



NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT TEAMS

2018

Mayor's Community Affairs Unit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 31, 2016, Mayor de Blasio signed Local Law 102 of 2016 requiring a designated agency to review requests and to develop a list of - at minimum - three neighborhoods where interagency collaboration, or a “neighborhood support team,” would address quality of life issues within confined geographical areas.

The genesis for this legislation grew out of a task force convened by former City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito to address quality of life concerns on 125th Street. These concerns included the sale and use of the drug K2 along with associated crime and sanitation issues. Input from members of the task force, which included community-based organizations, local businesses, elected officials, and city agency officials, informed a coordinated interagency approach to addressing the multitude of issues brought forth.

The Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit (CAU) was designated as the coordinating agency under the law to identify priority neighborhoods because of CAU’s entrenched relationships with communities Citywide and its day-to-day communication with Council Members, Community Boards and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Based on the level of interest shown and specific feedback CAU received, the Mayor’s Office of Operations (MOO), which uses data-driven methods to solve problems and improve City services, was tasked with developing empirical criteria for evaluating applications for a neighborhood support team. These criteria would serve as a guide for applicants to strengthen their submission and would provide CAU with a framework to help determine which neighborhoods would best be served by the creation of a support team.

Working within the parameters of Local Law 102, CAU listened to community feedback and decided to work within the existing governmental structures and resources. Each neighborhood support team, comprised of representatives from City agencies and community stakeholders, would use existing City resources and input from local communities to identify at least three priority geographic areas to address quality of life issues. These geographic areas would be confined to the size of a Community District. It would develop a targeted strategy and implement this plan over the course of one year.

The goal is to further empower community boards as we advance interagency coordination and address quality of life issues in key areas throughout the City.

THE PLAN

On February 15th, 2017, the City released a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to the public via the administration’s website (<http://www.nyc.gov/nst>). Its goal was to further explore how neighborhood support teams might work to address the specific quality of life issues affecting New York City’s neighborhoods, as determined by the people closest to those issues. Many Community Board leaders requested assistance in furthering their existing work or their charter mandated responsibilities

rather than re-creating an existing process. This feedback was instrumental in further shaping the proposed program guidelines.

Through March 2017, CAU conducted additional outreach to Borough Presidents, Council Member offices, Community Boards, and BIDs. Outreach efforts specifically targeted these groups due to the complexity of agency jurisdictions, familiarity of the issues presented, and existing community relationships. Local stakeholders received informal presentations of this program and were asked for feedback regarding the proposed action plan. Direct community engagement continued to be instrumental to the City's understanding of the best way to solve the individual quality of life problems identified through the RFEI process. During this time, CAU continued to receive and review RFEI submissions from community partners that were interested in engaging further with the program. During the review of RFEIs, the implementation team was able to identify priority areas, that were specific to each location. As such, the team developed customized plans for each NST location.

APPLICATION AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The program management and implementation team was dedicated to developing guidance on specific grading criteria, make-up and geographical dispersion of NST programs, and improved program implementation steps. The goal was to create an open and transparent guide for application expectations, eliminate perceived bias in the acceptance process by outlining the scoring criteria, and take action steps for an active Neighborhood Support Team.

The application and program processes are outlined below.

1. The Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) was designed to draw on the insights of community stakeholders to better understand the specific quality of life issues affecting New York City's neighborhoods and residents. RFEI's include a written form and may as accept additional documentation including: news articles, stakeholder interviews, community meetings and/or objective observations of the conditions in the relevant communities. Each RFEI is evaluated on its merits and is scored based on objective criteria, **to be determined by the managing agency**. Sample criteria may include: the comprehensiveness and complexity of the issue, whether addressing this issue would promote equal access to public resources and services, whether there have been prior attempts to address these concerns, and the level of community buy-in. Criteria for RFEI evaluation is included in appendix 1. This criteria will serve as a guide and may be changed/updated by the managing agency without notice.
 - a. Submissions can come from Community Boards, Council Members, Business Improvement Districts, and other community based organizations. No more than one application per entity will be considered.
 - b. All submissions must name a relevant contact person to serve as the community liaison for communication with NST implementation team and city agencies.
 - c. Any applicant who previously submitted and was accepted into the prior cohort of the NST program will not be considered until one NST cycle after their cohort cycle ends.

2. The City **will then choose no less than 3 RFEI's per year, with a limit of three applications selected per Borough.** Each Team which will consist of the appropriate City agencies and community members and will develop and execute plans to address quality of life conditions identified by the support team. The City reserves the right to conclude that none of the proposals are feasible and to select locations and Neighborhood Support Teams through an alternative method.

3. Neighborhood support teams will work to create and execute a one-year action plan **for each cohort.** At the end of one year, the support team will determine any relevant next steps, though in all cases support teams will aim to establish sustainable, community-driven framework for continued city agency responses. Support team recommendations are advisory. City services are offered subject to agency review, budgets, and the need to allocate limited resources.
 - a. After an application is reviewed and accepted into the NST program, the managing team will identify issues and reach out to city agencies for awareness. The team will then work with the applicant to schedule an in-person initial meeting. These meetings will be scheduled to further discuss the issues presented in the application and will include the applicants, relevant city agencies, and relevant community partners.
 - b. After the initial meeting, the managing team will meet to discuss strategy items that may have been brought up in the initial meeting, will conduct further follow-ups with city agencies for clarification, and then draft a strategy document.
 - c. This document will be submitted to agencies for additional feedback or clarification. The updated document will then be submitted to the applicant and relevant stakeholders for further review and input process. Following the approval by the applicant, the implementation process will begin. In some cases, due to a variety of factors, agencies have begun implementing specific strategies prior to the strategy document.
 - d. Regularly scheduled check-in calls with the community stakeholders, agencies and program implementation team will continue until cohort ends. Teams are purposely flexible so that strategies and solution delivery can be modified based on community and agency feedback.
 - e. Neighborhood Support Teams will work to create and execute action plans for each cohort with the goal of creating frameworks that are sustainable and community-driven. Support team recommendations are advisory and City Services offered through the NST are subject to agency review, budgets and the need to allocate limited resources.

CURRENT STATUS OF ACTIVE NSTs

As previously reported, The City received 23 expressions of interest from 17 community boards. Of these submissions, the NST program accepted a total of 16 submissions. Some of the submissions came from Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and others directly from the Community Boards. Of the 16 accepted RFEI submissions, 1 submission was officially withdrawn, 2 submissions were combined together into 1 because they covered a similar set of issues and geographical location, and 2 submissions already had an existing mechanism in place to address quality of life concerns. For those that already had a mechanism in place, the NST team will continue to work with them but in a reduced role and deferring to their current process. The table in appendix 2 outlines the applications from NST Cohort 1 and their status.

After receiving the expressions of interest and reviewing of the responses by the Office of Operations and the Community Affairs Unit, it was determined that a some of the issues mentioned in the expressions of interest would require collaboration among city agencies, while others would be best addressed by additional, focused engagement with a single city agency and/or targeted guidance with the community board. As appropriate, CAU will serve as liaison between the community board and the relevant city agencies.

CAU has organized and convened 14 NST meetings since January 2018 from the first cohort of applicants. For those meetings, the NST Management team worked to develop a strategy document to outline the next steps and implementation process for each NST applicant. Currently, the NST Management team has developed these strategies based on the conversations that took place at the initial meetings, and based on agency and stakeholder follow ups. The NST team is further developing site specific strategies in conjunction with City Agency expertise and has submitted these strategies to the NST applicants for approval. Once these strategies are approved by the applicants, the implementation process will begin and will include regular check-in phone calls every two months for status updates. During this implementation period, the NST Management team and the NST Stakeholders will work to identify signs of improvement and draft long term strategies for continued implementation beyond the NST cohort timeframe.

Throughout this initial meeting process there have been some changes in the makeup of the first NST cohort. These changes - identified below - were the result of further review of the applications and the information gathered at the initial meetings with the applicants and community stakeholders:

- One applicant did not have specific issues they wanted addressed that would meet the standard of the NST program. They are invited to apply to future cohorts of the program as appropriate.
- Another applicant formally requested to exit the program due to changes at the BID leadership after the application was submitted. They are also be invited to apply for the following cohorts if they continue to see quality of life issues in their area.
- One of the applications for the program relating to the Atlantic Yards development project already had Quality of Life meetings for issues related to the development. CAU will work to further engage city agencies through this existing process.

- Two applicants that flank a shared commercial corridor in Jamaica Queens were merged to create a single NST. The issues raised by these two applicants move fluidly throughout the length of the corridor and involve many of the same community stakeholders. Addressing the issues as a whole will be more strategically sound and have greater impact across the corridor through the implementation strategy being developed.

NEXT STEPS

CAU is currently developing outreach and presentation materials for significant outreach to local Community Boards, Elected Officials, and other community leaders for the second NST cohort. This undertaking will also include a significant but measured change in the timeline for the program based on the feedback and restrictions identified by various community boards. The modified timeline is available at the end of this report and is subject to change based upon program needs and observations.

APPENDIX 1: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Neighborhood Support Team- Criteria for Evaluation: Highest Total Points (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5)

Community Buy in

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

1. Level that the community Board, Elected Officials or BIDs are supportive?
2. Would taking on the RFEI disrupt actions being taken or that will be taken by other local parties?
3. Is the feedback from Borough Directors about issue supportive?
4. Does the level of community buy in meet the standards designated by the coordinating agency?
5. Has this group applied previously for a NST?

The comprehensiveness and complexity of the issue

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

1. Would Interagency cooperation assist in resolving
2. Are there any State, Federal or criminal law components to the issue?
3. Does the issue align with a citywide strategy of the Administration?
4. Can a plan be implemented within the NST Framework?
5. Who are the key parties involved in the issue?

Whether addressing this issue would promote equal access to public resources and services

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

1. Is this a group that has easy access to citywide services?
2. Has this issue been addressed in other RFEI's?

Whether there have been prior attempts to address these concerns

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

1. Has the RFEI exhausted other avenues for solutions (Borough Directors, Task Force, Community Board, etc.?)
2. How long has this been an issue within that community?
3. Has the issue made any significant steps?
4. Are there any other issues to take into consideration?

APPENDIX 2: NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT TEAM: COHORT 1 STATUS

Borough	Affected Geographical Location	Organization	Issues	Status
Manhattan	CB 1	Community Board 1	Rats and Trash Disposal	In Progress: Multiple Submissions
	CB 2	Community Board 2	Improper Disposal of trash, A-Frame, increase of pop-up events	In Progress
	CB6	Community Board 6	Homeless issues, methadone clinic, obstructed lighting.	In Progress
	CB 5	Times Square Alliance	Panhandling for Homeless group, DAZ enforcement, sightseeing busses	In Progress
	CB 7	Lincoln Square BID	Homeless and EDPs, Park Lighting, Homeless encampments	In Progress: Existing Mechanism
	CB 11	Community Board 11	Prostitution, dog waste pickup, park lighting	In Progress
Brooklyn	CB 8, 2, 6	Community Board 2	Atlantic yards related complaints	In Progress: Existing Mechanism
	CB 2	Fulton Area Business Alliance	Homelessness, Loitering, Blight Properties	In Progress
	CB 6	Community Board 6	Mental Health, public safety and EDPs	In Progress
	CB 14	Flatbush Junction BID	Homeless encampments, Improper trash disposal, traffic	In Progress
	CB 17	Sunset Park BID	Trash accumulation, , illegal parking, traffic enforcement protocol	In Progress
Queens	CB 13	Gateway JFK	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
	CB 12	Sutphin Blvd BID Community Board 12	Homelessness increase, Loitering and Business Disruption, Narcotics Activity, Methadone Clinic	In Progress: Combining
	CB 2	Long Island City Partnership	Parking, TLC specific issues, auto repair shops	In Progress
Staten Island	CB 1	Community Board 1	Illegal Parking, Excessive Noise, Environmental runoff	In Progress