

QUARTERLY REPORT

Colony Park Neighborhood Association

Submitted May 15, 2013

Margarita Decierdo, CPNA

Executive Summary:

The Colony Park Sustainable Initiative (CPSCI), was funded through a \$3 million HUD Community Challenge Grant (the Grant) administered by the City of Austin's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department (NHCD) to create a master plan for 208 acres of publicly-owned land in the Colony Park/Lakeside neighborhood.¹

After January 2012, NHCD proceeded to discuss to implement the challenge grant in Colony Park over the objections of the neighborhood association. This forced CPNA to take a multiple-prong approach, such as communicating directly with city council members, direct contact with HUD in Washington, D.C.; press releases, news announcements, and a media blitz; and engagement with one of Austin's leading civil rights attorney.

The Colony Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA) was initially opposed by NHCD with them first attempting to hire a contractor for public engagement and community outreach on a three year contract for \$120,000.00. (Note: CPNA was able to negotiate \$300,000.00 for ACC/UT to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement. ACC will perform Service-Learning and UT DDCE will provide Public Engagement, community outreach, and Service-Learning.)

The partnership between NHCD and CPNA was formed after the Senior Advisor of HUD, Salin Geevarghese and his executive team from Washington D.C. met with members of CPNA and NHCD staff; several facilitated meetings by Kalina Rose of PolicyLink; and, a core team representing CPNA and the City of Austin (COA) attended the Sustainability Conference-January 14-16 in New Orleans. Once all matters were discussed and issues resolved, procedures were put in place and the partnership was formed.²

The CPNA is the promoter and principal party of the Public Engagement Plan written and created by Margarita Decierdo, CPNA for the purpose of engaging the different, diverse and fragmented communities within the designated census tracks.³

There have been setbacks and continued challenges with moving forward with the CPNA Public Engagement Plan.⁴ At present, UT DDCE has assumed the primary role and will administer the \$300,000.00 Intergovernmental Agreement. Austin Community College (ACC) will provide Service-Learning in September coordinating with UT DDCE. UT DDCE is moving forward through the legal review process. ACC will submit its' approval to the plan once UT's review is concluded.

The Timeline of major events moving forward includes: 1) Finalization of the CPNA Public Engagement Intergovernmental Agreement-June 2013; 2) Selection of a Design Team-end of June 2013; 3) Contract

¹ NHCD obtained and was awarded the Challenge Grant in November 2011, without neighborhood input or involvement

² Attachment 1: Letter to Senior Advisor to HUD, Salin G. Geevarghese

³ Attachment 2: CPNA Public Engagement Plan

⁴ Attachment 3: CPNA Public Engagement Plan Outreach Partnership

completion for the Design Team-August 2013; and, 4) Public Engagement and Design Team's conduct a community meeting in Colony Park-September 2013.⁵

⁵ June 20th, Design Team finalist presentation to City Council (morning) and to the Colony Park community (evening).

ATTACHMENT 1

ATTACHMENT 1

From: decierdo4@aol.com

Date: Fri, 27 Jul 2012 03:21:25 -0400 (EDT)

To: <salin.g.geevarghese@hud.gov>

Subject: "...to heal and to build...is a noble task...LBJ 1968

Mr. Geevarghese,

My name is Margarita Decierdo, the Colony Park Neighborhood Association member and assistant secretary. I do not know if you recall our conversation, but I believe Mr. Wrenn has been in communication with you.

It is with great trepidation that I sit here, early Friday morning thinking about Colony Park and the storm headed our way. When you asked me point blank, "Is there hope Margarita?" I responded with an affirmative, "Yes, there is always hope." I thought about President Obama and know he would have said the same. You see, I believed that your presence gave us hope too. I thought that perhaps by your presence, individuals and especially representatives from the NHCD would hear your words regarding inclusion and engagement of community being vital to the success of the Colony Park Sustainability Pilot Grant. There would not be movement forward unless we would sit at the table as equal partners. Since that day, and by all communication to you by the NHCD staff and Mr. Wrenn, it has not played out as we would have "hoped" for. Instead, we receive information about meetings, work plans, and community liaisons after the fact. Instead, as we heard last night, a "Work Plan" has been sent to your office first before it gets to us. How can that be inclusion? There has not been any effort to hear our voices screaming loudly that we do not want to be treated as children, ignorant or otherwise, but be treated as equal partners, making decisions on those items that you must sign off on. You, who sit there, who asked me point blank, "Is there hope Margarita?" are complicit in this process of so called "sustainability". Was I naive to think otherwise? Was I naive to believe that you, who have been given great responsibility to ensure that "fair and equal treatment", be what govern your decisions? I do not know about your moral or ethical obligations to those who experience what we are experiencing here in Austin Texas. But I do know what is being prepared and forced down our throats is insidious and will impact our neighborhood for generations to come. President Lyndon B. Johnson wrote "What we say and what we do now will shape the kind of world that we pass along to our children and our grandchildren...just must now be lost in suspicion, distrust, selfishness, and politics among any of our people..." By losing the voice of community, we stand to lose everything that we have fought for in this country. Is it worth it? Is it worth me losing the small "glimmer of hope" for inclusion and justice? Please come down to see us, please suspend this project until there is agreement that our neighborhood and community comes first before politics and greed.

Sincerely,

Margarita A. Decierdo

Diversity Training Center

P.O. Box 684621

Austin, TX 78768-4621

Email: decierdo4@aol.com,

decierdo82@gmail.com

Phone: [512.762.1783](tel:512.762.1783)

ATTACHMENT 2

Colony Park Neighborhood Association

Public Engagement Plan

COLONY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Written by Margarita Decierdo, CPNA/UT/ACC Project Coordinator

(revised) February 11, 2013

Abstract: The Colony Park Neighborhood Association Public Engagement Plan is written for the purpose of offering a community engagement plan tailored to address the unique and specific social and economic conditions of the Colony Park area. This document is to be used as a tool to assist with Public Engagement and Community Outreach as a means to engage, empower, and build the capacity of Colony Park and surrounding neighborhoods to better the quality of life for its' residents and the future of generations to come. To this end, the Public Engagement document is specific, and directive in intent and purpose giving the residents and community voice in the process of development and change.

This document was written by Margarita Decierdo for the benefit of the Colony Park Neighborhood Association. All copyright laws apply © copyright 2012-2013. Do not quote, rewrite, without express permission of the CPNA and its representatives. Note: revised from the original document written on November 12, 2012.

Public Engagement Work Plan

Purpose:

The City of Austin received a \$3 million Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This grant's purpose is to support the development of 208 acres of publicly-owned land in the Colony Park neighborhood. The goal of the initiative is to create a master plan that integrates and reflects the needs and interests of the surrounding community while incorporating best practices in sustainable development. The process for creating that master plan must ensure an inclusive, community-wide process that result in a final master plan reflecting the diversity of the community.

The purpose of the Public Engagement Plan is to involve all segments of the community in the Challenge Grant target area which includes businesses, neighborhood associations, organizations, schools, residents and individuals. The Public Engagement Plan will involve Austin Community College-Department of Behavioral Sciences working directly with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement-University of Texas at Austin. Through this process, faculty and students will fan out through the Challenge Grant's geographical area implementing the goals of the Public Engagement Plan.

To date, many residents have limited interest or do not trust the process of development when proposed by the city which in the past has proven less effective. Preparing the community for "change" can be challenging and therefore a set of principles will be developed as this public engagement plan emerges. Meanwhile, the "Principles of Good Engagement"¹ outlined by the Queensland Local Government Service Association provide the following as "good" engagement principles;

- Understanding the community
- Local relationships
- "Go to them"
- Continuity and follow-up
- Maintaining focus on the community, stakeholders
- Structures and procedures
- Skills
- Accountability
- influence

¹ www.qlgcsa.org

The Public Engagement Plan for the Colony Park Sustainable Pilot Challenge Grant will be inclusive, community-wide involving a broad cross-section of representatives of diverse organizations, collaborating to organize and implement a public engagement planning process focused on the following goals:

Goal 1: To involve and engage people in the geographical area of the Challenge Grant (2013-ongoing to 2014)

Goal 2: Connect city, regional, and national resources to the Challenge Grant through Public Engagement Plan (2013-ongoing to 2014)

Goal 3: Provide a comprehensive community assessment (2013-completed June 2014)
(See appendix)

Goal 4: Build the confidence, capacity and consensus of community members, city staff, stakeholders, and grant participants (2013)

Goal 5: Establish Community Advisory Committee which will also function as the Neighborhood Contact Team (2014)

Goals, Strategies, Activities and Outcomes

Goal 1: To involve and engage people in the geographical area of the Challenge Grant ³

Strategy 1: Employ students to engage community, pass out literature, and help explain the project and recruit volunteers.

Activity 1: Involve neighborhoods in the Colony Park-Lakeside community and surrounding neighborhoods located in the census tracts 22.01, 22.08, 22.11, 22.12 will be canvassed by the ACC and UT Public Engagement team to help determine culturally-appropriate strategies. This activity will include but is not limited to grass roots organizing, messaging written both in English and Spanish, and block-walking of neighborhoods.⁴

Activity 2: Conduct surveys to provide community needs, wants and how they would perceive the development of the 208 (survey will be conducted in the census tracts 22.02, 22.01, 22.08, 22.11, 22.12) acres

Outcome: To involve participants in the process of planning, public meetings, forums, and special task forces to be developed, identify individuals and organizations to be part of the CAC (Community Advisory Committee) or Neighborhood Contact Team.

Strategy 2: Outreach and Public Engagement

Activity 1: Direct contact, which will include block-walking, phone banking, door-to-door contact, outreach to community leaders, organizations, individuals, youth groups, churches, social clubs, neighborhood organizations in an effort to get participation.

Activity 2: Presentations, outreach communications, making announcements at meetings, forums, at forums, boards and commissions, city council, service clubs, businesses and civic organizations, and school programs.

Activity 3: Attend monthly or quarterly coalition meetings with community partners to provide reports, plans, generate excitement, solicit input and distribute promotional materials

Activity 4: To use all forms of social and traditional media to conduct outreach and community engagement

Outcome: To obtain active ongoing participants of 100 individuals and/or organizations (while this could seem low, let it be known that the voting precincts have less than 100 people participating in the representative census tracts)

Goal 2: Connect city and regional resources to the Challenge Grant through Public Engagement Plan

Strategy 1: Hold public meetings, forums, and participate in neighborhood association organizational events

Activity 1: Organize and conduct meetings, distribute resource literature, use web-site and other social media technology to reach and connect to community

Activity 2: Identify resources and organizations, technical support, networks to help build capacity within Colony Park and neighboring associations within grant census tracts

Outcome: Capacity building in neighborhood associations, organizations, and institutions in targeted census tracts

Activity 3: Continue on-going ACC/UT Public Engagement Plan outreach and communication

Goal 3: Comprehensive Community Assessment

Strategy 1: Create a Colony Park, Challenge Grant, Geographic Database

Activity 1: Conduct *community assessments* which includes asset mapping to develop a complete profile of businesses, neighborhood strength, weaknesses, threats and opportunities (*SWOT*) and identify individual and groups to support the challenge grant

Activity 2: Using the HUD Asset Mapping Tool including the Community Assessment Indicators⁵ to assist with profile of communities within the census tracts, determining Common Ground of Themes and Topics within each census tract

Activity 3: Collect existing information on all data sources related to the Colony Park grant census tracts, and merge this information with new data collected from the Public Engagement Team

Outcome: Create a new database that can be used to attract businesses and mixed-income populations

Goal 4: Build the confidence, capacity and consensus of community members, city staff, stakeholders, and grant participants

Strategy 1: Create a total communications network through different forms of media, working with media team creating an open and transparent environment where people will feel connected to any and all resources to help them engage in the process

Activity 1: Use communications team and all different forms of social media, as well face-to face interaction to these groups and organizations to form and build confidence to overcome traditional apathy

Outcome: Garner commitments from people, organizations, businesses, and others to hopefully to participate in the Community Advisory Committee or Neighborhood Contact Team

Goal 5: Establish Community Advisory Committee which will also function as the Neighborhood Contact Team

Strategy 1: Connect with existing neighborhood organizations, area schools, local businesses, religious-faith based organizations, civic organizations, interested individuals, city and regional resource groups

Activity 1: Conduct outreach to their respective constituencies; create channels of communication to these groups and organizations

Activity 2: Assist and develop ongoing public engagement activities and create avenues for planning/design team presentations

Outcome: Create an well-informed active Community Advisory Committee which will also function as a Neighborhood Contact Team

Time Line (tentative)

March 2013

- Austin Community College/UT/CPNA/COA Inter-local Agreement is formalized
- Promotional Materials development
- Press-release once formalized and announcement of first major public event

April-December 2013

- Data collection; analysis of existing quantitative data of neighborhoods tracts (voting, utilities, taxes, housing, safety), AISD, Travis County, independent data
- Neighborhood profile/assessment (survey): socioeconomic, health, transportation, housing, education, and safety
- Goals of Public Engagement Plan; Training and orientation of participants, students, community groups, COA staff
- Qualitative data intake; neighborhood perceived needs, challenges, history, neighborhood leadership identified
- Leadership building activities (community empowerment, capacity building, identifying resources)
- Neighborhood activities with stakeholders (sustainability voices; ACC/UT, CPNA, AISD, HUD)
- Attend TAG Team (includes CPNA, CDC Commissioner) meetings

September 2013

- Major kick-off
- Data collection
- Deliver community survey report and community profile to Planning/Design team
- Conduct preliminary planning
- Set monthly meetings with TAG Team, ACC/UT/CPNA Engagement Team
- Introduction of Design Team to community, neighborhoods

October 2013

- Continued outreach based on Public Engagement Plan goals
- Preliminary partnerships with community leaders

December 2013

- Coordinating plan to include public engagement results
- Development of Community Advisory Committee which will function as the Neighborhood Contact Team to include partnerships with ACC/UT/CPNA, community organizations, partners of influence and resource

January-March 2014

- Continued Public Engagement outreach
- Public meeting with Design Team
- Data collection; all teams report
- Forming of CAC (Neighborhood Contact Team), Public Engagement Team, surrounding communities, friends of Colony Park and partners of influence and resource
- Interaction with TAG Team and Design Team

April 2014

- Major public meetings (ongoing quarterly) to include CAC (Neighborhood Contact Team) CPNA and surrounding neighborhood associations, Design Team, Public Engagement Team (ACC/UT)
- Interaction with TAG Team and Design Team

May 2014

- Continued Public Engagement outreach
- Monthly meetings of CAC (Neighborhood Contact Team), Public Engagement Team, surrounding communities, friends of Colony Park and partners of influence and resource
- Interaction with TAG Team and Design Team

June-July 2014

- Major Public meeting
- Continued Public Engagement outreach
- Monthly meetings of CAC (Neighborhood Contact Team), Public Engagement Team, surrounding communities, friends of Colony Park and partners of influence and resource
- Interaction with TAG Team and Design Team

September 2014

- Major reporting of all teams

October-November 2014

- Draft reports
- Public presentation

December 2014

- Final Reports
- Austin Community College/UT program close out

**Appendix-Community Assessment Indicators (Reference Goal #
3: Comprehensive Community Assessment)**

- I. Quality of Life
 - A. Governance Structure
 - 1. Federal
 - 2. State
 - 3. County
 - 4. City
 - B. Climate
 - C. Regional Position of Community
 - D. Churches
 - E. Medical and Hospital Facilities
 - F. Housing
 - G. Hotels and Motels
 - H. Shopping Facilities
 - I. Restaurant and Dining Facilities
 - J. Postal Services
 - K. Media
 - L. Cultural Activities
 - M. Civic, Fraternal, Professional and Social Organizations
 - N. Recreation Facilities
- II. Taxes
 - A. Taxes Affecting Individuals and Families
 - B. Taxes Affecting Businesses and Industry
 - C. General Information
- III. Utilities
 - A. Electric Power
 - B. Gas
 - C. Water
 - D. Sewage
 - E. Telephone Service
- IV. Transportation
 - A. Railroads
 - B. Trucking Service
 - C. Air Transportation
 - D. Bus Service
 - E. Taxi Service

F. Highways and Streets

G. Pipe Line Service

V. Labor

A. Population totals for city, county and/or metropolitan area for last three censuses,
recent estimates and ten-year forecast

B. Labor Supply

C. Unions

D. Wages and Fringe Benefits

E. Practices

F. Existing Industry

VI. Resources and Services

A. Resources

B. Services

VII. Education and Training

A. Local School Facilities

B. Colleges

C. Vocational and Start-Up Training Facilities

VIII. Financing

(Reference Public Engagement Plan Budget)

Background

The Initiative is a three-year community planning process that will culminate in a Master Plan (the "Master Plan") for development and redevelopment of 208-acres of publicly-owned land (the "Property") in Northeast Austin, on Loyola Lane between Johnny Morris Road and Decker Lane. The Master Plan will incorporate best practice land and community development strategies including energy-efficient building design, water conservation, and zero-waste technology and will incorporate standards to create a model, sustainable, and livable mixed-use, mixed-income community. The Initiative will include completion of a Master Plan, resulting in rezoning; *engineering for subdivision and site planning for review and approval by the City of Austin*; infrastructure construction plans and architectural design guidelines for new, sustainable residential, commercial, and mixed-use development.

Project Objectives

1. Facilitate, incentivize, and create a catalyst for development of the Property in accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) six Livability Principles.
2. Foster cross-departmental/agency/community coordination and create successful models of *comprehensive systems change* to support sustainable and equitable development.
3. Support *capacity-building* and community transformation goals of Colony Park area residents and stakeholders.

Goals/Principles

The Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative will support and further the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's six Livability Principles by:

- Providing more transportation choices for Colony Park area residents and encourage Capital Metro to create connections to anticipated transportation routes such as the Capital Metro Green Line commuter rail;
- Making Colony Park a mixed-income neighborhood that includes equitable, affordable and well-designed housing options;
- Enhancing economic competitiveness of the Colony Park community;
- Supporting the existing Colony Park neighborhoods by engaging in capacity-building activities and providing technical assistance.

- Valuing the Colony Park community by actively partnering with the Colony Park Neighborhood Association community members to implement community engagement strategies and develop a shared vision for the future

Organizational and Governance Structure (Membership)

The organizational structure of the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative is a reflection of the shared vision of the Colony Park Neighborhood Association and the City of Austin led by Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, the recipient of the 2011 HUD Community Challenge Grant.

The originating members of the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative include the City of Austin, the Austin Housing Finance Corporation, and the Colony Park Neighborhood Association and its successors and assigns.

Initiative members will lend expertise, experience, advice, and resources, as appropriate and possible as set forth below, in areas of data and analysis, outreach, planning and design. These partners will help coordinate and develop sustainable measures and goals that will reach a wide base of the greater Colony Park – Lakeside area, with special emphasis on traditionally under-represented populations; will build partnerships to discover existing needs; and will collect, discover and corroborate information sources to better equip decision-makers.

Communications

All official print and digital communications media will be reviewed by the Initiative prior to distribution, including, without limitation, all promotional materials, invitations, postcards, posters, newsletter, and e-letters prior to distribution.

Roles and Responsibilities of Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Members

City of Austin

Guidelines: As grantee, the City of Austin serves as the official administrator of the Initiative. The City of Austin is administering the Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant through the Office of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development/Austin Housing Finance Corporation (NHCD/AHFC). NHCD/AHFC will designate one staff member to serve as the single point of contact for communications between the City of Austin and its Initiative partners.

Roles & Responsibilities: As required by law and the conditions of the HUD grant, the City of Austin, while working in collaboration with its partners, will serve as the main coordinating entity and will retain final decision-making authority. The primary responsibilities of the City of Austin are to serve as the fiscal agent and coordinating agency on behalf of the Consortium. ensure compliance with all HUD and program requirements, solicitations for consultant services, award consultant contracts related to the project, and serve as staff for the day-to-day

project administration and coordination of working group staffs and sub-contractors or sub-grantees.

Colony Park Neighborhood Association

Guidelines: As representatives of the neighborhoods adjacent to the Property, the Colony Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA), and its successor entities and assigns, shall serve as the community point of contact for the Initiative. The CPNA will designate one member to serve as the single point of contact for communications with between CPNA and its partners.

Roles & Responsibilities: The primary responsibilities of the CPNA are to serve as partners in engaging the larger surrounding community through coordinated outreach efforts, assist and advise in crafting scopes of work in consultant hiring, reviewing and identifying applicants for consultant positions, providing feedback to the City of Austin on identified community needs and interests, communicating to the surrounding community on upcoming events and the progress of project work, and organizing the surrounding community to attend project events. The CPNA shall serve as an advisory body to the City Council AHFC Board of Directors and shall review and make recommendations to the City Council or AHFC, whichever is applicable, with regard to all activities related to the Project. No action shall be taken by the City or AHFC unless and until the CPNA has reviewed the matter and made a recommendation concerning it.

Colony Park Public Engagement Team

Guidelines: As an identified working group, the Public Engagement Team (PET) will consist of members of CPNA, staff from the City of Austin, and faculty and students from the University of Texas at Austin (UT) and Austin Community College (ACC).

Roles & Responsibilities: The purpose of the Public Engagement Plan is designed to conduct community outreach and public engagement in support of the Colony Park Challenge Grant target area. The Public Engagement Plan will involve Austin Community College-Department of Behavioral Sciences working directly with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement-University of Texas at Austin. Through this process, faculty and students will fan out through the Challenge Grant's geographical area implementing the goals of the Public Engagement Plan.

The partnerships with the Austin Community College, Department of Behavioral Sciences, University of Texas Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will provide outreach and public engagement. ACC students through Service Learning and Civic Engagement will work with faculty to involve and engage people in the geographical area of the Challenge Grant. Through UT's Pre-College Academic Readiness Program; Chembridge/SPURS/Math Masters and UT Outreach Austin, students recruited will engage community, pass out literature, and help explain the project and recruit volunteers. Additional responsibilities will include canvassing the Colony Park-Lakeside and surrounding communities to help determine culturally-appropriate strategies. This will include but not limited to grass roots organizing, messaging written both in English and Spanish, and block-walking of neighborhoods. Once canvassed, students will conduct surveys to provide community needs, wants and how they would perceive the development of the 208 acres. Students will also assist in involving the community in the process of planning, public meetings, forums, and special task forces to be

developed, identify individuals and organizations to be part of the CAC (Community Advisory Committee) or Neighborhood Contact Team.

Margarita Decierdo, Project Coordinator CPNA/ACC/UT and CDC Commissioner will coordinate and monitor the Public Engagement Plan through the entire planning process. As adjunct faculty of the Department of Behavioral Sciences, Ms. Decierdo will recruit students to participate in the Service Learning and Civic Engagement Project. ACC Faculty Dr. Sam Echevarria will lead the Public Engagement Team by analyzing existing demographic data, provide the methodology for surveys, engage students in statistical analysis, and assist with quantitative and qualitative evaluations of data gathered to provide direction to the Design Team, design analytical tool for project report. Dr. Mariano Diaz-Miranda will assist to recruit students who are skillful in community participation and are Spanish speakers. Dr. Wanda Nelson, DDCE will provide coordination of UT's Outreach Austin, Pre-College Academic Readiness Programs. These two programs combined work with 10th through 12 grade students at all Austin ISD high schools, including the LBJ High School (within grant census tract).

Budget 2013-2014:

Graduate Students/College/High School Students	210,000.00
ACC/UT Administrative/Management	20,000.00
ACC Faculty	50,000.00
ACC Interns	20,000.00
Total	\$300,000.00

ATTACHMENT 3

Colony Park Neighborhood Public Engagement Plan Outreach Partnership

Austin Community College

November 2012

University of Texas at Austin Community College

Division of Diversity and Community Engagement

September 2012

ACC Trustee Richard-Summary of Colony Park Community Challenge Grant

The COA and Austin Housing Finance Corporation received a 3-year, 3 million planning grant from HUD to support the development of 208 acres of publicly-owned land in the Colony Park neighborhood.

The Colony Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA) and the Neighborhood Housing Community Department (NHCD) are engaged in a series of work sessions to develop a working relationship in order to “right” the historical exclusion of Colony Park residents from the planning and decision making process. The initial plan by the NHCD included a Public Engagement Liaison, however, after two days of deliberation with the CPNA representatives and NHCD, the idea was scratched and a Public Engagement Plan presented by Margarita Decierdo¹, Colony Park neighborhood representative and Community Development Commissioner replaces the one proposed by the NHCD.

Public Engagement through Cooperative Agreements:

The Public Engagement Plan has funding and while still being determined will provide ACC/UT the opportunity to recruit student interns, work study and compensation to faculty members who participate. The Public Engagement Action Plan-Sustainable Community Strategy presented by Margarita Decierdo ensures a more equitable and sustainable community participation effort. This Action Plan reflects a “grass-roots”, community-based process in which a diverse group of residents, community leaders, educators, civic and faith-based servants will be brought together to identify the greatest challenges facing the Colony Park residents and community. In order to ready the residents and neighborhood of Colony Park, an engagement plan is critical and will serve as the initial planning phase for the Colony Park Master Plan and overall planning outcomes.

The Public Engagement strategy is to incorporate two entities into the Grant Planning process- UT’s Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and ACC’s Department of Behavioral Sciences and the Latino/Latin American Studies Center through Dr. Mariano Diaz-Miranda. These two entities will act as the Public Engagement Management Team.

Conversations with Dr. Greg Vincent, Vice President for the DDCE have been successful in determining the viability of a working relationship to assist the CPNA’s Public Engagement efforts. Faculty, student interns, experts in community relations will be called upon to assist in creating a 3-year Public Engagement Plan utilizing best and current practices on community engagement. These resources include Austin Achievement Zone through Dr. Wanda Nelson; Yvonne Loya, Director of Community Engagement Programs; Dr. Enrique Romo, Deputy to the

¹ Margarita Decierdo, ACC Adjunct Professor of Sociology
Public Engagement Plan for Colony Park Community
and Community Engagement Models © copyright 2012 (all rights reserved)
under the Diversity Training Center-Margarita Decierdo (author)

Vice President of Diversity and Community Engagement, and; Cheryl Sawyer, Director of Community Resource Development. Together, the resources leveraged through these programs will add much needed resources to the Colony Park Public Engagement effort. As an example, a "Day of Service", where over 1000 student volunteers will engage the community and provide a day of complete service to Colony Park.

Conversations with the faculty and Chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences at Austin Community College have also generated conversations about partnerships and engagement into the Colony Park Public Engagement Plan. The intent is to recruit faculty from the Department of Behavioral Sciences, and student interns interested in assisting with block-walking, door-to-door canvassing, and speaking with community residents. Faculty can assist with asset mapping, training and help build the capacity of residents. Likewise, the Latino/Latin American Studies Center chaired by Dr. Mariano Diaz-Miranda can provide the Spanish speaking residents with the same training, assist with communication, canvassing and block-to-block engagement.

In order to bridge gaps and distrust of city staff, the relationship established with ACC and UT will help "buffer" and establish new forms of relationships among and between the residents-communities of color and "city" staff. Likewise, and most important, building on the strength of partnerships to empower the residents and neighborhoods of Colony Park will serve as the overall strategic vision for economic and social equity.

Purpose: Building Partnerships

The City of Austin received a \$3, 000,000 Challenge Grant from HUD in January. It is a planning grant that places emphasis on public engagement and community outreach. The current idea behind the engagement plan would employ students, faculty and to some extent the administrators of various programs to help engage the residents and community of Colony Park-Lakeside neighborhoods and surrounding communities. These communities, especially where the Sustainable Grant proposes to build and develop are at best, distressed, riddled in poverty, squalor and lacking grocery stores and health facilities. Colony Park-Lakeside is a minority community (over 90%) below the Median Family Income of Austin and Travis County. For most living in the community, the nearest grocery store is more than 3-miles away and hours away from amenities most take for granted. There are no department or clothing stores, no cleaners or basic services, just convenient stores (Dollar Stores), gas stations and poverty conditions everywhere the eye can see.

The Public Engagement and Community Outreach Plan designed by Margarita Decierdo¹ was constructed to benefit ACC and UT students, faculty and administrators. The Colony Park Neighborhood Association is in negotiation with the City of Austin on budget issues and other concerns. Students and faculty would be compensated, which is part of the negotiation. The Public Engagement Plan would include student, faculty and COA staff through training and proposes to address both short-and long-term needs of the community.

The ACC/UT Action Plan reflects a "grass-roots", community-based process in which a diverse group of residents, community leaders, educators, civic and faith-based servants will be brought together to identify the greatest challenges facing the Colony Park residents and community. In order to ready the residents and neighborhood of Colony Park, an engagement plan is critical and will serve as the initial planning phase for the Colony Park Master Plan and overall planning outcomes. The Public Engagement strategy will incorporate two entities into the Grant Planning process, UT Austin's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and ACC's Department of Behavioral Sciences, where Dr. Samuel Echevarria-Cruz will work with the CPNA and Latino/Latin American Studies Center through Dr. Mariano Diaz-Miranda (recommended). These two entities will act as the Public Engagement Management Team with Margarita Decierdo working as the Project Manager (no compensation/only in-kind contribution).

Our conversation centered on whether Dr. Greg Vincent, Vice President for the DDCE had recommendations on determining the viability of a working relationship to assist the CPNA's Public Engagement efforts.

Present at the meeting were Dr. Wanda Nelson, Austin Achievement Zone. Dr. Nelson described the details as to how the Austin Achievement Zone is currently working at the St. John's community using the Harlem Model. Through partnerships with AISD and other entities like CIS (Communities in Schools), Boys and Girls Club, UT's Youth Corp, outcomes have been more than outstanding. The St. John's community is made whole through these working partnerships.

¹ Margarita Decierdo, CDC Commissioner, Colony Park Neighborhood Association Public Engagement Coordinator for the Sustainable Pilot Grant (HUD) and NHCD, Austin Community College, faculty in the Department of Behavioral Sciences

Yvonne Loya, Director of Community Engagement Programs has most recently worked in the Dove Springs community. Their "A Day of Service" model works to organize hundreds of student volunteers to provide a day of service to a community. Students who participate have extensive training. We are told that a year's preparation for a Day of Service is critical and the next community to participate would have to be selected soon.

Dr. Enrique Romo, Deputy to the Vice President of Diversity and Community Engagement represents the Multicultural Center for the DDCE. Programs and community involvement are under his watch (if I understand this correctly) where the relationships are monitored for success.

Cheryl Sawyer, Director of Community Resource Development runs the UT Scholars program. The goal is to have students participate in 100 hours of community service through their 4 years at UT with a second year of home service and their 3rd year at an agency. In addition, the VISTA program is under Ms. Sawyer's direction. Currently, there might be the capacity to bring in two VISTA volunteers.

David Matustik, Deputy Communications Director will provide the Engagement Team with information concerning financials, contracts, and ways to communicate with the COA.

Melvin G. Wrenn, CPNA Project Facilitator will provide the overall long-term goals of the development which will include conversations about the economic analysis, and the political boundaries being considered.

Finally, our goal is to consider a partnership with and leveraging of these programs. The Colony Park Public Engagement effort is in need of these resources and encouraged the participants to consider how they may be able to assist us.

This gives an overview of some of the possibilities of an ACC/UT Austin partnership on Public Engagement and Community Outreach in Colony Park. In order to move forward, the ACC/UT administrations' would have to endorse and assign key decision makers to work along with Margarita Decierdo through the process of negotiating with UT and COA.

To participants:

- 1) How can your input (program) assist us in creating a viable engagement plan and what kind of resources can you leverage to assist us in this endeavor?
- 2) Think about the structure of the partnership; who will administer the Public Engagement Plan with the CPNA/COA and how will interns, student volunteers, and work study participants work within this structure

Lastly, our goal is to build an engagement plan that builds community and create an amazing place to live. Please provide any comments and or corrections, if any. Your participation in this initial meeting is greatly appreciated and I will follow-up on a more extensive conversation as we learn more from all of you and our negotiations with the COA.

Thank you,
Margarita Decierdo