



# Montclair Organized Neighborhoods Leader's Guide

## Effectively Organize Your Neighborhood to

- *GAIN POWER IN NUMBERS*
- *PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES*
- *DETER CRIME*
- *SOLVE ULTRA-LOCAL ISSUES LIKE PARKING, TRAFFIC, BLIGHT*
- *WATCH OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER*
- *BEAUTIFY OUR SURROUNDINGS*
- *SOCIALIZE AND HAVE FUN!*



Montclair Organized Neighborhoods:  
A joint initiative of Piedmont Pines Neighborhood Association and Montclair Neighborhood Council  
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# MON Leader's Guide

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## What are MONs?

Montclair Organized Neighborhoods (MONs) were created in 2004 as a joint initiative between the Montclair Safety and Improvement Council (now Montclair Neighborhood Council—MNC) and the Piedmont Pines Neighborhood Association (PPNA). The ambitious goal of both the PPNA and MNC is to have 100% of our communities organized into MONs. The starting point of each MON is to have a neighborhood leader, boundary map, roster, a way to communicate with one another, a list of priorities to tackle as a group and to plan one event per year.

PPNA now has 27 MONs in various stages of organization, and the MNC has over 30. Some are huge, some are tiny. Some are well-oiled machines and some are in start-up mode. [See map, Appendix A]

This Leader's Guide is intended as a tool kit to help MONs move up the 3-level skills ladder [see page 3]. PPNA and MNC also have MON support teams to help MONs get started or boost the energy of a flagging MON. Need help? [Send us an email: info@PiedmontPines.org](mailto:info@PiedmontPines.org) or [info@MontclairNeighborhoodCouncil.com](mailto:info@MontclairNeighborhoodCouncil.com)

Organizing a MON and keeping it vibrant can be fun and very rewarding, and will yield many benefits for all involved.

## Why are MONs important?

Safe communities begin with well-organized, well-prepared neighborhoods. Oakland's resources simply do not stretch far enough to satisfy the public safety needs of 400,000 people without help from residents, and in the Oakland Hills, response by public safety agencies like police and fire can be delayed, or in the case of a major disaster, not possible for quite some time. Consider that organized neighborhoods:

- Have power in numbers, leading to a stronger and more authoritative relationship with officials.
- Have access to Oakland's intensive curriculum of neighborhood training for crime prevention and emergency preparedness and response.
- Gain more eyes and ears to detect and prevent crime.
- Pool labor, skills, equipment and knowledge to make an entire neighborhood less attractive to criminals and less vulnerable to crime.

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Also consider:

- Even when Oakland Police achieves its ideal staffing, it needs all the eyes and ears it can get to respond effectively.
- The Hayward Fault runs through the Montclair Village. In the event of a major earthquake, we may be without essential police, fire and rescue services for 72 hours or more.
- Wildfires will always be a concern. The 1991 Firestorm resulted in the loss of 25 lives and nearly 4,000 homes were destroyed.

## What projects are appropriate for MONs?

MONs offer a way to expand the benefits and reduce the risks of living in the East Bay Hills. Here is a sampler of projects taken on by MONs:

- Broadcast alerts about crimes in progress
- Reduce unsafe parking on narrow streets
- Organize a community work day to pull weeds and beautify a patch of open space
- Widen a street by shoveling away sloughed dirt
- Hire private security patrols to reduce crime
- Install video surveillance cameras to deter crime and produce evidence for Oakland Police
- Host emergency preparedness and crime prevention training inside the neighborhood (CORE [Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies] and Neighborhood Watch are two Oakland City programs with training available free to residents)
- Participate in Citywide emergency preparedness drills to sharpen skills
- Establish a neighborhood command center stocked with emergency supplies
- Work with neighbor to reduce front yard blight
- Reduce vegetation overgrowth to reduce fire risk
- Work on traffic calming measures with City engineers
- Present comments and offer mitigations to City planners to prevent unsafe or environmentally objectionable construction
- Work with schools to beautify their entrances
- Hold social events to welcome new neighbors and acquaint neighbors with one another to better watch out for the safety of the entire neighborhood

## Skills ladder for MONs

Developing a vibrant, effective MON takes time and teamwork. Here's our vision for building the skills of MONs throughout PPNA and the MNC. Our MON Support Team will help at every stage.

### MON Level 1 (Start-up Organization)

- Start-up team assembled to organize neighborhood
- Leader(s)/roles determined--divide responsibilities into teams
- Boundaries identified, map created
- Roster completed
- Kick-off event held
- Communications system established. Consider these three popular options--each has advantages and disadvantages:
  - Nextdoor --You can establish a "private" group just for your MON. Each person can set filters for what posts they want to read.
  - Google Group <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!overview>
  - Yahoo Group <https://help.yahoo.com/kb/groups>

### MON Level 2 (Crime Prevention/Personal Safety Focused)

- Achieve 50% neighbors trained in Neighborhood Watch
- Participate in National Night Out (First Tuesday night in August)
- Achieve 25% neighbors trained in CORE 1 [Consider: It takes 15 participants for CORE to train at someone's home. If you can't get 15 people scheduled, contact [info@PiedmontPines.org](mailto:info@PiedmontPines.org) or [info@MontclairNeighborhoodCouncil.com](mailto:info@MontclairNeighborhoodCouncil.com) and we will query nearby MONs for extra participants. Schedule at <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/communities-of-oakland-respond-to-emergencies-core>]
- Assist a neighboring MON during Citywide CORE emergency preparedness drill (April)

### MON Level 3 (Emergency Preparedness Focused)

- Achieve 50% neighbors trained in CORE 1
- Achieve 25% neighbors trained in CORE 2 and 3
- Participate in Citywide CORE emergency preparedness drill (April)
- Establish radio communications channel; train neighbors
- Neighborhood Incident Command Center established and stocked with emergency supplies
- Boundary map enhanced with gas shut off valve location for each property

## Sample MON Calendar

Some ideas to pick and choose from once your MON is up and running.

**January:** Steering Committee outlines events/dates/locations/roles for the year. Distribute Save-The-Dates to residents

**March:** Publicize Citywide Emergency Preparedness Exercise

**April:** Pitch in on Earth Day; participate in Emergency Preparedness Exercise

**July:** Publicize National Night Out

**August** (Firsts Tuesday): Participate in National Night Out. Set a date for CORE or Neighborhood Watch (NW) training

**October:** In-neighborhood training (CORE or NW)

**December:** Holiday party to welcome all new neighbors

## MON leadership models

Each MON establishes a leadership model that fits its needs. To prevent burnout and stimulate engagement, we highly recommend that roles and tasks be as widely dispersed as possible. Here are examples of leadership structures:

**Steering Committee:** One person serves as the overall leader, calling the steering committee together a couple of times a year to schedule upcoming events, review priorities, etc. This is recommended for mid-size MONs where the team meets at the beginning of each year to chart out the annual event calendar and define who will do what for each event. Roles can rotate each year, such as:

- Schedule and host a CORE training class
- Schedule and host Neighborhood Watch training
- Schedule and plan an annual neighborhood social event
- Schedule and plan an emergency preparedness drill
- Keep the neighborhood roster and boundary map up to date
- Locate, maintain supplies in the Incident Command Center
- Welcome new neighbors
- Publicize events, stimulate participation
- Manage fundraising and treasury
- Serve as liaison to PPNA or MNC
- Attend MON Leaders Network forums

**SuperMON:** One person serves as the overall leader with Block Captains overseeing smaller neighborhood groups. This is recommended only for very large MONs. They pool efforts where it makes sense; work independently where issues or interests are not shared. They come together for an annual social event and emergency/crime training. Block Captains keep their own the rosters updated and share it with the overall leader.

**Single Leader:** One or two people do most of the work. This is an option of last resort and, for the long haul, will only work in a very small MON. People burn out, people move.

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## Getting started

1. Form a start-up team -- recruit at least three people who share your interest in having a strong, organized neighborhood. See the sample *Get-started* flier to seek interested co-organizers.
2. Determine appropriate boundaries--the addresses to be included in your MON.
3. Get a volunteer to compile and manage the MON roster.
4. Decide on a date and location for the first social event. Recruit volunteers to plan publicity, food
5. At the social event
  - a. People provide missing roster information
  - b. MON support team member speaks about the advantages of being a MON
  - c. Sign up volunteers
  - d. Poll neighbors about MON priorities
  - e. Ask for show-of-interest sign ups for CORE and Neighborhood Watch training
  - f. Talk about having a Nextdoor sub-group for communicating just within the MON
6. After the social event, regroup the leadership team to review:
  - a. Neighborhood response to the social event
  - b. Roster gaps
  - c. MON priorities
  - d. Determine the best structure for leading your MON
  - e. First-year action plan--keep it simple and manageable
  - f. Volunteer roles
  - g. Fundraising needs (e.g., voluntary start-up dues to fund an emergency supply kit for the neighborhood)

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## Keep the momentum going

Don't be discouraged if participation is not what you expected. Some folks just aren't joiners and may not share your enthusiasm for a stronger community. If you get 30% of your households engaged at least once a year, you're on the road to success. You also need a way to welcome new residents into the fold (and to tap into their energy!)

### Tips for energizing your MON

- Rotate duties and responsibilities to avoid burn-out among your core team
- Mix up activities and be sure each event includes time to socialize and have fun
- Revisit why your neighborhood organized in the first place and keep your neighbors informed of what you've accomplished
- Break tasks into the smallest possible pieces so they are doable for people with busy lives

**Recognize who has contributed to your MONs success in ways big and small--consider fun, quirky prizes**

#### Event and team ideas

- Holiday party, with cookie exchange
- Happy hour gathering
- Welcome new residents with a potluck dinner
- Talent show
- Yard sale -- raise funds for emergency equipment, like a generator
- House numbering team
- Drain cleaning team



## Key resources

**Support Team.** Both the PPNA and MNC offer seasoned MON leader volunteers who are available to help at any stage of your neighborhood's journey to becoming a Level 3 MON. Send an email to [info@PiedmontPines.org](mailto:info@PiedmontPines.org) or [info@MontclairNeighborhoodCouncil.com](mailto:info@MontclairNeighborhoodCouncil.com) to discuss your needs. A sampler of support you can expect:

- MON Leaders network--meets to provide organizing assistance, share ideas, motivate, build and sustain momentum, and to communicate and provide assistance between MONs.
- Emergency Preparedness --to motivate, pool resources, coordinate CORE training participation in the annual Citywide preparedness exercise, conduct local drills, and recognize achievement.
- Radio support--define radio communications procedures. Training for you and your neighbors on the use of two-way radios can be scheduled through [info@MontclairNeighborhoodCouncil.com](mailto:info@MontclairNeighborhoodCouncil.com).
- Crime prevention--to detect patterns, improve OPD response, coordinate Neighborhood Watch training, connect interested neighbors with private patrol companies
- Support from city resources--if your action plan includes such issues as traffic, pedestrian safety, emergency vehicle access, compliance with new septic regulations, building permit concerns or other government or civic issues we can assemble the right agencies to help
- Provide Welcome Bag for new Piedmont Pines residents full of information about Oakland, Montclair and PPNA. (PPNA MON leaders contact [info@PiedmontPines.org](mailto:info@PiedmontPines.org))

**CORE** (Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies) is free training for individuals, neighborhood groups and community-based organizations in Oakland. The underlying premise is a major disaster will overwhelm first responders and leave many citizens on their own for the first three to seven days. CORE teaches self reliance skills and helps neighborhoods establish teams to take care of the situation until professionals can arrive.

- **CORE I: individual and family** preparedness. Learn how to reduce common household hazards, prepare family disaster plans and emergency supply kits, develop evacuation plans and respond to earthquakes, fires, chemical emergencies, severe weather and terrorist threats.
- **CORE II: neighborhood** emergency response. Learn how to organize a command center and create emergency response teams such as communications, damage assessment, hazard reduction, search and rescue, gas shut off, disaster first aid, shelter and special needs.
- **CORE III: hands-on** practice in disaster first aid, fire suppression, damage assessment, search and rescue, disaster psychology, special needs, emergency communications. Conducted at the Oakland Fire Training Center

For an updated schedule, or to register for CORE, go to <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/communities-of-oakland-respond-to-emergencies-core>, call 510 238-6351 or email [core@oaklandnet.com](mailto:core@oaklandnet.com).

**Neighborhood Watch** teaches crime prevention techniques. The Oakland Police Department will send an instructor to your neighborhood. To schedule, call 510 238-3091

## Sample roster form

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home landline:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Adults:**

Name	Cell	Work	Email

**Names of children and their year of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Special needs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pets that might need care in an emergency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Out of area emergency contact**    Name: \_\_\_\_\_    Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell: \_\_\_\_\_    Work: \_\_\_\_\_    Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Privacy:** We respect the privacy of your contact information. Please indicate your privacy preferences:  
 \_\_\_ It is only okay for the neighborhood leader to use this information for neighborhood business  
 \_\_\_ It is okay to share this information with our neighborhood  
 \_\_\_ It is okay to share this information with PPNA/MNC. [PPNA and MNC use roster information to keep neighbors informed of broader neighborhood issues; they do not share contact information unless it's for explicit PPNA/MNC business.]

**Emergency Training and Skills**

	First Aid/CPR	CORE 1	CORE 2	CORE 3	Neighborhood Watch	Crisis Counseling	2-Way Radio/HAM
Have skills							
Would like to learn							

**Other Training and Skills**

	Mechanic	Carpentry	Electrical	Plumbing	Child Care	Pet Care	Other (list)
Have skills and tools							

**What would you most like to see improved in our immediate neighborhood?**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteering:** Keeping our neighborhood organized and motivated takes effort. How are you willing and able to help? \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample *Get-started* flier

### Help Get Our Neighborhood Organized



### When neighbors know each other, neighborhoods are safer and better prepared for emergencies

Dear neighbors on **[enter street name(s)]**

I hope you'll join me in getting our neighborhood better equipped to prevent crime, respond to emergencies, and act on issues that are important to each of us. I'm looking for a core group of five to eight neighbors interested in and willing to invest some time and energy to get our neighborhood organized.

To kick off this effort, I'm hosting a start-up meeting at my home on **[date]** from **[start and end times]** at **[address]**. If you can join me in this effort, please contact me at [phone number] or email **[email address]**.

Here's what I hope to accomplish at this meeting:

1. Review our boundary map.
2. Determine our highest priorities-- reasons organizing will be beneficial to all.
3. Outline start-up tasks and seek volunteers to lead a team for each major task.
4. Select the best method for keeping one another informed--such as a Google or Yahoo group or Nextdoor's listserve.
5. Determine what leadership structure and roles we need to get this effort moving and sustain it.
6. Schedule a social event to bring neighbors together--to recruit help on tasks such as scheduling crime prevention/ emergency preparedness training and to fill in our roster.

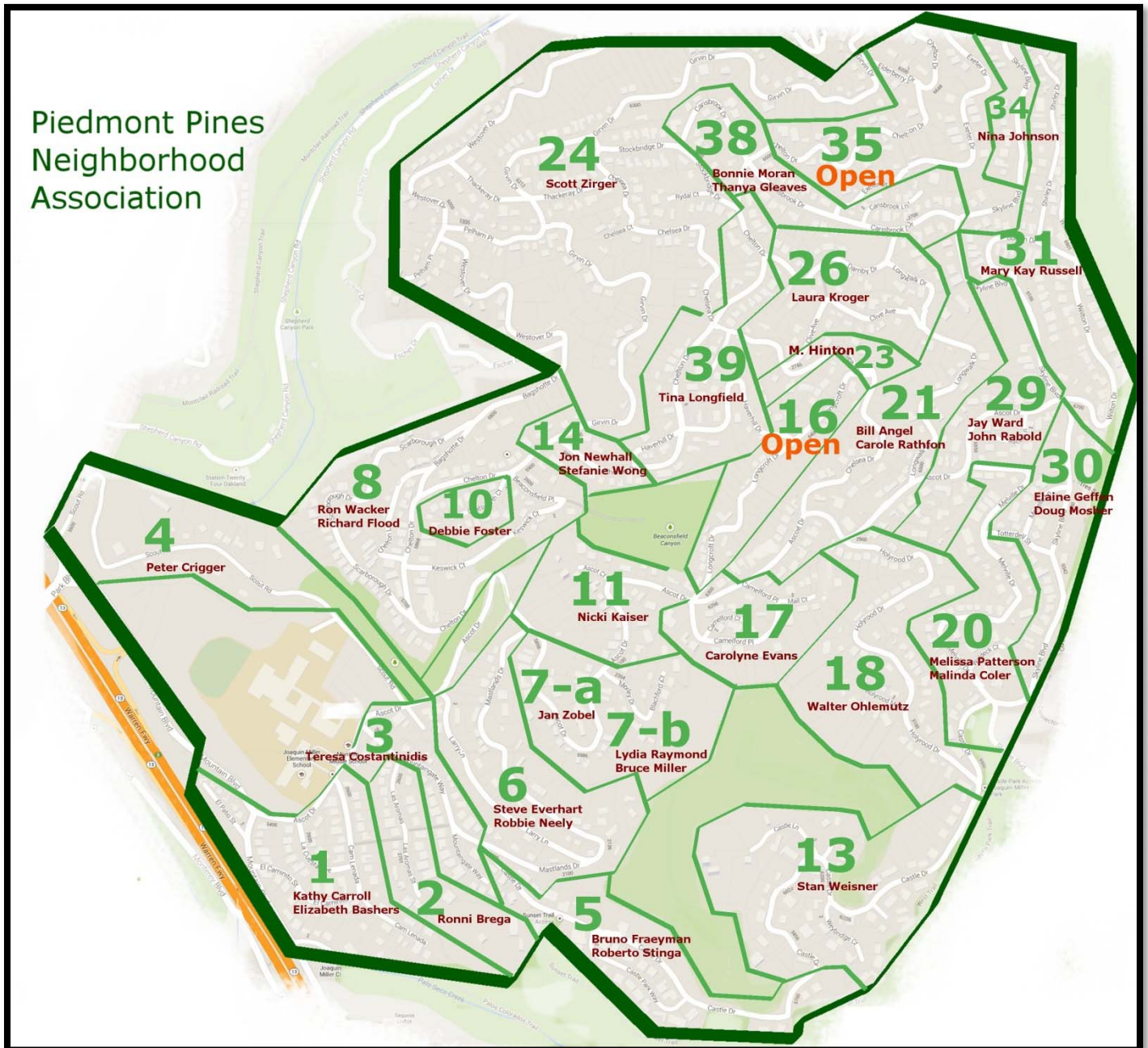
If you share my passion for improving the safety of our neighborhood by working together, please join me on **[date]**. I look forward to working with you,

**[sign]**

## PPNA MON map

Here are the boundaries of PPNA's current 27 MONs, after multiple mergers and splits over the years. This map will continue to evolve. For the most current map, visit PPNA's website:

[http://www.piedmontpines.org/site\\_page.cfm?pk\\_association\\_webpage\\_menu=2053&pk\\_association\\_webpage=5708](http://www.piedmontpines.org/site_page.cfm?pk_association_webpage_menu=2053&pk_association_webpage=5708)



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## Version history

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Edit</u>
2.1	2019-01-01	Doug Mosher	Changed MSIC references to MNC
2.0	2016-02-17	Robbie Neely	Streamlined, MON leader feedback
1.6	2011-02-15	Doug Mosher	Minor updates
1.5	2011-01-19	Doug Mosher	Minor updates
1.4	2010-02-11	Doug Mosher	Minor updates
1.3	2009-06-22	Doug Mosher	Major update
1.2	2008-01-10	Doug Mosher	Minor updates
1.1	2007-07-15	Robbie Neely	Minor updates
1.0	2006-06-15	Robbie Neely	Original