

2015 -16

Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission Annual Report



The Vision for the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission is a City and community engagement process that increases inclusiveness, empowerment and greater opportunities for participation by all community members of the City of Minneapolis.

Members of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission 2015-2016

David Boyd, District 1 Representative

Denis Houle, District 2 Representative

Jeanne Montrese, District 3 Representative

Doron Clark, District 4 Representative

Nicholas Cichowicz, District 5 Representative

Debra Behrens, District 6 Representative

Antoine Martinneau, District 7 Representative

Francisco Segovia, District 8 Representative

Ishmael Israel, Mayoral Appointee

Nasser Mussa, Mayoral Appointee

Eric Gustafson, City Council Appointee

Raya Esmaili, City Council Appointee

Braulio Carrasco, City Council Appointee

Tessa Wetjen, City Council Appointee

David Zaffrann, City Council Appointee

Maleta Kimmons, Park Board Appointee

NCEC members volunteered over 700 hours at Commission and committee meetings as well as during the two community forums held during the year. For most Commissioners, this commitment of time to their city was in addition to other volunteer work with neighborhood and community organizations.

In addition, Commission members met with neighborhood organizations they represent and with City Council members on a range of issues. The NCEC members also had a major role in planning and conducting the annual Community Connections Conference which was attended by over 600 neighborhood and community representatives.

Major Initiatives

Strategic Plan

To help focus the work of the NCEC, the Commission adopted its first strategic plan in 2015. The plan was the product of two planning workshops where commissioners prioritized the work of the commission for the next year. The resulting plan identified four areas:

1. **Work Plan.** NCEC will adopt a formal work plan for its work, including clarifying who the NCEC serves, and institute a process for using it by July 31, 2015.
2. **Neighborhoods 2020.** Using the principles of community engagement, NCEC will convene and lead a robust city-wide conversation by stakeholders about the future of neighborhood organizations and will make recommendations to the City Council in 2016 regarding changes to CPP guidelines effective 2017.
3. **Blueprint for Equity.** Develop a plan for NCEC to use the Blueprint for Equity (later renamed Blueprint for Equitable Engagement) to support city wide (City departments, neighborhood organizations, community and cultural organizations, and residents) effective, inclusive, and equitable engagement in civic governance by December 31, 2015. Work body(ies) Responsible: CIF Funding Committee, CDETF, Blueprint for Equity, One Minneapolis Fund.
 - a. Identify elements of report on boards/commissions diversity that can be used enhance work and develop a plan to use them.
 - b. Create a set of principles and practices that will ensure that all decisions are made using an equity lens.
 - c. Identify community and cultural organizations that can serve as collaborative partners and begin to build relationships with those organizations.
4. **Policy Recommendations.** NCEC will implement a process by which policy recommendations are made to the City Council at least annually.

Blueprint for Equitable Engagement

In early 2016 the NCEC concluded work on the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement, and recommended its approval by the City Council. The Blueprint is a multi-year strategic action plan to ensure an equitable community engagement system for the City of Minneapolis.

The Commission worked with the City's Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) Department utilizing an engagement strategy consistent with the City's adopted Core Principles of Community Engagement to create the Blueprint. This document establishes the groundwork to ensure that the City's engagement efforts are equitable in their approach and implementation. An equitable engagement system ensures that all community voices are sought and valued and that decision makers reflect the communities they serve. The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement focuses in the following areas of the City's engagement work:

1. Neighborhood Organizations: We aim to help neighborhood organizations assess whether or not their outreach efforts, board decision making processes and distribution of resources is being conducted with a lens of equity and inclusion. The City intends to include the 70 neighborhood organizations as partners in addressing racial disparities in our community. With access to local political and social resources, neighborhoods are able to utilize millions of dollars annually and become central places of empowerment for marginalized local residents;
2. City's Board and Commissions: The City has a goal of having the advisory and planning boards and commissions reflect the diversity in the community;
3. Cultural Outreach and Engagement: The department's Access and Outreach team has staff dedicated to providing access to engagement where cultural norms and/or practices, language and disability create barriers; and
4. City Enterprise Outreach and Engagement: The department supports the community engagement efforts of City departments and connects this work with the efforts stated above.



Community Participation Program

The Community Participation Program (CPP) provides funding to build and support strong, sustainable and representative Minneapolis neighborhood organizations. The program provides about \$4 million annually to the city's 70 neighborhood organizations.

In 2015 and 2016 new guidelines were developed to guide the program for the next three years. The CPP is aimed at assisting neighborhoods in three key areas:

- (1) Identifying and acting on neighborhood priorities;
- (2) Influencing City decisions on plans, policies, procedures, programs and services; and
- (3) Increasing involvement in civic and community life.

The NCEC met as a Committee of the Whole at two meetings in early 2016 to review the proposed guidelines. At the June 2016 Commission meeting the NCEC completed its review and recommended approval of the guidelines to the City Council.

Community Forums

To broaden the community outreach of the NCEC, the Commission has embarked on a program of holding periodic community forums throughout the city on current topics. These forums allow an opportunity for residents to address the Commission which informs commissioners in developing policy recommendations to the City Council. Since late 2015 two forums have been held:

Tuesday, December 15, 2015 - University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach Center (UROC)

This forum was held in North Minneapolis in the wake of the protests over the shooting of Jamar Clark by Minneapolis Police. Approximately fifty residents attended and addressed the Commission on two questions.

Question One: What actions can the City take that could improve the relationship between the City and community members?

Question Two: What specific policy or rule or structure changes could the City make that would improve the relationship between the City and community members?

Wednesday, June 15, 2016 - Sabathani Community Center

This forum was designed to inform residents on elections processes and to hear comments on barriers to voting. It was attended by NCEC members, NCR staff and staff from the Elections Services Division of the City Clerk’s Office. The forum was very lightly attended but did include discussion on a range of issues related to voting.

One Minneapolis Fund

The program started in early 2013 as part of the City’s racial equity effort. Non-profit organizations in Minneapolis that work in cultural communities may apply for small grants to fund programs for leadership development and community engagement. The NCEC played a key role in shaping the program. Commission members developed the program funding guidelines and annually review the applications and make funding recommendations to the City Council.

Now in its fourth year, the One Minneapolis Fund made \$182,000 available to non-profit organizations in the city for a variety of programs. The One Minneapolis Fund Committee of the NCEC reviewed 46 applications submitted by the April 9, 2016 deadline and made funding recommendations to the full Commission at the June 28, 2016 meeting. Grant recommendations were later forwarded to the City Council which approved them in their entirety.

Grants were awarded to the following organizations:

African Chamber of Commerce Community engagement training for East African residents.	\$25,000
Anyah Leadership development for Minneapolis college students.	\$1,000
Circle of Discipline Civic Engagement and leadership development among underrepresented youth.	\$25,000
From Death to Life Conduct leadership development among mothers who have lost loved ones to gun violence.	\$20,000

The Dial Group Leadership development among artists from communities of color.	\$15,000
Emerge Community Development Fund Vista volunteers recruited from non-traditional groups to work on housing, employment, financial literacy, and education services.	\$25,000
Givens Foundation/Black Market MN Using the arts to promote equity in economic, artistic and civic leadership.	\$17,000
Lake Street Council Train minority business owners in civic engagement.	\$10,000
LVY Foundation Youth leadership development.	\$19,000
We Win Institute Leadership development and advocacy training for African American and African parents.	\$25,000

Neighborhood 2020 Committee

Creation of the Committee was called for in the 2015 NCEC Strategic Plan with the intention that the group would initially work on review of the Community Participation Program guidelines and later address the long term future of City support to neighborhood organizations.

The Committee met at various locations throughout the city in 2015 and 2016 and included members not on the NCEC. In February and April of 2016 the Committee presented its recommendations on the guidelines to the full Commission. These recommendations formed the basis for subsequent Commission actions on the guidelines.

The final recommendations of the Neighborhoods 2020 Committee can be found online at: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/boards/ncec/WCMS1P-152025>.

Community Innovation Fund

The Community Innovation Fund (CIF) is a program called for in the 2008 document *Framework for the Future*. The CIF provides grants to neighborhood organizations to foster innovative and locally-relevant approaches to City identified goals. The aim of the program is to provide funding for projects which test concepts in neighborhoods which can later be replicated throughout Minneapolis.

In June 2015 the NCEC completed the first round of applications for the program. Recommendations were made to fund projects in 14 neighborhoods. These recommendations were later approved in their entirety by the City Council. The following projects received funding from the program:

Bottineau Neighborhood Association - \$16,000

Bottineau, in partnership with the Concerned Citizens of Marshall Terrace and the Above the Falls Citizen Advisory Committee, is conducting a study of air emissions in the neighborhood. The goal of the

project is to produce data which would lead to work with local industries to reduce air emissions. The draft study of emission and the health effects has been completed. This will be followed by additional work on emissions. Bottineau has coordinated its efforts with the Minneapolis Health Department and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Central Area Neighborhood Association - \$30,000

Central is partnering with The Pillsbury United Communities Waite House to provide job training for Central neighborhood residents. A goal of the project is to place residents in jobs at the Seward Coop Grocery which is being built in the neighborhood. The training program has begun and will continue until July 2017.

Citizens for a Loring Park Community - \$15,000

Partnering with the Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association, Loring Park had developed a community based planning process leading to a landscape plan to improve the appearance of the Hennepin–Lyndale Avenue Corridor. Since the grant was awarded the Loring Business Association has been added as a partner to the project. Work is underway with the Minneapolis Public Works Department and MnDOT on the overall reconstruction project of the Hennepin–Lyndale Avenue Corridor.

Cleveland Neighborhood Association - \$20,000

Cleveland is joining with local arts organizations Juxtaposition Arts and Bully Creative Shop to implement the Street Forum community engagement tool. This project will use technology and social media to involve residents in issues affecting the neighborhood. Utilizing Step-Up interns the work was initiated in the summer of 2017 and will continue through early 2017.

East Phillips Improvement Coalition - \$25,000

East Phillips is partnering with the Native American Youth Arts Collective to use art as an engagement tool among youth living at Little Earth. Work on the project is underway. East Phillips is coordinating with Little Earth on managing the project.

Holland Neighborhood Association - \$15,000

Holland is working with the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership for work in community engagement and planning for the Great Northern Greenway, a trail corridor connecting north and northeast Minneapolis across the Mississippi River. The Riverfront Partnership has hired a consultant to conduct a visioning process for the greenway. Three community meetings have been held. Planning on the project is being coordinated with the Park Board, City and neighborhood organizations. More on the process can be found on the Riverfront Partnership's website: <http://www.minneapolisriverfront.org/riverfront-initiatives/great-northern-greenway/>

Longfellow Community Council - \$18,000

Longfellow is partnering with Metro Blooms, a non-profit organization which promotes gardening throughout the metro area, the Longfellow Business Association and Project for Pride in Living to develop raingardens throughout the neighborhood. These raingardens are intended to improve the quality of stormwater and add greenspace to the neighborhood.

Longfellow has combined CIF funding with a grant from the Hennepin County Legacy program to develop 35 raingardens. Applications were received from 215 people wishing to have raingardens constructed on their property. A lottery to select the properties on which raingardens would be constructed. Longfellow has already been contacted by other neighborhood organizations seeking information on how to implement similar raingarden projects.

Lyndale Neighborhood Association- \$30,000

Partnering with the Corcoran, Powderhorn Park, Central and West Bank neighborhood organizations, as well as HOME line, Lyndale Neighborhood Association is the lead organization in developing the Minneapolis Renters Coalition. This group works on renters issues within Minneapolis. The project is in the start-up phase and is being funded by the City and three other funders. To date, ten member organizations have signed on the coalition. Several more are expected to join. The governance structure for the group has been established.

Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association - \$15,000

Prospect Park received funding to initiate engagement efforts with residents of Glendale Public Housing to help residents have a voice in the proposed redevelopment of the project. The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority has put the project on hold while alternatives for Glendale are considered.

Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association - \$25,000

Partnering with the Mercado Central business cooperative, Powderhorn is using the funding to continue current efforts to rebuild organizational capacity in the coop. This project is an extension of assistance the City has been providing to the Mercado over the past two years. Work continues on assisting the Mercado board to become self-supporting.

Ventura Village - \$25,000

This project would construct an outdoor patio and picnic area adjacent to the Phillips Community Center. The neighborhood is currently working on a lease agreement with the Minneapolis Park Board in advance of beginning work on the project. The work on the CIF funded project is being coordinated with the larger effort to renovate the Phillips swimming pool.

Windom Park Citizens in Action - \$25,000

Windom Park sought funding expand an existing tool library. The project involved developing storage and workshop space for the tool library in order reach more people in the neighborhood. With CIF funding the tool library has expanded their space and the tool inventory. Most of the funding has been expended. Information on the library can be found at: <http://nemtl.org/>

Community Connections Conference

Each year the Neighborhood and Community Relations department hosts an annual conference. The conference is a gathering of neighborhood and cultural organizations for the purposes of 1) sharing experiences and best practices; 2) facilitating connections between



organizations; and 3) supporting stronger relationships with the City of Minneapolis.

In 2016, the conference was held on April 2nd with over 600 people attending. The conference served as the kick-off event for the City's update of the Comprehensive Plan, which will be developed through 2018.

NCEC members served on the planning committee for the conference. The Commission also hosted a workshop during the conference to learn about the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) districts, ways to get elected, what the time commitment is, and what the benefits are of connecting with the NCEC.

NRP Policy Board

The NRP Policy Board is comprised of 11 members representing the Minneapolis Mayor, the Minneapolis City Council, the Hennepin County Board, the Minneapolis School Board, the Minneapolis Park Board, and the Minneapolis State Senate and House delegations. In addition, four of the 11 members of the Policy Board are selected from the membership of the NCEC. During 2015-2016 NCEC representatives to the Policy Board were Debra Behrens, David Boyd, Nasser Mussa and Francisco Segovia.

During the year, the Policy Board took action on the following items:

- Webber-Camden Neighborhood Phase II Plan Modification (September 2015)
- Recommendation on a new policy covering neighborhood fund balances for NRP funds (October 2015)
- Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization Phase II Plan Modification (January 2016)
- Cedar-Riverside Phase II Plan Modification (January 2016)
- East Harriet Farmstead Phase II Plan Modification (January 2016)
- Hawthorne Neighborhood Priority Plan (January 2016)
- Recommendation on the 2017-19 Community Participation Program Guidelines

Meet a Commissioner in monthly Minneapolis Connects newsletter

Each month, a Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commissioner is highlighted in the monthly Minneapolis Connects newsletter administered by the Neighborhood and Community Relations department. It is intended for readers to get to know members of the commission.

Presentations

Asian Media Access

August 2015

Ange Hwang, Director of Asian Media Access addressed the Commission on the Project Penn initiative. This One Minneapolis Fund project is aimed at engaging under represented communities in North Minneapolis in planning for the Penn and Plymouth Avenue Corridors.

Appetite for Change

October 2015

This was a presentation from another One Minneapolis Fund grantee. Michele Horvitz, the founder and executive director of Appetite for Change, presented the Good Food Advocacy Campaign. This project works to build the leadership capacity of African-American and low-income individuals to lead the food movement, connect with other communities in Minneapolis and increase community and civic engagement around food issues.

Twin Cities Media Alliance

February 2016

Bruce Johansen of the Twin Cities Media Alliance provided an overview of the Minneapolis Media Literacy Campaign project funded by the One Minneapolis Fund. The project worked with residents of North Minneapolis to develop skills in civic engagement, including training in working in civic organizations, media literacy and use of social media.

Midtown Phillips/New Americans Soccer Club

April 2016

Abdul Hohamedon, head of the soccer club, presented a video showing the activities of the club which is designed to provide sports and mentorship to children whose families are recent immigrants to America. The club allows all kids to participate by supplying equipment to those unable to afford it. The Midtown Phillips Neighborhood Association partners with the club to involve participating families in neighborhood activities.

KALY Somali Language Radio

April 2016

The founder and managing director of KALY Radio, Mohamed Kali, described the station which is at FM 101.7. It is a low power station that started in late 2015 with a signal that reaches the Phillips and Cedar Riverside neighborhoods in addition to some areas beyond those neighborhoods. Part of the startup costs were funded by a Community Innovation Fund grant from the City. The radio station provides a link to news and entertainment for many residents who speak Somali. He is the former vice-chair of the Midtown Phillips neighborhood and the neighborhood organization was instrumental to getting the station on the air. The station is a vehicle for neighborhood announcements and building relations between the police and the community.