



# Best Practices For Neighborhood Council Collaborations

## Stellar Examples –

- The collaboration of 4 Neighborhood Council's (Central San Pedro, Coastal San Pedro, Harbor City, and Northwest San Pedro) produced \$30,000 to purchase 3 ATV's and an enclosed trailer for the LAPD's Harbor Division.
- Empowerment Congress Southwest Area Neighborhood Development Council (ECSWA) and the Vernon Main Neighborhood Council (VMNC) collaborated with one another to put together a series of violence reduction conferences with the guidance of gang members, which resulted in noticeable reduction in violence in the area.

The ATV project allowed Neighborhood Councils to work on an issue that went beyond borders and boundaries. Everyone recognized that certain things couldn't be accomplished alone. As a result, the securing of the ATV's for the LAPD, Harbor Division reduced illegal dumping, off-road motorcycle riding, homeless encampments, and various other criminal activities. Maryann believes "it was a great project and it will continue to serve the Harbor Area."

The ECS and VMNC are located in areas characterized by frequent gang activity, criminal offenses, and violent outbreaks. In response, the conferences that were held provided an opportunity for the community to reach out to the gang members and find out the reasons behind actions and the progress that can be made to stop the violence.

**Primary prerequisite** – willingness to work with others! Recognition that "you can't do it on your own and seeing the benefit in supporting one another with the understanding of sharing the end product." (Mike)

**Greatest lesson** – with intensive communication between NC leadership, the rest of the NC may be left in the dark or NC may all have different understandings. There "should be one big meeting." (John)

**Special benefits** – collaborations indicate a coalition of shared interest. Banning together equates to a stronger voice! In addition, collaborations allow NCs to look toward broader issues on a more regional or even a city level.

## **Special thanks & acknowledgement to those interviewed:**

Mark Lewis, Senior Project Coordinator for Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

Maryann Cypher, LAPD Booster Organizer

John Greenwood, Vice President of Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council

Mike Feyder, President of Harbor City Neighborhood Council (HCNC)

Kevin McNeely, Funding Administrator for DONE

James Harris, Empowerment Congress Southwest

Interpretation of interviews & creation of "best practices" by DONE intern: Helen Leung



## Best Practices for Neighborhood Council Collaborations:

- ❖ **Find common ground & identify a problem**
  - Have the representatives of each NC get together quarterly
  - Attend a meeting of your neighboring NC
  - Get to know other NC leaders at the Congress of NCs
- ❖ **Keep NC board members up to date!**
  - On all potential & working relationships with other NCs
  - Collaborations don't work when only a few people know about it
- ❖ **Continuous communication**
  - With the other NCs via meetings, retreats, or events
  - Create a list serve among all partners
- ❖ **Establish guidelines**
  - That include an overall vision and a plan
  - For making decisions & facilitating process
- ❖ **Have a huge meeting**
  - Everyone should receive the same memo
  - Be on the same page
- ❖ **Community, community, community**
  - Remember to include all your stakeholders in the process
- ❖ **Establish trust**
  - At a level of comfort, get to know one another
  - Host a 'community party' for one another
- ❖ **Work towards a solution**
  - Set a goal
  - But be willing to compromise along the way
- ❖ **Get more NCs to participate**
  - Means more resources, funding, and ideas
  - Increase the community credibility of the project
- ❖ **Establish a regional council of NCs**
  - That meet at least quarterly
  - To work on problems that the Congress of Neighborhood Council may not address
  - Addressing issues that concern a whole area, beyond NC boundaries
- ❖ **Respect & work with Neighborhood Council differences**
  - Especially in the decision making process, some Neighborhood Council require a committee approval first while others allow Neighborhood Council board approval only
- ❖ **Document progress**
  - So that all NCs and their members + stakeholders are updated
  - In order to avoid confusion & misunderstanding
  - Send it out to all relevant parties

Remember to check in with your DONE Project Coordinator for regulation updates, new info, and other resources!