office of neighborhood involvement

Organizing and supporting partnerships to prevent crime and the fear of crime

4747 E. Burnside
Portland, Oregon 97215

tel 503-823-4064
fax 503-823-2909
tty 503-823-6969

Amanda Fritz
Commissioner

Amalia Alarcón de Morris
Bureau Director

City/County
Information & Referral Line
503-823-4000

This document is available at the ONI website:
www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/cp

Good Neighbor Agreements

Office of Neighborhood Involvement Crime Prevention Program
Fall 2015

What is a Good Neighbor Agreement or GNA?

A Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) is a written document that contains terms agreed upon by two or more parties, usually a neighborhood association and a business, and defines how to resolve problems that may arise. The agreement is voluntary and not legally binding. Neighbors and other stakeholders may pursue this process to express their concerns about how a liquor establishment, apartment complex, or other facility may impact the livability and safety of their neighborhood, and to establish a relationship with a new or existing business. Because a GNA is typically a preventative measure, a business with significant problems may not be a good fit for this kind of agreement.

Some of the issues addressed in GNAs may include:

- noise related to entertainment, outdoor music, or music volume,
- hours of service, including outdoor seating,
- patron behavior inside and outside of the building,
- security,
- appearance and safety of property such as lighting, physical maintenance, litter patrol, graffiti control and clean-up

The steps that management or owners are willing to take to prevent or mitigate problems are incorporated into the GNA. The process can provide the business with insight into the neighbors' concerns even if they are not all addressed in the document. The goals of the agreement are to maintain the livability and safety of the neighborhood; minimize nuisance issues, crime and fear of crime in and around the establishment; and develop and maintain clear communication channels between all parties.

Role of the parties

The parties involved in this agreement may include the neighbors, agencies, businesses, and other stakeholders in the neighborhood that may be impacted by the business, apartment complex, or facility. As participants in the GNA, all parties are expected to follow through with what they agree to do. For example, if there is a lot of noise at the business, the GNA may specify who the neighbors can contact to resolve the issue immediately. Where crime is involved, neighbors should call the police for assistance.

A majority of GNAs pertain to liquor licensing establishments. During the liquor licensing process, a business and neighbors may be encouraged to consider a GNA to address issues raised, establish

a relationship, and prevent problems. The pending license provides a potential motivation to the business to listen and respond to neighbor concerns. A GNA is voluntary and not legally binding even when created during the licensing process. However, this does not exempt the business from having to adhere to City, County, State, and Federal laws. The agreement is solely between the signing parties. Where there is a legal basis to do so, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission may place limited restrictions on a license to address some of the concerns raised that relate to alcohol sales and service.

Regardless of the type of business, it is important for all of the parties involved to remember that developing a respectful relationship with the business is one of the most important factors in a successful agreement. It is more likely that owners and managers will follow through on those terms that they are willing and able to implement. If a business is hesitant about committing to a particular item, the issue can be revisited at a meeting in six months or a year.

The support of stakeholders will reinforce the business's adherence to the GNA. If the business is a good neighbor, let other community members know. Where applicable, it may also be appropriate to become a patron. A GNA is founded in the belief that mutual respect and cooperation between a business and neighbors leads to stronger, healthier neighborhoods.

The Process

- It is important to have a person(s) lead this process by:
  - Talking to the stakeholders to understand their concerns,
  - Communicating those concerns to the business,
  - Coordinating a meeting that brings all of the parties together,
  - Facilitating the GNA meeting

  The lead person may be a neighborhood representative, stakeholder, professional facilitator, or a Crime Prevention Coordinator. If your concerns involve safety and livability, you can contact your Crime Prevention Coordinator for assistance. Call 503-823-4000 and ask for the coordinator who supports your area.

- At the GNA meeting, the business will listen to neighbor concerns and the group will discuss ideas for how problems may be avoided. The business will determine what will work in the operations of their business. A draft of the agreement may be prepared for this meeting.
- The facilitator will create a draft or update an existing version following the first meeting. The group will continue to meet until the final draft is completed and accepted by the business, stakeholders, and neighbors.
- The stakeholders, neighbors, and the business all sign off on the agreement.
- The group agrees on a time to meet to review the document i.e. six months or a year out.