

2019 SANTA ROSA NEIGHBORFEST PILOT PROGRAM FINAL REPORT

A special thank you to our funders and community partners!



Executive Summary

In 2019, the City of Santa Rosa developed and implemented the Neighborfest Pilot Program. Staff from the Community Programs and Engagement Department (CPE) worked with eight (8) neighborhoods throughout Santa Rosa to plan and host a Neighborfest event. In collaboration with the City's public safety, communications team, and Community Advisory Board (CAB), CPE staff developed program materials and organized the City's involvement at each event. In addition, CPE staff partnered with community-based organizations to provide information on individual and family disaster preparedness, mental health first-aid, and additional community resources at each of the events. These community-based organizations included the American Red Cross, Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County, Northern California Coastal Region, and the Sonoma County Library.

Methods

Each participating neighborhood group was asked to complete a final report as part of their mini-grant requirements. All eight (8) neighborhoods completed and submitted a final report.

In addition to the final report, the participating neighborhoods were asked to complete a brief survey regarding their event. Seven (7) of the eight (8) neighborhoods completed the follow-up survey.

Outcomes and Conclusions

Approximately 1,145 Santa Rosa residents participated in a Neighborfest during the 2019 Pilot Program, with attendance ranging from 50 to 250 residents per event. Approximately 321 new neighbors participated in a Neighborfest during the Pilot Program, averaging about 7 new neighbors per event. A total of 74 neighbors across all eight (8) participating neighborhoods assisted in the planning of their Neighborfest.

Initial analysis shows that Neighborfest events provide an opportunity for residents to socialize with one another and create relationships with new neighbors. Participation in Neighborfest also provides educational opportunities for neighborhoods, as well as the opportunity to begin thinking about individual, family, and neighborhood preparedness. Participation in a Neighborfest also produced an increase in the level of preparedness for several neighborhoods.

Although there is not a current programmatic mechanism to continue the depth of work administered through the Neighborfest Pilot Program, staff continues analysis and follow-up assessments with neighborhoods to evaluate whether program participation resulted in increased social cohesion and resiliency.

Next Steps: 2020 Neighborfest Program

The City, in partnership with the Community Advisory Board (CAB) will fund seven (7) Neighborfests in 2020 – one event in each Santa Rosa City Council district.

BACKGROUND

In October 2017, two wildfires broke out within the City limits of Santa Rosa as well as in unincorporated Santa Rosa. The damage from the wildfires was extensive: 24 people were killed, 88,261 acres burned, and 6,583 structures destroyed. Nearly 3,000 of the homes lost were in the City of Santa Rosa, representing 5% of the City's housing stock. The impacts of this devastation were experienced citywide and continue to require significant resources to address the long-term recovery needs of the community - both physical and emotional.

Research has shown that the more connected neighbors are to each other, the stronger their resilience is after an emergency. “The strength of relationship between neighbors is an indicator of how well communities adapt in an emergency”¹ and how quickly they recover. “Residents who live in neighborhoods where they feel connected to those around them are more likely to survive times of stress,”² in other words, neighbors are more willing to check on each other and help each other during a disaster. In addition, residents who map out an emergency plan with their neighbors are more likely to be able to respond effectively during a disaster.

During the October 2017 wildfires, residents who had made connections with their neighbors prior to the disaster were better able to help each other during the emergency. In an effort help the Santa Rosa community come together and heal from this disaster, to increase the number of neighborhoods that are prepared for an emergency, and to strengthen community cohesion and resiliency, the Community Programs and Engagement Department (CPE) developed and implemented the Neighborfest Pilot Program with the help of the Santa Rosa Police and Fire departments, various community-based organizations and residents of Santa Rosa.

2019 NEIGHBORFEST PILOT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CPE staff first learned of the Neighborfest approach from the City and County of San Francisco’s Neighborhood Empowerment Network (NEN). Staff consulted with Daniel Homsey, Director of the Neighborhood Empowerment Network, who provided an overview of the program in San Francisco as well as program and evaluation materials. These conversations resulted in CPE staff meeting with other Santa Rosa staff and community partners in early 2018 to obtain input and to initiate the planning of a local Neighborfest Pilot Program.

Subsequently, CPE staff applied for and received three (3) grants totaling \$30,000 to support the Neighborfest Pilot Program from the following organizations: Community Foundation of Sonoma County, Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County, and United Way of the Wine Country. Funding was used to provide mini-grants to each participating neighborhood, in addition to the development and printing of program materials, supplies and additional costs such as translation services.

¹ Guenther, D. *Social Cohesion: The Root of Resilience*. Feb. 2016. Mithun. <http://mithun.com/2016/02/09/social-cohesion-root-resilience/>.

² Professor Daniel Aldrich, PhD, North Eastern University.

In addition to grant funding, the City partnered with the Earthquake Country Alliance (ECA), a public-private-grassroots partnership of people, organizations, and regional alliances focused on earthquake preparedness, to provide disaster preparedness materials and an enlarged neighborhood map for an asset mapping exercise at each Neighborfest event.

Application and Selection

In the summer of 2018, CPE invited existing neighborhood and community groups to apply for a Neighborfest Pilot Program grant. In order to be eligible, each neighborhood group had to be either a formal neighborhood association or have had experience in planning and implementing block parties. As part of the application process, applicants were required to share neighborhood demographics, identify at least five (5) neighbors that would serve on their Neighborfest planning committee, and select a date from the provided list to host their Neighborfest event. In total, CPE staff received eight (8) applications, all of which were selected for funding as part of the 2019 Neighborfest Pilot Program.

The list of selected neighborhoods and Neighborfest dates are displayed below in Table A.

Neighborhood Association/Group	Date of Neighborfest	Time of Event
Junior College Neighborhood Association Location: Santa Rosa Charter for the Arts	June 8, 2019	1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Moorland Neighborhood Action Team Location: Andy’s Unity Park	June 22, 2019	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Burbank Gardens Neighborhood Association Location: 500 block of Brown Street	June 29, 2019	12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Sherwood Forest Neighborhood Location: Little John Lane	July 6, 2019	4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
West End Neighborhood Association Location: DeMeo Park (between W 7 th and Hewitt)	July 13, 2019	3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Sunset Avenue-Roseland Neighborhood Location: Roseland Elementary at Sunset Ave side	August 3, 2019	9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Aston Avenue-South Park Neighborhood Location: Martin Luther King, Jr Park	August 17, 2019	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Ridgway Historic Neighborhood Association Location: 300 Block of Benton Street	August 24, 2019	4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Table A: Neighborhoods and Neighborfest Dates

Program Materials and Support

A variety of support and resources were provided to neighborhoods during the pilot program. Each participating neighborhood received a mini-grant of \$2,500 to plan and implement their Neighborfest. The mini-grant funds were used to pay for block party and special event (as applicable) permits, event insurance, rentals (e.g. tables, chairs, event tents, etc.), food and beverages, portable restrooms, raffle prizes and incentives, disaster preparedness supplies, games and entertainment.

In addition to the mini-grants, each neighborhood received a *Neighborfest Toolkit* and additional resources that assisted with the planning of their event. This toolkit provided a step-by-step overview of how to:

- plan a block party;
- obtain proper permitting and insurance;
- plan for food, games and other event activities;
- conduct outreach for their event.

The toolkit also included templates that each neighborhood group could utilize during the planning and implementation of their event, including:

- sign-in sheets for planning meetings and at the event itself;
- tracking sheet for event assignments and responsibilities;
- checklist for the day of the event;
- an event layout template;
- an outreach flyer template.

CPE staff and Community Advisory Board (CAB) members were readily available to answer questions for participating neighborhoods during the planning process, as well as during the delivery of the Neighborfest event itself.

Roles and Responsibilities

With each participating neighborhood responsible for the planning and implementation of their respective Neighborfest, City staff and participating community-based organizations had specific roles at each event as well. Staff from Santa Rosa Police and Fire Departments were on hand to answer questions related to emergency alerts and notifications, as well as any other public safety concerns specific to each neighborhood. Additionally, City Marketing and Outreach Coordinators were on hand alongside public safety to sign up residents for SoCo Alerts and to disseminate pertinent City-wide information.

CPE staff, alongside CAB members, facilitated the *Map Your Resilientville* booth at each Neighborfest. The purpose of the activity was for neighbors to work together to map resources available in their neighborhood that could potentially assist during an emergency or disaster. Residents were asked to identify facilities, businesses, and community-based organizations that could serve as shelters, food and water sources, administer medical treatment, and locate resources such as information centers during a disaster. In addition, residents were asked to think about which of their neighbors they considered vulnerable and who may need help during an emergency or disaster. To incentive participation, residents also received promotional items from the CAB, including mini-flashlights and reusable bags, and disaster preparedness materials provided by the ECA.

The City also worked with several community-based organizations to provide specific disaster preparedness information and resources at each Neighborfest:

- American Red Cross provided individual and family disaster preparedness information and a CPR demonstration.
- Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County provided mental health resources and information about psychological CPR.
- Sonoma County Library provided a children’s reading area and information about various programs and services their branches offer.
- Additionally, each neighborhood was asked to connect with and invite three (3) additional organizations to table at their Neighborfest event.

EVALUATION METHODS

As part of the mini-grant requirements, each participating neighborhood group was asked to complete a final report, which included the number of people involved in the Neighborfest planning; the number of Neighborfest attendees; accomplishments; challenges and opportunities for improvements; and at least three (3) testimonials from event attendees. All eight (8) neighborhoods completed this final report.

In addition to the final report, the participating neighborhoods were required to complete a brief survey regarding their planning and delivery of each event. The survey asked several follow-up questions, including the tracking of new neighbors and how many neighbors they met at the Neighborfest. In addition, several process-related questions were asked, including the value of planning materials and how helpful staff was during the planning stages. The survey also asked about the level of preparedness for each neighborhood before and after Neighborfest. Seven (7) out of the eight (8) participating neighborhoods filled out the follow-up survey.

Below are the outcomes from the final report and follow-up survey.

OUTCOMES

Neighborhood Association/Group	# of Attendees	# of New Neighbors	# Involved in Planning	# Organizations
Junior College Neighborhood Association	150	25	5	3
Moorland Neighborhood Action Team	50	8	9	12
Burbank Gardens Neighborhood Association	150	53	6	5
Sherwood Forest Neighborhood	250	100	10	5
West End Neighborhood Association	100	10	8	7
Sunset Avenue-Roseland Neighborhood	95	95	4	11
Aston Avenue-South Park Neighborhood	200	30	12	8
Ridgway Historic Neighborhood Association	150	n/a	20	6
TOTALS	1,145	321	74	57

Table B: Outcomes – Number of attendees, new neighbors and involved in planning

How many neighbors attended your Neighborfest this year?

Approximately 1,145 Santa Rosa residents participated in a Neighborfest during the Pilot Program, with attendance ranging from 50 to 250 residents. Neighborhoods with higher numbers of attendance at their Neighborfest were generally more organized (i.e. formal neighborhood associations), have had at least one block party before, and/or already had a disaster preparedness initiative being driven by the neighborhood group. See Table B above for exact numbers per neighborhood.

How many neighbors participated in the planning of your Neighborfest?

A total of 74 neighbors across all eight (8) participating neighborhoods assisted in the planning of their Neighborfest, ranging from 4 – 20 neighbors involved in event planning. While the Pilot Program required a minimum of five (5) neighbors involved in the planning of each Neighborfest, participating neighborhoods had an average of approximately nine (9) neighbors involved in the planning. See Table B above for exact numbers per neighborhood.

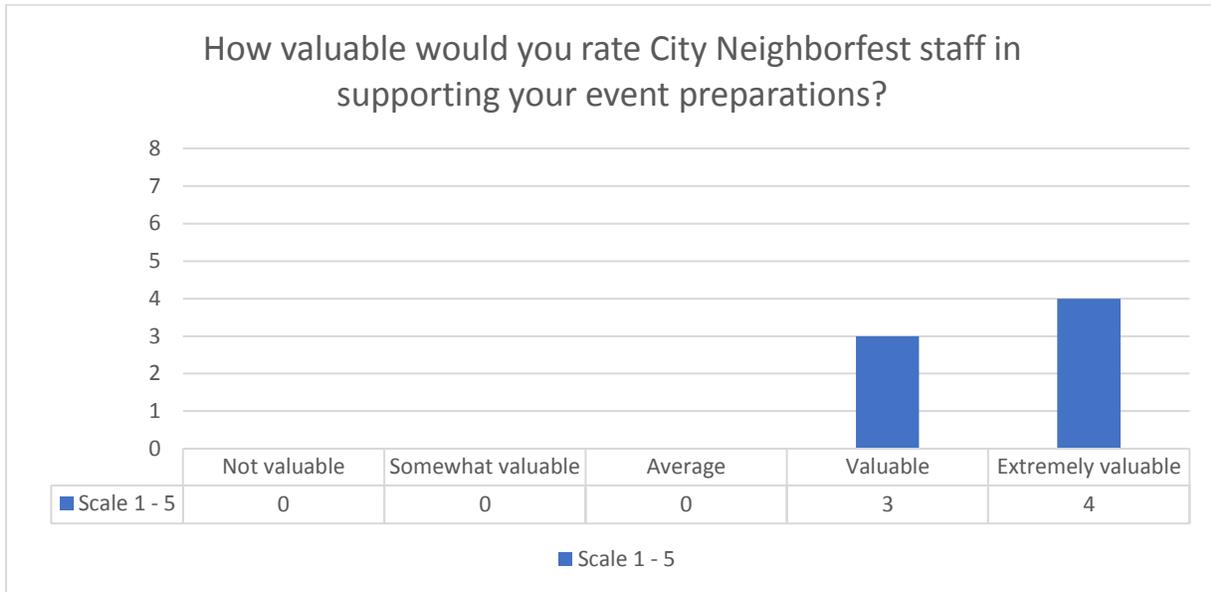
Did the event track new members of your neighborhood? If yes, how many new members of your neighborhood did you meet?

Seven (7) out of the eight (8) participating neighborhoods indicated that they did track new members of their neighborhood at their Neighborfest. Approximately 321 new neighbors participated in a Neighborfest during the Pilot Program, averaging approximately seven (7) new neighbors per event. See Table B above for exact numbers per neighborhood.

How many community organizations/agencies tabled at your Neighborfest event?

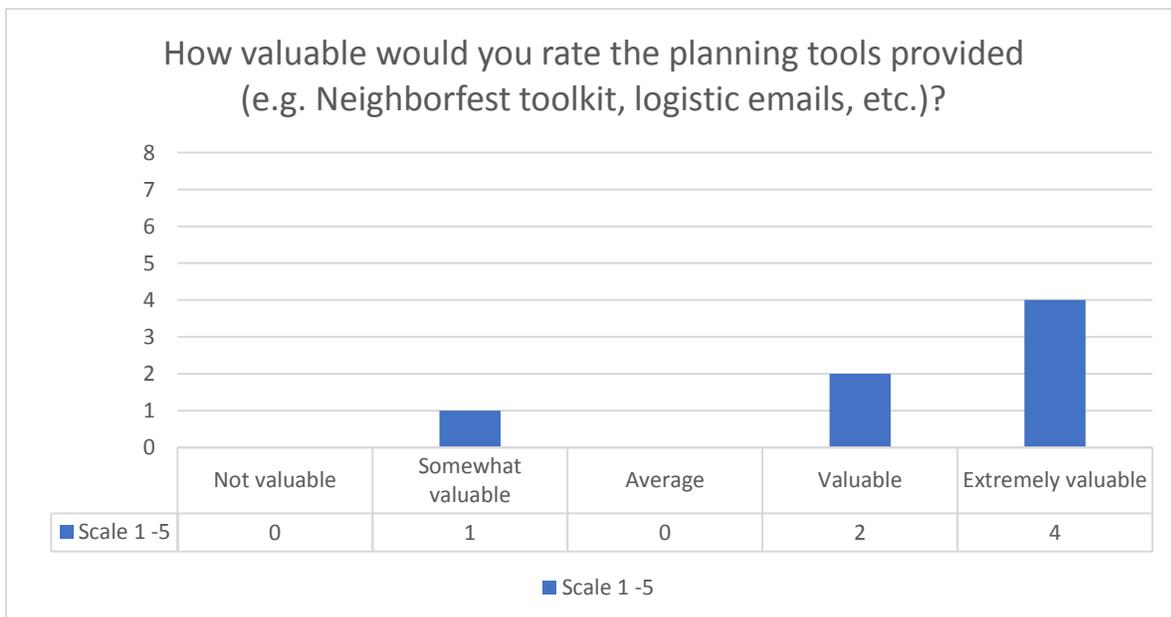
Approximately 57 community organizations/agencies participated in the Neighborfest Pilot Program. Some of these organizations tabled at all Neighborfest events, including the City of Santa Rosa, Red Cross, Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Library. Other organizations such as Community Action Partnership, County of Sonoma, Pediatric Dental Institute (PDI), Santa Rosa Community Health Center, Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, and more, also tabled at various Neighborfest events. The number of organizations/agencies tabling at each event varied anywhere between three (3) and 12 organizations/agencies, with an average of seven (7) agencies tabling per event. See Table B above for exact numbers per neighborhood.

How valuable would you rate the City Neighborfest Staff in supporting your event preparations?



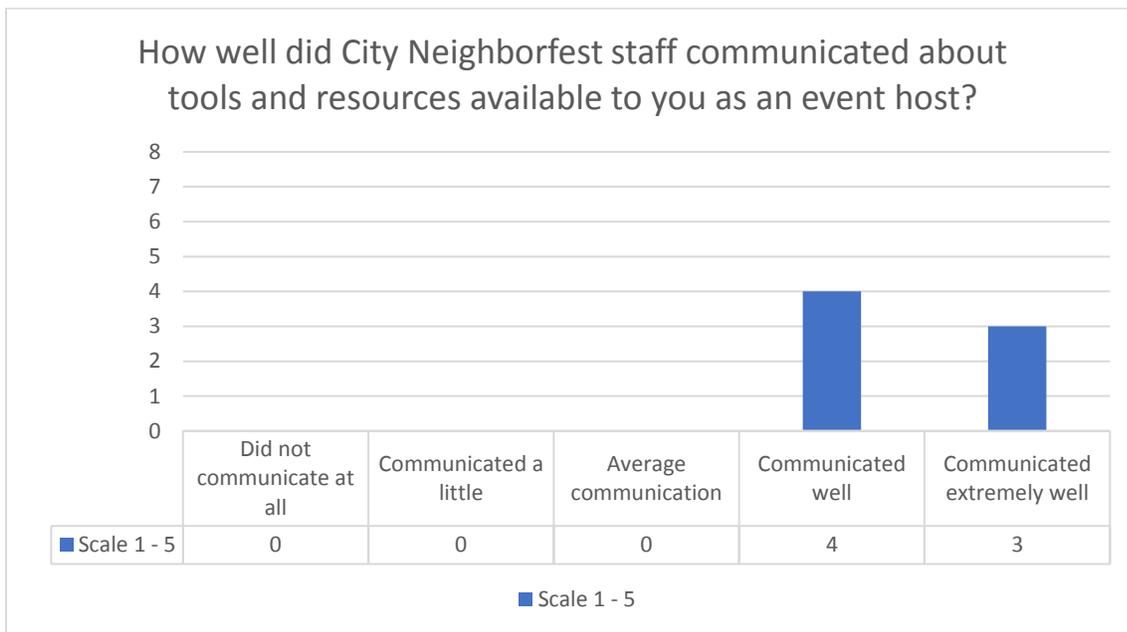
Three (38%) of the participating neighborhoods said the City Neighborfest staff support in event preparations was valuable. The other four (50%) neighborhoods responding to the survey indicated that City Neighborfest staff support in event preparations was extremely valuable.

How valuable would you rate the planning tools provided (e.g. Neighborfest toolkit, logistics emails)?



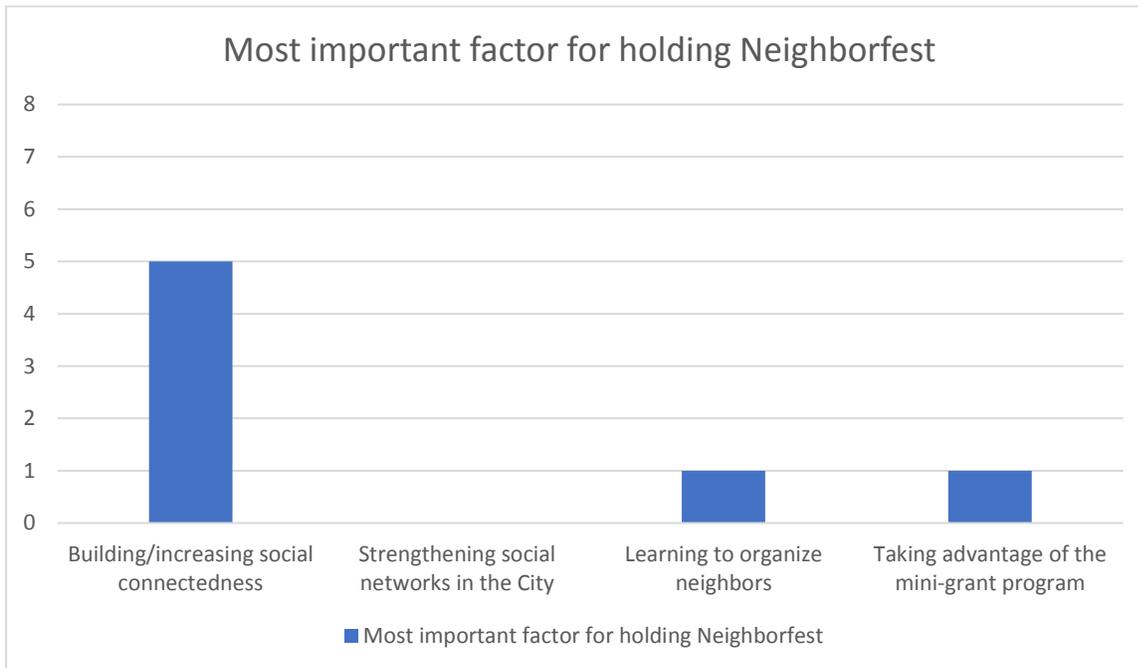
One (12.5%) neighborhood indicated that the planning tools (e.g. Neighborfest Toolkit, logistics emails) were only somewhat valuable in the planning of their Neighborfest. This particular neighborhood hosts an annual block party and has many neighbors with experience in planning such events. Two (25%) of the participating neighborhoods said the planning tools were valuable in the planning of their Neighborfest. Four (50%) neighborhoods responding to the survey indicated that the planning tools were extremely valuable in the planning of their Neighborfest.

Please rank how well City Neighborfest staff communicated about tools and resources available to you as an event host.



Four (50%) neighborhoods indicated that the Neighborfest staff communicated well about the tools and resources available to their planning group. Three (38%) neighborhoods indicated that the Neighborfest staff communicated extremely well about the tools and resources available to their planning group. Neighborfest staff provided each participating neighborhood a *Neighborfest Toolkit* during the Pilot Program orientation, as well as copies of the City of Santa Rosa’s policies on special events and street vendors. The latter was included in the event a participating neighborhood decided to include food trucks and other mobile vendors at their event.

What would you say is the most important factor for you in hosting a Neighborfest?



A = Building/ increasing social connectedness with new and old neighbors

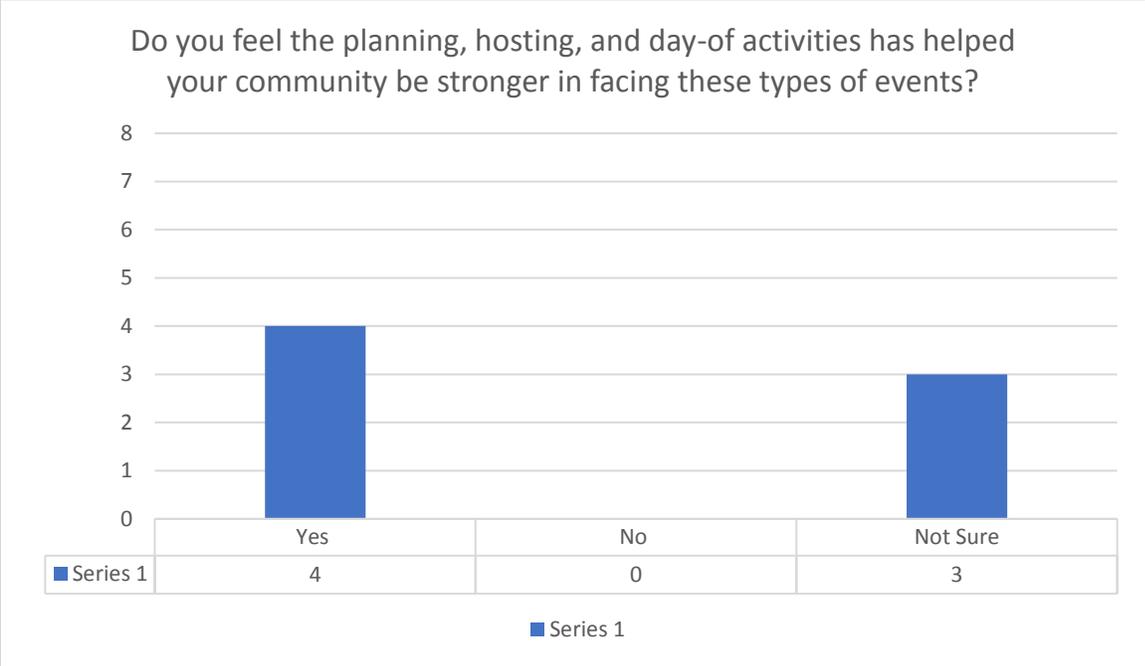
B = Strengthening social networks in the City

C = Learning to organize neighbors towards emergency preparedness and neighborhood resilience

D = Taking advantages of the Neighborfest Mini-Grant Program for a day of fun with the community

Five (63%) of the participating neighborhoods selected A) Building/increasing social connectedness with new and old neighbors as the most important factor for hosting a Neighborfest. One (12%) neighborhood indicated that C) Learning to organize neighbors towards emergency preparedness and neighborhood resilience was the most important factor for hosting a Neighborfest. Finally, the other neighborhood (12%) responding to the survey indicated that D) Taking advantages of the Neighborfest Mini-Grant Program for a day of fun with the community was the most important factor for the neighborhood in hosting a Neighborfest.

Imagine your community is faced with a stress-event, such as a large-scale earthquake or fire. Do you feel the planning, hosting, and day-of activities has helped your community be stronger in facing these types of events? Why or why not?



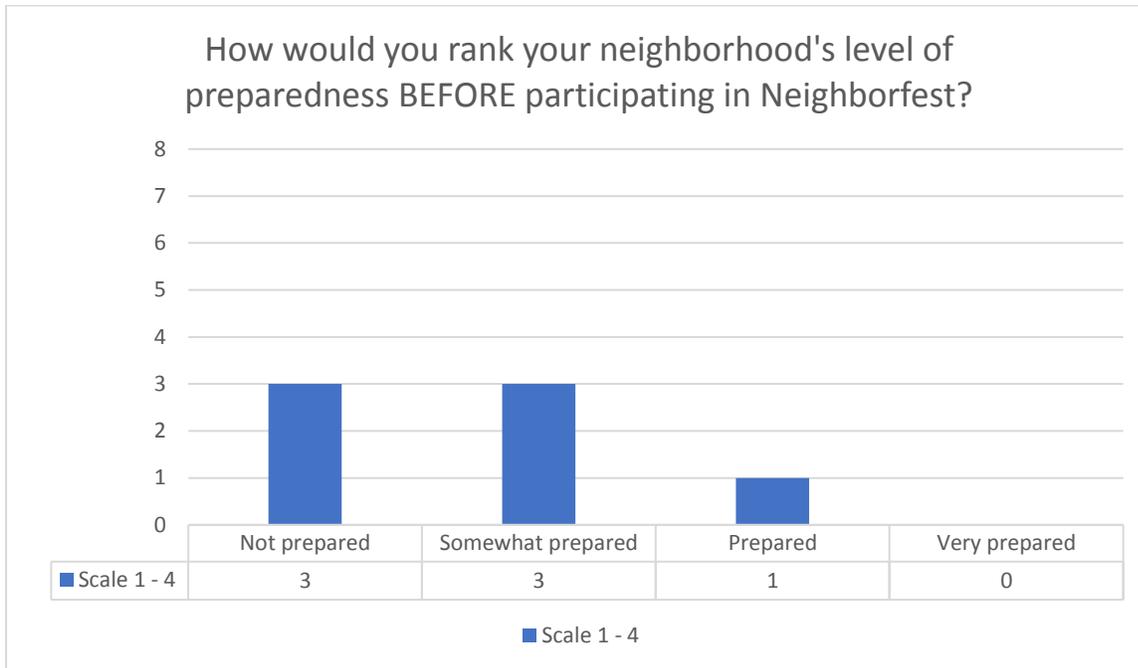
Four neighborhoods (50%) indicated that participating in this program did make their neighborhoods stronger, while three neighborhoods (38%) were not sure if participation made their neighborhoods stronger when facing these types of events.

For those responding yes, access to materials and information were important factors in building neighborhood strength and resiliency. *“Neighborfest provided additional tools to our community members to use in preparing for an emergency, both within their home and within the neighborhood. I believe the more we talk about emergency preparedness, the more community members will be open to the planning process.”* Others indicated that getting to know their neighbors and focusing on relationship building was helpful in increasing neighborhood resiliency. *“I think people are more comfortable with each other and prepared to think about their neighbors both as a resource and in a supporting capacity.”*

Other neighborhoods were not sure if one Neighborfest had impact in strengthening neighborhood resiliency. *“I think the event brought more awareness to preparedness, but ultimately each household has to organize. As a single person household, strategizing with others on resources within the block would be great (e.g. who has a generator, specific skills, etc.), but this takes more time to map out. The recent emergency pack giveaway at the Fairgrounds was good, but chatting in line with others, I realize, I am not able to go out and buy an individual generator for myself. So, this needs to be addressed within each block(s).”*

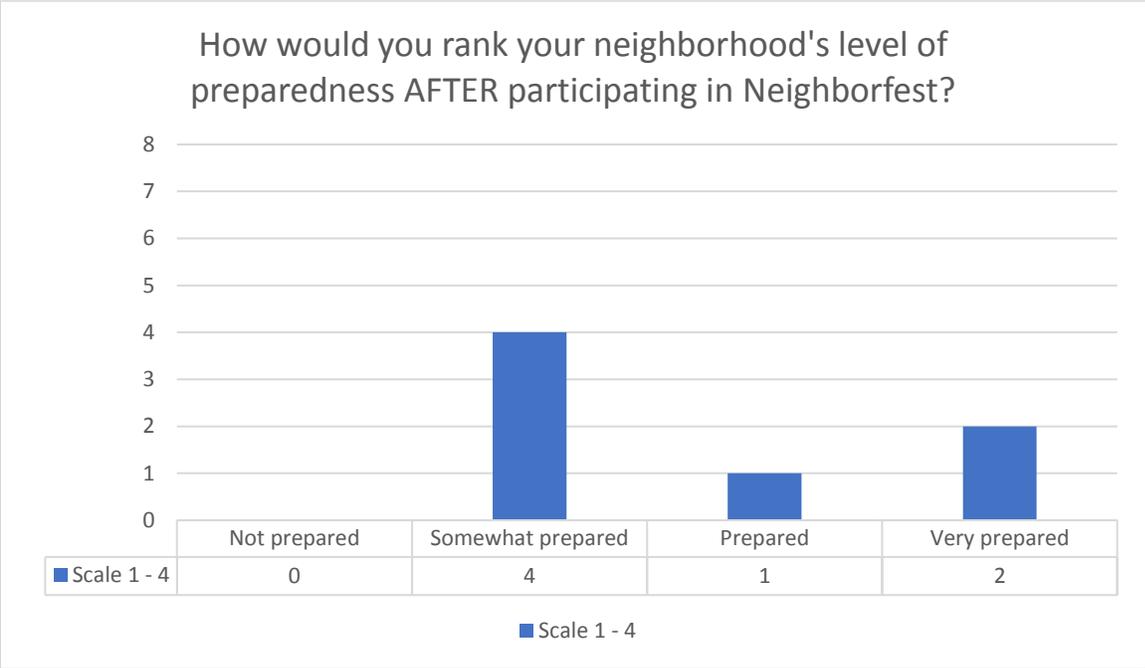
Overall, the neighborhoods did indeed see the value of relationship building with their neighbors and how it could help during a time of stress.

How would you rank your neighborhood's level of preparedness BEFORE participating in the Neighborfest Program?



Three neighborhoods (38%) indicated that they were not prepared prior to participating in Neighborfest and another three (38%) neighborhoods felt they were somewhat prepared prior to Neighborfest. One (12%) neighborhood indicated that they felt prepared prior to participating in Neighborfest.

How would you rank your neighborhood's level of preparedness AFTER participating in the Neighborfest Program?



The three (3) respondents who felt *not prepared* prior to participating in Neighborfest indicated that after hosting their Neighborfest they felt *somewhat prepared* in the event of a disaster. The two (2) neighborhoods that felt *somewhat prepared* now feel *very prepared* after hosting a Neighborfest. The one neighborhood that selected *somewhat prepared* before Neighborfest indicated no change after participating, remaining *somewhat prepared*. The final neighborhood that felt *prepared* also indicated no change, still feeling *prepared* after participating in Neighborfest.

Evaluation Wrap-Up

Initial analysis shows that Neighborfest events provide an opportunity for residents to socialize with one another and create relationships with new neighbors. Participation in Neighborfest also provides educational opportunities for neighborhoods, as well as the opportunity to begin thinking about individual, family, and neighborhood preparedness. Participation in a Neighborfest also produced an increase in the level of preparedness for several neighborhoods.

Although there is not a current programmatic mechanism to continue the depth of work administered through the Neighborfest Pilot Program, staff continues analysis and follow-up assessments with neighborhoods to evaluate whether program participation resulted in increased social cohesion and resiliency.

2020 Neighborfest Program

City staff explored various strategies to diversify the funding sources to support the Neighborfest Program moving forward. Ultimately, the City’s Community Advisory Board (CAB) voted on dedicating their Community Improvement Grant (CIG) Program to specifically fund the

Neighborfest Program after the Pilot Program's completion. Through this new funding source, the City will fund seven (7) Neighborfests in 2020 – one (1) event in each of the seven (7) Santa Rosa City Council districts. During this cycle of funding, neighborhoods and community groups will have the opportunity to hold a Neighborfest PLUS event, a regional approach at reaching a larger segment of the community, rather than focusing on one block of a specific neighborhood.

Under the Community Improvement Grant (CIG) Program, applicants can apply for two tiers of funding:

Tier 1

Under Tier 1, applicants may apply for up to \$2,500 in grant funds. Projects for Tier 1 funding must meet the following requirements:

- Must hold a Neighborfest event (focused on a small set of neighborhood blocks)
- A physical improvement activity or project (e.g. community garden creation or upgrade, mural painting, memorial bench installation, etc.) may take place during the event, but is not required.

Tier 2

Under Tier 2, applicants may apply for up to \$5,000 in grant funds. Projects for Tier 2 funding must meet the following requirements:

- Must hold a Neighborfest PLUS event (several neighborhoods joined together for a community-wide event) OR
- A Neighborfest event with a physical improvement activity or project (e.g. community garden creation or upgrade, mural painting, memorial bench installation, etc.) that must take place during the Neighborfest event.

The 2020 Neighborfest Program will be delivered between June and October 2020. Staff will continue to evaluate the program using the same assessment tools and will also identify enhancements to the program as necessary.