

Project Name (25 characters max)

People Peaced Together

One-Sentence Abstract (220 characters max)

Old and new residents of the diverse Lomond neighborhood have revived their Community Association, developed a shared vision, and are planning to connect with one another by beautifying public and private spaces.

Paragraph Abstract (295 characters max)

Old and new residents of the diverse Lomond neighborhood have revived their Community Association and developed a shared vision. They will institute an Adopt-A-Yard program, establish attractive plantings throughout the neighborhood, and redevelop a park to bring residents together.

1) How will you and your community decide what "it" (the issue(s) to be addressed) is? If you've already decided -- what is the "it" and how did you get to that decision? (1500 characters max)

In December 2006, citizens from the integrated Lomond neighborhood of Shaker Heights formed a steering committee to revive a community organization that had been inactive. The steering committee walked the neighborhood distributing invitations to public meetings. Emma, a resident with experience in community organization, facilitated a series of four meetings in which over 75 community members developed Vision 2012: A Participative Community with Facilitative Leadership. This vision included the desire for stronger connections among neighbors through effective communication systems and community-wide social gatherings, the maintenance of property values through well-maintained homes, and increased opportunities for youth involvement. While developing the vision, participants identified competing issues such as inadequate involvement among residents, inconsistent home maintenance, and undirected youth. Working committees were formed to develop action steps to realize the vision.

Two of these committees are the Neighborhood Beautification Committee and the Social Committee. The Beautification Committee focuses on the development of public and private spaces to showcase the strengths of the neighborhood and to improve overall curb appeal while the Social Committee focuses on developing community-wide events to bring neighbors of all races and ages together, to welcome new residents, to provide outreach to elderly and disabled residents, and to institute youth programs.

2) Getting together with those in your community (whether it's a few blocks, a city or town, a group, or an online network) and discussing the issues you care about as a group are essential to making it your own. Describe your community and tell us how you will work to solve problems together and encourage people with different backgrounds and viewpoints to participate. (1500 characters max)

The Lomond neighborhood is located in Shaker Heights, an inner-ring suburb of Cleveland. People move to Lomond for its quiet, tree-lined streets, its attractive and

affordable housing, and the excellent reputation of Lomond Elementary School. Residents appreciate its diversity, with black and white families, lifelong residents and newcomers, domestic and international families living side by side.

In spite of Lomond's attractiveness, there is a need for rejuvenation. The neighborhood is a mix of one and two-family homes built from 1920 to 1950. Many of these aging homes need repair and routine maintenance. Yards, once beautifully landscaped, have become overgrown. Some elderly residents struggle to maintain homes and yards. With a decrease in owner-occupied two-family homes and an increase in government subsidized rentals, properties fall into disrepair when absentee landlords are unaware of needs or unwilling to upgrade properties. Finally, there are a high percentage of foreclosed properties in the neighborhood. Although the city provides minimal maintenance on these properties, it is apparent that they are abandoned. Through public meetings, a suggestion box, an e-mail list with over 180 subscribers, and a new Web site, Association members are discussing ways to bring together "old" and "new"—upgrading "old" homes with "new" improvements, connecting "old" with "new" residents, and easing relations between "old" adults and "new" teenage youth.

3) It really all comes down to having a plan. What's yours? Tell us about what you want to do with others in your community -- or what you have done and want to do more of. How will this initiative make a lasting difference and create an ongoing space for your community to connect, form solutions, and act together? (1500 characters max)

The Beautification and Social Committees plan to work together to accomplish three goals:

1. Maintaining private yards and homes. The committees are planning a perennial plant exchange in the spring. They will follow this with an Adopt-A-Yard program in which they invite elderly or disabled residents to request assistance cleaning gardens and planting. They will solicit adult and youth volunteers to assist.
2. Branding the neighborhood to boost community pride and send a message to visitors about Lomond's uniqueness. This summer the Association solicited donations to install and water hanging baskets on Lomond Boulevard. The committees hope to expand this program and solicit suggestions for ways to mark the entry points into the neighborhood with signs and attractive plantings.
3. Redesigning public spaces as gathering places. Gridley Triangle is a small park in the middle of our neighborhood. Currently it has mature trees, a sandbox, and a perennial garden, but it is rarely used by residents except as a dog run. We are planning an Ice Cream Social at this park in August. We will solicit suggestions about how to make the space more amenable to formal and informal community gatherings. One possibility is the creation of a community garden where adults work alongside teenagers.

Grant money would support event publicity, yard tools, hanging baskets, plants, outdoor furniture and landscaping materials.

4) We want to know about you. Please tell us about your background, why you are interested in this grant, and how you will be able to bring people together to get things done. Also, if you know the other key members of your passionate team already, tell us a bit about them too. (1500 characters max)

I am a 40-year old white male represent the Lomond Association Steering Committee, a diverse group composed of long-time and newer residents, black and white, old and young. In December 2006 Judy, the school secretary of many years, invited committed school parents, including Karen and me, to an organizational meeting to revive the inactive neighborhood association. We joined with Henrietta (a white woman) and Carolyn (a black woman), friends and Lomond residents since 1975, to form a steering committee, which also included former officers and others with longstanding Association involvement. These included Sabria, Margaret, Constance, and Eva. Karen and Judy served as the hubs for e-mail correspondence and convened steering committee meetings. When our group needed a facilitator to assist with public meetings we asked Emma, a 30-year Lomond resident who had professional experience as a community organizer, to assist. Since the creation of our Vision 2012, we have added chair people of the standing committees to the steering committee. The Association will elect its first officers in October under the new vision plan and revised bylaws. When our Association learned of this grant, we recognized that our work of the past seven months fit the criteria. This grant will help us pursue our citizen-centered projects to build a sense of community while enhancing our neighborhood.