

District Council Focus Group Responses

District Council Visioning/Audit Response

Conducted Sept - Nov., 2010

<i>Focus Group Responses Sorted by Question and Theme; Source Column = District Council and Comment # (See Key on Sheet 2 for details)</i>			
Focus Group Question	Theme	Source, Comment #	Comment
Current Role			
Current Role	Advisory Role	LU 7	· Through the CNC (from the DCs), we are able to give policy advice on budget and advise DON on certain things. We encourage each DC to write letters on budget too. But in general, we do not advise on political issues and definitely not on politicians.
Current Role	Advisory Role	N 1	Giving feedback to the City on projects and priorities.
Current Role	Advisory Role	N 4	· The DCs provide a relationship with the city. It is an official role – it is an evolving role. They are a way to provide representation of citizens in the district – a way to give feedback to the City. And a way for citizens to contribute to their neighborhoods and to the City as a whole.
Current Role	Awarding \$	M/QA 4	· Gives communities some ownership and role in how to allocate limited resources for projects the community wants to take on. Helps us achieve a common goal of how we want to spend limited funding.
Current Role	Awarding \$	E 2	Do the ranking on things like the street fund and NMF
Current Role	CNC	E 4	The CNC works with the city on what these pieces are going to be and in the past has put on citywide forums, issues like the budget
Current Role	collective action	C 2	Objective is to get all groups in the district to work together to enhance the quality of life in the Central District.
Current Role	Collective Action	DR 5	A year or two ago it served as a place for neighborhood groups to share information. Now we are actually trying to proactively advance the interest of all the neighborhood groups together. So more collective action now.
Current Role	Collective Action	N 8	· I like the DC because it gives me a chance to talk with the leadership of other community councils in my district. Share our concerns with each other and see if we have shared concerns. Can come together to take a unified voice to take action and resolve it. We have more access to city council members and departmental staff as a Council.
Current Role	collective action	NE 5	Neighborhoods coming together to solve common problems and provide support for one another.
Current Role	collective action	NW 1	It is an opportunity for people to identify common concerns and issues, and in theory, formulate requests and validate them within the group and use that to approach the city as a group. An opportunity for community members to meet.
Current Role	collective action	NW 39	The DCs are for residential and commercial interests to find common ground.
Current Role	collective action	B 8	The rezone discussion – a good example of engaging in an issue. If we hadn't had the DC process, we wouldn't have had a coordinated opportunity to discuss.
Current Role	collective action	E 5	We work together where adjoining DCs have common interests, i.e. transportation and bus routes
Current Role	collective action	SW 2	We have a strong sense of community here so probably wouldn't vote for projects that just benefit us.

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Current Role	Collective Action/NDCs	E 18	So the end goal shouldn't be to just have more diversity on the DC; the end goal isn't just getting more people to come. The end goal is to accomplish action and to open doors; find the right contacts to accomplish solutions. Is why the NDC is so important.
Current Role	Community Building	DR 2	The Delridge DC is more a cooperative representative of the entire neighborhood. Is more organic.
Current Role	Community Building	DR 3	Other DCs are more representation from specific groups that are there to forward a particular agenda. We are not about that. Our agenda is about the people of Delridge.
Current Role	Community Building	DR 4	We are a gathering of neighborhoods. Not a gathering of business interests or whatever.
Current Role	Community Building	DR 6	There is a strong ethic of responsibility to the community.
Current Role	Community Building	DR 7	When we vote on projects/grants we ask how can we serve the whole district?
Current Role	Community Building	DR 8	There are no egos here. It is about building community. I feel good about coming to our meetings because we push everyone's agenda, not just each individual's agenda. Is what keeps me coming back.
Current Role	Community Building	DT 5	See it as a very important way for civic engagement in the neighborhoods that pulls all the downtown neighborhoods together.
Current Role	Community Building	SE 1	As a whole, purpose is to engage citizens. Could be in any way, but to engage is the purpose.
Current Role	Community Building	SE 3	For me, I want it to be fun – a place to exchange ideas. Sponsored the summer streets “world village event,” bringing people together. A place for neighbors to get to know each other and plan events for people to get to know each other.
Current Role	Connection to Government	DT 1	As the Belltown Business Association, which represents all businesses in our area, our link to the DC is very important as an advocate and lobbyist to make sure that our wishes get to the city (the wishes for our area in particular). The DC is a good avenue for our interests to be heard. Through the DC we are able to work with the City... I also wear my affordable housing hat. It allows me to voice BBA's (Belltown Business Association's) concerns about what's happening in Belltown with homeless and low-income.
Current Role	Connection to Government	DT 9	See it as a means for neighborhoods to be represented. Come from Denny Triangle myself. We get info to the DC that then gives it to the City.
Current Role	Connection to Government	E 12	The DCs open doors – city representatives come. Can get things done. Have the District Coordinator.
Current Role	Connection to Government	N 5	There are always options for individuals to go to City council hearings but most people wouldn't want to do that; this is a more accessible format for people to give input. The budget hearings, for example, are not an ideal version. Here it is much more neighborly and accessible – can talk to each other and the City.

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Current Role	Connection to Government	N 6	· The DCs help people find different services, how to go about doing things. i.e. working with SDOT, improving sidewalks, the budget. Is a way for community groups to get together and help each other out, know what else is going on. Able to make an initial contact with City. Know who to go to in the future. Builds relationships with city staff.
Current Role	General	DT 8	The role ideally should be even more important in difficult economic times when you want more people to participate and want to keep high players involved.
Current Role	General	E 9	When they were built, there was already a citywide coalition of neighborhood councils that did not include businesses. People were very suspicious of the DCs mandating inclusion of businesses. People thought it would be a distraction from neighborhood orgs or the DC process was just another additional level of bureaucracy to separate government from community activists. This suspicion still exists a little.
Current Role	General	SW 14	I almost see it as a parallel function to the city council. So the DCs are a unique level and is where it is strongest. Obviously the smaller orgs are more rooted to area.
Current Role	General	SW 15	Is based on a hierarchical model. The smaller orgs go to the district council, though they are not well distributed (community councils).
Current Role	Geographic asset	DT 15	The rest of Seattle is project-specific involvement; with participation centered around and attracting one issue people. Really important to have involvement that is multiple issues, geographic based.
Current Role	Geographic asset	LU 9	· They are advisory bodies. If you comment on city policy, then you're advising the city. So we can and do. The NE district has done more over the years on commenting directly, writing letters. Others active too. I think this has helped a great deal. The City is always needing to hear an unvarnished view from the grassroots. There are 30 or more advisory committees in the city. Every single one of them, with the exception of the CNC and DCs, are appointed by the mayor, city council, or department head. We are the only one where membership is entirely selected at the grassroots (the only other one that has partial selection is CUCAC).
Current Role	Geographic asset	NW 2	The DCs are geographically focused, not issue based, not hand-picked, like other commissions and boards.
Current Role	Geographic asset	SW 7	This is a fairly unique system that fills the gap left since the City Council is citywide. Thus, it is our only representation geographically. So the main purpose is to provide some kind of interface that is geographically oriented and can represent our specific concerns that are different from other areas.
Current Role	Geographic asset	SW 9	The city doesn't have staff that are super familiar with each neighborhood, so the DCs provide this.
Current Role	info-sharing	B 4	Important that all constituencies share ideas and find common ground when can. And to come to understanding.
Current Role	info-sharing	B 5	We have 40 people, a lot of constituency groups and have dialogue.
Current Role	Info-sharing	E 1	Act as a place for the neighborhood councils, chambers, etc. to network
Current Role	Info-sharing	E 3	To be a place where we can share information and deal with the business that the CNC and the City and send on to the district council

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Current Role	info-sharing	E 11	Our DC is outstanding because of its diversity (including racial/ethnic, income, business representation, geographic). We are able to learn about the other fellow's problems, see the differences, and see the commonalities. Help with each other's issues – back each other.
Current Role	info-sharing	E 20	For my district, if we didn't have DCs, we would miss the opportunity to have the face-to-face contact with neighborhood leaders from other groups.
Current Role	Info-sharing	GD 1	· Networking and sharing information. A collaborative entity. The extent of their power is sharing info, which is a big power in itself.
Current Role	Info-sharing	LU 1	· It brings us together from the geography. It helps us be aware of each other's issues and the city's issues and run with it. Members are able to go back out to their groups. We learn from each other, i.e. Fremont learned from the parking kiosk experience in West Lake. The Aurora bridge railings project affected many of us – it helped to have those farther away from the bridge understand the issue.
Current Role	Info-sharing	LU 3	· Talking to each other, networking.
Current Role	Info-sharing	M/QA 1	· Pulls all the disparate orgs in the community into one place. Gives us an opportunity for all the community organizations to share what we're doing with each other.
Current Role	Info-sharing	M/QA 5	· It is educational for the organizations. What is going on.
Current Role	info-sharing	NE 1	Info-sharing. I go because it keeps me informed. To be able to bring that back to the community members in my org. For people to express their ideas and opinions.
Current Role	info-sharing	NE 2	To bring neighborhood groups together to share ideas. Be able to have people come to the DC when they have a concern and get support from the DC for their issue.
Current Role	Info-sharing	SE 2	Is a great resource for info sharing. City council members come. Is a place to get to know each other. Is what we've focused on the last few years.
Current Role	Info-sharing	SW 1	The DC provides a place to be with other community organizations. Learn from what other orgs have done. Great to share learnings.
Current Role	Info-sharing	C 4	Include all the new developers to share information on the various types of housing being developed in the neighborhood.
Current Role	Info-sharing	E 10	Our district doesn't really fit together as a district. As such, it is very different across the district. We are a unique, wide area. Our district has a multi-personality, not just one. So we give a little and get a little. Help each other out.
Current Role	Info-sharing	GD 10	· Currently, I see that we view our DC as more about information sharing – what people take from that is work on advocacy together as groups, not as one unified district council. It is a vehicle to empower people to do whatever they want to do. Take information back. Be able to weigh in. Is only every other year that we issue a letter or statement of some sort. One example is the Southpark Bridge, which we were all for.
Current Role	info-sharing	N 3	The DCs help address the things that cross between the neighborhoods, allows communication between them, and to work on things together.

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Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	B 1	Conduit for info up and down
Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	C 1	Feel that the DC should serve as both, information sharing in a public forum setting and decision-making as it relates to Matching Projects and initiatives that impact the neighborhood.
Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	LU 2	· When city council comes to our DC, they hear from a large geographic area, instead of having to go to each community council.
Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	M/QA 2	· It gives the broad community groups the opportunity to interact with city/governmental leadership. A lot of our efforts as the DC involve inviting elected leaders and city staff (and other government entities) to share with us their perspectives on issues that are of interest to them and us.
Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	M/QA 7	· In addition to gaining information, there is also the need or desire to give feedback to the City, or Port, or state transportation, for example. It produces a little bit of tension as to how we go about doing that. We try to construct our meetings to ask them to talk with us and then listen to us. Point is that it provides a venue for community organizations to talk to our elected leaders. Without that forum, we would probably be more frustrated. Does create tension but is a healthy tension. Without that, there would be more discontent. Is also important that the DC be broad based because it plays this role in giving feedback.
Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	N 7	· It is also a way for the City to communicate with community groups. Information that comes from the city and flows through the Council – is the best way to get the information and pass it along to the community councils. It is a vehicle to hear from others, as well, like developers, police department, county council, business owners.
Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	N 9	· I like that two way exchange. Are able to give advice and recommendations to the City and the City send information down to disperse to community councils.
Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	NE 4	Information sharing going both ways: city gov. to communities and the reverse.
Current Role	Info-sharing&Advisory	SW 6	Is definitely about info-sharing and advising city on policy relevant to our community.
Current Role	Institutional Memory	B 6	Maintaining historical context, heritage of community
Current Role	Issues Addressed	C 3	In terms of guidelines, recognize importance of processes and information sharing such as the Neighborhood Street Fund, Neighborhood Matching Fund, Bridging the Gap, City Initiative networking, and works with Office of Emergency Preparedness to reach out to the residents.
Current Role	Issues Addressed	DT 7	It is important for us to be focused on issues that affect all of the downtown neighborhoods. Is important to share common issues.
Current Role	Issues Addressed	E 13	There are always half who are interested and half who are not, depending on the issue.

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Current Role	Issues Addressed	E 14	We often have the same complaints to the City from diverse parts of the district. Doesn't matter of demographics, have similar issues.
Current Role	Issues Addressed	LU 4	· Some issues only affect specific areas, but there are also a lot of common issues. There are also big city policy issues that we're all interested in.
Current Role	Issues Addressed	LU 5	· We are involved in the city budget, NMF, and neighborhood planning.
Current Role	Issues Addressed	N 2	When different groups discuss issues. For me the city presentations are useful, but the majority of people in my neighborhood aren't excited about things like City budget vs. an issue on sidewalks in their neighborhood.
Current Role	Issues Addressed	SW 8	Services, neighborhood planning, emergency management. All critical functions that our DC is involved in.
Current Role	Membership	DT 12	We have representatives from each neighborhood. We are geographically based and include business and resident interests.
Current Role	Membership	E 8	We also have a pretty good set of active community groups across the district. They come depending on the subject of the meetings. When it's NMF season, we see new faces and sometimes they come back.
Current Role	Membership	E 15	Membership doesn't change frequently – there are long-time active people, people that are active in their neighborhoods.
Current Role	Membership	E 16	Works well that when someone has a problem, they come to the DC meeting; don't come otherwise.
Current Role	Membership	E 17	People who come to the DC are always part of something else.
Current Role	neighborhood planning	B 7	We sometimes have a defensive stance in history, in relation to neighborhood plan. We are interested in seeing the 1998 plan bear fruit. We see ourselves as the sheppard and holders of the neighborhood plan. The defenders. Because we are here in the long-term versus downtown people who come and go.
Current Role	neighborhood planning	DT 6	Everyone says their DC is the best. Ours is so important because so much neighborhood planning went through us years ago.
Current Role	neighborhood planning	SW 5	Have also become more active in the neighborhood planning process.
Current Role	position-taking	B 2	Is important for the DC at times to take positions, to be clear where we as a community we stand. Though not on a regular basis.
Current Role	Position-taking	M/QA 25	o Most of the members have a sense of what is acceptable to the majority. We don't put forward things that we know there isn't agreement on. Don't take positions because hard to get all orgs at bottom to be behind something.
Current Role	position-taking	SW 3	If there is an issue, how do we take a position? Don't just vote, so we do consensus; if 60% feel it is right, we'll take it. Otherwise shouldn't be a position if it's not strong. Also we make sure we aren't asked to make a position without getting to discuss it and fully understand it.

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Current Role	position-taking	E 7	I don't think that DCs are in a good position to attempt to make policy for their entire district. One example is residential parking zones – business orgs are not enamored with this, residents are. Because we had varying views on this, we decided not to take a stand on it — it was not in the best interest of the DC.
Current Role	position-taking	SE 4	We encourage our members to give input to the City directly. i.e. parking issue: we didn't make it our effort but encouraged members affected by it to go to city council directly.
Current Role	position-taking	DT 4	Our DC votes on controversial issues. Our business association votes.
Current Role	Position-taking	LU 10	· It is illegal for us to endorse ballot measures or anything political or on ballot. But we can still take positions on issues before they are on the ballot (and can advocate to get things on the ballot). We take positions all the time.
Current Role	position-taking	B 3	Taking an immediate position on a specific project versus long-term advocacy and positions, long-term strategy.
Current Role	position-taking	SE 7	Idea of representation is very complicated. For me, the DCs should represent their members and that's it. Don't try to represent entire community.
Current Role	position-taking	SE 8	On various issues, i.e. revitalization in SE, the City has asked the DC to take a position on. These led our DC to ask ourselves the question of what our role is. Should we be taking positions on city policy or just do information sharing?
Current Role	Position-taking - NO	DR 9	Our DC does not take positions on specific issues. What we do is let parties come and give us info and take it back to the groups we represent and if those groups decide to take a stance, they can. We don't issue letters of support. There have been a few instances where we have, but for the most part we don't.
Current Role	Position-taking - NO	LU 6	· This DC has tried hard to not take a political stance on any issue because we are a group of groups, even when we all agree on an issue. Because our groups should have the right to individually sign on to things, not together.
Current Role	Position-taking - occasional	SE 5	In last 2 years, have only taken 2 positions. 2 groups abstained because didn't affect the group directly or didn't have a chance to take back to group. Idea of majority and minority report.
Current Role	Position-taking - occasional	M/QA 6	· We take info back to our orgs. Only take action if we all agree.
Current Role	Position-taking - occasional	M/QA 11	· Because we are broad-based and very diverse, it is hard to come to agreement and take positions. Every org has its own agenda and priorities. Thus we don't put positions out as often. We have chosen to not be an advocacy group. We know we're funded by the city; also each of our groups can advocate on their own. Sitting at DC meetings and listening to elected leaders makes me very valuable to my community council.
Current Role	Position-taking - occasional	N 17	· We are relatively light on taking positions and only occasionally vote on things. Generally only if it is complete or almost complete consensus do we send in a letter. If we end up doing a controversial vote, we don't write a letter. We are not a very contentious group. I know there are struggles in other districts.

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Current Role	Position-taking - occasional		In last 2 years, have only taken 2 positions. 2 groups abstained because didn't affect the group directly or didn't have a chance to take back to group. Idea of majority and minority report.
Current Role	position-taking-yes	LU 8	· The Lake Union DC does write letters to City Council.
Current Role	Uniqueness	DR 1	We operate a little differently from the other DCs.
Current Role	Uniqueness	NE 3	Each district has different ways of operating.
Current Role	Uniqueness	NW 4	The DCs are different because personalities of the people who go are unique. They really reflect the people in the orgs there.
Current Role	Voice/Influence	E 6	We designed our DC to be pretty minimal, not strong. We felt it was better to spend our volunteer time with our various component organizations, spend our energy back home, rather than spend time on the DC level, which is not particularly close to the center of power. I like it this way.
Current Role	Voice/Influence	NW 25	The three channels of civic engagement are voting, writing letters, and acting together with other groups through the DCs.
Effectiveness			
Effectiveness	Autonomy	LU 22	· The neighborhood associations in Seattle are much more involved and present than other cities. They address many issues impacting their neighborhoods: crime, services for elderly, etc. To whatever extent the City can aid it, helps. Also important to not do damage to it. In 1987, when DC legislation was originally proposed, there was fear that it could damage existing grassroots networks. In recent years, DON has been doing things that have weakened grassroots instead of enhance it. In Vancouver BC, created district councils that actually resulted in some neighborhood groups going away. Our fear was that since it was staffed by the City, it would be too government-run, top down. In both ways, we have been able to avoid this. Mostly because of Jim Diers, first DON director. Early on the DCs could have become very top-down and disempower the associations, but his background was not government. Mayor Royer hired him and Rice and Shell kept him. It showed the respect he had in the neighborhoods. He was trying to protect the independence of the DCs while also being the Mayor's advocate as well. Right now feel like DON is more controlling.
Effectiveness	Autonomy	LU 23	· Neighborhood street fund and NMF have been very important to CNC – have been deeply shaped by CNC. Recently there have been changes made to these programs that have moved away from collaboration with CNC, though we successfully reversed some of those changes (DON announced they were eliminating interviews of NMF interviewees with DCs without consultation to CNC). Was not collaborative, inclusive. One of many examples of disempowering DCs and CNC and its advisory role to DON and the matching fund.

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Effectiveness	Awarding \$	E 24	Would be hard to do the NMF panel without the DCs. For our district, the citywide matching fund panel – we end up making the same recommendations as the citywide panel. They do a good job for our district; other districts may not agree frequently.
Effectiveness	Awarding \$	N 10	· I have felt pretty happy with our DC and the way it functions; it's role. The opportunity for the DC to review things like the street fund projects and NMF. I like that we can be there to give applicants additional things to think about to strengthen their proposals to the City. When they come and make presentations to us, we help give them resources, ideas on how to improve their proposals.
Effectiveness	Awarding \$	SE 12	The DCs do a good job on mentoring and helping matching fund applicants. Especially here where there are ethnic-based non-profits in an American system.
Effectiveness	Awarding \$	SE 10	NMF recommendation has helped build ownership and make people feel they have a voice.
Effectiveness	CNC	NW 22	I would argue that letters from the CNC get diluted. CNC struggles to not step on toes and tries to operate by consensus. There are certain things the CNC should weigh in on.
Effectiveness	CNC	SW 16	There isn't enough strength left at the CNC. Is diluted.
Effectiveness	CNC	E 25	The CNC members – frustration with the politics of the CNC. By description anyone on the CNC is a meeting junky because they have to attend 3 monthly meetings. These are people whose life is meetings.
Effectiveness	CNC	E 26	But they (the CNC) have done some great stuff around the budget forums.
Effectiveness	CNC	M/QA 12	· For our DC, a representative goes to the CNC meetings who is not the Chair. We are not very connected to the CNC. The CNC – is its own council – is not a consensus of what the DCs want.
Effectiveness	CNC	SE 11	The CNC is tasked by ordinance on specific things. Do take positions. They are supposed to be representative of all the DCs when take positions. Maybe their role should be to provide guidelines and advice. Could organize a meeting of all the district chairs. Want CNC to focus on what the districts can do together, whether it's an event or initiative. They do the same as the DCs – have mayor and council come by. Is repetitive. Is like bad middle management.
Effectiveness	collective action	SW 17	Originally there was one SW DC. Delridge had unique issues. Like Rainier Valley. Is unfortunate that it separated low-income and high-income. So try to do joint meetings some time. We also have joint initiatives, i.e. emergency planning, transit; community volunteer awards program; gathering of neighborhoods
Effectiveness	Community Building	DR 12	· We have done several programs that other DCs have tried to replicate. For example the Gathering of Neighbors.
Effectiveness	General	B 11	We have had big successes, like the rezone dialogue.
Effectiveness	General	E 28	I think our DC has been very effective for a long time. We're not all perfect.
Effectiveness	General	GD 6	· Would be a shame to separate the DCs from DON because it is DON's mission to build community.

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Effectiveness	General	LU 13	· Institutional memory: one of the criticisms of the audit was that there weren't files/records kept. Don't even have a record of who the voting members of the DCs have been over the years. Hope this can start happening. Also minutes/agendas are valuable.
Effectiveness	General	LU 28	· Jim Diers had mediators help resolve the problem between Delridge and West Seattle instead of intervene himself, as Stella/DON intervened in SE Seattle, which made it worse. It actually harmed the DC and CNC by not including them in the decision.
Effectiveness	General	M/QA 9	· What we do is create a work plan at the beginning of the year and we ask all the members to put out all the issues of concern that we want the DC to address. We ask the members to consult their organizations for these concerns, not just their individual ideas. Then the exec committee works to bring speakers that can address the issues.
Effectiveness	General	M/QA 22	· Our work plan gives direction to our DC. Also, we look back over the last year and looked at what we achieved, what is no longer relevant. There needs to be some flexibility with the work plan because new issues pop up. We adapt and add things in as needed.
Effectiveness	Issues Addressed		With NDC's help, we send speakers the questions, issues we specifically want them to address so they come prepared to the meeting.
Effectiveness	Issues Addressed	NW 17	If government is trying to listen, we need to figure out what the topics are that are amenable to a regional approach to exchange of info and opinion.
Effectiveness	Issues Addressed	SW 18	There has never been a dispute over peninsula-wide issues.
Effectiveness	Issues Addressed	SW 19	Best strength is issues that impact certain neighborhoods. i.e. transit, viaduct, etc. affecting West Seattle. We are able to take the info that City puts out. Able to connect resources and disseminate, as well as get feedback to give the city.
Effectiveness	Lack of Volunteer Capacity	B 14	Biggest thing is that we have limited capacity as volunteers, limited time. When we had a lot of issues on the table, there wasn't enough time to address all of them as volunteers.
Effectiveness	Lack of Volunteer Capacity	N 14	· Is hard when already going to their community council meeting, to go to additional monthly meetings.
Effectiveness	Lack of Volunteer Capacity	SW 20	One of the issues with all the DCs is limited resources. Limited time to spend on this.
Effectiveness	Lack of Volunteer Capacity	SW 21	One challenge is that our reps are wearing multiple hats – representing multiple orgs. So we are challenged with getting unique individuals that only wear one hat. Is a small group.
Effectiveness	Lack of Volunteer Capacity	SW 22	Demand of members to sit on other committees. There aren't enough people to go around. Active in own communities and on DC so not time to be on a committee or advisory board – CNC, city, transit, development, So burnout factor and fatigue.

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Effectiveness	Lack of Volunteer Capacity	SW 23	We would all love to be able to hand this off, but is a daunting task to find others because is so time intensive. Why have same 15 people involved. If we could recruit more people and more community organizations. It would be highly welcome. We are begging more participation. Would be great to have individuals that are not representing an organization, just interested. Yet come consistently. We love when the public comes. To recruit people, when hear about an issue, see if anyone is getting active in it.
Effectiveness	Leadership Development	B 16	Would like more longevity – long-term volunteers that are dedicated
Effectiveness	Leadership Development	DR 14	· Leadership development, including involving young people to be leaders in Delridge. This could be a model for other district councils. We know that cultivating leadership within our communities is important. We're not just talking about leadership but involving folks in all ages, class, and ethnicity. Is a goal that should be for all district councils.
Effectiveness	Leadership Development	GD 17	· Sometimes, for the CNC, no personalities should be bigger than the organization; in some instances the personality is bigger than the organization. I think there are some big personalities that dominate in the CNC and probably in other DCs. I think in my DC, we do a good job recruiting others. So nothing is on one person's shoulders only.
Effectiveness	Leadership Development	NE 30	We are doing our best to introduce new ideas to our long-time members, but we're seeing a lot of resistance.
Effectiveness	Leadership Development	NW 20	The DON sees part of their obligation is to give training on community leadership. Instead of fostering leadership from within community that results in empowerment and citizen involvement and control, it's more DON just giving trainings. There is a shift – DON doesn't value citizen activists the way it did.
Effectiveness	Membership	N 23	· I think every DC's bylaws say voting members have to be community groups. Here they are primarily community/neighborhood councils. I think that is a good foundation.
Effectiveness	Membership	SW 12	The majority of our DC members are neighborhood groups.
Effectiveness	Membership	DR 15	· Membership/access – we are pretty damn open. If somebody is interested enough to take time and participate to try to find solutions to issues, they are welcome to our council.
Effectiveness	Membership	DR 16	· This DC – people are really trying to do the best for their whole community, so here we are, very accepting. I felt accepted before I had an official seat.
Effectiveness	Membership	DR 17	· Felt at Greater Duwamish that members were trying to gain and hold power to advance their own agenda. Landowners trying to hold their power.
Effectiveness	Membership	DR 18	· The Delridge Neighborhood Development Association has been a key partner. They have been the non-profit that has helped a lot of things in Delridge move forward.
Effectiveness	Membership	DR 19	· In the SE it seems there is a tension between agencies and residents whereas here there is a great relationship.

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Effectiveness	Membership	DT 13	We are supposed to be representative – that is our purpose. There are a lot of people that aren't participating, so if we can improve the numbers it would be more representative.
Effectiveness	Membership	LU 14	· We look at ourselves as very representative.
Effectiveness	Membership	LU 15	· Currently, not all DCs have business/chamber representation or are not attending regularly, but they should. It's important they are there and active.
Effectiveness	Membership	LU 16	· There are several districts that have active business participation, and a few that need to work on it. I don't know if there is a DC where the businesses feel that their perspectives are excluded, just that they aren't active.
Effectiveness	Membership		No one interested party can join, however a coalition of gardeners, for example, could have a seat at the table.
Effectiveness	Membership/Inclusion	DT 11	We do a good job with representation/inclusivity. The reps have been here for a long time – I think this is a good thing. Aren't stale.
Effectiveness	Membership/Inclusion	N 15	· I have always seen the DC as representing its member organizations, thus is somewhat exclusive by nature. The only voting power is those that are members.
Effectiveness	Membership/Inclusion		We look at our criteria every year to try to make sure that we are inclusive; so not too strict but foster community. Criteria include open meetings, have written bylaws. Are looking for sustainability – a group that will come to the council consistently. Share resources. We also have business associations, senior center, business, university. Are wondering if we should have Sustainable West Seattle be a member.
Effectiveness	Membership/Issues	N 11	· Getting more diversity of membership has been difficult. There is a large diversity of ethnicities in Maple Leaf and Lake City. Is not really reflected on our Council. Is a challenge because some of the higher level issues that cross neighborhoods are not some of the issues they may be interested in.
Effectiveness	Membership/Issues	N 13	· Need to get more people to come – get people fired up (for example, sidewalks fire people up). Create interest by various communication/outreach methods, including digital. For me, land use is a hot issue, but probably not for the rest of the public. Is only when something actually happens locally that people care.
Effectiveness	Membership/Issues	N 25	· When we say we want more members to join, a good example is the North Seattle Family Center. They have a council of ethnic diversity that meet regularly but aren't interested in coming. We have tried to get them to come. Often, groups won't come or come only for specific issues.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process	B 13	I don't think we can do that at the DC meetings (use our meetings to have more in-depth conversation on community issues). Is better for subcommittee meetings – very few would be interested in the topic of discussion. Instead, the DC meeting is a way to then set separate meetings/working together outside of DC meeting.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process	B 12	What might lack in some cases is a forum or the energy for having conversation. Instead our meetings are more of presenting information. So meeting design is not such that we can have real conversations when we come together. Happens only at subcommittees. –

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Effectiveness	mtg process	DT 17	We have a good blend of fun and product for our meetings.
Effectiveness	mtg process	NW 21	The once a month format of the district councils is inhibiting – it dilutes our effectiveness.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Efficiency	M/QA 24	· Do a lot of things through sub-committees, such as NMF, so monthly meeting time isn't taken up. We sit aside a couple hours to meet with NMF candidates, we get a sense of their projects and they have a good hearing.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Efficiency	M/QA 26	o When have an action we want to take, i.e. craft a letter, we have a group of people take it up. Don't spend time in general meeting.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Efficiency	DT 10	Chair of the DC is very good. Helps keep us on track and makes sure our concerns get to the city.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Efficiency	DT 14	Sometimes we have so much on the agenda, it's hard to get it all done. We need to get better at managing expectations – we have very little time to get everything done. Earlier this year, we put together a calendar to help us. We have a lot of DON-related issues to address – NMF, etc. and left with little time for neighborhood issues. May extend time of meeting to get to address issues.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Efficiency	SW 4	Our role has changed a lot over the past few years. Before we were more here to receive info from the city. Over time, we have been more selective on what info we receive to make sure it's relevant to our community; is info we want.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Efficiency	SW 25	Always have city wanting to come talk to us about various issues or city council members come push their stuff on us. We have been more assertive with having them know what our issues and concerns are before coming out so make sure is relevant to us. Since we have such limited time, we get 15 requests at least and can't accommodate everyone so are more selective.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Inclusion	DT 43	The NDCs ought to be able to assist the Chair with facilitating and calling people out when they're out of order.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Inclusion	M/QA 18	· We have a real professional culture with how we conduct our meetings. People can agree to disagree. No shouting. Is a protected environment where won't be attacked. That helps keep the council together. Otherwise we would drive people away.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Inclusion	M/QA 19	· We have mechanisms in place that really try to create balance between Magnolia and QA, i.e. change locations, change chairs. Even in decisions about project funds, make sure to balance. Think about it because of the past, tension in the past.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Inclusion	M/QA 20	· We are 3 neighborhoods. We've constructed our practices to honor the interests of all the parties in a way that makes us feel good about it. So know that one neighborhood won't dominate over others. Achieve balance. Is a valuable best practice.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Inclusion	M/QA 21	· The exec committee meets 4 times a year, set the agenda for the next months. Look at work plan and set agenda. It makes it easy for being a chair because we have a team. Ensures no one person is driving the train. And gives a framework.

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Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Issues	M/QA 3	We give them a series of questions to address to make sure they are topics we are interested in.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Issues	N 16	· Had a presentation by a developer at our DC meeting, resulting in continued dialogue with the head of the development. Our DC could hold forums where action/follow-up can result. We could sponsor forums once or twice a year where we choose hot issues and invite the public and city staff.
Effectiveness	Mtg Process/Structure	NW 30	To make the DCs more effective for opinion gathering, may mean more frequent meetings or longer meetings. How do we take all of the already busy people, how do we use a committee structure to bring in more people to do more work? Do we need to be more formal? And have more support to do that? We have a volunteer that does a website for our DC. We have a volunteer that does meeting minutes. There is a lack of professionalism and administrative support.
Effectiveness	NDCs	LU 19	· Our DC is extremely effective at bringing us together. We are more effective because we have Tim, NDC, and the Service Center. Need a geographic center because is a geographically based group.
Effectiveness	Outreach	GD 8	· Who is recruiting members to join the DCs? Is it the Chair? Is it the District Coordinators who are already stretched thin?
Effectiveness	Outreach/Communication	B 18	Have been successful by announcements to the blog and the Ballard news tribune. Membership has increased. There are new groups. They may not be called diverse by the City. There are the handful of single issue groups.
Effectiveness	outreach/communication	SW 24	I think every area is different but we have the blog which has been successful in strengthening the DC. There are other attempts like MegaWatt which was supposed to help strengthen communication for DC, but fizzled and didn't help. The blog is our outreach mechanism.
Effectiveness	Outreach/Communication	E 27	Our new NDC is doing a good effort at outreach to tell public about DCs.
Effectiveness	Outreach/Communication	M/QA 17	· Did a brainstorm to widen membership – had help from our NDC. Had some success. We've made efforts and have had some success in getting more groups involved.
Effectiveness	Outreach/Communication	N 12	· One challenge is messaging to explain what we are and what we address. Sometimes we get people to show up for the issue they are interested in but are overwhelmed by the other business the Council addresses.
Effectiveness	Outreach/Community Councils	SW 11	Our biggest issues is that we have pockets with no representation at all; don't have community councils; haven't ever gotten organized. Could be lack of leadership or maybe there isn't a uniting issue. Our DC has helped advise and bring new leadership together for 2 new community organizations per year. We are actively trying to identify the areas that aren't represented to get active.

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Effectiveness	Outreach/Diversity	B 17	How do we reach out to those neighborhoods that don't have representation? Or how can we get young people involved? Also there are constituents that will just never come to a meeting. Or they had kids and don't come anymore. In Crown Hill, we provide childcare for our neighborhood meetings. Also cultural barriers. Not that we shouldn't try. But shouldn't beat ourselves over the head. We should perhaps take a different outreach approach on occasion to include other groups - if they won't come to meetings, how would they participate?
Effectiveness	Outreach/Diversity	LU 17	· Rob in Ballard makes it possible for businesses to participate in Ballard DC. He keeps his eye on the ball. Here, we know businesses are very important.
Effectiveness	Outreach/Diversity	LU 18	· There is very little outreach being done by DON to promote the DCs, whereas POLs and other ways are well funded for neighborhood planning.
Effectiveness	outreach/diversity	NW 18	When City tried to infuse RSJI into DON and district councils – it has made unimportant what district councils are – it has diluted the DCs. One idea is that there is a parallel organization for underrepresented groups with cultural/language needs. But others think this would be an act of segregation – separate but equal. What we should do is apply more resources to get them to join the district councils, such as translation and relationship-building. We need to break down the “us and them” barrier. Would benefit us to have underrepresented groups.
Effectiveness	outreach/diversity	SE 13	We are good at getting people to come to our meetings. We are up to 25 member groups. Feel it is a fairly diverse group. Attendance is pretty good. We have a membership committee who helps think about outreach. Need to focus on engaging current members.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	N 18	· I don't know what influence we have with letter writing anyway. Sometimes we don't feel like we need to write a letter because we have city staff coming here and hearing us. We will advocate for our projects – neighborhood project funds in our district.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	N 19	· In years past, I made it a point to send in a letter about our budget priorities to the City, but I didn't feel like it had much influence so don't do it anymore. We could help launch a letter writing campaign to get various groups to write letters on budget priorities, for example, to help us have more influence. Once, all district councils and community councils each sent in a letter saying they wanted more police. Ideally it would be great if it really worked as a channel for all of the feedback from the district, so that one letter from those various groups would have more weight instead of everyone writing individual letters. Would be more efficient and better communication.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 14	Aurora Merchants Association – writes letters to city council and are often ignored.

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Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	B 20	Would be nice to know that city staff really want to hear our feedback. Not just because is a box to check off for community input. There have been times in past when we see that some have heard us and others that haven't. Metro definitely never actually listens to us. So, City needs to require that when staff go out, have to listen. Create a feedback mechanism. Send someone with actual understanding of the issue and is better prepared. Send info in advance so we can prepare in advance.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	DT 2	We want to make sure our voice is heard before any decisions are made on issues such as City Nightlife and the food vending carts. It is very important that the DC is heard. The issues at hand currently have a huge impact on businesses and residents of downtown.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	DT 3	If we didn't stand up on those issues, the City would pass them without our input. DCs have to be very proactive.
Effectiveness	voice/influence	DT 20	Only in the last few years, for some cases we are representing or addressing particular policies, it doesn't appear we are being listened to because the policy is already set. Where those issues are important, it negates the purpose of getting together at all. It discourages people participating now. To encourage participation, it would be great if we were listened to by the City, even if we agree to disagree. We all have jobs; this is volunteer – is even more discouraging. If there was a formal recommendation role that this body could play, where we all vote, it seems like it would go somewhere. The city doesn't make it clear how we fit into their deliberations.
Effectiveness	voice/influence	DT 22	We need to be tapped in far earlier in the process – before decisions are already made. For mobile vending, we had to fight to be included. When don't agree with the City on a policy/program, we raise an objection and try to do something. For the mobile vending issue, there was resistance to having us participate.
Effectiveness	voice/influence	DT 23	If we had a formal way to weigh in on issues, it would be clearer, save time, and sustain volunteerism. If we're going to sell the DC system, we need something to sell it with.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	GD 7	· Are we just a vehicle for receiving information? Would like to see more productive dialogue than the City just going to the DCs to dump information, check off the box. Does the City want to just talk <i>at</i> or talk <i>with</i> community?
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	M/QA 13	· It seems there is more communication at us then giving back. Falls on deaf ears. The City has their own philosophy and perspective so don't always agree. So we understand that they won't do exactly what we say, but is important that we have a voice at the table.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	M/QA 14	· We hope that we don't see ourselves as a mouthpiece for the city.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	M/QA 32	· Having a voice at the table (<i>see above section on effectiveness for detail</i>)
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NE 18	Follow-up for city staff on projects is very important. Goes back to "political will" – that really involve community throughout process

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Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 8	I see the DC as a bunch of neighborhood orgs getting together to present ideas to the city and receive ideas from the city. Right now it is not able to, as much as it should, present ideas to the city, or at least get any results from it. We listen to what the city council has to tell us (usually on election years), they have their ideas of what they're promoting and we report them to our groups. We would like the city to listen to what we have to say. I don't know how we're going to do that because we're not all that important. I'm not sure the intention of the City is to hear what we have to say.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 9	I agree it is intended to be a two-way communication street but it mostly works as a platform for the city to come to check off the community engagement box. I don't blame the city entirely for this.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 13	So city shouldn't just come give presentations on what they're going to do. As opposed to a request for opinion on which direction we should go. Also, if the departments don't bring it back to the dept heads who take it to city council, is pointless.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 15	There is no feedback loop – we give them our opinion and don't hear back.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 31	Need someone in City to make sure the feedback loop is done. See how the input of the DCs actually affected the budget. Need someone in DON who is extremely independent of political swirl. And is able to honestly share facts not dependent on political. Getting the straight scoop. Someone we can trust.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	SW 27	Would be helpful if City could look at us in a more strategic way and if they could do a little more homework on what our needs are. We don't just want to be the receptacle for news flashes. That info can be sent via email.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	DR 13	· This council has been able to articulate and fights for its needs.
Effectiveness	voice/influence	DT 21	City – don't talk to us if there isn't any funding to implement it. i.e. Nightlife
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	LU 20	· It seemed to us that DPD/DON didn't use us very well in last round of neighborhood planning. The DCs hold a lot of institutional memory, which should be helpful.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	LU 21	· We don't always feel like we have great representation on CNC and the citywide review team. We've had some great budget conferences but we aren't sure how much it's listened to. Only lobbyists/advocates tend to show up to the citywide meetings. When we bring people through the DCs, is more effective because we can make sure to bring more people. Is effective for budget conference because the DCs recruit people to attend.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	LU 31	· When change position descriptions for coordinators, they should come to the DCs to consult. Should be involved in hiring process for NDCs. For Downtown DC, never included consultation about who is hired or job description. Research and Evaluation position was cut without consultation. Should include in staff retreats. Goal setting.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	M/QA 15	· We view the relationship with the City as important; not sure how important they view us as. The city doesn't view us as important. There are some departments that value us more and others that come and you can tell they don't value.

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Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	M/QA 16	· Had the impression that was a rubber stamp move for city than is now. So has improved.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	M/QA 23	· We have good speakers. I'm happy if they come and they've listened. Sometimes they come back with modification of a plan based on our input. One example is the emergency planning funding that was adopted.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NE 12	Need greater awareness of role played by DC as well as DCs taking ever increasing leadership role in bringing Community constituents together to problem solve. More needed in terms of financial support and authority to be effective. To get there, city support and guidance needed as well as leadership by DCs.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 10	City originally created this structure for this system. Great on paper. High points and low points over time. Sometimes about personalities, sometimes about issues. They give us real work to do, i.e. the street fund and weighing in on small project funds. We did it. The city benefited by it. The City gives little back to the councils in terms of real work to do. It is a missed opportunity – we could do much more. We should figure out what worked well at the high points and bringing that back.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 11	Trust is also a big part of it. The city needs to trust us, as community. There has been a lot of lack of trust from the City partially because they see us as being the same old people, so they write us off. First of all, this isn't true. There are a few old timers but many new faces. Two, if there is a problem with that, find a way to use that expertise and experience. Like classes on how to be a community activist.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 12	Trusting us is about willingness to back off a pre-conceived plan and letting go. Actually make a difference in outcomes.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 16	The NDC could report back what we say to the City more. Works well when Stella hears from all of the coordinators when something is bubbling and then go to Mayor's office with the concern.
Effectiveness	Voice/Influence	NW 19	What could get more people to come? Money helps, if there are resources to employ. For example, many departments, like SDOT, could come to the DCs when are making decisions on their department's budget prioritization. If give the DCs authority and important work to do, people will engage – if take away, people will disengage. It needs to have a relationship to the City by being given authority.
Capacity			
Capacity	Access to Data	DR 21	· Access to data – each DC should have a profile of its demographics and knowing its mix of retail services and open space. Would give the councils a way of working off the same set of data for their area that they can use.

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Capacity	Access to Data	LU 27	· We need access to demographic breakdowns of our neighborhoods. We have it only by planning area, but 40% of city doesn't fall within any planning areas and they are very big, so useless info in terms of neighborhood association efforts to outreach. At least need this info so we can even know what our demographics are. The demographer is located in the Planning Commission.
Capacity	DC budget	LU 24	· More city support to the DC process.
Capacity	DC budget	NE 14	Put more financial resources towards the functions of the DCs.
Capacity	DC budget	SE 16	Need more food budget – for neighborhood events
Capacity	DC budget	SE 17	Funding is very limited - \$450 per year. Decrease restrictions on funding and increase funding.
Capacity	Equipment	N 27	· Electronic resources like laptop and projector.
Capacity	Equipment	NW 27	We don't have a projection screen.
Capacity	Equipment/Space	NW 26	Physical space is different between each DC – some are high quality spaces that are business-like and others, like ours, are a small table and small area where we can't all fit. Need space for the voters and guests. We all need decent meeting space.
Capacity	Equipment/Space	SE 15	We need space support – meeting spaces
Capacity	General	DT 19	Utilize our tools. Use our neighborhood plans; refer to them.
Capacity	Leadership Development	DT 36	Getting an orientation to understand the role of staff and the City. Maybe at exec level. A packet of information for each new member. Strategically train the board so it can be empowered. If grow it enough can do more committee work. The packet could go for our 2011 goals.
Capacity	Leadership Development	SW 29	Have a "How to Start a Neighborhood Group" section, including things such as sample bylaws, to the DON website. An online toolkit to help neighborhood organizations form.
Capacity	NDCs	B 15	The NDC is very important. We'd probably just fall apart if didn't have direct support. It is a lot of work. Also carrying it back to the City.
Capacity	NDCs	DT 24	One concern is that we need continuity with our district coordinator. We like our coordinator. If we didn't have Leroy, we would be at the mercy of DON, whoever answers phone. Leroy is our link to the City. DON needs to maintain that link with us – a fixed avenue of information. Continuity is very important. The DCs let us know what's going on. They help us with being politically savvy and how to be most effective with message/interests.
Capacity	NDCs	E 21	Will be really difficult for the DCs to convene without ongoing staff support.
Capacity	NDCs		The support we get as individual groups within the Council in terms of providing a roadmap, who does what in the City, where we need to go, should we be working with the city for this or not. The NDCs are wonderful resources to the neighborhood groups.
Capacity	NDCs	E 23	We would probably stop meeting if we didn't have a district coordinator.

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Capacity	NDCs	LU 25	· A conviction that support in the form of having an NDC position. Is absolutely necessary. We had them before there was DON. With budget cuts, we hear fear of cutting service people. We need to keep the system whole and entire because it accomplishes the job. For strong neighborhoods, need the DC system and the NDCs to support it.
Capacity	NDCs	M/QA 30	· We would not function as a DC without an NDC. If the NDCs were un-funded, it would kill the DC process. They are what makes it work. We wouldn't do it if there wasn't Christa. We would revert back to working independently in our own groups. Is a big red star – this is a volunteer group.
Capacity	NDCs	M/QA 31	· Really quality coordinators are important; helps keep it all together.
Capacity	NDCs	N 22	· I can't see the district councils surviving without the NDCs. They do so much behind the scenes to bring people together, help connect people and city. A consistent contact when leadership changes in the Council. They know who is doing what in all of the City departments.
Capacity	NDCs	NW 5	The NDCs are very inconsistent. There are some that take this part of their job very seriously – help empower chairs and the group, and others who are very hands off.
Capacity	NDCs	NW 28	The NDCs are very inconsistent. There are some that take this part of their job very seriously – help empower chairs and the group, and others who are very hands off. The differences in the personalities of the NDCs should be matched to the DC. Need strong leadership and need good people – if aren't doing the job, they are hurting the DCs. Need better management from above. Could evaluate them every 3 years and decide if they are still a good fit for the DC. Need more accountability. Also, if we swapped NDCs every once in a while and got someone from a different DC, would be a good way to get new skills and experience.
Capacity	NDCs	NW 29	It would be nice to know what and to who the NDC reports back to City. Need clarity on the roles and expectations of information flow and NDC role in general. Should be clear on the job description.
Capacity	NDCs	DT 27	The NDCs need more support from higher up to do their work.
Capacity	NDCs	DT 30	The NDC's time is also not dedicated to us. Seem like pulled away a lot.
Capacity	NDCs	LU 30	· The NDCs are the most important resource for making the DCs effective. The resources available to the NDCs have been cut back. DON eliminated the web coordinator (helped before with CNC website).
Capacity	NDCs	NE 13	Our NDC is good, but would like more support.
Capacity	NDCs	NE 16	My idea is that the go to person at the DON wouldn't have the answers, but could find the resources we need for a website, or for organizing a summit, etc. So have an extra person at the central office. Or another idea is that each of the NDCs be an expert on something – i.e. holding summits, technology, etc. that can be used by every district. The NDCs need more support.
Capacity	NDCs	SW 28	NDCs need more resources too – they are vital to our ability to function as a DC – he bridges some of our issues and helps us find resources. So more resources from DON to help would be great.

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Capacity	NDCs	DT 25	Would like more staff support – like a legislative aide for council members – a policy person who can help write position papers for the DCs. So when positions are taken, have support and the City can get a clear opinion about the direction the DC is in favor of.
Capacity	NDCs	DT 26	With the economy with the way it is we are all pressed in our jobs, so without Leroy, it would be difficult. He sends out the monthly alerts of the entire neighborhood meetings in our district. Is a great resource. Can use that to call for volunteers.
Capacity	NDCs	DT 28	Expectations around management is important. For NDC role – getting direction from DON and from DC members.
Capacity	NDCs	DT 29	Role of NDC - shouldn't make them wear both hats of advocate for community and City representative. Should separate these roles – maybe have a policy person.
Capacity	NDCs	DT 31	Role can be advising the DC Chair – help us set the agenda. Also give Chair insider view of politics.
Capacity	NDCs	GD 2	· The NDC is there as a resource to help facilitate, educate, and empower.
Capacity	NDCs	N 21	· We exist because the city created us. We have the district coordinators. I fear those positions being cut drastically. Those positions are the lifeline to citizens. What about having a dozen more district coordinators? We are cheap relatively speaking. We are volunteers, and the coordinators are the only staff... could use more staff.
Capacity	NDCs	N 28	· In an ideal world, more personnel, like the NDCs, helping the district councils.
Capacity	NDCs	NW 32	There used to be district managers who were like lobbyists to help make the neighborhood plans get implemented and push projects forward. That was an effective model. Had the sense that there was someone on the staff working for your neighborhood's interests. Someone who can help advise you on the insider view. Get advanced notice from DON on what is coming up. Act like the watchdog for neighborhoods, sending out info early and often. City life, politics, trends in regulation.
Capacity	Outreach	B 22	For people who don't come to the DCs, where do they get their information? The students at the university gave us good ideas, like parks and coffee shops. Would be fun to have a way to bridge those informal centers, i.e. having a coffee shop run by the DCs where people can chat.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	DR 20	· All DCs should have the resources provided to be able to have a website. If not a website, the City should provide all DCs with the resources to produce a newsletter. Need a vehicle for communicating out.
Capacity	outreach/communication	DT 32	Is really important to have a means to communicate what we do, our work. Each DC needs to have a website that the NDC can update consistently with meeting notes.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	DT 34	Could make a CNC website with each DC on there.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	E 34	DON should help notify community members on the DCs.

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Focus Group Question	Theme	Source, Comment #	Comment
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	LU 26	· Also need more support with technology, electronic outreach. Need websites for each DC. Is fatally injuring them. There is criticism that the DCs are not reaching out, not well known. This is a basic way of doing that.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	N 26	· Webpage. Tech resources. I've been told that there is webspace available on the DON website, but we would need to know how to edit HTML pages. Would like staff support with website maintenance.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	NE 15	Would like a website for our DC where we are able to post information. Hard to tell whether the City has a support mechanism for creating and maintaining a website. Is too much work to maintain as a volunteer. It would be good to have a resource within DON who would be considered a go-to website person. Could make a standard website that would be very easy to plug into ourselves.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	SW 26	Micro-community journalism; blogs; news resources. What is role DC plays in that? Media resources have become vital to the community because the DCs don't have a way to interact directly to public. Only way is to attend meetings. Don't have a website with meeting minutes. So West Seattle blog is that resource. This is a necessary resource the City needs to look at. The minutes of our meetings are not posted on the blog.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	B 21	It would be interesting for after a Council meeting, to put a quick summary of our Council meeting online. Have a link to the presentation so that those who couldn't make it can have a resource. Also, if there is a group set up at the meeting to address the issues, people can know about it immediately. Idea of a webcast.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	B 23	A lot of young people use social media; could create a facebook page.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	DT 35	We would like to know more about what the issues are in other district councils. The website could help this.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	LU 29	· DON is supposed to maintain a community mailing list. The mailing list is not being maintained. This should be done to help strengthen DCs and inclusion/outreach.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	N 29	· Being able to put out a consistent message is difficult because our issues change. Often, we are told by the City with little notice that we need to vote on something. I would like our DC to have a coherent plan so we can know what to expect.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	N 30	· We could have more effective resources to share information internally – an intranet of sorts to share documents, internal resources, store documents and records, etc.
Capacity	Outreach/Communication		Need websites to be done in a consistent way that people can understand and so we have a similar structure for each of the DCs, i.e. About Us, Contact Us, etc. Have tools that make it easy to manage and are consistent across DCs (same structure, different content)
Capacity	Outreach/Communication	NE 17	Not everyone is on computers or lives their life on computers. At the community councils, we deal with people who don't live on computers. There are other types of communication. Computer is not only way. The personal touch is very important. Why things like a traffic summit is a personal way to communicate.

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Capacity	Outreach/Communication	NW 24	Need to have a citywide awareness campaign to educate on the DCs – that they exist. They are invisible right now. Could have a bill insert on the DCs.
Capacity	outreach/marketing	DT 33	The way you get people interested in joining something like this is telling them what happens if you don't. We haven't marketed ourselves very well. i.e. we've been talking about the tunnel and viaduct; we awarded the NMF projects. We haven't been able to show neighborhood participants why it's worth their time; what's in it for them. MARKETING!
Capacity	Outreach/Neighborhood Councils	NW 23	What would make the DC stronger? Need to go down another level to look at improving the neighborhood councils and merchants groups – those orgs that make up the DCs.
Potential Role			
Potential Role	Ambiguity	GD 4	Part of the problem is that it is such an undefined role. The city has played a role in this problem. Are they for information sharing or advisory? My DC has morphed tremendously over the last 5 years. Attendance level has tripled. Has established connections with neighboring communities. The ambiguity between the City and DCs and their relationship remains. If it's more of an advocacy position, it is an awkward position because City staff are staffing it, and it's a city department and the executive sets the tone. Should the DCs be more independent? I think it's a fabulous model, should update its mission and expand the table. I think at the core of it, there is a goodness, but we need to make it more defined.
Potential Role	Awarding \$	DR 10	One idea is that the DCs be in charge of Small and Simple grants (NMF). - No doubt it would create more interest but need to consider the costs. Many financial management issues. Also altruism and finance are not often in the same category. By incentivizing monetarily, when run into situations where people are there just to represent specific interests. Is against what we are about. Is easy for that process to go sideways. Would be difficult. But could end up with really great results. It would take skilled facilitation. Would need to resource the process more than currently do. - It could be a good thing if done correctly. It could be worked out if there were set guidelines.
Potential Role	Awarding \$	SE 9	DCs could decide on allocating Small Sparks. Makes sense because we know our communities better.
Potential Role	CNC	M/QA 29	· Also need to clarify the role of the CNC – right now is just another district council. Do we need a CNC? If they need to cut budget, a good place would be to cut CNC. Don't need it. I've never seen any benefit out of the CNC. The finance department could lead the budget conference. We feel disconnected. The CNC gave feedback on mid-year cuts – the connection between DC and CNC is very weak or non-existent. Instead of strengthening the connection, more value to just get rid of it. I'm not sure our DC has the knowledge to give broad-based, city-wide topics. So instead, could pull together DC chairs to give feedback on city-wide issues/policies, so only when an issue comes up where benefits.

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Potential Role	CNC	SW 10	I'm happy if the CNC doesn't exist. We aren't very involved with city policy stuff; we're interested in local. Community councils are the strongest.
Potential Role	CNC	NE 19	The CNC could provide a toolbox to DCs – resources for questions, where to go.
Potential Role	collective action	B 9	Do more with reaching out to other District Councils. We need an easier way to set that up. This way we can address issues and work on projects across DC boundaries, for example transportation corridors and high school areas. So there are unclear boundaries in practicality. Also, could help us work together to address issues that are not geographic based. Occasionally at CNC, we would have a roundtable, but very sporadic. If every DC had a quick summary posted online, could all easily see what everyone is working on.
Potential Role	collective action	C 6	Think that all district councils should be on the same page with community initiatives.
Potential Role	Community Building	DR 11	Our Strategic Delridge Initiative is at the core of what we're doing. Its goals are to: o Strengthen the trust relationship with local government and its many layers and agencies. o Create or maximize places and events where diverse groups can come together to build trust and reciprocity. o Create and promote a Delridge neighborhood and community identity. o Develop business associations to spur economic development. o Promote a green Delridge. o Conduct outreach and serve populations that cross class, ethnicity and cultural lines and communities. o Strengthen the schools. o Create a "boulevard" feel along Delridge Way.
Potential Role	Community Building	SE 18	Would like to have more events to get neighbors to know each other.
Potential Role	Connection to Government	NE 6	Facilitate greater citizen involvement in local government.
Potential Role	DoN Capacity	LU 11	· Under Jim Diers, DON did a great deal to organize geographic areas that do not already have a neighborhood association or chamber. DON is not doing that right now. Their emphasis is accusing neighborhood associations of not being inclusive. Meanwhile, there are significant parts of our city that have no functioning association. I'm disappointed that DON is not focusing on that and suggest that it do this again. Could happen through NDCs.

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Potential Role	General	E 19	I am in favor of the DCs but don't want it to be a shadow government. In favor of it fulfilling the basic duties of networking and ranking. So, no change in role of our DC.
Potential Role	Issues Addressed	LU 12	· Public safety should be an important issue for the DCs to address.
Potential Role	Membership/Diversity	C 5	Intent is to build an inclusive, diverse and open district council. Working with district council members to amend the bylaws to involve the diverse communities.
Potential Role	Membership/Inclusion	C 7	The DC's role should be inclusive with diverse communities part of decision-making that impacts the entire district.
Potential Role	Membership/Inclusion	C 8	Understand the dynamics of neighborhood political strengths and weaknesses. Worked with a consultant to improve the inclusion of diversity as it relates to reflecting the faces of the population that live and work in the neighborhood.
Potential Role	Mtg Process/Issues	NE 7	<p>Diversify the issues addressed by DCs:</p> <p>-- Certain neighborhood councils have very specific priorities they want to talk about. What we're hoping to do is slowly introduce new ideas and new topics to find a search for areas where we can come together and help each other out. That is what I see is the purpose of the DCs – bring neighborhood groups together to share concerns and ideas and get support.</p> <p>-- Would like to be more proactive by setting up summits (described below). It has been a bit complacent. We have people that have been on it forever and have the same issues. We need to push out into the community more.</p> <p>-- Small issues in small neighborhoods tend to get overwhelmed/drowned out by bigger issues in other areas. When you don't have any big issues, won't see a connection or relevance to the DCs. We need to bring a connection into neighborhoods with smaller issues. People won't want to come if no issues are addressed that relate to them. Goes back to idea of diversifying issues. So if we allow room for other issues, we will diversify membership – more people will attend if we don't only address a few big issues. Not sure how we can reach out and start to balance perspectives.</p>
Potential Role	position-taking	DT 16	Should take more positions across DCs. Should consider weighing in on policies, address concerns that are in common for districts.
Potential Role	position-taking	NE 10	

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Potential Role	Voice/Influence	B 10	<p>Money! A quarter million dollars. Each district council should get block grants. You would find people clamoring to join the DCs. You would find collaboration between districts. You would find politicians coming here because want money.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Would improve the process of all of the neighborhood projects, of pleading for large and small NMF grants. We could make significant community projects happen in this community instead of a bunch of small traffic circles. o Instead of clamoring with each department to get a little money for a project, we would be the source. People would be clamoring to us. And we decide what projects happen. Would streamline process; be easier for the City. o It would give us much more responsibility.
Potential Role	Voice/Influence	DT 18	<p>There continues to be a need for autonomy on how grassroots system believes in the work it's doing. Puerto Alegre (in Brazil) – we should adopt this participatory budgeting model – we should get to determine how we spend budget.</p>
Potential Role	Voice/Influence		<p>The two key things are meaningful work (more authority). More budget authority. In Tokyo, they have districts as well, and have considerable budget authority. Bellvue and Portland also. Porto Alegre.</p>
Potential Role	Voice/Influence	M/QA 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · I do think the city misses opportunities for using the DCs to get input on budget cuts. The city could come out to the DCs to ask us what is the least and most important. Dwight Dively used to come to the DCs and give us the overview of the budget, the big picture.
Potential Role	Voice/Influence	M/QA 28	<p>Right now there is only the street fund and NMF – these are small ways. When the city makes any significant policies, they should come to us, like an advisory body. They do public meetings but are not well advertised. We are a conduit to the community and spread the word back to our community. · City should work with DCs and neighborhood councils on these issues, to buy in. Can alleviate friction that can be caused when we're not bought in.</p>

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Potential Role	Voice/Influence	NE 8	<p>Become the neutral conduit and facilitator of information and community problem-solving.</p> <p>-- I see the DC like being a conduit for information. Being more neutral. So when there is a question (i.e. Children's Hospital), my view is that the DC should be a space where the various sides of a concern can come to our meetings and have a chance to disseminate info. And we then pass that on to our residents/groups. And when there is an issue that we feel the City should be made aware of, the appropriate party in City Hall should come listen.</p> <p>-- So what the City usually does is comes out to us and tell us what they are going to do, not come to us to help co-create a solution. So we should have the DCs or community council be in charge of the info exchange. Should be a neutral party to make sure all sides are represented. Steer way meeting progresses so public actually has a chance to give feedback. And that city expertise is also respected. The city should provide a professional facilitator that can make things move and keep it neutral and productive, not let officials be attacked. Where stay respectful. An outside neutral facilitator that isn't involved in the process. (organizational capacity)</p>
Potential Role	Voice/Influence	NE 9	<p>-- When city departments come, they don't come to hear us, rather to give us updates and information. Thus, it isn't an opportunity to give input on traffic concerns, for example. We make suggestions that they will take down but doesn't have the same impact as a summit would, where actual improvements come out of it.</p> <p>-- We could bring resources together to hold a day-long summit to disseminate and share info on traffic concerns in the district. Would bring various parties who are involved together (i.e. city departments and local groups), identify problem areas, hear the ideas of residents, and figure out how to work together to find solutions. A summit would give the opportunity to get people's input. We would have access to departments in a way where they actually listen to us and where we can have a dialogue with each other – not just a presentation to us. This would also help demonstrate the value of the DC more.</p> <p>-- If we could do a summit on an important subject, it would be a way for "the City" to get a better idea, hearing from the residents, developers, other parties – all there. That the City can get a really good sense of where the community stands.</p>
Potential Role	Voice/Influence	NW 6	<p>Would be nice if the DCs were more recognized by general public, that the city council would actually find it meritorious to listen to the DCs, this would result in expanded membership and more involvement, more committees, do more work, and have more staff support.</p>
Guidelines			
Guidelines	Autonomy	E 32	Frustrated with DON because we don't need a lot, we don't make policy.
Guidelines	Autonomy	E 36	I think the Councils, through staff, should be the source of movements of the management of the DON. DON shouldn't be telling us what we should be doing. DON should listen to us. We have problems and solutions.

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Guidelines	Autonomy	LU 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the solutions floating around, i.e. DON or city council making appointments, prohibitions of people serving more than a certain number of years. All of those things would eliminate the current situation that the grassroots entirely has role in selecting its members. I am proud of the fact that City has received more independent advice from the CNC and DCs than any other city advisory bodies. To what extent has the city listened? There are many instances where the city hasn't taken our advice but it is largely because we are selected at the grassroots and give new, unvarnished ideas. If they start appointing our positions, they won't be people who are going to tell them what they don't want to hear.
Guidelines	Awarding \$	DR 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be a standard when it comes to awarding of city money. For example, when our DC looks at a large matching fund projects, we should look at it using the same set of guidelines and principles as every other district council. (Use same set of criteria).
Guidelines	Definition of Diversity	B 27	Who defines diversity is very difficult.
Guidelines	Definition of Diversity	GD 9	And what is the definition of diverse to the City? Is it only ethnic diversity? There are many types of diversity, i.e. renters.
Guidelines	Definition of Diversity	LU 37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of diversity, there are many types of diversity, not just racial. It is important that business representation is part of the DCs.
Guidelines	Guidelines: Basic/Flexible	B 25	The city could come up with some general considerations for membership, as opposed to enforce. There are pockets of our city that have large cultural groups that don't tend to come to meetings. How do we balance that? That is when we have non-profit service providers running the show. Important that the rules stay constant for membership.
Guidelines	Guidelines: Basic/Flexible	DT 41	The DCs should look to the city to provide the backbone. Shouldn't be afraid of basic guidelines.
Guidelines	Guidelines: Basic/Flexible	M/QA 37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> But some broad guidelines, policies, i.e. to prevent discrimination. Since is funded by the city, the city can put guidelines in place, but not so specific.
Guidelines	Guidelines: Basic/Flexible	N 32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personally I think there should be basic by-laws, membership rules, rules of engagement. Then after that, as long as they don't conflict, districts could create different rules to suit their needs. Could solve a lot of problems, like the membership issues in SE. The membership make-up is different depending on the district, like more business groups in Downtown.
Guidelines	Guidelines: Basic/Flexible	N 33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead of imposing by-laws, another option is to generate a set of general recommendations or guidelines districts can use but are able to deviate from (flexibility within guidelines).
Guidelines	Guidelines: Basic/Flexible	NE 20	Current baselines for DCs are appropriate in my opinion. DCs should have considerable flexibility to determine their own goals and definition of effectiveness. (If DCs feel they are simply following city rules, it decreases dramatically the incentive to be creative and to work hard on the issues that impact them.)

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Guidelines	Guidelines: Basic/Flexible	B 24	If we get a block grant, if we were given substantial money to spend, the city would be justified in telling us we should have same membership rules, criteria, staff support. And if not, I would opt for flexibility. We are volunteers; what it takes to bring in volunteers is better.... Since we don't have a lot of power, flexibility is fine.
Guidelines	Guidelines: OK	DT 42	Once using city money to staff the body, the DC is not just grassroots.
Guidelines	Guidelines: OK	M/QA 34	· We could use guidelines for membership. I flounder in my own mind as to what orgs we should be recruiting. i.e. should we include special interest groups, schools, senior homes?
Guidelines	Guidelines: OK	SE 19	The city hasn't been clear what the expectations are for the DCs. Great they can operate as needed, but I think they need a baseline.
Guidelines	Guidelines: OK	SE 20	Should have a baseline of what membership is.
Guidelines	Inconsistency	DT 37	I tried to get involved in Cap Hill CC, where I moved to – it was very confusing; there is no formal membership, anyone can vote. Went to East DC and there were very few people there. Seems very inconsistent across DCs – the Downtown DC works very well. We need a formal structure that every Council needs to follow. We need to discuss how to empower membership and discuss process and structure.
Guidelines	Inconsistency	DT 45	Realize that other DCs will push back on top-down. Tried to put guidelines down on NMF – found we were all operating a little differently. Utilizing and respecting volunteer power is important. We all see great people at our table but consistency is also important.
Guidelines	Inconsistency - Elections	GD 14	· Is there any consistency between DCs? I found out DCs have elections whenever they want. I proposed that all DCs have elections on a common day. There was huge resistance to this idea.
Guidelines	Membership	GD 13	· At our district, anyone can come to the table; everyone has a different perspective. We would love to have non-profits, anyone, at the table. We aren't taking controversial votes. Is about sharing perspectives. Is a win if we are all more informed. The more people the better. Don't really get why it's so controversial, why a power struggle in other districts.
Guidelines	Membership	N 35	· We are generally really open about who our membership is. Community councils, chambers of commerce, townhouse association, farmer's market (though that gets a little dicey because it is represented on various councils).
Guidelines	Membership	B 19	One idea is that groups have to have been to 3 consecutive meetings before they are allowed to vote.
Guidelines	Membership	DT 39	Membership: people who are members are expected to be active; if not, should not be a member. The frustrating thing is that there is inconsistent attendance in my DC (East). We need to tie membership to attendance if members are going to vote. It helps create value.
Guidelines	Membership	DT 47	The pressure to mandate membership in order to be a viable/legal organization is daunting for some of the DC's. Without a good system to capture new members, the DC runs the risk of being out of compliance legally – maybe the answer lies in revising the by laws?
Guidelines	Membership	M/QA 33	· Some DCs have narrow and some wide membership. We are broad.

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Guidelines	Membership	M/QA 36	· We have democrat and republican members.
Guidelines	Membership	NE 22	The more active that the neighborhoods are, the better. Who besides community councils should be members of the DC? At least the NCs should all be members and should be active in the DC. If not, doesn't have the same cohesiveness and representation of district wide.
Guidelines	Membership	NE 23	Right now, members are the chair of the community councils. Also, Chamber of Commerce is a member though they haven't come in a long time. This is a problem we struggle with.
Guidelines	Membership	NE 25	We had a strategic planning session this year (one of the things I'm trying to advocate for). One of the questions I asked is about membership – do we want to examine membership? Have that as a meeting topic. Someone suggested local PTAs (who are not currently eligible for membership). What we would like to do is have a website and sponsor a summit as a way of raising the profile of the DC to the community – this is what we do – so we get greater feedback from folks and perhaps get applications from new members. Don't advertise we want every nonprofit group in NE Seattle, but a few that have a vested interest in the local community.
Guidelines	Membership	NE 26	Current membership criteria: not for profit, open and regular meetings, have to represent some community-based group
Guidelines	Membership	NE 27	Transitional housing – have had (or are trying to get?) on as member.
Guidelines	Membership	NW 38	As long as new people aren't representing themselves individually, or the city, they should be able to be members.
Guidelines	Membership	NW 40	Something that is citywide (i.e. tenants association) should not be on the DC.
Guidelines	Membership	SE 21	Membership criteria: some DCs have partisan positions (democratic, republican)
Guidelines	Membership	SE 22	Don't think there should be a checklist of groups you should have but should be clear that it's not just community and business organizations. That not representative of our city any longer, even if it's how the DCs started.
Guidelines	Membership	SE 23	Not all non-profits operate with open meetings. Operate more like a corporation...
Guidelines	Membership	SW 33	Issue of community groups vs. service groups being representatives. Membership.
Guidelines	Membership - Term Limits	GD 16	· Term limits: there is a fine balance between institutional knowledge and stagnation. It is the responsibility for everyone at the table to be recruiting either a replacement or addition. I'm not a fan of term limits; I'm also not a fan of having a person at the table for 20 years - is not beneficial to the org or that person. There is a value to institutional knowledge; don't want to exclude – want to expand.
Guidelines	Membership - Term Limits	NE 24	Do we want a term limit for the representatives? Would be great ideally to get fresh ideas, etc. but in practice, is really hard to get new leadership. There is also value in those that have the history, time, commitment to be there. Is a difficult thing when is volunteers.
Guidelines	Membership/Diversity		It is more important that there is more diverse involvement on the community level (i.e. community councils, neighborhood groups), rather than getting people of color to the district council level.

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Guidelines	Membership/Diversity	NE 28	The community councils also struggling with getting underrepresented populations to come. We try to include topics that are relevant to young families, etc. to get them to come. Are doing a community party. Idea of moving meeting times to include young families. It takes the community councils themselves more effort to reach out to residents in their neighborhoods. If we do a good job with outreach as the DC, reaching out to groups like PTAs, NE Moms group, etc., then the word will get out. Visibility and outreach to community can come from both DC and CCs, but is more effective if comes from Community Councils.
Guidelines	Membership/Diversity	DT 40	Is difficult to say who membership should be across DCs – depends on the neighborhood being represented. What's important is to contact as many people as possible. So they are able to know what is going on; know about what we're working on.
Guidelines	Membership/Diversity	E 37	Is hard to have total diversity on the DC. Is not practical. Get so many people involved about an issue can become unwieldy.
Guidelines	Membership/Inclusion	E 29	Don't think neighborhood councils that represent similar areas should have to fight with each other over which NC is seen as official. All should be able to join. We are open about who joins our DC. Cannot join as individuals or individual businesses. We would probably not allow individual non-profits to join. If they wish to form a group of non-profits, then they could join.
Guidelines	Membership/Inclusion	E 35	The DC shouldn't be run by individual commercial interests, as we've heard has happened in other districts, it should be made up of people who live here. Individual business interests can be heard at the DC but they shouldn't be a DC representative. If don't also live in the neighborhood, doesn't make sense for businesses to be involved in the DC (since only have individual monetary interests, not interested in the well-being of the whole community).
Guidelines	Membership/Inclusion	N 34	· Could have voting and non-voting membership where people are embraced but don't vote if don't represent a group.
Guidelines	Membership/Inclusion	NW 34	Membership – some DCs are great at bringing new groups in. other DCs not so much.
Guidelines	Membership/Inclusion	NW 37	We were having a hard time identifying the missing person. It is hard to know who we don't know.
Guidelines	Membership/Limited Capacity	DT 38	There is no way to market that public participation is required. We have substantial legal requirements as a DC on meetings, etc. NMF – it is a big responsibility. There is a huge pressure on the volunteer governance group to grow the leadership. When have an all volunteer leadership, you run the risk of driving away the very participation you want by putting it on the volunteers and not providing enough staff support to address this.
Guidelines	Membership/Limited Capacity	NW 35	When only meet once a month for a body that is already stretched thin. What is a reasonable expectation for what it can do and what it should do? People will rise to the occasion if they have an important reason to get involved.

District Council Focus Group Responses

District Council Visioning/Audit Response

Conducted Sept - Nov., 2010

<i>Focus Group Responses Sorted by Question and Theme; Source Column = District Council and Comment # (See Key on Sheet 2 for details)</i>			
Focus Group Question	Theme	Source, Comment #	Comment
Guidelines	Membership/Limited Capacity	NW 36	Who should be at the table? Who's job is it to figure out who is missing? Who's not at the table? I think that is the city's job. It is not going to happen otherwise. We all agree that it would be great. If the city truly believes that as part of RSJI that we need to diversify, they should put down the resources.
Guidelines	Membership/Limited Capacity	NW 33	I absolutely reject the idea that it is our job to broaden membership. It is the NDC's job, not ours. They need to be evaluated on this. Need to look at their position descriptions and create metrics. The CNC started to address this but never followed up with it.
Guidelines	Membership/Outreach	B 26	Need full representation of community otherwise not effective.
Guidelines	Membership/Outreach	GD 12	· Should always strive to have as many people at the table as possible. Should we be focusing on outreach to underrepresented populations or do we just do outreach with them in mind?
Guidelines	NDCs	DR 25	· Each district should have a district coordinator. Should be the one single commonality – the one thing they share. The one single thing that represents the concept of a DC, is the NDC. I don't think we need to go beyond that. I think it's important that each neighborhood should be what it is. I like what this council has become. But that we all have NDCs is key.
Guidelines	NDCs	DT 46	Managing turnover of NDCs – it is important to look at how much turnover – need to give consistency across DCs.
Guidelines	NDCs	E 41	Think that DON should keep every NDC and remove more Neighborhood Service Centers. The NDCs are at the core of making the DCs function.
Guidelines	Outreach	GD 11	· Consistency. Who is responsible for recruiting, for outreach? Is it the DC? Is it the NDCs? We don't even have a consistent meeting room. There are a lot of moving pieces. And it's understanding we are all volunteers. Defining roles and expectations. And what the city is truly willing to give the resources. Better define the NDC role – i.e. if they are to help maintain a website to help with outreach. Is not in the capacity as a volunteer. The city really needs to work with the District Councils to make these clarifications.
Guidelines	Position-taking	GD 18	· Membership guidelines: pros and cons for both. Goes back to what the role of the DC is – is it for advocacy? Will the City actually use their positions in decision-making? If so, then yes, there needs to be guidelines on membership, i.e. ratio of residents vs. businesses. The City needs to decide how the DCs are going to fit into their decision-making process. The DCs need to decide how we are going to gather information, share and form opinions.
Guidelines	Position-taking	GD 19	· If we did do more of an advocacy focus, we would need more checks and balances.

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Guidelines	position-taking	NE 11	Tighten Process for Taking Positions as a DC -- Our district has always done a lot of writing letters, taking positions on issues. There is controversy on some position statements – have a quorum and have a vote. But is this really to say that our position is representative of the entire district? No. One answer is to give a position and to say which communities did not agree. Also need to make sure that our member reps go back to their community council so when they vote at DC meetings, it is a reflection of their community, not just them as an individual. Is hard to enforce this though. People say that they can't always go back to their community. I tend to vote no, don't back position, if I don't know what my CC thinks. <i>(Could something like this be a guideline across district councils, so it is a consistent practice? If so, let me know and I can add under the last question on ideas for potential guidelines across DCs)</i>
Guidelines	position-taking	NE 21	Think guidelines should be set when taking positions as a DC. (see description under "potential role of DC" section.)
Guidelines	position-taking	SE 14	The policy for taking positions is very fair, though it takes 2 months to do it. There is no quick way when the members have to go back to their group. Is hard because is not quick enough to go through the district councils. Makes more sense for City to go directly to community councils, yet don't have the resources/time to do that. The DCs have been used by the city to cover their bases, due diligence, for public input. Needs to start happening when city thinks up idea in first place. Then could utilize DCs early on, instead of right when council is voting on the decision. Works best when idea is first proposed to mayor's office or city council. The public should get to give input on the proposal itself. When it's in draft stage. Need to have some sort of protocol in place for this.
Guidelines	Position-taking	GD 15	· I personally believe there should be some common themes, but how the DCs go about it can be different. i.e. are we information or advocacy, if we take a position, what does that look like? What does the City do with that? What is the protocol, i.e. have to go back to member organizations to check in before taking a position. When the City demands us to take a stance, can't demand immediate stance because is just the people at the table at the time (found with the CNC).
Guidelines	Position-taking	M/QA 8	· There are two types of feedback: individual members who are speaking for their own organization and feedback from the DC as a whole. If we are speaking as a Council, it is critical that we be broad-based. Also, each organization needs to give thought ahead of time, not immediately that evening.
Guidelines	Recommendation	B 30	Could have 10 guiding principles that are created by a work group. It would be around staff support, inclusion, goals, meeting behavior, as opposed to a huge rulebook. And understanding what the vision is.
Guidelines	recommendation	DT 44	We haven't gotten around to updating by-laws – we need to do that. How we re-vision our vision. Advisory, participatory, fiduciary responsibilities are the 3 areas. Should bring together DCs to update by-laws together.

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Guidelines	Resources/Support	C 9	As far as baselines, would like to see an equal amount of funding resources to support community needs as it relates to community service and public service.
Guidelines	Resources/Support	SW 32	The resources available – this can be consistent across DCs. A central point of resources for what the City can provide.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	B 31	The guidelines assume that all people/groups would fit into a certain box. This ends up being anti-inclusion. If the new rules state meetings/communications must be ABC, and a certain group doesn't work that way, they get excluded by the rules. That just doesn't work. Rigid guidelines force us to exclude people, probably those who most need to be included. Look at how outreach was done for the station areas - DON staff went to people's homes and their meetings, gathered feedback that way. That was a process created to adapt to a particular situation. Rigid rules tend to limit the ability to do that.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	DR 24	· One set of rules across DCs isn't going to work for everyone. We work on entirely different planes.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	DR 27	When it doesn't involve something like awarding city money, each DC should be left to create its own agenda. Our issues are totally different than others DCs.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	E 30	Each district should get to decide membership guidelines. I hesitate to say what any other DC should do. I don't want to say there should be a type of baseline. I know other DCs are getting criticism because they are lacking ethnic diversity. I first encourage people of color in my neighborhood to get involved in the Yesler Terrace Community Council. We are very ethnically diverse.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	E 33	Each district is different from another district. Creating a standard of rules and approaches for all districts is ridiculous. They are interested in different things. In our district, we are totally diverse.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	E 38	Believe there shouldn't be guidelines across district councils. Leave them alone to do what they want.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	E 39	DON needs to respect what they've got (the DCs). Need to understand that our area, our Council, is a mixed bag. Needs to be treated differently.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	E 40	Each district is different. To create district rules when each district is different would be difficult if not impossible.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	GD 5	Each district council is so different, can't treat them the same with a brushstroke policy change, where some are succeeding, others are more stagnant. How can we make a policy change that keeps the successes changing?
Guidelines	Uniqueness	M/QA 35	· I don't think there should be one standard set of membership because there are different concerns in each neighborhood.
Guidelines	Uniqueness	SW 30	We work well together and have created our own structure and norms that work really well for us. I don't know if they would work well for the other groups. There is richness in the diversity of the councils.

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Guidelines	Uniqueness	SW 31	In terms of a set of standards. We want to encourage the DCs to be different. We're not a voting body, we're not politicians; we're just volunteers and we voice the opinions we think the community upholds. It is very important to keep the DCs organic, not too formal. Instead of a formal structure – it just doesn't work that way.
Audit Process			
Audit Process	Ambiguity	M/QA 39	City Council seems unsure about what to do with the audit. They also needs to think about what it expects of the DCs – what it wants.
Audit Process	Ambiguity	N 20	· Would be interesting to have someone from DON or City Council to come and tell us how they view the District Councils.
Audit Process	Autonomy	NE 29	Our council has a lot of long time members that don't want DON to tell them what to do.
Audit Process	Biased	B 29	I think we should just drop it. The entire thing was inspired by what happened in SE. Someone could have gotten involved in SE a lot sooner before it blew up. Could have done mediation. We could have proceeded the way were going, trying to encourage diversity, etc. as usual. So we need to just determine where it is broke, and not work on the whole thing.
Audit Process	Biased	DR 22	· What we're doing in our DC didn't come across in the audit. The audit is a flawed document – biased towards a specific district. It didn't give a true representation of the rest of the district councils.
Audit Process	Biased	DR 23	· The audit didn't recognize that we were the only DC that had youth involvement.
Audit Process	Biased	LU 32	· I believe the audit was gravely flawed. It was troubled by the crisis in the Southeast District and misunderstood by the other districts. I was chair of CNC during that crisis. Other DCs didn't have this problem.
Audit Process	Guidelines	NE 31	Whatever the result of this audit process is, there needs to be recognition that gives a fair amount of independence to DCs to organize and choose their topics as they feel is best. Any move to enforce stringent standards will meet resistance from the DCs.
Audit Process	Lack of Volunteer Capacity	B 28	Audit turned into affecting a bunch of volunteers. We can't deal with this on our own. Is way out of scale, too cumbersome for what we have the ability to do. What we have the time and mindshare to do. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. But some if it is broke. In our area it's not. So leave us alone. Is being made far more complicated than it needs to be. 80 pages of work plan and rules and regulations will not help, could even destroy it. ... so that DON will tell us what to do, they are going to hand out the rules, change the rules of NMF. It's a sham. None of it builds community or brings community together.
Audit Process	Lack of Volunteer Capacity	DT 51	District Councils are fragile and the City needs to be mindful that changing the mission/vision/goals is more difficult when you are dependent on volunteer participation. Certainly with the new budget impacts, this next fiscal year will add challenges.

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Audit Process	Legislation	LU 36	· I don't think we need to change the legislation regarding DCs.
Audit Process	Legislation	M/QA 38	· Have the city write the rules; don't have us sit down and write the guidelines. Don't want more meetings. Could do a carrot and stick – provide incentives.
Audit Process	Legislation	SE 24	Supposed to have city attorney to look at language. Amendments left it very fuzzy. We need to figure out if legal changes need to be made.
Audit Process	Recommendation	DT 48	We need to restate our vision if it has morphed. It's okay if it is not the original vision.
Audit Process	Recommendation	DT 49	The strategic plan in the audit is only as good as what is done with it. Needs to result in actually getting something done. Give the exec committees of every DC feedback. This comment to me is key. The leadership of all the DC's needs to see the results of this strategic audit, weigh the results given the new budget impacts, and hold the City accountable for action items. It will also help them guide their internal plans.
Audit Process	Recommendation	LU 38	· Could do a focus group with people in North Seattle (since did one with underrepresented populations in the SE).
Audit Process	Recommendation	NW 3	The notion that there is a great deal of difference between the DCs is that they are not that different. They are probably similar by-laws. The biggest difference is probably around membership. Should compare all of the by-laws as part of the work plan. They are an association of associations. Rules are pretty minimal – open membership, etc. However, at one CNC meeting recently, one person took representation lightly.
Audit Process	Resources/ Support	DT 50	Funding and/or dedicated resources is a key to the success of implementing the audit response work plan going forward.
Audit Process	Simplify	M/QA 41	· If DON and City Council wanted to give direction – state the purpose of what want, guidelines – including criteria for membership, resources/support the city will provide (like how the City wants city staff to function). The rest is too much detail.
Audit Process	Simplify	M/QA 42	· We tried to participate in the audit process. We are probably not going to participate into the audit response. We know the CNC put a lot of effort in the work plan. Was way too much information and meetings. The audit response is totally out of touch with the DCs.
Audit Process	Simplify	M/QA 40	· The audit work plan got so broad and big, it lost the fundamental questions. How are we constituted and how do we form ourselves. The major questions. Just address those.
Audit Process	Voice/Influence	LU 33	· The audit was flawed. The audit response could be used to de-nature, hamper, reduce the independence of the DCs as advisory bodies. I want to see them strengthened. Want the adequate support to be addressed.
Audit Process	Voice/Influence	LU 34	· Audit Response work plan: some things are worrisome. DON revised the work plan in a major way after we created it. Afraid will damage the CNC in name of improving. Talk about holding meetings where DC chairs would meet privately with DON and CNC. CNC meetings must be open. Should not have private meetings. Is typical of how DON has been handling things. Weakening DCs.