To make an impact, neighborhood improvement projects should be visible to those passing by. Well-planned projects create pride and encourage investment by residents. This is especially true of activities near highly visited places in the community, such as small pocket parks or public facilities. New and visible investment in community improvements signals to the real estate market, real estate professionals and those outside the community that the neighborhood is changing and headed in a positive direction.

As a component of NBN, the City will fund opportunities for residents to undertake neighborhood improvement projects through the provision of small matching grants. Funds will be allocated through a formal and competitive application process. Neighborhood organizations will be required to match City funds with neighborhood generated resources.

NBN pilot neighborhoods will be allocated funding for neighborhood projects based on their participation.



Core Concepts:

- Beautifying the neighborhood
- Creating a sense of place
- Working together
- Getting to know your neighbor
- Volunteering
- Establishing neighborhood standards

4 Building a Viable and Competitive Real Estate Market

Residents in healthy neighborhoods strategically market their community on an ongoing basis. This is accomplished by newsletters, websites, well-publicized neighborhood events, and the excitement and pleasure they convey to their friends and colleagues.

Another strategy for getting the attention of potential buyers is working and partnering with real estate agents committed to specializing in the Norfolk market or in selling a particular neighborhood (i.e. Norfolk Real Estate Ambassadors).

This is an effective way to attract interest in the neighborhood. The agent can become familiar with the community, civic organizations, activities, history, and public amenities. These professionals have access not only to their clients but to other agents with homebuyers interested in living and investing in good neighborhoods.

Positive messages are critical for every neighborhood. It is the perception, whether positive or negative, that influences where people live and invest. Every neighborhood has something that is working. It is up to the residents

to draw attention and excitement to these attributes. Internal and external communications should always highlight the positives and downplay the negatives.

NBN will provide information on communication techniques and strategic opportunities, including newsletters, press releases, promotions, web sites and social media.

Core Concepts:

- Attracting new homeowners
- Marketing the neighborhood
- Communicating positive messages
- Partnering with real estate agents



5 Building Attractive and Quality Property Improvements

The more consistent, substantial, visible, and well-crafted the home improvements, the better the opportunity for revitalization and market impact. Achieving maintenance and repair levels just to comply with minimum code standards will not generate the market interest needed to create competitive and reliable real estate markets.

Core Concepts:

- Increasing sales
- Increasing values
- Investing in quality improvements



IV. Developing the Community Action Plan

The community action plan establishes a framework for the direction the community wants to take and how change will be implemented.

- Determine if there is interest in the community for participation in NBN. Conduct an open discussion at the civic league meeting.
- Get as many stakeholders involved as possible.
- Create a steering committee of between 8-15 people. Involve a cross-section of the community.
- Commit to and attend all leadership and neighborhood training.
- Form committees to share the work needed to address all aspects of the process (neighborhood improvement projects, neighborhood data/analysis, action plan, neighborhood standards).
- Conduct community consultations. Techniques include surveys, interviews, questionnaires, front porch meetings, and coffee house and living room chats.
- Map the community assets. Obtain and analyze data and responses.
- Create a draft plan. Include description of geographic area and details on community engagement. Get feedback from the community – comments and suggestions.
- Develop final community action plan.



V. Program Implementation

Success will be directly tied to the level of community participation and investment of time and resources.

Role of Residents

- Work with neighbors, local businesses, schools, faith-based organizations and the civic league to address issues and challenges in the neighborhood.
- Get to know neighbors and encourage them to volunteer their talents and skills to help the community implement its action plan.
- Invest in their properties.
- Be open to new people and new ideas.
- Look for opportunities to grow and cultivate involvement. Organize volunteer groups for clean-ups; block parties, and holiday events.
- Talk to neighbors about ways in which to work together, support each other and ways to improve the area.

Role of the City

- Encourage residents to participate in neighborhood improvement meetings and events.
- Provide technical assistance, education and information on City services, programs, tools, and other community resources.
- Nurture partnerships for the good of the community.
- Provide advice on neighborhood improvements and projects.
- Assist in funding neighborhood improvements.



VI. Measuring Outcomes:

NBN is an outcomes-based program. The following outcomes and metrics will be used to determine the program's success. As a pilot program, it is critical that outcomes are measured so that, as the program expands, it may be adjusted for maximum efficiency.

NBN Desired Outcomes:	NBN Metrics:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valued neighborhood partners. • Residents build home equity. • The neighborhood has a well-positioned and competitive real estate market. • People are investing in their homes and block. • Neighborhoods are generally perceived as friendly places. • Residents speak positively about and promote the interests of the neighborhood as a good place to live and invest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in property and sales values relative to the City and region. • Decrease in market time for real estate sales. • Increase in building permits. • Increase in activity of and participation in civic organizations. • Decrease in vacancy rates. • Reduction in the number of properties with property maintenance violations. • Decrease in crime.

VII. Celebrating Norfolk’s Neighborhoods

Annual Front Porch Neighbors Summit

The Norfolk Front Porch Summit is intended to broaden civic participation and foster relationships among Norfolk’s residents and community leaders by providing them with a forum to meet, exchange ideas and explore opportunities for collaboration around the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods theme. The day-long event will have a relevant and energizing theme, workshops, and speakers representing national, state and local best practices; neighborhood showcase; family entertainment, etc.



The focal point of the event will be a neighborhood exposition — a showcase to celebrate Norfolk’s neighborhoods, and is scheduled for September 22, 2012 at Norfolk City Hall.

C.O.O.L. Awards

The Civic Opportunity and Outstanding Leadership (COOL) Award was created in spring 2010 to recognize civic leagues that are improving the condition of their neighborhoods through grassroots efforts. Criteria for the award include: residents working together as volunteers to improve the community; encouraging individual and community responsibility for the neighborhood; increasing awareness of the importance of enhancing the quality of life in Norfolk through neighborhood programs, events or projects; and the promotion of neighborhood unity, communication, interaction and cooperation. Award entries are judged by a panel consisting of staff and a diverse group of community stakeholders.

The presentation of the COOL Awards will occur at the Annual Front Porch Neighbors Summit.

VIII. Conclusion

The Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Program is about building vibrant neighborhoods through a diverse network of partnerships: neighbors with neighbors, neighborhoods with businesses, and neighborhoods with City government. The more than 120 neighborhoods of Norfolk can be empowered through partnerships to better the lives of their residents and the state of their City.

NBN will seek to nurture these partnerships, empower them with strong leadership, build the image of each participating neighborhood, strengthen those neighborhoods' positions in the real estate market, and provide the means for every neighborhood to be one of choice.



Bureau of Community Enrichment
810 Union Street, 5th Floor
Norfolk, Virginia 23510
www.norfolk.gov/communityenrichment

