

**AGENDA
CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
JULY 28, 2021
6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

CALL OF ROLL:

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM:

"An opportunity for members of the public to address the City Council on items on/or not on the current agenda. Items requiring Council action maybe deferred to staff or Boards and Commissions for research and future Council Agendas if appropriate. You will be limited to three (3) minutes and we ask that you conduct yourself in a professional, courteous manner, and refrain from the use of profanity. Failure to abide by this policy may result in the loss of your privilege to speak".

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS:

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items under the "Consent Agenda" will be adopted with one motion; however, council members may request individual items to be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion and action if they choose.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS:

COMMUNICATIONS:

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2022 Draft Budget Memo
2. City Park and Trail Master Plan

3. Resilient Communities Project Overview

OLD BUSINESS:

4. City Council Mission and Vision Statements

5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council Training Dates

6. American Rescue Plan Update

COUNCIL REPORTS:

ADJOURN

BUDGET MEMO

TO: CITY ADMINISTRATOR
FROM: AEM FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS, LLC
SUBJECT: COUNCIL WORK SESSION - FIRST DRAFT OF 2022 BUDGET
DATE: 7/26/2021

Introduction

Upon your request, we have summarized some of the key items for consideration in this years' budget.

Budget Format

The 2021 Budget included the Council approved priorities for each department. These will continue to be reviewed and updated as needed in the 2021 budget.

Key items in this year's budget:

- The 2022 tax rate is proposed to increase from 43.31% to 45.07% resulting in a 1.76% increase from 2021.
- The total 2022 tax levy is proposed to increase \$450,578 or 10.12% from 2021
 - o The general levy increased \$69,743 or 2.08%
 - Factors relating to this increase are explained in this memo under the General Fund Budget Summary section
 - o The debt levy increased \$50,835 or 5.74%
 - Increase is due to the issuance of the 2020A bonds for the 2020 street project and the subsequent tax levy needed to fund debt service payments
 - o The capital levy increased \$330,000
 - Capital levies are needed to fund equipment and improvements and details can be found in the City's Long Term Plan
 - The street replacement levy increased by \$300,000 or 100%. This is new item for 2022.
- Staffing
 - o The Crime Analyst was promoted to full-time starting in July 2021
- All employees are projected to receive a COLA increase of 3% and eligible employees will receive a step increase
- We have estimated a 8% increase to health insurance. Per the League of MN Cities, we have estimated a 20% increase to Worker's Comp and 12% increase for general liability insurance.

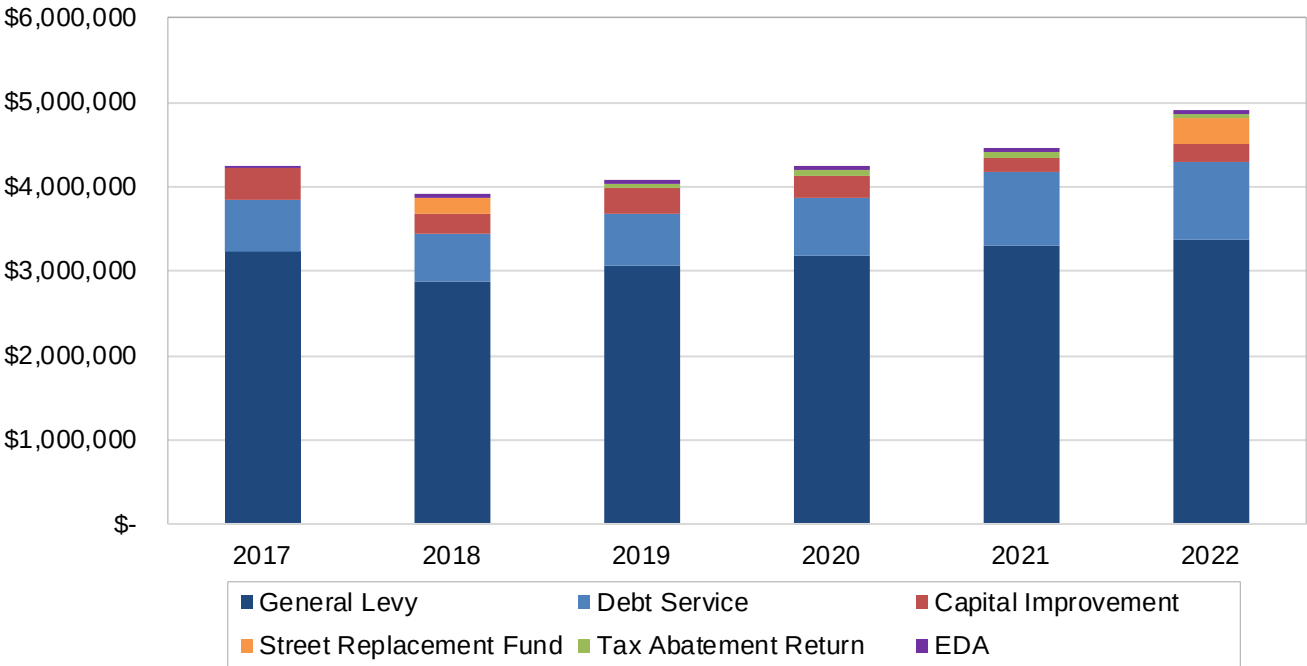
Tax Levy Summary

Overall, the property tax levy includes levies for general operations, EDA, capital equipment and improvements, street replacement, and debt service. The 2021 actual and 2022 proposed property tax levies are listed below:

	2021 Levy	Proposed 2022 Levy	Increase (Decrease) from 2021	Percent Change from 2021	Fund #
General Levy	\$ 3,354,083	\$ 3,423,826	\$ 69,743	2.08%	101
EDA Levy	42,000	42,000	-	0%	280
Capital Levy					
Capital Equipment	170,000	200,000	30,000	17.65%	401
Park Development	-	-	-	0%	404
Street Replacement	-	300,000	300,000	100.00%	408
Total	170,000	500,000	330,000	194.12%	
Debt Levy					
2009A GO Bonds	150,681	210,000	59,319	39.37%	337
2015A GO Bonds	275,000	275,000	-	0%	338
2016A GO Bonds	125,906	124,404	(1,502)	-1.19%	339
2018A GO Bonds	107,217	104,540	(2,677)	-2.50%	340
2020A GO Bonds	226,421	222,116	(4,305)	-1.90%	341
Total	885,225	936,060	50,835	5.74%	
Total	\$ 4,451,308	\$ 4,901,886	\$ 450,578	10.12%	
Tax Capacity	\$ 10,277,068	\$ 10,876,467	\$ 599,399	5.83%	
City Tax Rate*	43.31%	45.07%	1.76%		

*The City's Payable 2021 Tax Rate has been estimated based on preliminary tax capacity information provided by Chisago County. The final tax capacity and rate will vary from the rate estimated in this memo.

Tax Levy Summary 2017 to 2021 Actual and 2022 Proposed



Draft

Tax Capacity Impact on Tax Rate

Keep the Tax Levy Dollars Flat

	2021	2022	Change
City Tax Rate	43.31%	40.93%	-2.39%
City Tax Levy	\$ 4,451,308	\$ 4,451,308	\$ -
Tax Capacity	\$ 10,277,068	\$ 10,876,467	\$ 599,399

If the City keeps the tax levy dollars flat, the tax rate will decrease by 2.39%. As tax capacity increases, cities can levy more dollars without a direct tax rate increase. In this example, the city is able to keep a flat levy amount and the residents see a decrease in the tax rate.

Keep a Flat Tax Rate

	2021	2022	Change
City Tax Rate	43.31%	43.31%	0.00%
City Tax Levy	\$ 4,451,308	\$ 4,710,926	\$ 259,618
Tax Capacity	\$ 10,277,068	\$ 10,876,467	\$ 599,399

If the City keeps a flat tax rate, the levied tax dollars will increase by \$259,618 (or 5.83%). As stated before, as the tax capacity increases, cities are able to levy more dollars without a direct tax rate increase. In this example the city is able to collect an additional \$259,618 without having to increase the tax rate per household.

Current Proposed Tax Levy & Tax Rate

	2021	2022	Change
City Tax Rate	43.31%	45.07%	1.76%
City Tax Levy	\$ 4,451,308	\$ 4,901,886	\$ 450,578
Tax Capacity	\$ 10,277,068	\$ 10,876,467	\$ 599,399

In this example are the proposed 2022 Wyoming tax rate and levy amounts. The dollars levied are increased by \$450,578 (10.12%) and the tax rate has gone up by 1.76%. It is because of the increased tax capacity that the City is able to levy more dollars while having a lower tax rate.

General Fund Budget Summary

	Actual 2019	Budget 2020	Budget 2021	Budget 2022	Amount Change	Percent Change
Revenues						
Property taxes	\$ 3,175,401	\$ 3,246,123	\$ 3,354,083	\$ 3,423,826	\$ 69,743	\$ 69,744
Other taxes	125,458	163,434	158,134	82,748	(75,386)	(75,386)
Licenses and permits	309,477	235,500	212,000	224,000	12,000	12,000
Intergovernmental	414,222	150,450	153,369	165,800	12,431	12,431
Charges for services	49,572	48,000	52,000	54,000	2,000	2,000
Fines and forfeitures	18,352	20,000	20,000	15,000	(5,000)	(5,000)
Interest earnings	42,575	35,000	36,700	25,000	(11,700)	(11,700)
Miscellaneous	8,075	-	-	-	-	-
Other financing sources	410	-	-	-	-	-
Total Revenues	\$ 4,143,543	\$ 3,898,507	\$ 3,986,286	\$ 3,990,374	\$ 4,088	0%

Revenue Key Changes:

- Property Taxes - increase to offset increase in expenditures and decrease in other revenues
- Other Taxes – decrease due to 2021 being the last year of the Polaris Tax abatement.

Draft

Property Type	Market Value	Taxable Market Value	2021 Taxes Payable	2022 Taxes Payable	Increase (Decrease) in Property Taxes
Residential	\$ 100,000	\$ 71,800	\$ 311	\$ 324	\$ 13
Residential	200,000	180,800	783	815	32
Residential	300,000	289,800	1,255	1,306	51
Residential	400,000	398,800	1,727	1,797	70
Commercial	500,000	500,000	4,006	4,169	162

Note: change in market value has not been assumed

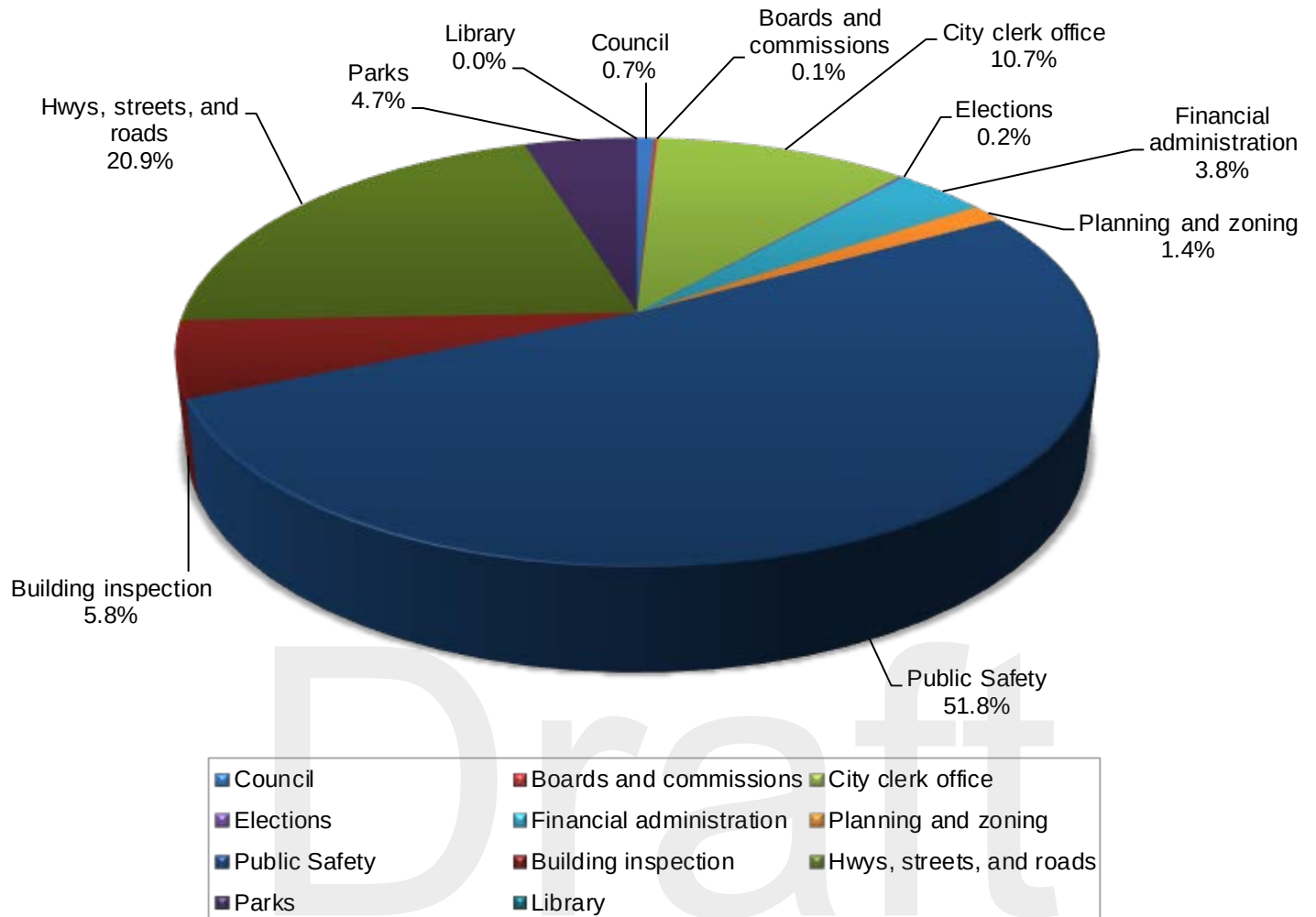
General Fund Budget Summary (Continued)

	Actual 2019	Budget 2020	Budget 2021	Budget 2022	Amount Change	Percent Change
Expenditures						
Council	\$ 24,935	\$ 25,860	\$ 28,230	\$ 28,448	\$ 218	\$ 218
Boards and commissions	6,989	5,450	5,570	5,824	254	254
City clerk office	353,430	449,950	401,860	425,070	23,210	23,211
Elections	-	8,500	-	6,000	6,000	6,000
Financial administration	288,595	266,736	270,536	151,940	(118,596)	(118,596)
Planning and zoning	48,397	55,200	59,860	54,562	(5,298)	(5,298)
Police department	1,826,391	1,855,011	1,976,780	2,067,075	90,295	90,295
Building inspection	172,820	235,030	221,930	230,574	8,644	8,644
Hwys, streets, and roads	806,935	809,400	805,940	832,449	26,509	26,509
Parks	108,005	147,920	174,430	188,432	14,002	14,002
Library	37,562	39,450	41,150	-	(41,150)	(41,150)
Transfer out	1,438,730	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	5,112,790	3,898,507	3,986,286	3,990,374	4,088	0%
Excess Revenues (Expenditures)	\$ (969,247)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

Expenditure Key Changes:

- Elections - increase due to elections in 2022
- Financial Administration - decrease due to 2021 being the last year of the Polaris Tax abatement.
- Police Department -
 - o increase in wages and benefits (\$71K) due to COLA and step increases;
 - o increase in workers compensation and property/liability insurance premiums (\$31K);
 - o increase in operating supplies (7K) and increase of contracted services by 12K
 - o offset by a decrease in the in employer paid insurance due to new employees doing opt out and old employees having family coverage.
- Parks - increase due to contracted services for 10K and an increase in workers comp and general liability insurance.
- Library - decrease due to zero budget for 2022.

General Fund Budget Summary (Continued)



Budget Detail - By Fund

The following financial report is attached:

- Budget Report for City of Wyoming

User: ssaxe

DB: Wyoming

Calculations as of 06/30/2021

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2020 ACTIVITY	2021 ACTIVITY THRU 06/30/21	2021 AMENDED RTMENT BUDGET	2022 REQUESTED BUDGET
101-0000-31000	GENERAL PROPERTY TAXES	3,276,818	(40)	3,354,083	3,423,826
101-0000-31005	PROPERTY TAXES (DEBT LEVY)		1,675,093		
101-0000-31015	FAIRVIEW PILOT		73,496	37,000	36,748
101-0000-31016	POLARIS TAX ABATEMENT	73,134		73,134	
101-0000-31050	TAX INCREMENTS				
101-0000-32100	BUSINESS LICENSES/PERMITS	10,384	440	12,000	12,000
101-0000-32180	OTHER LICENSES/PERMITS				
101-0000-32210	BUILDING PERMITS	112,203	95,317	175,000	185,000
101-0000-32220	FEES ETC.	7,357	13,055	15,000	15,000
101-0000-32240	ANIMAL LICENSES				
101-0000-33150	FEDERAL POLICE GRANTS	3,152	510	5,000	5,000
101-0000-33180	FEDERAL GRANTS-CARES	605,510			
101-0000-33400	STATE GRANTS AND AIDS	2,739		1,000	1,000
101-0000-33401	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AID				
101-0000-33402	HOMESTEAD CREDIT	3,871		3,800	3,800
101-0000-33404	PERA AID			2,569	
101-0000-33423	POLICE STATE AID	94,510		86,000	90,000
101-0000-33424	FIRE STATE AID	62,312		45,000	56,000
101-0000-33426	OTHER STATE PUBLIC SAFETY AID	9,409		5,000	5,000
101-0000-34100	GENERAL GOVERNMENT				
101-0000-34101	CITY HALL RENT REVENUE	50		500	500
101-0000-34102	LIBRARY FEES	100			
101-0000-34107	ASSESSMENT SEARCH FEES	485	75	500	500
101-0000-34111	ENGINEER FEE				
101-0000-34112	FIRE INSPECTION				
101-0000-34122	STAGECOACH/EASTER - REVENUE				
101-0000-34125	DONATIONS	825	35		
101-0000-34204	PROTECTIVE INSPECTION FEES				
101-0000-34205	PUBLIC SAFETY GRANTS			5,000	5,000
101-0000-34208	DARE PROGRAM				
101-0000-34215	FIRE DEPARTMENT	7,235			
101-0000-34220	POLICE DEPARTMENT	1,035	1,498	1,000	1,500
101-0000-34230	PARK & RECREATION DEDICATION				
101-0000-34301	STREET, SIDEWALK AND CURB FEES				
101-0000-34302	DRIVEWAY PERMIT	15,829	10,897	10,000	12,000
101-0000-34780	PARK FEES	940	1,405	1,000	1,000
101-0000-35000	FINES AND FORFEITS	11,417	5,350	20,000	15,000
101-0000-36100	SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS				
101-0000-36200	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES	1,607	1,159		
101-0000-36210	INTEREST EARNINGS	60,439	537	27,500	25,000
101-0000-36211	INTERFUND LOAN INTEREST	9,833		9,200	
101-0000-36220	RENT	43,177	21,553	49,000	50,500
101-0000-36240	REIMBURSEMENTS	10,434	11,575		
101-0000-38050	CABLE TV REVENUES	51,523	21,659	48,000	46,000
101-0000-39200	INTERFUND OPERATING TRANSFERS				
101-0000-39203	TRANSFER FROM OTHER FUND				
101-0000-39400	PROCEEDS FROM SALE	443			
101-1110-41000	SALARIES & WAGES	21,030	10,500	21,000	21,000
101-1110-41210	PERA	202	100	200	200
101-1110-41220	FICA	1,615	803	1,610	1,610
101-1110-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	256	90	90	108
101-1110-42000	SUPPLIES - OFFICE/COPY/COMPUTR			3,000	2,000
101-1110-42080	TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION	517	468	2,000	3,000
101-1110-44180	UNIFORMS	153	10	300	500
101-1110-44330	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	30		30	30
101-1330-41000	SALARIES & WAGES	3,630	2,010	5,160	5,160
101-1330-41010	FULL TIME - REGULAR	18			
101-1330-41220	FICA	281	154	390	390
101-1330-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	109	20	20	24
101-1330-42080	TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION				250
101-1330-42100	OPERATING SUPPLIES				
101-1400-41010	FULL TIME - REGULAR	155,956	89,181	163,850	177,580
101-1400-41020	FULL TIME - OVERTIME				
101-1400-41030	PART TIME EMPLOYEES REGULAR				
101-1400-41210	PERA	13,057	6,689	12,290	13,320
101-1400-41220	FICA	11,487	6,263	12,530	13,580
101-1400-41300	EMPLOYER PAID IN (GENERAL)	17,251	10,552	15,440	16,360
101-1400-41310	LIFE INSURANCE	1,823	1,179	2,220	2,170
101-1400-41400	UNEMPLOYMENT COMP (GENERAL)				
101-1400-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	1,748	1,040	1,040	1,330
101-1400-42000	SUPPLIES - OFFICE/COPY/COMPUTR	3,358	1,657	6,000	6,300
101-1400-42050	SOFTWARE UPGRADES	293		250	300
101-1400-42080	TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION	1,151	837	5,000	5,000
101-1400-42090	NETWORK MUNICIPAL COMPUTERS	31,975	17,496	30,000	33,000
101-1400-42100	OPERATING SUPPLIES	8,044	1,317	5,000	5,000
101-1400-42150	COPIER	2,778	1,132	6,000	5,000
101-1400-42170	CITY NEWSLETTER	2,515		3,500	3,500

User: ssaxe

DB: Wyoming

Calculations as of 06/30/2021

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2020 ACTIVITY	2021 ACTIVITY THRU 06/30/21	2021 AMENDED RTMENT BUDGET	2022 REQUESTED BUDGET
101-1400-42180	COMPUTER MAINT/REPAIR	2,614		3,000	3,000
101-1400-42270	COVID-19	348,041	(651)	1,000	
101-1400-42310	CONTRACTED SERVICES	24,078	8,863	30,500	31,250
101-1400-43000	PROFESSIONAL SERVICE (GENERAL)	385	80	2,000	10,500
101-1400-43030	ENGINEERING	15,767	11,061	25,000	25,000
101-1400-43040	ATTORNEY FEES	139,283	7,680	25,000	25,000
101-1400-43120	FEE (GOVERNMENT-STATE)	304	304		
101-1400-43210	TELEPHONE	3,236	1,516	3,500	4,000
101-1400-43220	POSTAGE	3,069	1,649	2,500	2,500
101-1400-43510	LEGAL NOTICE PUBLICATION	1,251	39	1,000	1,000
101-1400-43600	CLEANING SERVICE	3,912	2,147	4,500	4,500
101-1400-43610	CLEANING SUPPLIES			250	500
101-1400-43630	GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE	57,603	4,142	2,860	3,080
101-1400-43800	UTILITIES-GAS/ELEC/SEWER/WATER	4,818	2,788	7,000	7,200
101-1400-43840	REFUSE	988	559	1,000	1,600
101-1400-44010	REPAIRS & MAINT. - BUILDINGS	3,511	215	6,000	5,000
101-1400-44180	UNIFORMS	190	262	500	500
101-1400-44290	REIMBURSEMENTS & REFUNDS	1,180			
101-1400-44330	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	14,206	459	17,500	18,000
101-1400-49500	CONTINGENCY (LGA)			5,630	
101-1410-41000	SALARIES & WAGES	7,769			4,600
101-1410-41210	PERA	59			50
101-1410-41220	FICA	120			100
101-1410-42100	OPERATING SUPPLIES	6,159			1,000
101-1410-43310	TRAVEL EXPENSES	184			250
101-1500-41010	FULL TIME - REGULAR	29,473	14,795	31,330	32,270
101-1500-41020	FULL TIME - OVERTIME				
101-1500-41210	PERA	2,210	1,110	2,350	2,420
101-1500-41220	FICA	1,873	949	2,400	2,470
101-1500-41300	EMPLOYER PAID IN (GENERAL)	10,483	4,756	10,880	11,750
101-1500-41310	LIFE INSURANCE			240	240
101-1500-41320	PCORI TAX		114		
101-1500-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	353	200	200	240
101-1500-42080	TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION	136	45	300	300
101-1500-43000	PROFESSIONAL SERVICE (GENERAL)	64,366	20,675	55,000	60,000
101-1500-43010	AUDITING AND ACCOUNTING	33,000	34,870	36,000	42,000
101-1500-43510	LEGAL NOTICE PUBLICATION	162		150	250
101-1500-44330	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS		156		
101-1500-47140	TAX ABATEMENT	102,410		131,686	
101-1910-41010	FULL TIME - REGULAR	28,490	13,826	29,270	30,150
101-1910-41210	PERA	2,137	1,037	2,200	2,260
101-1910-41220	FICA	1,939	941	2,240	2,310
101-1910-41300	EMPLOYER PAID IN (GENERAL)	7,657	1,892	7,970	8,540
101-1910-41310	LIFE INSURANCE	687	413	410	410
101-1910-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	277	160	160	192
101-1910-42310	CONTRACTED SERVICES	2,430	1,736	4,410	4,500
101-1910-43030	ENGINEERING	1,594		1,200	1,200
101-1910-43040	ATTORNEY FEES	171	6	750	750
101-1910-43120	FEE (GOVERNMENT-STATE)				
101-1910-43150	PLANNER (COMP PLAN)	6,933	4,523	10,000	3,000
101-1910-43510	LEGAL NOTICE PUBLICATION			250	250
101-1910-43540	OTHER PRINTING & BINDING		53	1,000	1,000
101-2110-41010	FULL TIME - REGULAR	807,602	389,153	869,150	917,640
101-2110-41020	FULL TIME - OVERTIME	21,752	9,861	15,000	20,000
101-2110-41030	PART TIME EMPLOYEES REGULAR	25,196	12,629	12,800	
101-2110-41040	POLICE O.T. - PARTTIME				
101-2110-41050	NIGHT DIFFERENTIAL	1,272	826	3,290	3,290
101-2110-41060	POLICE O.T. - GRANT	2,847	257	8,000	8,000
101-2110-41070	POLICE O.T. - COURT	201		4,000	4,000
101-2110-41080	FIRE WAGES	204,405	92,617	195,250	198,390
101-2110-41100	HOLIDAY	20,908	1,561	31,860	31,430
101-2110-41210	PERA	154,241	74,050	171,230	174,250
101-2110-41220	FICA	28,190	12,698	29,740	32,600
101-2110-41240	FIRE PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS	55,497		54,000	56,000
101-2110-41300	EMPLOYER PAID IN (GENERAL)	179,590	69,318	176,500	155,970
101-2110-41310	LIFE INSURANCE	7,675	4,172	7,680	7,060
101-2110-41400	UNEMPLOYMENT COMP (GENERAL)	19		500	
101-2110-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	48,697	71,726	71,680	98,716
101-2110-42000	SUPPLIES - OFFICE/COPY/COMPUTR	3,679	2,908		3,610
101-2110-42080	TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION	34,953	20,878	25,000	25,950
101-2110-42100	OPERATING SUPPLIES	18,188	9,682	11,000	18,000
101-2110-42120	MOTOR FUELS	25,453	15,708	40,000	50,000
101-2110-42200	COMPLIANCE CHECKS	260		100	250
101-2110-42230	CRIME PREVENTION		821		2,500
101-2110-42240	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	26,063	6,552	32,500	34,530
101-2110-42300	SAFETY EQUIPMENT	28,407	900	14,500	17,050
101-2110-42310	CONTRACTED SERVICES	5,827	673		11,700

User: ssaxe

DB: Wyoming

Calculations as of 06/30/2021

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2020 ACTIVITY	2021 ACTIVITY THRU 06/30/21	2021 AMENDED RTMENT BUDGET	2022 REQUESTED BUDGET
101-2110-42350	RESERVES	22		400	2,000
101-2110-43000	PROFESSIONAL SERVICE (GENERAL)	5,584	4,854	8,050	8,000
101-2110-43010	AUDITING AND ACCOUNTING			500	500
101-2110-43040	ATTORNEY FEES			5,000	2,000
101-2110-43200	COMMUNICATIONS (GENERAL)	32,341	8,468	33,000	32,575
101-2110-43210	TELEPHONE	3,060	1,508	3,000	3,100
101-2110-43220	POSTAGE	2,325	985	2,200	2,500
101-2110-43600	CLEANING SERVICE	2,407	1,279	3,000	2,500
101-2110-43630	GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE	12,656	72,199	49,850	53,894
101-2110-43700	INSPECTIONS	5,348	3,574	5,000	6,050
101-2110-43800	UTILITIES-GAS/ELEC/SEWER/WATER	7,758	5,251	8,600	7,800
101-2110-43840	REFUSE	50			
101-2110-43900	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	37,367	21,030	31,000	31,100
101-2110-43910	SPECIAL PROJECTS	4,503		8,000	8,200
101-2110-44010	REPAIRS & MAINT. - BUILDINGS	11,138	3,231	15,000	6,000
101-2110-44080	UNIFORMS	11,841	5,851	12,000	11,300
101-2110-44330	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,902	1,108	2,400	1,930
101-2110-44360	INVESTIGATIONS	3,482	1,338	3,000	3,590
101-2110-45800	OTHER EQUIPMENT	23,958	11,321	13,000	13,100
101-2400-41010	FULL TIME - REGULAR	127,736	63,178	147,330	152,010
101-2400-41210	PERA	9,580	4,738	11,050	11,400
101-2400-41220	FICA	9,230	4,561	11,270	11,630
101-2400-41300	EMPLOYER PAID IN (GENERAL)	22,424	4,415	20,810	22,300
101-2400-41310	LIFE INSURANCE	1,384	863	1,560	1,560
101-2400-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	783	820	820	664
101-2400-42000	SUPPLIES - OFFICE/COPY/COMPUTR	4,028	1,520	4,900	5,300
101-2400-42050	SOFTWARE UPGRADES		686	1,000	1,000
101-2400-42080	TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION	2,841	463	4,000	4,000
101-2400-42100	OPERATING SUPPLIES	2,072	284	2,000	2,000
101-2400-42120	MOTOR FUELS	779	352	1,400	1,400
101-2400-42310	CONTRACTED SERVICES	376		2,000	2,000
101-2400-43030	ENGINEERING			250	250
101-2400-43040	ATTORNEY FEES	140		750	750
101-2400-43210	TELEPHONE	1,086	418	2,300	2,300
101-2400-43220	POSTAGE	219	296	800	800
101-2400-43310	TRAVEL EXPENSES	1,201		1,000	1,000
101-2400-43630	GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE		4,620	3,190	3,310
101-2400-43900	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	651		3,500	3,500
101-2400-44180	UNIFORMS			800	800
101-2400-44330	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	245	275	1,200	2,600
101-3100-41010	FULL TIME - REGULAR	322,928	163,419	335,050	342,140
101-3100-41020	FULL TIME - OVERTIME	14,419	7,302	14,000	14,000
101-3100-41030	PART TIME EMPLOYEES REGULAR	4,776		6,970	6,970
101-3100-41210	PERA	24,196	12,468	26,700	27,230
101-3100-41220	FICA	25,271	13,003	27,240	27,780
101-3100-41300	EMPLOYER PAID IN (GENERAL)	69,201	22,260	74,380	80,330
101-3100-41310	LIFE INSURANCE	2,834	1,792	2,630	2,630
101-3100-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	22,772	20,540	20,540	16,546
101-3100-42000	SUPPLIES - OFFICE/COPY/COMPUTR	1,064	372	500	500
101-3100-42050	SOFTWARE UPGRADES	(858)		10,000	7,500
101-3100-42080	TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION		220	1,000	1,000
101-3100-42100	OPERATING SUPPLIES	4,577	2,372	2,500	2,500
101-3100-42120	MOTOR FUELS	13,538	6,587	17,000	17,000
101-3100-42130	CULVERTS				
101-3100-42190	SEASONAL ACTIVITIES				
101-3100-42250	LANDSCAPING MATERIALS		681	3,000	1,500
101-3100-42260	SIGN MATERIAL/REPLACEMENT	4,741	2,173	5,000	5,000
101-3100-42300	SAFETY EQUIPMENT	2,223	2,125	2,000	3,500
101-3100-42310	CONTRACTED SERVICES	12,827	4,610	7,500	7,500
101-3100-42400	SMALL TOOLS/MINOR EQUIPMENT	5,085	5,528	5,000	10,000
101-3100-42910	EQUIPMENT REPAIR				
101-3100-43000	PROFESSIONAL SERVICE (GENERAL)				
101-3100-43030	ENGINEERING	3,904	1,218	4,000	4,000
101-3100-43040	ATTORNEY FEES				
101-3100-43060	PERSONNEL TESTING	655	928	1,000	1,000
101-3100-43090	HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL				
101-3100-43120	FEE (GOVERNMENT-STATE)	431		350	350
101-3100-43210	TELEPHONE	5,927	2,657		2,700
101-3100-43520	GENERAL NOTICE PUBLICATION	380			
101-3100-43630	GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE	21,772	18,510	12,780	13,450
101-3100-43800	UTILITIES-GAS/ELEC/SEWER/WATER	14,632	9,119	17,500	17,500
101-3100-43840	REFUSE	1,855	275	800	800
101-3100-43860	STREET LIGHTS	67,588	28,970	80,000	80,000
101-3100-43900	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE		1,880		
101-3100-44010	REPAIRS & MAINT. - BUILDINGS	5,584	1,838	5,000	5,000
101-3100-44030	REP & MAIN. - OTHER THAN BLDGS				
101-3100-44040	REPAIRS & MAINT. - EQUIPMENT	33,121	24,106	40,000	43,000

User: ssaxe

DB: Wyoming

Calculations as of 06/30/2021

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2020	2021	2021	2022
		ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	AMENDED RTMENT	REQUESTED
		THRU	06/30/21	BUDGET	BUDGET
101-3100-44100	RENTALS (EQUIPMENT)	1,017	2,168	7,000	5,000
101-3100-44180	UNIFORMS	4,349	2,712	5,000	5,000
101-3100-44330	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	177		1,500	500
101-3100-44400	SALT & SAND	37,189	22,335	30,000	35,523
101-3100-44410	STREET MAINT MATERIALS	32,501	11,955	40,000	45,000
101-3100-44450	SNOW REMOVAL				
101-3100-44460	GRAVEL MAINTENANCE				
101-3100-44470	PAVEMENT LINE STRIPING				
101-3100-44500	CRACK FILLING				
101-3100-44580	CALCIUM CHLORIDE				
101-3100-44600	POTHoles/PATCHING	2,417			
101-3100-44760	TREE PLANTING				
101-3100-49010	2018 F250 PICKUP				
101-3100-49020	2008 MACK DUMP TRUCK				
101-3100-49030	2006 FORD D550 DUMP				
101-3100-49040	2012 CHEVY PICKUP				
101-3100-49050	2014 FORD F350				
101-3100-49060	BOBCAT 863 SKID STEER				
101-3100-49070	CAT 14 GRADER				
101-3100-49080	CAT 247B SKID STEER				
101-3100-49090	CAT 924 LOADER				
101-3100-49100	JOHN DEERE TRACTOR				
101-3100-49110	JOHN DEERE TRACTOR W/ARM MOWER				
101-3100-49130	WACKER ROLLER				
101-3100-49140	STEPP HOT PATCH TRAILER				
101-3100-49150	2016 MACK DUMP TRUCK				
101-3100-49160	2011 FREIGHTLINER DUMP TRUCK				
101-3100-49170	2000 STERLING PLOW TRUCK				
101-3100-49180	1998 FORD PLOW TRUCK	557			
101-3100-49190	WOOD CHIPPER				
101-3100-49210	JOHN DEERE 401D BACKHOE				
101-3100-49220	DUMPSTER TRAILER				
101-3100-49240	2017 F350 PICKUP				
101-3100-49250	2019 F250 W/TOMMY GATE				
101-3160-43800	UTILITIES-GAS/ELEC/SEWER/WATER				
101-5200-41010	FULL TIME - REGULAR	32,040	19,205	36,030	37,120
101-5200-41020	FULL TIME - OVERTIME	146	600	1,000	1,000
101-5200-41030	PART TIME EMPLOYEES REGULAR	4,090		13,470	13,470
101-5200-41210	PERA	1,807	1,140	3,300	3,380
101-5200-41220	FICA	2,578	1,428	3,860	3,950
101-5200-41300	EMPLOYER PAID IN (GENERAL)	5,235	2,039	7,590	8,200
101-5200-41310	LIFE INSURANCE			280	280
101-5200-41500	WORKER S COMP (GENERAL)	6,761	2,870	2,870	2,312
101-5200-42080	TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION		1,730	1,000	1,000
101-5200-42100	OPERATING SUPPLIES	538	445	1,000	1,000
101-5200-42120	MOTOR FUELS	210	143	2,000	2,000
101-5200-42190	SEASONAL ACTIVITIES	(20)			1,000
101-5200-42250	LANDSCAPING MATERIALS	1,774	153	1,500	1,500
101-5200-42310	CONTRACTED SERVICES	37,758	14,576	35,000	45,000
101-5200-42400	SMALL TOOLS/MINOR EQUIPMENT	2,314	1,263	2,500	2,500
101-5200-42600	TRAIL MAINTENANCE	1,105		2,500	2,500
101-5200-42910	EQUIPMENT REPAIR				
101-5200-43210	TELEPHONE				
101-5200-43520	GENERAL NOTICE PUBLICATION	450			
101-5200-43630	GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE	169	17,423	12,030	13,220
101-5200-43800	UTILITIES-GAS/ELEC/SEWER/WATER	2,436	1,623	3,000	3,000
101-5200-43840	REFUSE	1,091	495	1,000	1,000
101-5200-43900	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE				
101-5200-44010	REPAIRS & MAINT. - BUILDINGS	3,357	137	5,000	5,000
101-5200-44030	REP & MAIN. - OTHER THAN BLDGS	54			
101-5200-44040	REPAIRS & MAINT. - EQUIPMENT	24,324	5,016	20,000	20,000
101-5200-44050	SATALLITE RENTAL	4,968	1,590	4,500	5,000
101-5200-44180	UNIFORMS	28			
101-5200-44760	TREE PLANTING		8,085	15,000	15,000
101-5200-49000	2004 CHEVY PICKUP				
101-5200-49120	POLARIS RANGER				
101-5200-49220	DUMPSTER TRAILER				
101-5500-41210	PERA				
101-5500-41220	FICA				
101-5500-41300	EMPLOYER PAID IN (GENERAL)				
101-5500-42100	OPERATING SUPPLIES				
101-5500-43600	CLEANING SERVICE	11,741	7,580	19,000	
101-5500-43800	UTILITIES-GAS/ELEC/SEWER/WATER	15,596	7,072	19,000	
101-5500-43840	REFUSE	130	105	150	
101-5500-44010	REPAIRS & MAINT. - BUILDINGS	111	20	3,000	
101-9360-47210	TRANSFER		(16)		



Date: July 26, 2021

Presented to: Mayor Iverson and City Council Members

Presented by: City Administrator, Robb Linwood

Department: Administration

Reference: **2022 Budget Work Session- Wednesday, July 28, 2021 at 6:00PM**

2022 Budget Calendar

July 28, 2021	Council work session - first draft of budget presented.
August 2-August 6, 2021	Additional departmental meetings to discuss and review council feedback from work session.
August 11, 2021	2nd draft of budget due to City Administrator.
August 25, 2021	Council work session – if needed.
September 7, 2021	At the Council meeting, the public hearing date on the proposed budget and proposed tax levy are approved by the Council.
By September 30, 2021	City Administrator certifies preliminary levy and hearing date to Chisago County.
September/October	Additional updates/fine tuning of budget before final presentation.
October 20, 2021	Final budget due to City Administrator.
November	County Auditor mails tax notices to each taxpayer.
November 10, 2021	Council work session – final budget presented.
December 7, 2021	Initial Truth-In-Taxation Hearing on 2022 Budget & Levy and adoption of the 2022 Budget and Levy.
December 21, 2021	Final adoption date of the 2022 Budget and Levy - if needed.



CITY OF WYOMING

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2022 City Council Budget Goals and Priorities

At the 1st Council Meeting in 2021 the City Council meeting the Council adopted the 2022 Budget Calendar which outlined a series of steps to establish and eventual budget. As part of those steps it was included in the initial meetings to have a discussion on the Council's budget goals and priorities which are intended to provide direction for the preparation of the 2022 Recommended Budget.

Ongoing Goals and Initiatives.

Continued Development of parks

- Swenson ADA Grant
- Veterans Memorial at Railroad Park
- Development of Fireside Park
- Utilize Sunrise Trail to draw people here
- Work to ensure Hawk meadows snowshoeing and cross country skiing has trails
- Address Eagle Scout Projects and make sure they are repaired or updated
- Advertise Farmers Market
- Continue and have more partnerships with youth groups
- Look for potential area for a Dog Park

Continue work on City Budget/Services/Amenities

- Minimize financial impacts to residents and businesses as much as possible
- Be thoughtful of our taxes to our business's, residents and make sure they can continue to live here

Continue work evaluating city facilities

- Completion of needs assessment

Continued effort on community building

- Inclusiveness/Equity Policy Making
- Celebrating our identity – Stagecoach Days – Celebrate Wyoming's History overall, farming, railroad, continued events

Walkability/Safety

- Ensure new developments have trails
- Year round accessibility and promote fitness



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Continue Street Replacement and Maintenance Programs

- Focus on Neighborhood Streets

Continue to attract new business/Retain Existing

- Duncan Donuts
- Look for opportunities for new styles of business
- Food options
- Strip mall that encompass a large group of businesses

Communications/Community Engagement

- Marketing campaign where to go with city complaints or concerns

Continued evaluation of blighted properties and programs for it

- Program to deal with nuisance properties

Staff Level Changes for City Departments

No department has indicated staffing level changes in 2022

Changes in Programs or Service Levels

The Council is asked to provide general guidance on whether any of these programs or services should receive added or reduced emphasis. The Council may consider what emphasis you might want to provide for the Council's 2021 goals that were developed at the beginning of the year.

Valuation

Our overall valuations have increased and we are still waiting for this number from the County, but we believe it to be between 7 and 8 percent based off the total county evaluation.

Healthcare Costs

Healthcare is always an evaluation from year to year as we wait for cost associated with the cooperative the city is with Sourcewell (formerly NJPA). Last year staff reviewed other material from plans if the city were to go on their own with a similar plan and those costs exceeded our plan through the cooperative. The city will receive these costs in August of 2021 and we will continue to evaluate other plans to review for savings.

LMCIT Insurance Trust

The League of Minnesota Cities just released the initial 2021-2022 Workers Compensation Rates and Property. Most Minnesota cities are members of the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) for property, liability,



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auto, and workers' compensation coverage. Cities purchasing insurance from a private company should ask their provider about insurance coverage options, claim trends, and costs. Cities looking for possible ways to reduce their premiums can reference the memo Reducing LMCIT Premium Costs. LMCIT members' annual premium costs are affected by rates, exposures, and experience. In addition to rates, which are set by LMCIT in the fall, cities' costs can fluctuate if there are changes in exposures — such as payrolls, city expenditures, or property values — or changes in experience rating for workers' compensation, municipal liability, or auto liability. (Generally, experience the rating formulas compare expected losses for individual members within a recent three-year period to the actual losses during the same period, and if losses are greater (or less) than expected, a premium debit (or credit) is applied.)

Workers Compensation

Workers' compensation Data as of the end of 2020 shows total incurred costs for claims occurring in 2019 and 2020 were relatively high — driven in large part by a rapid increase in PTSD claim costs. There's still a lot of uncertainty behind

how PTSD claim costs will continue to develop, but there's not been any indication they're slowing down. This was noted above, but members that have had large claims – PTSD or other – in recent years, may see higher experience rating modifiers, which is something else to keep in mind. Something new that's come up in 2021 is the potential introduction of additional presumptions for public safety classes. That might cause additional pressure on rates if it looks like the league will be seeing new types of costly claims. These are not guarantees. Annual actuarial reviews, other rate development work, and reinsurance costs will be calculated this fall, at which time LMCIT will be able to give a definite answer on premium rates for 2020-21. Final rates can vary substantially from our preliminary estimates. For example, preliminary estimates last year suggested workers' compensation rate increases of 5 -10% range. Projected PTSD claim costs continue to skyrocket beyond expectations, resulting in the need for a 13.5% rate increase to keep pace with PTSD. There are two circumstances this year that make it particularly difficult to provide guidance on projected premium rate levels with precision: 1) LMCIT conducting class rate relativity adjustments for 2022, which means specific rates for specific job classes will increase for some and decrease for others, so members will be impacted differently depending on the mix of job classes and payroll each member has; and 2) LMCIT is conducting a fund balance adequacy review project, which could affect our evaluation of how large a fund balance we need to maintain. Some uncertainty remains behind how COVID-19 is impacting workers' compensation costs. LMCIT had several hundred claims and several million dollars in incurred COVID claim costs. While the intake of new claims has cooled off the exposure remains, and the long-term impact of accepted claims is unknown. LMCIT suggests cities allow for a workers' compensation premium rate increase in the 10 – 15% range for the average member, but with the way rates for individual job classes will change, it may be safer to budget for closer to a 20% rate increase for the chance that your city has a high percentage of payroll in one or more of the job classes that will increase more because of the relativity study adjustments discussed in the previous page. It's not unlikely for example that the police officer job class rate will need to increase more than for other job classes. (It's also possible that our city will have a high percentage of payroll in classes for which rates will either decrease or increase by less, but we'd rather suggest we be prepared for a larger increase if that's how things shake out.)

Property

The most relevant factor for property rates is the reinsurance market, which is in a harder cycle that LMCIT is accustomed to. Reinsurance costs are a significant part of LMCIT expense for property coverage and it's uncertain how the reinsurance market will behave later this year. (They don't expect it too suddenly soften up, based on what we're reading and what they're hearing from other sister pools in other states.) Given the experience other pools have had in recent months, they anticipate the possibility for increased costs. The initial data suggest some of the utility property classes



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(E.g. electric, water, sewer) may need to increase relative to other property types. Claims paid under LMCIT cyber and crime coverages have historically been funded with property coverage premiums, but it's looking like they may need to started charging for those coverage types separately and explicitly, due to changes in claim patterns and reinsurance considerations. Given the reinsurance uncertainty and the potential variability by member, for budgeting purposes cities may want to allow for a 5 to 10% increase for property coverage rates.

Liability

Loss costs in 2020 for municipal liability claims were average overall, but patterns for specific types of liability claims continue to evolve, as is the case with police liability, sewer backup liability, employment practices, and land use litigation, for example. Change in the police liability environment, potential federal or state reforms, and the escalation of the value of serious claims is definitely something LMCIT is monitoring and could impact pricing for police liability as well as excess liability limits.

LMCIT suggests cities allow for possible rate increases in the range of 3 to 7%, to in part account for the potential for an uptick inflationary effects, but a little more, maybe 8-12%, for members with police liability or excess liability limits, as the reinsurance market for excess limits is a bit in flux, so that causes some uncertainty

Auto

Auto coverage loss costs in 2020 were in line generally with previous years, so LMCIT expects overall auto rates to remain relatively stable, but they suggest allowing for 3 to 7% increases for auto rates to be safe and, like liability, to account for the potential for an uptick inflationary effects.

2022 Draft Budget

AEM has prepared a draft budget and memo for the council's review. Some of the highlights

- The 2022 tax rate is proposed to increase from 43.31% to 45.07% resulting in a 1.76% increase from 2021.
- The total 2022 tax levy is proposed to increase \$450,578 or 10.12% from 2021

The general levy increased \$69,743 or 2.08%

- Factors relating to this increase are explained in this memo under the General Fund Budget Summary section

The debt levy increased \$50,835 or 5.74%

- Increase is due to the issuance of the 2020A bonds for the 2020 street project and the subsequent tax levy needed to fund debt service payments

The capital levy increased \$330,000

- Capital levies are needed to fund equipment and improvements and details can be found in the City's Long Term Plan



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- The street replacement levy increased by \$300,000 or 100%. This is new item for 2022.
- The Draft Budget from AEM also shows what the levy increase does to the tax rate, tax capacity and how it would effect taxpayers as follows if the levy were to remain at its first draft amount.

Property Type	Market Value	Taxable Market Value	2021 Taxes Payable	2022 Taxes Payable	Increase (Decrease) in Property Taxes
Residential	\$ 100,000	\$ 71,800	\$ 311	\$ 324	\$ 13
Residential	200,000	180,800	783	815	32
Residential	300,000	289,800	1,255	1,306	51
Residential	400,000	398,800	1,727	1,797	70
Commercial	500,000	500,000	4,006	4,169	162

Note: change in market value has not been assumed

This is the driver in the levy this year and is the largest contributor to the increase. When the city council began working on a Long Term Plan for the city it was determined that the city needed to move away from bonding and creating debt for street projects. Moving forward it was identified to start paying cash for these projects. Utilizing the current Streets CIP that was updated this year the schedule is fluid, but tentatively follows:

City of Wyoming, Minnesota
Capital Improvement Plan - Street Replacement Fund 408
Schedule of Planned Capital Outlay 2020 to 2026

Department	City Accounting Code	Year to Replace	Item	Cost	2020 Actual Amounts	2021 Estimated Amounts
Public Works	Multiple	2020	2020 Street Project	\$ 3,750,000	\$ 3,750,000	\$ -
Public Works	Multiple	2021	2021 Street Projects	2,114,000	-	2,114,000
Public Works	Multiple	2022	East Viking Boulevard	1,756,000	-	-
Public Works	Multiple	2023	2023 Street Projects	2,983,000	-	-
Public Works	Multiple	2024	2024 Street Projects	2,025,800	-	-
Public Works	Multiple	2025	Mill and overlay	2,666,300	-	-
Public Works	Multiple	2025	2025 Street Projects	3,962,700	-	-
					<u>\$ 3,750,000</u>	<u>\$ 2,114,000</u>

In the approximate 7 years of the street replacement fund existence the city council has authorized and completed approximately 14.1 miles of projects in the city or about ¼ of the total amount of miles of streets in the city. At the current pace the city would have a cycle of approximately 28 years to complete all streets and this number should decrease over time given some changes. Some of the factors that will change this cycle over time is the construction of new roads, better methods for construction, better products and better maintenance



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those streets should and will last longer than others. The other piece is the council has been tasked with a difficult task of very little or no street construction had been completed prior to the creation of the street fund. We are in a state of catch up right now for the foreseeable future until we gain some ground on some of the worst streets in the city.

On the next page the council can see the Capital Fund Activity as projected in the Long Term Plan and the balances of the street funds to continue on the current pace of projects. With increased Levy amounts for the street fund in coming years to keep pace with the desired projects

Capital Project Fund Projected Activity				
2022 Estimated	2023 Estimated	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated	2026 Estimated
\$ 300,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000
93,221	92,110	85,426	82,088	81,381
290,337	290,337	290,337	290,337	290,337
12,284	54,926	38,187	-	-
364,378	371,665	379,098	386,680	394,414
2,500,000				
260,000	-	-	-	-
3,820,220	1,309,038	1,393,048	1,359,106	1,366,132
-	-	-	-	-
1,756,000	2,983,000	2,025,800	6,629,000	-
1,756,000	2,983,000	2,025,800	6,629,000	-
2,064,220	(1,673,962)	(632,752)	(5,269,894)	1,366,132
2,200,000	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	3,000,000	-
-	-	-	-	-
2,200,000	-	-	3,000,000	-
4,264,220	(1,673,962)	(632,752)	(2,269,894)	1,366,132
1,228,416	5,492,635	3,818,674	3,185,922	916,028
\$ 5,492,635	\$ 3,818,674	\$ 3,185,922	\$ 916,028	\$ 2,282,160



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The second piece of discussion is the long term plan assumes implementation of franchise fees in 2021. In 2021, 3 months of revenue are included. The fees are projected to provide approximately \$290,337 funding annually for street improvement projects. For comparative purposes, Franchise fees were compared to the property tax levy for impacts. If a property tax levy is used rather than Franchise fees, the impact to the median valued home is a 2022 property tax increase of \$73. The impact to a residential customer using franchise fees is \$72 on an annual basis.

A large part of the discussion this evening will be a continued discussion of direction from the council for future street projects, levy injections in the street fund and potential use of franchise fees. These are both necessary if the council wants to keep the current pace of projects moving forward. If the council determines that they are not comfortable with some of these items we will need to re-evaluate our current CIP fund and determine if the speed of projects and amount needs to be adjusted based on council feedback.

The good news is we continue to have growth and we see significant development this year and anticipate that as well next year in both residential and commercial, this development will help offset and significant changes in our tax rate.

**Another item to note to the city council is on August 2, 2021 the Wyoming EDA will hold a special meeting and public hearing for the potential sale of the Bingham property. If the sale proceeds it will payoff the city's mortgage in full on the property as well as some revenue. This could have an impact on the city's EDA budget in 2022 if this transaction is completed by the end of the budget cycle. Currently the EDA pays approximately \$34,000 in annual mortgage payment and taxes. The potential sale would also have the immediate construction of building that would be completed by spring of 2022 and then the potential of another building in the near future.



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Staff Report

Date: July 26th, 2021

Presented to: Mayor Iverson and City Council Members

Presented by: Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator

Department: Administration

Reference: Park and Trail Master Plan

Summary:

The City has requested a proposal from WSB for a Park and Trail Master Plan to identify needs within the City's Park and Trail system and to develop an overall strategic vision that can help to direct the investments of the City moving forward. The cost of the proposal is \$28,500.

Background Information:

The City Council identified park improvements and increased walkability both as priorities for 2021. We have a challenge in implementing significant progress on these items as we currently lack a comprehensive vision for what the city's park facilities and trail facilities should look like, how they should function, and ways in which we can leverage these resources to better serve the Wyoming community.

Currently, the City's park investment strategy is driven by the replacement needs of our current infrastructure. In 2020, the City Council updated the park maintenance budget to \$25,000 a year. This represents the average cost over a 22 year period that it would cost to replace the City's existing park infrastructure with the addition of cement curb which is needed for ADA with the replacement of this equipment. This calculation does not take into account any changes to the City's park facilities or addressing any gaps of service within the city's park system. Additionally, some parks are more expensive to replace the equipment in than others. Identifying what the city wants to do in our parks can help us to financially plan for those improvements.

In addition, the City Council and the Park Advisory Commission have highlighted an interest in identifying and addressing issues of accessibility with city parks and in expanding resources that would serve different demographics within the City whether than be seniors, kids, adults interested in maintaining an active lifestyle, people with special needs, etc. The City's park system and trail system are interconnected to meet these goals. Trails function best when they are connected to each other.

Staff reached out the WSB to develop a proposal that would include a needs analysis including site visits, review of planning materials, demographic analysis, trail gap analysis and needs prioritization. Then also to coordinate community engagement, planning recommendations, and a final proposal that would include a comprehensive picture of a park and trail system for the City.

There would be extensive value in this type of document for the City. It would streamline efforts both for planning and for engagement around all future park and trail developments and improvements. It would introduce a strategic vision



CITY OF WYOMING

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for the city's efforts around park and trail maintenance and/or expansion to reflect community needs. The total cost of the proposal is \$28,500.



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July 15, 2021

Ms. Kelly Dumais
Assistant City Administrator
City of Wyoming
26885 Forest Blvd
Wyoming, MN 55092

Re: 2021 Park System Plan

Dear Ms. Dumais:

I am pleased to submit this letter proposal on behalf of WSB & Associates, Inc. (WSB) to the City of Wyoming (City) to complete a park system master plan to include the existing 17 park sites as well as a high level trail system plan to address community connectivity for primary routes.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The following scope of services is meant to provide the City of Wyoming with the steps necessary to complete a high level park system master plan to guide future park and trail improvements in alignment with community needs.

A. Project Management & Kick-Off

- 1) WSB will provide project management and coordination efforts throughout the planning process.
\$1,700
- 2) WSB staff will attend a virtual meeting with city staff to review the work plan, schedule and overall expectations of the system planning effort. We will confirm key leaders and stakeholders that have insight into the park and open space system at a general or specific level. At this time, it will be important to discuss city known issues or deficiencies in the park system. Afterwards, we will provide meeting summary notes to those in attendance.
\$500
- 3) WSB will develop GIS maps of all existing park facilities based on available City and County data for planning purposes.
\$800

Task A: \$3,000

B. Needs Analysis

- 1) Park Inventory & Service Level Analysis: WSB staff will conduct site visits of each park in the system to determine the existing level of service. The level of service indicates general park function in relation to populations served based on factors such as overall age, condition, design, and accessibility. A map will be prepared to identify the results of the service level analysis.
\$1,500

- 2) Planning Analysis: WSB will collect all relevant planning materials and documents for review. These include the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, Park Dedication requirements, and any park concept or master plans. WSB will review and summarize the findings of these resources in a memo for distribution to the City.
\$700
- 3) Demographics Analysis: WSB will prepare a demographics analysis and will review the location of the parks in relation to the neighborhood service areas to determine any redundancies, or underserved populations based on existing park locations. Demographics maps and analysis maps of neighborhood service areas will be prepared utilizing existing ESRI data.
\$550
- 4) Trails Gap Analysis: WSB will conduct an analysis of the trails and walkways to identify regional routes, existing gaps, and overall connectivity in relation to major destinations within the community.
\$650
- 5) Needs Analysis & Graphics: A summary of the needs analysis will be developed based on the results of the system inventory and analysis to identify the greatest needs and desires that may affect prioritization. Summary information and graphic maps that illustrate the outcomes of the inventory and analysis will be prepared.
\$1,200

Task B: \$4,600

C. Community Engagement

- 1) Interactive Map: WSB will set up a project page utilizing Social Pinpoint, an online forum with an interactive map that can be used through various forms of social media and devices. This map provides a tool where users can drag and drops pins on a map to leave comments related to parks and trails, idea generation and design preferences. Community surveys can be linked to this platform to provide additional feedback to guide the planning process. Fee includes \$500 service fee for Social Pinpoint.
\$1,400
- 2) Stakeholder Meetings: WSB will collaborate with city staff to identify project stakeholders who may have more specific information and feedback related to the planning process. Meetings with specific project stakeholders can be held virtually or in person. We are including up to 8 hours per two staff members for stakeholder meetings.
\$1,200
- 3) Community Events: WSB is including attendance at two (2) community events or locations to conduct pop-up meetings in order to go where people are for quick and easy input through local events and activities. WSB will coordinate with the city to determine the events and locations for pop-up meetings.
\$1,500

- 4) Open House Mtg #1: WSB can facilitate a Public Open House meeting to gather input, ideas and concerns from those in attendance in order to help identify community needs, desires and concerns related to parks and trails.
\$1,300

Task C: \$5,400

D. Planning Recommendations and Approvals

- 1) Draft System Plan
 - i. The park system master plan will identify a community vision and parks mission statement along with a list of goals and priorities, in alignment with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.
 - ii. Park Recommendations: WSB will outline recommendations for each park meant to guide future park planning efforts, based upon the outcome of the needs analysis. This planning effort will include recommendations for future park search areas as well as potential modifications or clarifications related to park dedication requirements.
 - iii. Trail Recommendations: WSB will outline recommendations of primary trail routes or gaps to be filled in order to improve connectivity to primary destination areas.
 - iv. Estimation: WSB will prepare high level estimates based on recommendations of the plans for future budgeting purposes.
 - v. Priorities: WSB will prepare a preliminary list of priority projects based upon the needs assessment and in alignment with city goals and policies.
 - vi. The draft plan will summarize the planning process and will be formatted into an Appendix document to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan utilizing city branding.

\$10,000

- 2) Final Plan: Upon completion of review and feedback of the draft plan, WSB will refine and finalize the plan document for review and approval.
\$1,500
- 3) Open House Mtg #2: WSB can facilitate a public open house meeting to present the draft recommendations for further review and feedback from the community prior to finalization of the plan document.
\$1,300
- 4) City Meetings:
 - i. Staff Review Meetings: It is anticipated that up to four (4) virtual review meetings will be held with city staff to review schedule, recommendations and outcomes throughout the planning process.
 - ii. Parks Advisory Commission Meeting: WSB shall attend a Parks Advisory Commission Meeting to present the draft park system master plan and priorities for review and feedback.

- iii. Planning Commission Meeting: WSB shall attend a Planning Commission Meeting to present the draft park system master plan and priorities for review and approval to bring to the City Council.
- iv. City Council Meeting: WSB shall attend a City Council Meeting to present the final park system master plan for review and adoption to be included as an amendment to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

\$2,700

Task D: \$15,500

E. Additional Services

WSB will complete additional services, other than those listed in the Scope of Services above, as requested and authorized in writing by the City. These services shall be billed on an hourly basis according to the current Hourly Rate Schedule.

FEES FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

It is proposed that the following Tasks be billed on an hourly-not-to-exceed basis as follows:

Scope "A" (Kick-Off & Data Collection):	\$ 3,000
Scope "B" (Needs Analysis):	\$ 4,600
Scope "C" (Community Engagement)	\$ 5,400
Scope "D" (Final Plan & Approvals)	\$15,500
Total:	\$28,500

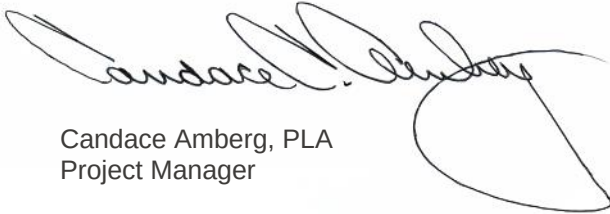
ACCEPTANCE

This letter represents our entire understanding of the project scope. If the City of Wyoming is in agreement, the necessary contract documents can be provided and signed. WSB will start work upon receipt of a signed contract.

Thank you for the opportunity to propose on this project. If you should have any questions regarding this proposal, please contact Candace at 763-231-4848.

Sincerely,

WSB



Candace Amberg, PLA
Project Manager



Jason L. Amberg, PLA
Director of Landscape Architecture



Staff Report

Date: July 26, 2021

Presented to: Mayor Iverson and City Council Members

Presented by: Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator

Department: Administration

Reference: Resilient Communities Project

Summary

In 2021, the Wyoming City Council identified several priorities that pertain to parks within the City including:

- the implementation of the Swenson ADA Grant
- the Veterans Memorial plan at Railroad Park
- further development of fireside park
- further utilizing sunrise trail to draw more people to the community
- improve snowshoe and cross country ski trails at Hawk meadows Park
- supporting Eagle Scout Projects
- Advertising the farmers market and
- more partnerships with youth groups.

The Park Advisory Commission has been in conversation about the potential of a partnership with the University of Minnesota Resilient Communities Project as a part of fulfilling these goals and to identify projects that would best serve Wyoming at this time. The Park Advisory Commission has identified two projects for the City Council to consider. The first is called "Aging in Parks: Active Living for All Ages in Wyoming Parks." The goal of this project would be to identify gaps in service for seniors in the Wyoming Park System and to recommend upgrades or resources that could be added to Wyoming Parks to improve their level of service to senior residents and residents of all ages with varying mobility or cognitive needs. The second project is called "Railroad Park Memorial Public Engagement." This project would lead the engagement efforts for the Railroad Park project, focusing specifically on the veterans memorial and the history walk.

Draft applications for the Resilient Communities Project are attached in the Packet. If accepted, the City of Wyoming would partner with graduate students at the University of Minnesota to complete the project. The cost to the City per project is \$6,000. If accepted, these costs would be added to the 2022 budget.

Background

The Resilient Communities Project is a partnership between local government organizations and the University of Minnesota which connects communities and community projects with students studying relevant coursework. Projects can address a wide range of local issues, opportunities and needs but specifically encourages projects that address racial inequities and disparities in Minnesota. A resilient communities project partnership could be a way to explore emerging opportunities or needs in the Wyoming community, generate new ideas and perspectives on a challenging problem or issue, bring community voices and knowledge to the conversation or launch new initiatives.



CITY OF WYOMING

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- Pioneer Park Master Plan: Best Practices for Community Engagement
- Building Community Resilience to Emergencies in Vulnerable Populations

The Resilient Communities Project can provide a variety of services for projects including analysis, planning, design to implementation and evaluation. Types of research and technical assistance available from RCP include, but are not limited to:

- Case study and best practices analysis
- Qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis
- Program evaluation
- Conceptual design development
- Asset mapping
- Culturally responsive programming and services
- Outreach and engagement
- Strategic planning
- Model ordinance development
- Community audits or inventories
- GIS mapping
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Branding and marketing campaigns
- Process and systems improvement

The University of Minnesota has extensive areas of study that can be tapped for work on a city's project:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Adult Education | • Nutrition | • Science (St. Kate's) |
| • Agronomy | • Food Systems | • Maternal & Child Health |
| • Anthropology | • Forest & Natural Resource Management | • Political Science |
| • Architecture | • Geographic Information Systems | • Psychology |
| • Bioproducts & Biosystems Engineering | • Geography, Environment, and Society | • Public Affairs |
| • Business Administration | • Gerontology | • Public Policy |
| • Civil, Environmental, & Geo-Engineering | • Graphic Design | • Public Health Administration & Policy |
| • Communication Studies | • Health, Physical Education & Recreation (UMD) | • Recreation and Outdoor Education |
| • Community Health Promotion | • Historic Preservation | • Recreation & Resource Management |
| • Design | • Horticulture | • Scandinavian Studies |
| • Economic Development | • Housing Studies | • Science, Technology, & Environmental Policy |
| • Education Policy | • Human Resources & Industrial Relations | • Social Work |
| • Elections Administration | • Industrial Engineering | • Spanish & Portuguese Studies |
| • Environmental Education | • Interior Design | • Sports Management |
| • Environmental Health | • Journalism & Mass Communication | • Strategic Communication and Marketing |
| • Environmental Science, Policy, & Management | • Land Use Planning | • Sustainability Studies |
| • Evaluation Studies | • Landscape Architecture | • Transportation Studies |
| • Family Social Science | • Law | • Urban Studies |
| • Film Studies | • Liberal Studies | • Youth Studies |
| • Fisheries, Wildlife, & Conservation Biology | • Library and Information | |
| • Food Science and | | |

Considerations

An important consideration for deciding which projects to move forward with is what the City Council wants to do

regarding the proposed park and trail master plan. The Park and Trail Master Plan proposal conversation began after the Park Advisory Commission had initially proposed the need to explore the aging in parks project. The current proposal from WSB includes engaging seniors and identifying the same needs that the proposed resilient communities project would address. Originally, our intent was that the park and trail master plan would be able to utilize the research and reporting from the Resilient Communities Project, however the timelines do not fit together as we original hoped, as the Resilient Communities Project would not happen until the Spring Semester in 2022 if the project(s) were accepted and WSB would be able to start work immediately. Alternatively, we could develop a proposal for the Resilient Communities Project that built off of the plan from WSB doing a deeper dive specifically into recommendations for seniors. However, doing a deep dive that soon after the initial review by WSB would likely result in some double work between WSB and the Resilient Communities Project.



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Resilient Communities Project

Application Guidelines for the 2021–2022 Academic Year

The Resilient Communities Project (RCP, rcp.umn.edu) facilitates partnerships between local government agencies in Minnesota and the University of Minnesota, on projects designed to advance community sustainability, equity, and resilience. Projects may address a broad range of local issues and needs, but RCP specifically encourages projects that address racial inequities and disparities in Minnesota.

Communities selected for an RCP partnership benefit from applied research and technical assistance, provided by graduate and professional students and faculty at the University from a variety of departments and disciplines. The scale of RCP partnerships is flexible, and can be sized to meet your agency's capacity and needs. Typically, partnerships range in size from 1 to 20 discrete projects, and in length from 6–18 months.

Eligibility: Cities, counties, tribal public entities, special districts (e.g., watershed, transit, park, school), and regional government agencies or collaboratives in Minnesota are eligible. The selection process is competitive.

Program Cost: RCP partners must support the partnership through both dedicated staff time and a local financial contribution. For the 2021–2022 academic year, the cost is \$5,000 per project for partnerships that include 5 or more projects, or \$6,000 per project for partnerships that include from 1 to 4 projects.

Deadline for Proposals: Proposals are accepted at any time, but are due by the following dates to ensure eligibility for assistance during the time periods indicated:

- January 15 for work to begin summer academic term (May to August)
- April 15 for work to begin fall academic term (September to December)
- August 15 for work to begin spring academic term (January to May)

Proposals must be submitted as a single PDF file to rcp@umn.edu.

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OVERVIEW OF RCP

The Resilient Communities Project (RCP) is a partnership between the University of Minnesota and local government agencies in Minnesota that engages students and faculty from across the university to work on *locally identified projects that advance community sustainability, equity, and resilience*. University faculty, graduate and professional students, and staff address the partner's research and technical assistance needs through course-based or independent student projects, providing easy and efficient access to research and expertise available anywhere within the University of Minnesota system.



Previous RCP partnerships have addressed projects on a host of local issues, including

- housing
- economic development
- public health and safety
- racial equity
- parks and recreation
- education
- public participation
- social services
- environmental stewardship
- transportation

RCP works closely with our partners to match projects with students and faculty from a **wide range of disciplines**. Assistance is available at **all project stages** (analysis, planning, design, implementation, and evaluation) and across **all departments in your agency** (administration, human resources, corrections, police and fire, planning, public health, public works, engineering, communications, parks and recreation, finance, environmental management, and more).

HOW AN RCP PARTNERSHIP WORKS

The partnership begins with a series of planning and orientation meetings to discuss your needs and goals for the partnership, negotiate a scope of work for each project, and learn how a partnership operates. Then University of Minnesota students, faculty, and staff will actively collaborate with you on the projects during fall, spring, and summer academic terms, depending on your project timeline and course availability. Project deliverables are typically available at the end of each academic term.

Partner Community Commitment

A key element of a successful RCP partnership is commitment and involvement from partner community staff. **For each project submitted**, partner communities will be expected to identify a **project lead**—an individual staff member who will be the primary point of contact for U of MN students, faculty, and staff working on that project. Project leads are responsible for

- attending an initial RCP orientation session;
- participating in project scoping meetings;
- preparing and providing background materials related to the project;
- pitching projects to students and faculty during class meeting times on the U of MN Minneapolis or St. Paul campuses;
- leading site visits in the community;
- attending regular project meetings;
- initiating and coordinating the participation of residents, community organizations, or other stakeholders in the project;

- participating in periodic reviews of student work throughout the semester; and
- coordinating and attending final project presentations on the U of MN campuses and/or in the community.

Project leads should anticipate spending an average of 3–5 hours per week on each project they are responsible for during each semester the project is active.

RCP and University Commitment

RCP staff with knowledge of the broad range of academic departments and resources at the University and with expertise in community resilience, project management, and communications will provide **ongoing support to ensure high-quality outcomes that meet your agency's needs**. This includes recruiting and coordinating university resources (students, faculty, staff, and courses), facilitating project scoping, identifying and coordinating delivery of data and background information for projects, maintaining a Basecamp project management system, coordinating communications and media outreach about the partnership, planning and staffing campus and community events, reimbursing project-related travel and material costs to support student and faculty participation in the program, promoting partnership activities through social and earned media, and troubleshooting projects as needed.

Outcomes from each University course, student team, or individual student that participates in a project will be documented in a **final presentation and report** (or other agreed-upon deliverable) at the conclusion of the project. All work products will be licensed through a Creative Commons agreement that allows your agency to reproduce, distribute, or adapt the work for non-commercial purposes.

Financial Cost of the Program

RCP receives some funding and in-kind support from the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), but we depend on a **local financial contribution** from our partners to support program staffing and operations. The cost is currently **\$5,000 per project** for partnerships that include **5 or more projects**, or **\$6,000 per project** for partnerships that include from **1 to 4 projects**.

Each project will be matched with up to two (2) U of MN courses, student teams, or independent student researchers. If additional matches or other types of assistance (e.g., an intern) are desired, this may incur additional costs, pending your agency's pre-approval.

Partners may choose to fund their local contribution through a collaboration with other groups, such as county and state agencies, watershed districts, private developers, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and chambers of commerce. Regardless of where funds are obtained, **the partner community is responsible for acting as the sole fiscal agent for the partnership, and for making payment to RCP for all projects that are successfully matched.**



HOW TO APPLY

Submitting Your Proposal

Proposals must be **submitted by email** as a single PDF file sent to rcp@umn.edu.

RCP staff are available to help with development of your proposal at any stage—from introducing the RCP program and model to staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders to helping brainstorm ideas for projects or preparing a proposal for submission. Please contact us at rcp@umn.edu for assistance or with questions.



Deadline for Proposals

Proposals are accepted at any time, but are due by the following dates to ensure eligibility for assistance during the time periods indicated:

- **January 15** for work to begin summer academic term (May to August)
- **April 15** for work to begin fall academic term (September to December)
- **August 15** for work to begin spring academic term (January to May)

Upon receipt, RCP staff will follow up within two weeks to discuss your proposal

Required Proposal Components

1. **Partner Information:** Provide (a) the name of your agency or community, (b) current population and number of households in the geographic area you service or represent, (c) annual budget, (d) the total number of staff your agency employs.
2. **Proposed Project(s):** Provide individual descriptions of from **one to twenty (1–20) projects**. Projects should address high-priority issues for your agency and the community it serves, and involve **research questions or technical assistance needs** appropriate for graduate-level student work. Projects should demonstrably advance community sustainability, equity, or resilience. For suggestions on how to choose projects, visit the “Selecting Projects for an RCP Partnership” page on our website at <https://rcp.umn.edu/content/selecting-projects>.

For each project, provide the following information:

- a. **Project title.** Should be descriptive of the project, but can also be creative.
- b. **Project lead.** Identify one staff person in your agency who will serve as the primary contact for the project, as well as their job title, department, e-mail address, and phone number. This individual must be able to commit an average of 3–5 hours per week to the project each academic semester that the project is active throughout the partnership.
- c. **A 1–2 paragraph description of the project.** What is the **context** for the project? Why is this project a **priority** at this time? What are your agency’s **ultimate goals or objectives** related to the project or the larger issues the project addresses? How will student work be **used by your agency or community** to further these goals/objectives?
- d. **3–5 specific issues, questions, ideas, or problems for consideration that you want students to address.** What are the key things that would help to advance local efforts on this project or on the issues this project touches?

- e. **Project impact.** How will this project serve to **advance sustainability, equity, and/or resilience** in your community? Who will benefit?
- f. **Community partners or stakeholders** (external to your agency) that will be invited to participate in the project. This might include but is not limited to other government agencies, nonprofit or community organizations, resident or neighborhood groups, or local businesses. Describe specifically how these individuals or organizations will be involved, what they will do, and how their participation will benefit the project. *NOTE: It is NOT necessary to include partners or stakeholders for every project proposed.*

Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to contact RCP during preparation of their proposal to discuss proposed projects and ensure they are within the capacity of RCP and appropriate for student work.

3. **Demonstration of Support:** Include letter(s) or formal resolution(s) supporting your agency's application to and participation in the Resilient Communities Project from **one or more** of the following: city/county manager or administrator, mayor, elected governing body (city council, county board, etc.), relevant department heads. If appropriate, you may also wish to include demonstrations of support from partner/stakeholder organizations or agencies, and/or external funding entities.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

RCP will evaluate your proposal based on the following criteria:

1. **Top-Level Support and Administrative Capacity:** Senior staff show a commitment to participate in the RCP program and to direct staff time and resources to the partnership.
2. **Clear Project Focus:** Projects are well formulated, issues or questions for investigation are defined, and there is a clear project goal.
3. **Project Relevance and Impact:** Clear description of how results will be used, what the impact will be, and how this builds upon or advances the partner's overall sustainability, equity, or resilience efforts.
4. **Community Engagement:** Where appropriate, projects include a commitment to meaningfully engage through the partnership those residents and other stakeholders directly affected by the issue, as a means of integrating local knowledge and concerns.
5. **External Partnerships:** Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with other local entities (e.g. neighboring cities, counties, watershed districts, transportation districts, school districts, business or professional organizations, private funders, research or educational institutions) to formulate projects, share partnership costs, and broaden support for any policies, programs, or other initiatives that result from working with the University.
6. **Likelihood of Match with University Courses:** Projects must be within the capability of University of Minnesota graduate/professional students, and should involve appropriate research or technical assistance needs, not menial tasks or low-level administrative work. *NOTE: While RCP works diligently to match projects, we cannot guarantee matches for all projects.*

Resilient Communities Program Application

City of Wyoming, Minnesota

I. Partner Information

The City of Wyoming, Minnesota is located in Southwest Chisago County. The City is comprised of 21.29 square miles. In 2008, the City of Wyoming annexed the Wyoming Township, forming the current city boundaries that are in place today. Today the population of Wyoming is estimated to be 8,237 residents. The City has 27 full time employees and serves approximately 2,921 households. The City of Wyoming provides police and fire services, building inspections, water and sewer utilities, construction and maintenance of street infrastructure, and park maintenance. The annual budget for the City of Wyoming in 2021 is \$4,451,308.

II. Proposed Project(s): Provide individual descriptions of from one to twenty (1–20) projects. Projects should address high-priority issues for your agency and the community it serves, and involve research questions or technical assistance needs appropriate for graduate-level student work. Projects should demonstrably advance community sustainability, equity, or resilience. For suggestions on how to choose projects, visit the “Selecting Projects for an RCP Partnership” page on our website at <https://rcp.umn.edu/content/selecting-projects>. For each project, provide the following information:

1a. Project title. Should be descriptive of the project, but can also be creative.

Draft Title: Aging in Parks: Active Living for All Ages in Wyoming Parks

1b. Project lead. Identify one staff person in your agency who will serve as the primary contact for the project, as well as their job title, department, e-mail address, and phone number. This individual must be able to commit an average of 3–5 hours per week to the project each academic semester that the project is active throughout the partnership.

Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator

Administration Department

kdumais@wyomingmn.org

651-440-1888

1c. A 1–2 paragraph description of the project. What is the context for the project? Why is this project a priority at this time? What are your agency’s ultimate goals or objectives related to the project or the larger issues the project addresses? How will student work be used by your agency or community to further these goals/objectives?

The Wyoming City Council is pursuing diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives that support the City in becoming both more accessible and more welcoming to all people. One of these ways is working to ensure that aging residents are able to

continue to live and thrive within the community. The City of Wyoming seeks a partnership with the Resilient Communities Program to support identifying recreational opportunities within the city's park system to best support seniors and people of all ages with varying mobility or accessibility needs. Opportunities to remain active and to access public park facilities is critical to supporting people wishing to age in place. Wyoming is home to multigenerational families and the City is committed to providing opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy city parks together. Currently Wyoming's public parks are generally geared towards children with most parks hosting playground equipment exclusively for children. While these are important features of our park system, they are not the only audience that the City wants to provide resources to within our parks.

Much of the equipment in Wyoming's Parks is due for replacement in the near future. The City has to consider how they would like to proceed with replacing this equipment. The Park Advisory Commission and the City Council are interested in identifying opportunities within the city's park system to encourage and support seniors in using and enjoying our park facilities.

Id.3–5 specific issues, questions, ideas, or problems for consideration that you want students to address. What are the key things that would help to advance local efforts on this project or on the issues this project touches?

- What types of park infrastructure would best support seniors in the Wyoming Community?
- Which parks are best located to expand resources targeted towards serving our senior residents?
- What are seniors residents in Wyoming looking for in public outdoors spaces?

Ie. Project impact. How will this project serve to advance sustainability, equity, and/or resilience in your community? Who will benefit?

By expanding the accessibility of parks to more seniors, this project will also make Wyoming's parks more accessible to all ages. Variations of mobility needs should not exclude people from enjoying the outdoors and the amenities within the city's parks. By investing in outdoor spaces that promote aging in place and the continued health and wellness of our senior community, this project hopes to support residents who wish to age in place.

If. Community partners or stakeholders (external to your agency) that will be invited to participate in the project. This might include but is not limited to other government agencies, nonprofit or community organizations, resident or neighborhood groups, or local businesses. Describe specifically how these individuals or organizations will be

involved, what they will do, and how their participation will benefit the project. **NOTE: It is NOT necessary to include partners or stakeholders for every project proposed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact RCP during preparation of their proposal to discuss proposed projects and ensure they are within the capacity of RCP and appropriate for student work.**

- Fairview Hospital
- Senior Living Communities within Wyoming
- Chisago County
- Chisago Age Well Coalition
- Wyoming Churches
- School District Community Education Program

2.a. Project title. Should be descriptive of the project, but can also be creative.

Draft Title: Railroad Park Memorial Public Engagement

2.b. Project lead. Identify one staff person in your agency who will serve as the primary contact for the project, as well as their job title, department, e-mail address, and phone number. This individual must be able to commit an average of 3–5 hours per week to the project each academic semester that the project is active throughout the partnership.

Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator
Administration Department
kdumais@wyomingmn.org
651-440-1888

2.c. A 1–2 paragraph description of the project. What is the context for the project? Why is this project a priority at this time? What are your agency's ultimate goals or objectives related to the project or the larger issues the project addresses? How will student work be used by your agency or community to further these goals/objectives?

The City of Wyoming is in the process of raising funds for the construction of Railroad Park in downtown Wyoming. This park will include three main components including a veterans memorial, a history walk, and a trailhead as the park sits along the Regional Sunrise Prairie Trail. The City wants to partner with the Resilient Communities Project to lead the engagement effort on the veterans memorial and the history walk within the park. These two features are meant to share the story of our community, celebrate service, and also serve as a gateway to the City. While the master plan for the park has general characteristics for the design of these structures, the specifics about the content and final design need to be developed.

The City wants to make sure that we are engaging different groups within our city in the process of defining the specifics of what these memorials will look like. We want the Resilient Communities Project to facilitate the engagement efforts for these components to ensure that we are respectful of the past and honor the many contributions that have helped to make the Wyoming community what it is today.

2.d. 3–5 specific issues, questions, ideas, or problems for consideration that you want students to address. What are the key things that would help to advance local efforts on this project or on the issues this project touches?

- What stories should be included on the City's History Walk
- How should the City design the Veteran's Memorial within the Park
- How do we incorporate different groups within the engagement efforts on each of these components.

2.e. Project impact. How will this project serve to advance sustainability, equity, and/or resilience in your community? Who will benefit?

We want to incorporate diverse voices in our engagement efforts for defining what these memorials should look like. We want to make sure that this site is a place that is accessible and welcoming for all residents in the community and does justice to the stories and sacrifices of the past that have helped to make the Wyoming community what it is today.

2.f. Community partners or stakeholders (external to your agency) that will be invited to participate in the project. This might include but is not limited to other government agencies, nonprofit or community organizations, resident or neighborhood groups, or local businesses. Describe specifically how these individuals or organizations will be involved, what they will do, and how their participation will benefit the project. NOTE: It is NOT necessary to include partners or stakeholders for every project proposed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact RCP during preparation of their proposal to discuss proposed projects and ensure they are within the capacity of RCP and appropriate for student work.

- Wyoming Historical Society
- Forest Lake VFW
- Forest Lake American Legion
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Chisago County Historical Society
- Wyoming Lion's Club

III. Demonstration of Support: Include letter(s) or formal resolution(s) supporting your agency's application to and participation in the Resilient Communities Project from one or more of the following: city/county manager or administrator, mayor, elected governing body (city council, county board, etc.), relevant department heads. If appropriate, you may also wish to include demonstrations of support from partner/stakeholder organizations or agencies, and/or

external funding entities.

*These will be added once the City Council approves the applications

Building Community Resilience to Emergencies in Vulnerable Populations



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The project on which this report is based was completed in collaboration with Ramsey County as part of the 2018–2019 Resilient Communities Project (RCP) partnership. RCP is a program at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) that connects University faculty and students with Minnesota communities to address strategic projects that advance local resilience and sustainability.

The contents of this report represent the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of RCP, CURA, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, or Ramsey County.



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Resilient Communities Project

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Building Community-University Partnerships for Resilience

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Building Community Resilience to Emergencies in Vulnerable Populations: A Human Centered Approach to Community Outreach and Engagement

Capstone Paper

In Partial Fulfillment of Degree Requirements
The Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs
The University of Minnesota

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10 May 2019

*Signature below of Paper Supervisor certifies successful completion of oral presentation **and** completion of final written version:*

Monday, April 29, 2019
Date of oral presentation

Dan Milz, Visiting Assistant Professor
Capstone Instructor

Friday, May 10, 2019
Approval date of final paper

Ramsey County Emergency Management and
Homeland Security
Client

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Abstract

Ramsey County Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (RCEMHS) has a knowledge gap in vital information about preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters in vulnerable communities. This study focused on three key vulnerable communities within Ramsey County: older adults (60 years or older), children under five, and the Karen population. Qualitative analysis of interviews was conducted with individuals, organizations, and government departments within Ramsey County. Due to the trans-boundary and trans-jurisdictional nature of natural and human-caused disasters, coordination within agencies and with nonprofit and private organizations is necessary. The study found that many vulnerable populations interact with public benefit programs, providing insight into disaster resilience. These touch-points can be trust and resilience-building exchanges. The communities have a lack of knowledge of RCEMHS and emergency management, and which may reinforce complacency towards emergency preparedness. To counter a lack of knowledge and engagement in emergency preparedness by communities, we recommend RCEMHS adopt a human centered approach in preparation and planning activities, where communities hold valuable expertise about their assets and vulnerabilities in regard to disasters. This study developed five recommendations for more effective outreach and engagement in emergency management. Each of the recommendations can use human centered design strategies and are aligned within a community resilience framework.

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Introduction

At the center of disasters are communities dealing with the aftermath and not all communities feel the impact of disasters equally. Disaster preparedness knowledge is an important factor in successful recovery efforts. As the most densely populated and one of the most diverse counties in Minnesota, it is important for Ramsey County to engage effectively with all its communities to ensure that every resident is well prepared for natural and man-made disasters. Given the density and diversity, however, not all communities are being reached effectively. These gaps exist in part because disaster preparedness research is lacking for many of the county's vulnerable communities. Too little is known of what assets and social vulnerabilities exist within certain demographic groups in Ramsey County to help them prepare for and respond to natural and man-made disasters

To encourage and support community resilience to disasters across the county, Ramsey County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (RCEMHS) needs to identify the social vulnerabilities and assets that exist within each community. Our primary recommendation for RCEMHS is to use a human centered approach to identify vulnerabilities and assets. This approach will keep the needs of vulnerable communities, of whom are most impacted by disasters, at the center of its outreach. How communities prepare for and respond to disasters vary depending on which social vulnerabilities are present in the community. Vulnerabilities such as socioeconomic status of its members, housing, access to transportation and language; and assets including social networks all affect a community's disaster preparedness and response.

The mission of RCEMHS is to foster resilience in Ramsey County through the development of a community-wide culture of preparedness and the coordination of public safety efforts to prevent, plan for, respond to, mitigate and recover from all hazards, disasters and emergencies – whether natural or human-caused, accidental or intentional (Emergency Management & Homeland Security, 2019). RCEMHS is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan (RCEOP). The RCEOP provides the framework by which Ramsey County and its communities manage major emergencies that threaten health, safety, property and resource (Emergency Management & Homeland Security, 2019). Within the RCEOP, Ramsey County identifies not only the importance of responding to communities' needs when a disaster occurs but also recognizes there are critical actions that need to take place for communities to build resilience prior to disasters.

Specific to Ramsey County, the core elements of this project will: (1) identify key social vulnerability indicators to inform the development of a social vulnerability index (2) determine assets and vulnerabilities for three demographic groups: older adults 60+, children under 5 years old, and the Karen community; (3) provide recommendations on community partnerships and models of how to engage with vulnerable communities to better improve emergency plan outreach and (4) provide recommendations for how to approach collaboration and management of County departments when engaging with vulnerable communities in regards to disaster preparedness and response.

Research Questions

Based on the four core elements of the project, the following research questions were developed:

1. *What assets and social vulnerabilities could inform Ramsey County emergency response to natural and man-made disasters?*
2. *What factors influence how communities build resilience and respond to natural and man-made disasters?*
3. *How have local governments effectively cross collaborated to build resilient communities and serve communities in times of disaster and recovery?*
4. *What outreach strategies are effective in reaching vulnerable communities?*

Background

Ramsey County's emergency and disaster management is laid out in the Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan. The plan explains the common doctrine and structures used to coordinate activity across the various levels of government and provides information on how the county will manage emergencies that threaten county functions and services as well as efforts undertaken by each of the municipalities (*Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan*, 2017). Disaster management refers to the relationship hazards and vulnerabilities have on the risk of a disaster, where risk increased with the magnitude of the hazard, amount of vulnerability, and resource scarcity (Flanagan et al, 2011). Generally, and for the scope of this project, a disaster is a natural or anthropogenic disaster. Disaster response, emergency management, and preparation have historically focused on the vulnerability of physical assets, like infrastructure (Flanagan et al, 2011). Using a community resilience framework emergency management moves from focusing exclusively on physical vulnerability to recognizing physical and social assets within communities. Using a community resilience framework helps emergency management to understand the social vulnerabilities, resiliency, and assets in a community, which enables precise resource allocation and outreach in preparation for, or response to, a disaster (Flanagan et al, 2011).

A social vulnerability refers to a community's resilience in response to external stress ("CDC's Social Vulnerability Index," 2018). A more intimate understanding of community vulnerabilities and assets provides an opportunity for building resiliency in such communities (Flanagan et al, 2011). This applied study of vulnerability provides insight into influences of vulnerability and resiliency in communities over time (Rygel, O'sullivan, & Yarnal, 2006).

The definition of community can vary greatly, referring to geographic location, membership, or a cultural group. For this project, community is defined as belonging to a specific group as defined by age or ethnicity. A vulnerable community will typically have fewer resources for preparation and mitigation (Rygel, O'Sullivan, & Yarnal, 2006), be more reliant on outside resources, less likely to receive outside resources during response, slower to recover, and more likely to have members of the community die (Flanagan et al, 2011).

The overall goal of RCEMHS emergency planning is to increase the resilience of

communities (*Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan*, 2017). The concept of resilience has evolved in psychology and behavioral health as a means to understand what adaptive capacities allows some individuals to continue functioning effectively and display positive outcomes in the face of adversity (Plough et al, 2013). A supportive social context in a community prior to a disaster has emerged as a key component for resilience to move from being defined at the individual level to a community definition of resilience (Plough et al, 2013). Community resilience creates a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, meaning a collection of resilient individuals does not guarantee a resilient community (Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008).

Cutter et al (2013) defines community resilience as the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events. Resilience is a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance (Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008). Resilience includes inherent conditions that allow the system to absorb impacts, cope with an event as well as post-event and adaptive processes that facilitate the ability of the system to re-organize, change and learn in response (Cutter et al, 2013). According to Manyena (2006) “viewing disaster resilience as a process (leading to desired outcomes) ... places emphasis on the human role in disasters. Disaster resilience is seen as a quality, characteristic or result that is generated or developed by the processes that foster or promote it.” Resilience is a process linking resources to an outcome.

While there is a general consensus on the definition of community resilience, there is less of an understanding on how to build resilient communities. In research conducted by Nuwayhid et al, collective identity, previous experience with adverse events, and social support networks contribute to building resilience. Community cohesiveness, social solidarity, and connected political leadership help to sustain resilience after an event (Plough et al, 2013). Building resilience has a participatory component based on who/where resilience is being built (Cutter et al, 2013). Responsibility for building and influencing community resilience is shared by individuals, families, government agencies, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and all levels of government (Cutter et al, 2013). RCEMHS accounts for community resilience as a mitigation activity (*Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan*, 2017).

Inherent in resilient communities are principles of equity and social justice. The impact of a disaster on a community is determined by everyday patterns of social interaction and organization particularly by stratification paradigms which determine access to resources (Morrow, 1999). Communities with strong social and economic infrastructures have health insurance, stable housing, and other assets that make them better able to be resilient socially and economically than marginalized communities (Plough et al, 2013). The effect of a disaster on a household or community, therefore, results from a complex set of interacting conditions related to geography and location and social and economic characteristics of the people living there (Morrow, 1999).

Problem Description

RCEMHS seeks to understand social vulnerabilities and assets within the county to better prepare for, respond to, and build resilience against natural or human-caused disasters” (“RC 1 Building Community Resilience to Emergencies n Vulnerable Populations,” 2019). Pre-existing patterns of communities are increasingly recognized as the root of disaster vulnerability (Morrow, 1999). The impact of a disaster on a community is not random but determined by

everyday patterns of social interaction and organization related to socioeconomic status and access to resources (Morrow, 1999). Effective disaster response at the local level must include a comprehensive understanding of the patterns and social interactions within particular communities (Morrow, 1999).

Risk to disasters can be identified and aggregated into indicators. Such indicators include:

- (A) Limited economic and material resources. Households living in poverty have fewer financial resources to plan for a disaster and recover more slowly after a disaster takes place. Economic status is also often connected to poorly built housing or inadequately maintained housing. People living in poverty also may have less access to transportation to evacuate prior or to assist in connecting to relief efforts post disaster (Morrow, 1999).
- (B) Human or personal resources including physical ability, relevant experience, education and skills (Morrow, 1999). For example, the vulnerability of people of the age of 65 varies greatly based on their age and health status and on the other end of the spectrum, children have increased vulnerability based on age and their physical and emotional development.
- (C) Family and social resources including the extent to which households are embedded in larger social networks. Recent immigrant communities may be more vulnerable because they lack connections to the larger community and may hesitate to ask for government help (Morrow, 1999).
- (D) Membership in racial or ethnic communities results in social and economic marginality influencing the impact of a disaster and one's ability to recover. Minority groups are often not included in disaster planning and there are cultural differences with how people assess and respond to hazard risk (Morrow, 1999).

Overlap among indicators can also create a compounding effect, which places communities and at an even greater risk of vulnerability to a disaster. Understanding the composition of the county along with vulnerabilities and assets is critical to communicating with and serving communities to prevent residents from being disproportionately affected by a disaster in mitigation, response or recovery.

It is also important to place this project and community resilience in the context of Ramsey County's 2018 Strategic Plan. Priorities including inclusive, effective and meaningful community engagement, advancing racial and health equity in all decision-making, effective and efficient services that put residents first, enhanced data sharing and integration, access to service delivery and facilities, and comprehensive economic development to build prosperity (Ramsey County Strategic Plan, 2018) have the capacity to build community resilience in the county. It is beneficial for emergency management to reflect where their work with building resilience intersects with the priorities in the strategic plan, as work across departments could be leveraged for emergency management.

The question of how to build resilience in vulnerable populations is coming at a critical juncture for Ramsey County. Indicators correlated to disaster vulnerability are present within communities in Ramsey County and disaster magnitude and frequency will likely be exacerbated by climate change. The aging population is growing, there is an increasingly diverse population, and there are deep racial and economic disparities. Older adults, children under 5 years old, and the Karen community were included in this study based on the priorities of RCEMHS with consensus by the capstone team. These three communities exhibit the indicators outlined above to varying degrees. Different disciplines define and measure vulnerability differently (Alwang,

Siegel, & Jorgensen, 2001), meaning any given vulnerability indicator may not be appropriate for the communities in Ramsey County (Rygel, O'sullivan, & Yarnal, 2006). To address this variability, the Resilient Communities Project will: identify indicators of vulnerability and resiliency specific to the communities of Ramsey County; use these indicators to develop outreach methods appropriate for Ramsey County; and use the project data to inform recommendations related to outreach. Focusing on three communities, which represent both common and perhaps vulnerabilities specific to them, will serve as a starting point for Emergency Management to better understand and develop models and recommendations which can be applied to other vulnerable communities.

Methodology

Three main research activities were conducted for this project, including a literature review, interviews, and qualitative analysis. First, a literature review of emergency management, resilience, and effective outreach models was conducted. Second, interviews with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders were carried out. Third, using the literature review as a framework, the interviews were analyzed to find main themes within and across the three communities of focus: older adults 60+, children under 5 years old, and the Karen community.

Literature Review

The cross-jurisdictional nature of emergency management and disasters prompted a literature review on framework surrounding inter- and intra-agency collaboration and community engagement. This research provided a baseline knowledge of decision-making structures, network structures, case studies on the successful facilitation of collaborations with other public, private, and nonprofit organizations, and involvement of the community in decision-making processes. Peer-reviewed articles, case studies from other counties, and secondary literature from government agencies and nonprofits were used to inform the literature review and frame qualitative analysis. The RCEMHS team provided several academic articles on disaster preparedness and resilience that informed the research. For the peer-reviewed articles, we conducted an e-search of academic journals pertaining to resilience, vulnerability, disaster preparedness, emergency management, outreach, and government partnerships within the three demographic groups the project is focused.

Interviews

There is a significant amount of information available on this topic at the international, national, state, and regional level. The concern, however, is the lack of information available that could be directly applicable to local municipalities within Ramsey County. We used a case study approach in an effort to provide a narrative applicable to the experiences of communities in the county. Because the project's research questions were focused on qualitative data, interviews were conducted to find similar themes across the three groups.

Data Collection

In total, 46 agencies, organizations, and individuals were contacted, and 21 interviews were conducted. Interview questions were written to answer the four research questions. Three sets of interview questions were developed for individuals, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies. A matrix was then created to determine if the interview questions would inform the research questions. The client also reviewed the questions to ensure objectives were being met. See Appendix A for interview protocol and questions.

An initial database of organizations in Ramsey County was developed and RCEMHS provided connections with several organizations through email. Emails were sent out based on research of relevant organizations and agencies. RCEMHS did not have contacts with organizations that served the Karen community, but an initial Google search yielded leads that were used as launching points. Internet searches were also an initial starting point for families with children under 5. The goal from these comprehensive searches was to get a mixture of government and nonprofit organizations that served the project's targeted demographic groups.

Snowball sampling method was utilized to expand the research network by asking each initial interviewee if there was anyone else they recommended for an interview. This method allowed for the ease of procuring additional interviews and expanding the network of the research. For the Karen community, it helped to have a Karen "guide" to refer and connect to other potential interviewees. Additional methods of connecting with community organizations included researching websites and utilizing the available contact information or making a direct-reach through LinkedIn.

Analysis

NVivo, a qualitative analysis software was used to code each interview and determine the main themes from each group and overlapping themes across groups. We used a list of predetermined general codes to organize the interviews and created sub-codes during the analysis process. General codes included assets, barriers, emergency planning, engagement, government, outreach, partnerships, resilience, technology, volunteers, and vulnerability.

Limitations

The restricted timeline available to complete research was a limitation for the project. Given the limited time-period, the interview pool was only a subset of nonprofit organizations and government agencies that serve each demographic group. Researching appropriate organizations, contacting and scheduling an interview took anywhere from several days to two weeks. Because of the limited time, we engaged in snowball sampling by asking each interviewee to provide recommendations for future interviews. This reduced time looking for interviewees but biased the sample. Due to these limitations, the interview group is not a representative sample of each demographic population.

Another limitation to the research is the overall complexity of emergency management. With the large amount of research on the topic, it was a challenge to get a completely comprehensive and in-depth understanding in the limited time. There was also hesitancy from interviewees due to the "obscure" nature of the topic. Many contacts were reluctant to be interviewed due to feeling unqualified to speak on emergency management.

Emergency Management Models of Collaboration

Inter-Agency and Intra-Agency Partnerships

Disasters require varying degrees of response, depending on the scale and magnitude of the impact. Coordinated response efforts under times of stress, and preparatory resilience building takes place in communities where formal and informal networks are a part of daily decision-making. Response from multiple actors, either within the same agency, other government agencies, or nonprofits should be leveraged in such a manner that address community needs during vulnerable times. Structural organization, decision-making strategies, and network mapping provide insight into inter and intra-agency collaboration as it applies to disaster and emergency management.

In disasters, risk is shared between agencies and organizations because of perceived shared threat, which results in a shared response to the stressful event (Kapucu, 2006). Disasters of such scale, or transboundary disasters, engage stakeholders and resources from across jurisdictions and exceed the capacity of a single organization to respond (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017; Steigenberger, 2016). Disasters are characterized by complexity, dynamic conditions, unpredictability, and distributed information across jurisdictions (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). This gives rationale for inter and intra-organizational response planning, in addition to developing social capital and networks that serve as assets and resilience-building factors. Despite the networked nature of disaster response, Incident Command System (ICS) coordinates response in disasters, which is a command and control tool discussed further in later sections (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017).

The complexity of disasters and their impact on communities necessitates response from a diversity of organizations and collaboration between them (Kapucu, 2006). Partnerships between organizations can be defined as two or more organizations contributing resources to a shared initiative or common goal (Kapucu, 2006). Successful partnerships often necessitate complementary resources (Kapucu, 2006). Large-scale disasters that cross jurisdictions require flexibility, distributed communication, ability to coordinate bilaterally, and acting as a collective unit (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017).

RCEMHS has identified the importance of partnerships and collaborative response through their guiding principles: engaged partnerships, tiered response, scalable, flexible, and adaptational capabilities, unity of effort through unified command, and readiness to act (*Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan*, 2017). The Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan further articulates the role of partnerships in community resilience in their response strategy: “Resilient communities begin with prepared individuals and depend on the leadership and engagement of local government, county government, NGO’s, and the private sector” (*Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan*, 2017).

Intra-agency Partnerships

Relationship building among different agencies and departments within an entity or organization is a pre-disaster act that strengthens the efficacy of a response following a disaster, due to improved operational success (Kapucu, 2008). Pre-disaster communication between

agencies and organizations has been proven to drive effective mitigation, preparation, and response (Kapucu, 2008). Emergency management workers are routinely filtering whether information seems crucial or distracting, which is subjective and complicated (Bharosa, Lee, & Janssen, 2010); however, coordination across departments enhances disaster response in a number of ways. A responding agency may better allocate resources with stronger internal relationships, as departments will be aware of efforts beyond their field (Janssen, Lee, Bharosa, & Cresswell, 2010).

Graphical depictions establishing a general structure of a network can help others understand the network within an agency, or across agencies (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). This analysis exposes excluded networks, gaps, or redundancy in the network of study. In addition, the exercise is able to expose the central actor in a response and who “key brokers” are. Key brokers connect to and disseminate information to actors not embedded in the network of the responding agency (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). The benefits of stronger internal relationships and understandings translate to organizations outside of the responding organization, in public-private and other partnerships discussed later in this paper.

Coordination issues and challenges that hinder interagency collaboration and response to a disaster can result from a lack of leadership, stemming from factors like burnout or lack of experience (Steigenberger, 2016). Intentional staffing and training as a means of planning for a disaster can prevent ambiguity in roles and structures in a high-stress environment (Steigenberger, 2016). Coordination and response in an urban environment may benefit from a more centralized command structure with specialized outreach or key brokers, as discussed in the core-periphery model in the section below (Steigenberger, 2016). While having a complete plan for all disaster is difficult, having strengthened core functions of coordination, like communication, information sharing, and cultural competency, eliminate the likelihood of high-frequency errors in the response process (Steigenberger, 2016). Such training for disasters provides various utility. These exercises network interagency individuals and departments and encourages learning across the organization (Steigenberger, 2016).

Standardization of information sharing addresses issues within the agency. Individuals and departments may intake and prioritize information differently, for example: immediate task versus information processing (Bharosa, Lee, & Janssen, 2010). These differences in communication prevent information sharing due to differences in priority and understanding. To encourage information sharing and communication across departments, and ultimately agencies, “emotional rewards and acknowledgement of their credit” are methods to increase systems thinking and ultimately information sharing (Bharosa, Lee, & Janssen, 2010). These and the following insights on inter and intra-agency collaborations serve to inform effective partnerships, outreach, and resilience-building in the community, as identified in the research questions.

ICS and Core-Periphery

Incident command system (ICS) is the standard response procedure to disasters which has explicit chain-of-command, hierarchical structure, see Figure 1 (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). Ramsey County Emergency Management’s guiding principles include “unity of effort through unified command,” which is the decision-making basis for the entire disaster cycle (Ramsey County Emergency Operations Plan, 2017). Literature has supported and criticized this setup, with apparent tradeoffs structure has been shown to be too rigid amid disasters, particularly when coordination across jurisdictions and networks are necessary (Nowell,

Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). In addition, specific perspectives may be unintentionally excluded through a single actor leading a response (Kapucu, 2008). However, this system integrates and streamlines “facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications” and is considered critical to emergency response (“Incident Command System Resources FEMA.gov,” 2018).

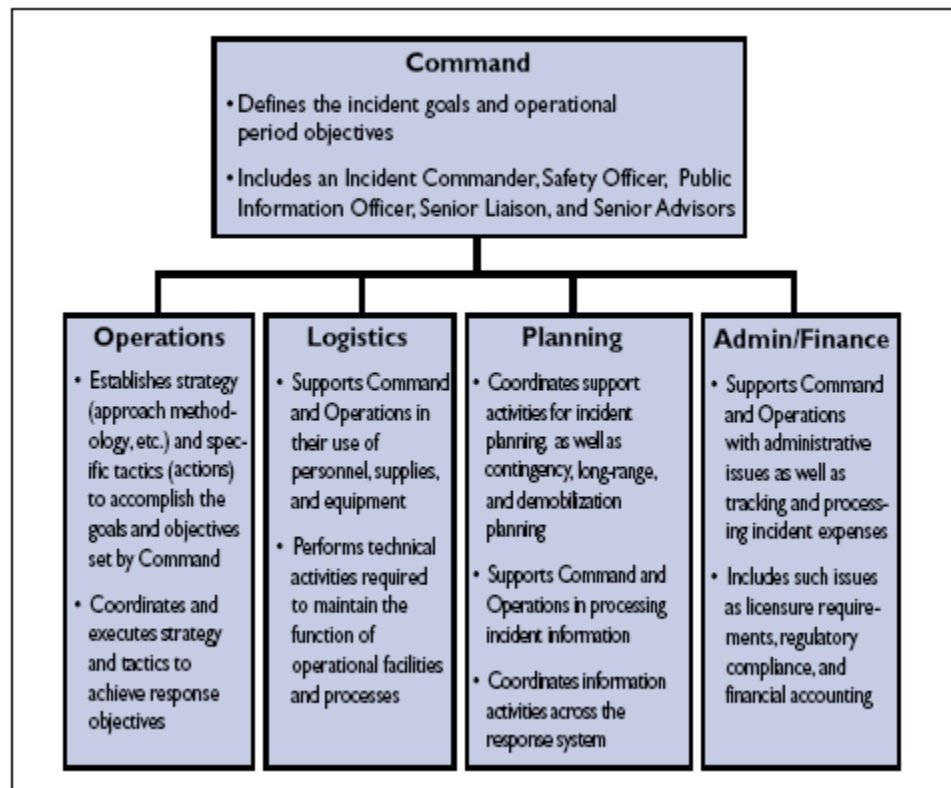


Figure : ICS Structure

A modified but appropriate network model for emergency management has been described as a “core-periphery” where several central stakeholders that are strongly networked act as brokers (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). The periphery, connected to the core by the brokers, act functionally to the response. This structure has been more flexible to the changing dynamic of disasters while maintaining information flows and resiliency (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). The core-periphery structure accomplished conflicting needs in a disaster: centralized coordination and networking of outside organizations (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). Figure 2 compares the different network structures (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017).

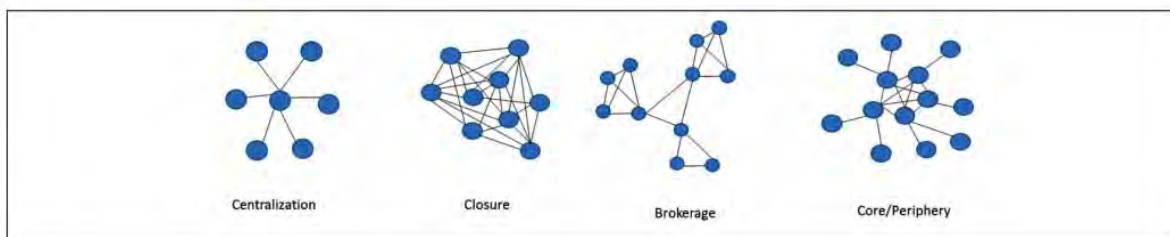


Figure 2: Network structures, including ICS (centralization) and Core/periphery

The makeup of the core, periphery, and brokers are determinative of coordination amid a disaster. The periphery efficacy is based on a network of functional, operational groups outside of the core (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). A successful broker likely looks like an individual with an operational role and are embedded in the local network, like a sheriff. The capacity of a broker determines information flow (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017). Additionally, characteristics of the individuals impact functionality. Local networks are informative when outside management responds to a disaster while heterogeneity and size of core members need to increase as the disaster scale increases (Nowell, Steelman, Velez, & Yang, 2017).

Public-Nonprofit Partnerships (PNPs)

PNPs have a place in addressing societal problems through their ability to connect various networks, organizations, and resources (Kapucu, 2006). Many such partnerships rely on self-selection and are voluntary in nature, making resources and success dependent on the participants (Kapucu, 2006). PNPs have been shown to engage community members in decisions that concern their ways of life while contributing to priority setting (Kapucu, 2006). Such partnerships distribute decision-making horizontally, which has been shown to develop social capital and inclusivity, which is a strategic goal of Ramsey County (Kapucu, 2006). Social capital, in particular, trust and tight networks, build resilience in communities and enable them to better respond to disasters (Kapucu, 2006).

Mistrust in government institutions has historical factors, including scandals and failures to constituents (Youngblood & Youngblood, 2018). Specific to government involvement in emergency management, failures resulting before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina have eroded constituent response to government (Youngblood & Youngblood, 2018). Building of trust through PNPs enables more effective communication and strategy implementation in a disaster, but this work is most effective when done prior to a disaster or stressful situation (Kapucu, 2006). While these partnerships and relationships build trust and communication, independent information systems between organizations and agencies can isolate opportunities for communication (Janssen, Lee, Bharosa, & Cresswell, 2010).

Enterprise architecture (EA) aggregates information systems and communication into a streamlined platform that can be understood across organizations, though this requires a level of broadness and preparatory planning (Janssen, Lee, Bharosa, & Cresswell, 2010). Multiple systems have been created and utilized during trainings and demonstrations to share information across agencies. This technology can share information such as location, email, navigation, photos, assignments and roles, and more (Bharosa, Lee, & Janssen, 2010). While technology can

mitigate technological barriers in information sharing across organizations, value-judgments in communicating information result in critical gaps. Preventing centralized information flows may mitigate this, which promotes structures like the core-periphery discussed previously (Bharosa, Lee, & Janssen, 2010).

Nonprofit organizations often serve their communities and as such are embedded in the informal networks that exist among residents. These networks and relationships serve an important purpose in emergency preparedness and disaster response. Social capital and networks facilitate individual and organization response in disasters in several ways: by increasing interaction, communication, trust, reciprocity, dissemination of information, and resource access (Kapucu, 2006).

Following the disaster that unfolded in New York City on 9/11, the New York Mayor's Voluntary Action (MVAC) served as a coordinator to the responding nonprofit organizations (Kapucu, 2006). Key response coordination activities included information aggregation about responding organizations, leader identification, information session hosting, and volunteer referring (Kapucu, 2006). Another example of response from 9/11 came in the founding of "11 September fund" used network power to meet the needs of the community. The fund assessed needs through listening to nonprofit organizations.

Social capital built through PNPs enables community engagement in decisions that concern them and may increase participation in programs or make programs more fit to the community (Kapucu, 2006), this being a horizontal decision-making strategy. These activities build capacity and resilience within the community resulting in more effective decision making, program and project implementation, and community commitment.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

Private organizations and businesses have been an integral part of disaster response, where they have provided resources, volunteers, capital, and more. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships themselves, indicating this trend will continue to improve the efficiency and efficacy of responses to disasters (Busch & Givens, 2013). PPPs are an effective way of allocating resources to those in disasters and positively impact the economy through business following a disaster (Busch & Givens, 2013).

These partnerships impact disaster management on all organizational levels of Integrated Planning Security (IPS) (Busch & Givens, 2013). As a result, this means activities can be performed or delegated outside of the government, especially when such tasks are negotiated prior to the event of a disaster (Busch & Givens, 2013). This strategy reduces decisions being made during an actual disaster (Busch & Givens, 2013).

There often is a lack of incentive to share information and communicate outside of an organization, even though stronger inter-organizational networks are better equipped to mitigate, prepare for and respond to disasters. Private organizations hesitate to share proprietary or sensitive information, and public agencies often underestimate the engagement of private businesses (*Public-Private Partnerships for Emergency Preparedness: Developing Partnerships*, 2014). A focus on social and cultural norms within an agency are an effective route in mitigating this. Encouraging norms and values of information sharing increases dissemination and reach of communications (Bharosa, Lee, & Janssen, 2010).

Best practices in developing public-private partnerships follow the preparatory and mitigation flows of the disaster cycle. Similar to other partnerships, identification of purpose, objectives, and appropriate partners represent appropriate first steps in this process (*Public-Private Partnerships for Emergency Preparedness: Developing Partnerships*, 2014). Engagement of the organization, third-party involvement, and continued joint activities are critical in maintaining the network and relationship. FEMA has developed a framework and foundational core attributes around public-private partnerships in recognition of the importance of this form of networking (FEMA, 2013). Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) have been structured as public-private partnerships in major urban areas like Dallas, TX (*Emergency Management Partnership Examples*, n.d.).

Fairfax County, Virginia, has utilized public-private partnerships in order to “prepare for, effectively respond to and quickly recover from emergency events” (“Fairfax County | Emergency Management,” n.d.). This county has an Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP3) with the purpose of encouraging innovation and civic involvement and responsibility (“Public Private Partnerships | Fairfax County,” n.d.)

Interview Analysis

Qualitative analysis of interviews indicated intra and inter-agency collaborations with RCEMHS support specific initiatives, like training. The county interacts with organizations and individuals very frequently, and these touchpoints have been identified as collaborative or engagement opportunities. A strong intra-agency relationship highlighted was Ramsey County Public Health/RCEMHS. A factor that strengthened this collaboration was a grant guiding the response to events that have a human impact. Internal to Ramsey County, partnerships have typically been initiated or managed through executive leadership teams, with a number of partnerships existing within a leadership team, like Health and Wellness. Other departments within Ramsey County have relationships and information on the communities that can inform what assets and social vulnerabilities RCEMHS is working with. Trusting other departments was discussed as a critical point, especially when time and resources are limited. Organizations outside of Ramsey County indicated their most frequent interaction and partnership with RCEMHS were in the form of drills, training, and exercises that are intended to be preparatory.

Identified barriers to stronger internal partnerships include time restraints, resources, relationships, language, information sharing, and organizational structure. Referring resources and working on multidisciplinary projects requires that departments are aware of each other’s initiatives and resources. When a relationship exists across departments, staff indicated that collaborations are more thoughtful and frequent. Information sharing may be limited by legal forces, like the Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and ensuring that information being shared does not need to go through a vetting process.

Summary

Strong partnerships build community resilience, strengthen coordination related to emergency management, and connect resources to those who need them in the community. Nonprofit and private organizations are networked into the communities they serve and work with, making them a valuable broker of resources and information to RCEMHS. These activities

increase interaction between the community and the government, in turn building social capital which is a key determinant of community resilience and how communities fare during disasters and emergencies. Interviews indicated that Ramsey County departments have a host of touchpoints with organizations and individuals in the community, which should be leveraged as partnerships. Interviewees mentioned collaboration on events and activities as a method of increasing RCEMHS awareness and reach, by intentionally co-hosting or sponsoring an event. Ramsey County staff discussed a monitoring process of existing organizations serving Ramsey County residents, which would serve as a database for potential partnerships while revealing existing gaps and redundancy. Such network mapping can be done in a visual way to reveal key community leaders, who should, in turn, be central to emergency management. Partnerships provide an opportunity to build relationships as a pre-disaster activity, delegate efforts throughout the disaster cycle, and reduce the frequency of errors and decisions that happen during an emergency.

Community-Based Engagement

Ramsey County's first priority in the 2018 Strategic Plan was "Inclusive, Effective and Meaningful Community Engagement" (Ramsey County Strategic Plan 2018, 2018). In a top-down, command and control approach to disaster management, the authority makes decisions based on their perception of the needs. In this model, communities are viewed as victims or receivers of aid (Pandey & Okazaki, 2012). As an alternative, community engagement can be a strategy for disaster prevention and mitigation activities, though it affects all stages of disaster cycle. Community engagement is a process that includes multiple techniques to promote the participation of residents in community life. Particularly those who are excluded or isolated by engaging them in collective action to create a healthy community (Nexus Community Partners, 2018). Using a community engagement model, communities are supported in analyzing their own hazardous conditions, vulnerabilities, and capacities as they see themselves (Pandey & Okazaki, 2012). During a disaster, people at the community level have more to lose because they are directly affected by the disaster and on the flipside, have the most to gain if they can reduce the impact of disasters in their community (Pandey & Okazaki, 2012).

Research has supported the notion that community engagement and coordination during non-disaster times improve the outcomes a community can expect to have in the event of a disaster (Kapucu, 2008). Community engagement in non-emergency times reinforces relationships between the community and government, which improves relationships, coordination, and empowers community members and organizations (Kapucu, 2008). During a disaster, community organizations and community members need to receive and relay information and resources. Engagement facilitates buy-in for planning activities, like response to warnings and evacuation plans (Kapucu, 2008).

A genuine concern and vulnerability in disaster planning is public complacency towards preparedness (Kapucu, 2008). Following spans of inactivity in terms of a disaster, communities have a tendency to minimize the risks and hazards presented (Kapucu, 2008). Lack of engagement in preparation and mitigation processes can result in increased devastation, disrupted communication channels, and underestimation of threats (Kapucu, 2008). However, the need for actively engaged community members and participation has direct and relevant consequences to the outcomes of the disaster and the efficacy of the responding agencies. When communities are prepared, engaged with or in relationship with the responding organizations, and facilitating

communication channels, resources are allocated to those who most need them, which reduces overall demands of responders and resource suppliers (Kapucu, 2008). Pre-disaster activities that inform constituents of hazards and action items have been implemented by emergency response personnel in the form of meetings, exercises, practice responses, and communications (Kapucu, 2008). Engagement with the community founded in school-systems has been identified as a strategy for wide-spread community information dissemination and preparedness, as it becomes “second nature” to children and their families (Kapucu, 2008). This strategy serves as an effective outreach method, collaborative effort, and capacity building activity that builds community resilience.

In addition to the emphasis of preparedness and disaster training effects that are purported to take place when training children, having an active Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in each community builds resilience and preparedness (Kapucu, 2008). These organizations facilitate the development of social capital, activities surrounding preparedness, and perpetuate protective factors especially in vulnerable communities (Kapucu, 2008).

Effective pre-disaster planning and preparedness builds a foundation of communication plans, trust, and relationships (Kapucu, 2008). This is particularly important for responding agencies, individuals and municipalities. Planning of communication will also facilitate preparation, as traditional communication channels will likely be impacted, and media training sends a more informed, consistent message. A key limitation in communication and disaster management is the lack of trust in government and execution of their recommendations (Kapucu, 2008). Emergency management has addressed this limitation by communicating with the community through other trusted sources: local media, local organizations, and local companies (Kapucu, 2008). Emergency management departments can utilize technology to both enhance communication in all stages of a disaster cycle, as well as build trust with constituents.

Having an accessible and user-friendly, portal-based website has been a determinant of credibility and trust in reviewing content, which is of particular interest in communicating information related to emergencies (Youngblood & Youngblood, 2018). Content standards (including information like location, contact information, external links, subscription to information) provide emergency management with baselines for online communication (Youngblood & Youngblood, 2018). In addition to these content necessities, the actual appearance of a platform is a predictor of credibility and usability (Youngblood & Youngblood, 2018). This study has considered the populations of children (ages five and under), elderly (ages 60 and up), and the Karen population. Accessibility of web-based information, and therefore outreach, has to consider different abilities in order to remain usable, particularly when “visual, motor, hearing, and cognitive” abilities vary across the audience and many users will be accessing information on a mobile device (Youngblood & Youngblood, 2018).

Case studies on communicating emergency information have determined that radio and television remain key sources of media, particularly among demographics that are not heavily utilizing smart-phones (Youngblood & Youngblood, 2018). However, social media has begun to fill gaps in information communication around emergencies and preparedness. Social media updates are perceived as being a more frequently updated source of information, though credibility challenges could be improved through the presence of emergency management or through the development of a “emergency communication toolkit” (Youngblood & Youngblood, 2018). Individuals in communities may often be uncertain of the role that emergency

management departments play in their community, so this building of credibility and intentional outreach has the potential to reach communities that RCEMHS currently does not.

What is Ramsey County currently doing for community outreach and engagement?

The Ramsey County Emergency Operations plan articulates opportunities for community outreach and engagement in the emergency management process and disaster cycle. Pre-incident, preparation, and mitigation activities where public participation or public audiences are considered include preparedness reports, gaps-analysis, general public information, alerts and warnings, and communications (“Incident Command System Resources | FEMA.gov,” 2018).

Ramsey County has been involved in community outreach and community engagement intentionally. Designated staff in specific departments work to network throughout the county with individuals, organizations, and issues happening in the communities. Activities like tabling, social media, newsletters, attending meetings, leading trainings, and participating in community events were discussed as methods of outreach and various levels of engagement. Engagement with the community was considered to be primarily project driven.

Interview Analysis



	INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Figure 3: The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Qualitative analysis of interviews conducted revealed a number of themes and recommendations related to the Levels of Public Participation. Emergency management departments have rationale for utilizing various levels of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. Much of the necessary work involves sharing information that is critical for

constituents which requires no feedback, which falls in the level of informing. However, other levels on the spectrum provide insight, information, and feedback about the system that emergency management could use to perform activities that can better serve constituents in emergency and disaster situations. The levels, identified in Figure 3, inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower are discussed in relation to qualitative analysis of the interviews.

Inform

Emergency management frequently must share critical information with no feedback necessary, which falls under the “inform” spectrum (“What is the Spectrum of Public Participation?,” 2017). Informing the community may be more effective when the message is reiterated and communicated from different platforms. Analysis indicated that communities listen to trusted sources, which can be a government agency, but it may also be another organization, leader, or outlet. Additional identified outlets of communication include applications like Next Door, social media, email by neighborhoods, via organizations, television, newsletters, and letters in the mail. Barriers for providing the public with information include language, particularly with signage.

Consult

Consulting the community involved the intentional solicitation of comments and feedback (“What is the Spectrum of Public Participation?,” 2017). Examples of this level of public participation include public comment, focus groups, surveys, and public meetings. Interviewees discussed the importance of reducing barriers to public meetings or focus groups to obtain representative consultations. Barriers like language, capital, and transportation were frequently discussed.

Involve

Involvement with a community requires intentional work and incorporation of community input into a planning process (“What is the Spectrum of Public Participation?,” 2017). Involvement includes performing workshops or deliberative polling.

Collaborate

Collaboration with community and organizations in the community means involvement and power in establishing preferred solutions and alternatives (“What is the Spectrum of Public Participation?,” 2017). These activities include citizen advisory committees, consensus-building, and participatory decision-making. Collaborative community engagement via partnerships was discussed among interviews. Leveraging partnerships and relationships to co-host an event or lead an initiative. The product is owned by both entities at the end of the process. Asset mapping was an identified example of collaboration.

Empower

Empowerment is the most engaged a community becomes during a decision process (“What is the Spectrum of Public Participation?,” 2017). Decision-making power is either external to the county or shared, including citizen juries, ballots, and delegated decisions. An example of this activity is re-granting: a government-awarded grant is put into community leader or organizations’ hands. This kind of activity moves all the way to empowerment of the community, where they are making decisions that are implemented. Qualitative analysis of

interviews reiterated that community members hold expertise in their community, and this value should be compensated somehow. In the field of emergency management, re-granting can be implemented to perform preparatory projects or make changes that mitigate harm. Reaching the empowerment level of the engagement spectrum may also be accomplished through intentional recruitment of community members into organizations that represent them, which was discussed as a method of improving law enforcement outcome in the community.

Summary

Community engagement, particularly during the mitigatory and preparatory phases of the disaster cycle, build social capital through increased trust, partnerships, and public participation in making decisions about their own community. Much of the current community engagement falls in the category of “informing” and interview analysis, literature review, and recommendations of this report advise movement across the public participation spectrum, towards engagement. Community engagement mitigates complacency towards emergency management and facilitates buy-in for participation in all phases of the disaster cycle. Consideration of existing barriers to effective community engagement were identified in interviews. Transportation, capital, language, time, fear and more were discussed. Themes indicated that flows of information and feedback must go between government and communities, rather than being a flow of outputs with no feedback or an extractive seeking of information with no feedback. When the community is effectively engaged in the disaster cycle, resource allocation improves in efficiency and efficacy because resources match the need of the community and are directed in relation to need. Partnerships with community organizations and strengthened internal relationships will facilitate the process of community engagement.

The Older Adult Community

Background

Older adults are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as those 65 years and older. For this project, we include those 60 years or older based on the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965 (Fox-Grage & Ujvari, 2014). The OAA supports a variety of home and community-based services, including meals-on-wheels and other nutrition programs, in-home services, transportation, legal services, elder abuse prevention and caregiver support to people starting at age 60. The point at which people begin accessing services can be an indication of their vulnerability. Many of the agencies and community-based organizations providing these services are or can potentially be critical partners in developing resilience within Ramsey County’s older population.

Older adults are a critical population for emergency management to consider because the older population is growing at a dramatic rate. By 2030, the national population of individuals 65 and older is expected to double (Aldrich & Benson, 2008) and Minnesota mirrors this trend. By the year 2040, the number of people 65 years and older who are living in Ramsey County will double from current numbers (Wolfe, 2017). The population of older adults is also becoming more diverse than ever before. Until recently the older population in Ramsey County has been mostly White. In 1990, 13 percent of Ramsey County’s 65+ population were people of color. By

2014 this number increased to 30 percent and the Metropolitan Council predicts that number will rise to 45 percent by 2030 (Wolfe, 2017).

Along with the growing population other trends within aging encompass indicators of vulnerability and have the potential to influence the resilience of older adults in the face of a disaster. First, economic security is a concern. Fewer people are receiving retirement money provided by their employers and savings are at an all-time low. Nationally, 24% of people between the ages of 54-85 have insufficient retirement resources (Wolfe, 2017). In Minnesota 39% of workers in the private sector do not have an employee-sponsored retirement plan (John & Koenig, 2015) and Social Security is the only source of income for almost three in ten Minnesotans age 65+ (AARP, 2014). Older adults are going into retirement with less in savings and are on fixed incomes. In Ramsey County, 30% of people aged 65 and older have an annual income of \$25,000 (St. Paul -Ramsey County Public Health, 2017) and 12% of older adults (65+) in St. Paul live in poverty (Egbert, 2014). Economic status is often correlated with resilience and older adults on fixed income have a more limited capacity to rebuild post disaster.

More people are choosing to age in community. Aging in community can be staying in one's home or in alternative housing within their communities. This trend is driven at both the policy and the individual level. Minnesota has been at the forefront of shifting the care of older adults away from institutions to aging in community for as long as possible. In 2007 Minnesota started funding grants to help people live well at home (Crosby, 2018). It is widely reported that aging in place can lead to better health outcomes, life satisfaction, and self-esteem, compared with aging in a nursing home. In addition, aging in place is typically more affordable than moving to an assisted living facility or nursing home (Guzman, Viveiros, & Salomon, 2017). Minnesota now spends more than \$21 million a year through the federal Older Americans Act on programs and services that help older adults stay in their homes (Crosby 2018).

The policy changes to focus on home-based care and services also align with people's own preferences. Seventy-eight percent of adults aged 45 and older surveyed in 2014 stated that they would prefer to remain in their homes indefinitely as they age (Guzman, Viveiros, & Salomon, 2017). In Minnesota, a smaller number of people are living in housing designed for seniors. Nearly 89 percent of people surveyed in a 2015 Minnesota Board on Aging survey believed their neighborhood is a good place to live. Only 10 percent have plans to move in the next few years (Minnesota Board on Aging, 2015). According to the Census Bureau, 47% of adults 60 and older in Ramsey County live alone and if a person has not downsized in their 60s, they are likely to stay in their homes until age 85, when disabilities tend to increase (Crosby 2018).

The movement towards aging in community is widely seen as beneficial for the individual places increased reliance on family, informal social networks and formal home and community-based services to assist with daily living activities. According to the Minnesota Board on Aging 2015 survey:

- The majority of caregiving for older Minnesotans is provided by family and friends
- 83% of respondents age 60 and older who need assistance with activities of daily living (walking, dressing, bathing and feeding) or instrumental activities of daily living (managing medication, finances, transportation and meal preparation) receive some unpaid help, either alone or in combination with paid help
- 71% rely only on unpaid help

Furthermore, long term care needs increase with age as aging brings rising rates of disability among those who are living in community. Disability includes ambulatory, cognitive, hearing, vision, and self-care. Of Older Adults (Egbert, 2014):

- 20% of older adults age 65-74 have a disability
- 40% of older adults age 75-84 have a disability
- 60% of older adults age 85+ have a disability
- 32% of those ages 65 and older have one or more disability of any type.

The trends and statistics outlined for older adults including the growth of the aging population, lack of economic security and propensity to stay living in community are important considerations for emergency management. How and where older adults are living is changing. They are living in a variety of settings and are connected to varying levels of service through formal and informal networks. Emergency management, therefore, needs to be adaptive to the trends and changing needs of the population. The assets and vulnerabilities of this community impact response to disaster and how RCEMHS engages with them.

Older Adults and Emergency Management

Older adults are disproportionately vulnerable during disasters. During Hurricane Katrina, 71% of victims were older than 60 and 47% were older than 77. Most of these victims died in homes or communities (Gibson & Hayunga, 2006) and during the 1995 heat wave in the Midwest, the median age of the 465 people in Chicago whose deaths were heat related was 75 years old (Aldrich & Benson, 2008). A primary reason, older adults are particularly vulnerable both prior, during and after a disaster is because they are more likely to have chronic illnesses, functional limitations and sensory, physical and cognitive disabilities than of younger people (Gibson & Hayunga, 2006).

An estimated 14 million people aged 65 or older living outside an institution reported in the 2000 census to having some level of disability, mostly linked to chronic conditions including heart disease or arthritis (Aldrich & Benson, 2008). Similarly, the majority of Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older experience two or more chronic conditions at the same time (Gibson & Hayunga, 2006). In addition, frailty is recognized as a physical condition that is distinct from both the normal aging process and disability. Characteristics of frailty include muscle weakness, slow walking, exhaustion and low physical activity (Gibson & Hayunga, 2006).

People with chronic conditions often need assistance with activities of daily living, however, multiple conditions are not necessarily correlated to a person's own assessment of poor health. In a study conducted by the New York Academy of Medicine, despite multiple chronic conditions, a majority of survey respondents rated their health as "excellent," "very good," or "good." This is an indication that even with multiple health issues people in normal circumstances are able to manage their care either on their own or through formal or informal networks. Yet, 13 million older adults aged 50 or older have said they would need help to evacuate during a disaster and about half of these would require help from someone outside the household (Pekovic et al, 2007).

After a disaster happens, conditions such as stress, lack of food and water, extreme temperatures and exposure to infections can cause a worsening of chronic illness (Aldrich and

Benson, 2008). The disruption to daily patterns, medication regimens, changes in nutritional intake can have a negative effect on a person's health (Evans, 2010). People aged 65 and older take three or more drugs per month. A change or disruptions in medication regimes can cause potentially serious and fatal complications (Gibson & Hayunga, 2006). Furthermore, certain disasters cause environmental pollution, including airborne particulate matter from large scale fires and collapsed buildings to mold spores from flood events. Both have the potential to cause and exacerbate respiratory functioning (Evans, 2010).

During response and recovery, older adults can struggle with standard relief efforts and amenities. Post Hurricane Sandy, older adults without transportation found it difficult to access distribution sites for food and water and in-person sites to access relief benefits. Another challenge was eating meals distributed by relief organizations, which contained excessive sodium, fat and calories for older adults. Access to medication and durable equipment being lost, damaged or left behind during an evacuation were also cited as concerns (Goldman, Finkelstein, Schafer, & Pugh, 2014).

A common denominator of how disasters affect older adults is the disruption of systems and services upon which older adults rely including transportation, communication, health care, and social supports (Goldman, Finkelstein, Schafer, & Pugh, 2014). When older adults are cut off from social networks due to loss of electricity or communication, they may be unable to maintain situational awareness and obtain resources. Older adults with stronger and more numerous connections are better able to have their needs met, whereas those with fewer and weaker connections are more likely to feel abandoned (Goldman, Finkelstein, Schafer, & Pugh, 2014).

Beyond the physical factors which make older adults vulnerable, socio economic factors also contribute to their vulnerability. Poverty is a risk factor for all people, but because poverty is strongly associated with poor health status, high poverty rates in older Americans make them particularly vulnerable (Goldman, Finkelstein, Schafer, & Pugh, 2014). Poverty is also generally associated with poorly constructed housing or older housing stock, a lack of insurance and decreased ability to recover economically after a disaster. A lack of income and savings makes preparing and recovering from a disaster even more difficult.

Additional factors which contribute to vulnerability are whether they live alone, have the ability to drive or access to transportation, lower literacy levels than the general population, and ESL proficiency (immigrants who are 65 and older may not speak English). All of these factors can affect one's ability to prepare and recover during a disaster.

Assets of Older Adults

It is easy to focus on the numerous vulnerabilities of the older population, but they are a heterogeneous group. It is important to understand the diversity and broad spectrum of the population as well. Older adults can be one of our greatest assets in preparing and recovering from disasters. Older adults have a desire to stay actively engaged in their communities. This is illustrated by their historically high rates of volunteerism and philanthropy. More than 6 out of 10 adults age 55 and older engage in some volunteer activity including a mix of formal and informal activities (Zedlewski & Schaner, 2006). In Minnesota, nearly 287,000 volunteers age 65 and older contribute an estimated \$459 million in donated labor every year (Minnesota Compass, 2014).

Older adults are underused resources in preparing for and responding to disaster. Experience and judgement increase with age and are important attributes in times of disaster (Gibson & Hayunga, 2006). There is also evidence to support the fact that older people are more psychologically resilient than younger people after a disaster due to being “inoculated” to stress over the years. Older adults who demonstrate this type of adaptability make ideal volunteers during response and recovery efforts (Goldman, Finkelstein, Schafer, & Pugh, 2014).

Interview Analysis

Based on interviews with organizations serving older adults the following themes were identified which contribute to the older population’s resilience to disasters. The themes are trust, technology and communication, isolation and social networks, resilience of older adults, and leveraging community-based organizations.

Trust

Trust was mentioned across the board as a vulnerability and barrier for older adults. Trust with the government and trust with people outside their networks or groups. Trust in government was specifically mentioned as a barrier for Hispanic and African Americans. Older adults do not trust people outside their network and are cautious towards other people they don’t know. As one staff stated, “They have their groups and stick with them.” Older adults connected with community-based organizations do have a strong level of trust in the organization and the staff. Through receiving services and attending events coordinated by the organizations, older adults get to know staff and over a period of time build a trusting relationship. Older adults look to the organization as a source of support and resources. They trust the messages and information that come from the community-based organizations, staff and volunteers. On the flipside, there was also concern for older adults being taken advantage of post disaster through disaster related fraud or scams.

Technology and Communication

A second theme that emerged is the lack of technology by older adults and reliance on landlines, network news and the newspaper. Landline phones are most prevalent with older adults. Organizations reported a small percentage have cell phones and of that, older flip phones are more common than smartphones. Email and social media are used by a small percentage of older adults receiving services by community-based organizations. If they do have email or are on social media, they may not access it regularly. It is not a primary source of communication. One organization cited economics as a reason in part for this. Older adults are on a fixed income and may not be able to afford internet in their home. Organizations rely on more traditional methods such as newsletters, flyers, and phone calls to communicate with clients.

Older adults are connected to the organizations and services through a variety of methods ranging from referrals through the county, family or caregivers, and through the organization's presence in the community. Organizations host events or provide services throughout the community and information spreads through word of mouth. The organizations themselves do not rely on email or social media as a reliable source of communication with clients, although they may use those tactics to communicate with families, caregivers and the broader community,

Isolation and Social Networks

As much as staff who were interviewed talked about the strong connection between the organizations and the older adults, staff also cited isolation as a vulnerability. Factors contributing to isolation include lack of transportation and mobility and/or functional disabilities such as loss of hearing or vision. Organizations provide formal networks through home visits, services, wellness events, but the presence of informal networks seemed to vary among older adults. Social networks were highlighted as a strength when present, but isolation was still a concern. In the case of one service provider in Ramsey County 70% of clients lived alone and in their annual survey of clients over half said the volunteer is the only person they see in a day. On the flipside, another organization highlighted that clients who were long-term homeowners were integrated into their community and there was a strong sense of neighbors helping neighbors. Common gathering places which facilitated connections for older adults included faith-based organizations, libraries, community centers and programs and activities provided by community-based service providers.

The presence of families varied, when present it is an asset, but many do not have family or are estranged which contributes to isolation. A disruption of services like Meals on Wheels, in home personal care, medication, and transportation services were all listed as vulnerabilities. In addition, a general reluctance to ask for help was highlighted as a vulnerability specifically unique to the older population. Descriptive phrases highlighted include, "I don't really need help", "I can do it", "I can tough it out." This attitude can be connected to their resilient nature through life experience. Service providers were also concerned with their lack of ability to advocate for themselves in an emergency or disaster situation. They could easily be taken advantage of.

In communities with a lower economic status there was greater concern on the effects of a disaster because of the general lack of resources. For example, where would people go if they lost their housing? In addition, compounded with a low socioeconomic status, interviewees highlighted the vulnerability of older adults who are illiterate, have Alzheimer's/Dementia and those who do not have bank accounts.

Resilience of Older Adults

The primary asset of older adults cited in interviews was their resilience. Life experience has developed an inner strength and capacity for older adults to weather hardship. One interviewee stated they have "a strong reserve." Multiple interviewees cited the Depression as developing coping skills and resilience in older adults. Phrases used to describe older adults included "tough cookies" and "they have wisdom to get through so much."

Better Leverage Community Based Organizations

A primary result from the interview analysis is that community-based organizations are an under-utilized asset. There is a broad network of organizations that work within the aging community, yet they seem to have little connection or knowledge of emergency management. They engage with the county in a somewhat transactional nature in the form of referrals for services and resources for county case workers. Community based organizations are connecting with older adults on a regular and sometimes daily basis. They are seen as a trusted resource to older adults and thus should be a stakeholder at the table for emergency management planning.

Children Under the Age of 5

Background

Children represent almost a quarter of the U.S. population; however, their size and importance in communities is not reflected proportionally in many emergency planning and management processes (Bartenfield, Peacock, & Griese, 2014). In Ramsey County, children under 5 make up about 7% of the population, of that, 6.8% are domestic-born children and 0.2% are foreign-born. (“Ramsey County, MN,” n.d.)

Children under the age of 5 are considered vulnerable for a number of reasons that include anatomic (size and body surface area and skeletal), physiologic, immunologic, developmental and psychological issues. All these elements are important for planning for the care of children in disasters or multi-casualty incidents (Gausche-Hill, 2009). Characteristics of children in chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) emergencies make illnesses in children from these instances difficult to prevent, identify, and treat (Bartenfield, Peacock, & Griese, 2014). Due to their vulnerabilities, children’s needs should be imbedded into each stage of emergency planning and management.

There are many obstacles currently facing emergency preparedness with children. According to an analysis of patients presenting to disaster medical assistance teams, pediatric patients are more likely to have no record of severity of illness, making it difficult to provide them the correct services (Gausche-Hill, 2009). There is a risk in children experiencing underdevelopment in physical activity, communication, and in self-preservation instincts due to disasters (Bartenfield, Peacock, & Griese, 2014). The inability to embed the needs of children in disasters, if not addressed, could have side effects that are generational and surpass the disasters themselves. The concern of the wellbeing of children in all circumstances including disasters is a value supported by international actors like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Penrose & Takaki, 2006). They recognized the importance of having emergency plans that are informed by the needs of children. Results from a study conducted by Plan International, indicate that children can alleviate losses in natural disasters and their involvement is essential to community recovery (Middleton & Burt, 2006).

Children Under the Age of 5 and Emergency Management

According to a policy report, out of all emergency departments, only 6% of them have all the equipment identified as important for the care of children (Middleton & Burt, 2006). The current status quo of many emergency departments in the U.S. is not sufficient or acceptable for serving children. There is room for current emergency management systems to show more dedication to providing the best services possible for children before, during, and after a natural or human-made disaster.

There are a variety of avenues on how to incorporate the needs of children into emergency planning and management to better serve children during disasters. One approach is to focus on the internal capability of an organization. In a systems approach, an organization can obtain Emergency Medical Services for Children Pediatric Facility Recognition and overall enhance pediatric disaster expertise (Gausche-Hill, 2009). Hiring a pediatric coordinator for

emergency care or developing a pediatric specific mass-casualty plan specifically for in schools can better inform planning and management (Allen, Parillo, Will, & Mohr, 2007). In combination with internal changes, externally, children are in many ways an underestimated resource for better informing emergency planning and management for children. There are findings that suggest the position of children in society as possible informants within various communication networks have been underutilized. Children can have a positive impact in disaster risk reduction (Mitchell, Haynes, Hall, Choong, & Oven, 2008). Children are able to enter intimate circles that are not always achievable by government entities by being valuable messengers of relaying information to their families (Izadkhah & Hosseini, 2005).

Interview Analysis

Children under 5 are a unique group because of their status as dependents. Legally, children are treated differently than adults (anyone over 18 years of age). Their capacity for resilience is dependent in part on their families' socioeconomic status and the systems (i.e. school, childcare,) and networks (community, familial) they are connected to. Based on interviews with organizations serving children under 5, we found themes in language, technology, and that fear can lead to a lack of information.

Languages

As one of the most diverse counties in Minnesota, Ramsey is experiencing an increase in Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations that primarily use another language other than English. Of the interviewees, organizations that serve young children were concerned by the challenges that language may pose to their ability to effectively provide service. A service provider noted that among the children their organization serves, a large number were from immigrant and refugee backgrounds, which contribute to the language challenges the organization faces. In all interviews, English was a barrier to some capacity to getting information out to families with young children. There were attempts to address it by adding staff that reflect the diversity in Ramsey County's workforce. The challenge still remains to continuously monitor language needs that could arise in order for organizations to effectively communicate information. If clients' language needs go unaddressed, a critical decline in service quality could grow, children could be separated from families, and people could be kicked out of their homes. Ultimately, the consequences of not monitoring language needs can potentially devastate families in Ramsey County.

Technology Usage

Technology is a critical part of a large majority of society as it has become essential to how individuals communicate. All organizations interviewed communicate with their clients through website, phone calls, and emails. There have been efforts to expand service abilities using technology. For example, some organizations mentioned interest in creating mobile applications to help with service delivery; however, texting is the most popular method to send updates and reminders to individuals. This kind of communication provides a direct, more immediate, and less disruptive form of contact with families.

The high poverty rate in Ramsey County can result in a more transient population, making it difficult for organizations to keep track of current mailing addresses. Interviewees noted that people do not change their phone number nearly as much as their address. An

interviewee pointed out that a phone number is one of the most consistent things an individual will have so it becomes a reliable source of communication, even more so than mailing, which could get lost or destroyed.

Fear Leads to a Lack of Information

A key theme in the interviews was a lack of awareness of resources by families, which an interviewee attributed to a fear of government or asking questions. This fear often leads to little knowledge of resources available to individuals and children in the community. An organization highlighted that immigrants who are refugees often come from countries where their government misled them, harmed them, and in turn, broke their trust in government entities. Refugees often bring their perception of government, good or bad, with them to the U.S. This tends to lead to communities of refugees or immigrants that are fearful and lack awareness of information. Interviewees did not mention an approach that has been particularly successful in addressing this concern.

The Karen Community

Background

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines refugees in the *1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* as someone “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” That is, a refugee is an individual that cannot return to their country due to persecution by the government because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group, or political opinions.

The Karen people are an ethnic minority group from Burma that were persecuted by the Burmese government (“Karen History,” n.d.). They were forced to leave the country due to the violence and oppression they were facing. Many fled to refugee camps in Thailand and eventually resettled in the United States and other countries (“Karen History,” n.d.). Karen immigration to the US started in the 2000’s, with the largest wave in 2005 and continues to this day (City of Saint Paul Communications Services, 2016). About 17,000 live in Minnesota and within the state, Saint Paul is estimated to have the largest concentrated population (“Karen History,” n.d.). Other densely populated cities are Roseville and Maplewood (City of Saint Paul Communications Services, 2016).

The Karen Community and Emergency Management

Because of their relatively recent (in the past 20 years) resettlement in the US, research on the Karen population and their relationship with disaster preparedness in the US does not exist. There are studies on generational differences between older and younger Karen refugees (Yarris, Stasiun, Musigdilok, & Win, 2015), engaging Karen students in the classroom (Harper

2017; (Smolen, Zhang, & Detwiler, 2013), effective collaboration methods between the Karen community and government agency (McCleary, Horn, Toe, Dwee, & Sniffen, 2018), Karen cultural resilience in the U.S. (Spivey & Lewis, 2016; Harper, 2016) and challenges of resettling in a new country (Mitschke, Mitschke, Slater, & Teboh, 2011).

Although these studies do not explicitly mention disaster preparedness, some do mention barriers to resettlement that can contribute the community's overall resilience to disasters. For example, in a qualitative study that interviewed twenty-one Karen adults living in the U.S., D.B. Mitschke et al (2011), found that disillusionment was a major theme in their interviewees. The interviewees thought their lives would be improved compared to their conditions in Burma and Thailand, but they were disappointed in their current living situation in the U.S. Many struggled to find employment and establish financial security. Among other concerns were access to affordable healthcare. Interviewees had trouble navigating the healthcare system because of its complexity and because of not being able to communicate in English. Language barriers also played a big part in successful acculturation (Mitschke, Mitschke, Slater, & Teboh, 2011; McCleary, Horn, Toe, Dwee, & Sniffen, 2018). Mitschke et al says, "According to participants, the language barrier is the most pervasive impediment to their success in the United States" (2011).

Secondary literature from the Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM), the only Karen-based social services nonprofit in Minnesota, also states that employment related issues, housing and limited-to-no English proficiency are barriers the community experiences (City of Saint Paul Communications Services, 2016). KOM states that most Karen are low-income and there are often four to seven individuals living in one apartment (City of Saint Paul Communications Services, 2016).

Interview Analysis

Three main themes of resilience emerged during interviews with several organizations that serve the Karen population of Ramsey County. The themes are: the impact of the refugee experience on resiliency, importance of non-profit organizations, community connectedness.

The Refugee Experience

Vulnerabilities that are attached to the refugee experience in the U.S. were identified by interviewees as challenges to disaster preparedness and recovery. When asked about the observed vulnerabilities of the Karen community, one interviewee said, "...when people come here as refugees, they have already lived through more hardship and 'disasters' in life than we might be considering a 'disaster'. So emergency preparedness may be lost on them or they may really not want to hear about things that might scare them or their families." Another interviewee said, "Recency of arrival to the U.S. can [make it] more difficult in knowing how to deal with emergencies and/or crises." A Karen individual also reiterated the point by stating the newness of the community is what makes them vulnerable to impacts of a disaster. In other words, the length of time a community has been established is a factor in how well they can respond to emergencies.

Other vulnerabilities that are often a part of refugee experiences are language barriers, a lack of financial stability, and a lack of transportation. An interviewee mentioned that because systems of alerts are in English, it makes it difficult for Karen individuals to understand what is happening. Being low-income is another challenge to disaster recovery. Because many low-

income Karen individuals depend on social benefits, dependence on those benefits can impact how economically resilient the individual can be after a disaster. An interviewee said that living in poverty limits how Karen individuals can respond financially to a disaster. A Karen interviewee said that most families go to Ramsey County for food stamps and rent assistance so if there is a disaster, they would need assistance to make sure they were still getting those benefits.

Importance of Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofits play an important role in helping Karen families and individuals acclimate to a new country and access social benefit programs. Programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program and employment assistance programs were mentioned during the interviews as common benefit programs Karen families and individuals received. Because of the Karen people's respect for experts and leaders, the importance of these organizations cannot be understated. As one interviewee said the community tends to "defer to experts" and "tend to trust 'authority'."

The initial point-of-contact is during the first ninety days of arriving in the U.S. Families and individuals work with one of the four federally-contracted refugee resettlement organizations in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The organizations help families find housing, provide transportation from the airport, get children registered for school, connect adults with English classes, and apply for public benefits through the county. They also provide services essential to everyday life such as transporting clients to and from the grocery store and a cultural orientation. It was noted during the interview that the orientation curriculum is stipulated by the federal government. It includes topics such as learning how to budget, understanding the healthcare system, safety in the home, how to use appliances, the naturalization process, consequences of breaking the law, cultural norms, cultural adjustment, hygiene practices, and rights under refugee status.

KOM plays an especially crucial role in the community. The organization was specifically created to address the need to assist Karen individuals with resettlement. The organization provides services such as training on how to take the local transit system, applying for public benefits, finding employment, and locating housing. The organization was cited as an important resource by other nonprofits and government agencies that were interviewed. Many of those nonprofits and government agencies also have prior or currently existing partnerships with KOM. For example, the refugee resettlement organization has a contract with the State of Minnesota to partner with KOM to match clients to KOM's services. Currently, the organization serves about 3,000 individuals a year.

Despite offering a wide range of services organizations that were interviewed stated that they did not have a plan to help the community respond and recover from disasters. The organizations had their own internal plans in case of emergencies, but no such infrastructure exists externally.

Community Connectedness

The theme of connectedness is found throughout the emergency management process. Although no formal infrastructure for community-based disaster preparedness and recovery exists within the organizations, interviewees noted that in times of need, the community will depend on each other. When asked "*What resources or strengths does the community (or your*

organization) have to help respond to a man-made/natural disaster?” all interviewees cited the internal connectedness of the Karen community as the most mentioned strength. One interviewee said that, “They are a close-knit community – word travels fast.” Another interviewee pointed out that the Karen people have a deep respect for authority and have designated community leaders. This can be supported through an interview with a community leader who said that if there was any need in the community, he would know about it. He noted that his interaction with the community goes beyond his professional capacity. He often helps families fill out forms for social benefit programs and translate government mail.

Interviews revealed that religion provides an important platform to facilitate community connectedness. KOM estimates that 80% of the community is Christian and 20% is Buddhist. Their website lists two Karen temples and fourteen churches. An interviewee who is both a direct service provider and a church leader said that most Karen people receive their news through their church and the church plays a crucial role in helping newly arrived Karen families get resettled. The same interviewee said that their church plays a leading role in disaster recovery by starting donation and food collections.

Discussion

Three themes were consistent in the literature and across all the demographic groups studied: importance of public benefit programs, engagement with direct service providers, and overall lack of awareness of emergency management. In the next sections, the findings in the context of the project’s four main research questions and considerations for further analysis will be discussed. The research questions are: *1) What assets and social vulnerabilities could inform Ramsey County emergency response to natural and man-made disasters? 2) What factors influence how communities build resilience and respond to natural and man-made disasters? 3) How have local governments effectively cross collaborated to build resilient communities and serve communities in times of disaster and recovery? 4) What outreach strategies are effective in reaching vulnerable communities?*

Main Findings

Public Benefit Programs

A major overlapping theme for all three demographic groups was the usage of public benefit programs. It was found that individuals and families become connected with social insurance programs through a nonprofit service provider or adjacent programs such as Head Start. This touchpoint into the community serves as a potential effective outreach strategy. It can inform disaster resilience in these groups regarding the benefits they receive, how they receive it and how often. While RCEMHS does not administer these programs, intra-agency partnerships can utilize the insight and relationships that exist within the community to better serve them throughout the disaster cycle. As mentioned in the Karen interview analysis, an interviewee noted that people who depend on government assistance will most likely need to know how to access those benefits after a disaster. Having access to those benefits is crucial to economic resilience of vulnerable populations.

Direct Service Providers

The utilization of social insurance programs informs the important role of direct service providers in the everyday lives of our defined groups. Families and individuals in each group have some type of interaction with a government agency or a nonprofit that works with a government agency. Identifying these access points can be helpful in determining intra-agency and external outreach strategies. Providers gain valuable face time with the clients through required regular appointments. These face-to-face meetings help build trust and repertoire with clients who may have a history of government distrust. In groups where word-of-mouth is a reliable avenue for obtaining information, words of trust, credibility, and otherwise can spread quickly.

Lack of Knowledge

The last theme established through the interviews was the general lack of knowledge about RCEMHS and emergency management. When asked if they had any collaboration or interaction with RCEMHS, most organizations said no and some even stated being unaware the department existed. The organizations had their own internal plan for disaster preparedness but nothing community-focused. Several interviewees astutely pointed out that individuals who have faced and are facing hardship in their lives are not inclined to think long-term about disaster preparedness. They are simply trying to live day-to-day.

Considerations

One aspect that was not discussed is the importance of intersectionality between the demographic groups. Intersectionality is described by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) as the interconnection and interdependence of race, class, gender, and other socially constructed categories. Although the qualitative research did skew towards interviewing nonprofit service providers and agencies that serve a specific socioeconomic class, the report also does not discuss the varying social identities that exist within each group and the gaps that exist between sub-categories in each group. For example, within older adults over 60, there is a varying degree of how each person will respond and recover from disasters. Some adults over 60 with more monetary resources or support networks will experience disasters differently than an older adult that lives by themselves and is living on a small fixed monthly income. Interconnectedness exists between the demographic groups as well. Although each group was treated as independent of each other, there is a clear overlap in social identities of Karen individuals and adults over 60 as well as with Karen individuals and children under 5.

Despite the usage of public benefit programs providing insight into community assets, vulnerability, and resilience, there are individuals or communities that are not utilizing public benefit programs or strongly connected to community-based organizations. Across all communities, there will be people who are not connected to services for a variety of reasons. They may not need them, they may not qualify, or be aware of their existence. It is this population that is not accounted for in analyzing the various touch points highlighted in the report. A primary factor of community resilience is connectivity, yet often emergency management is focused on the preparedness of singular family units or individual. To get at communities of people who are not connected formally to services, it is important to increase connectivity among individuals across all communities. As an example, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health shifted their emergency preparedness messaging from “Just Be Ready” to a more community resilience focused message of “Know Your Neighbors. Plan

Together. Be Ready.” As part of the campaign residents were encouraged to meet with neighbors and to prepare individual and neighborhood disaster plans. Their campaign highlighted connectivity as a central feature of a community’s ability to mitigate and recover from a disaster (Plough et al, 2013).

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Recommendations

The following recommendations represent a paradigm shift in how Emergency Management engages with communities. In the same way that disasters are local and disaster response begins at the local level, building resilience is most effective if it starts with the local community and its residents (Cutter et al, 2013). Provided below are five recommendations which are aligned with the Rand Corporation’s Community Resilience Framework and focus on a human centered approach in engaging with communities. These recommendations focus on expanding the ways in which communities are engaged with emergency management, not just as a receiver of information, but in co-creating disaster management strategies. By engaging community in the process, Emergency Management will develop more effective community outreach and communications plans and partnerships leading to increased community resilience, thus answering to the established research questions about effective outreach, collaboration, and engagement.

Community Resilience Framework

Community resilience literature identifies numerous factors which are likely correlated with increasing a community's resilience. Yet, there is less clarity on specific strategies and tactics communities can implement to build resilience. To fill this gap, the Rand Corporation, developed a community resilience framework shown in Figure 4 below (Chandra, 2011). The framework identifies building blocks of community resilience that affect a community’s pre-event vulnerability to disaster and its adaptive capacity to recover. Their process for developing the framework included conducting a literature review, holding a series of focus groups across the United States and convening three meetings with subject matter experts. From the research conducted, they developed a framework composed of building blocks of community resilience and eight levers of action. The building blocks are physical and psychological health of the population, social and economic well-being, individual, family and community knowledge, attitudes regarding self-reliance and self-help, effective risk communication, social integration of government and nongovernmental organizations and social connectedness (Chandra, 2011).

In the framework, the eight levers of wellness, access, education, engagement, self-sufficiency, partnership, quality and efficiency are meant to strengthen the main building blocks, which are associated with community resilience. Activities related to the levers strengthen each component and moves a community closer to achieving community resilience as it conducts more activities. The process is in a circle because building resilience is iterative and ongoing (Chandra, 2011). Even though the framework was developed with health security in mind, it is transferable to emergency management. For the recommendations section, each recommendation is aligned to a lever of action. Using the framework creates a visual of how the recommendations interact and contribute to community resilience.

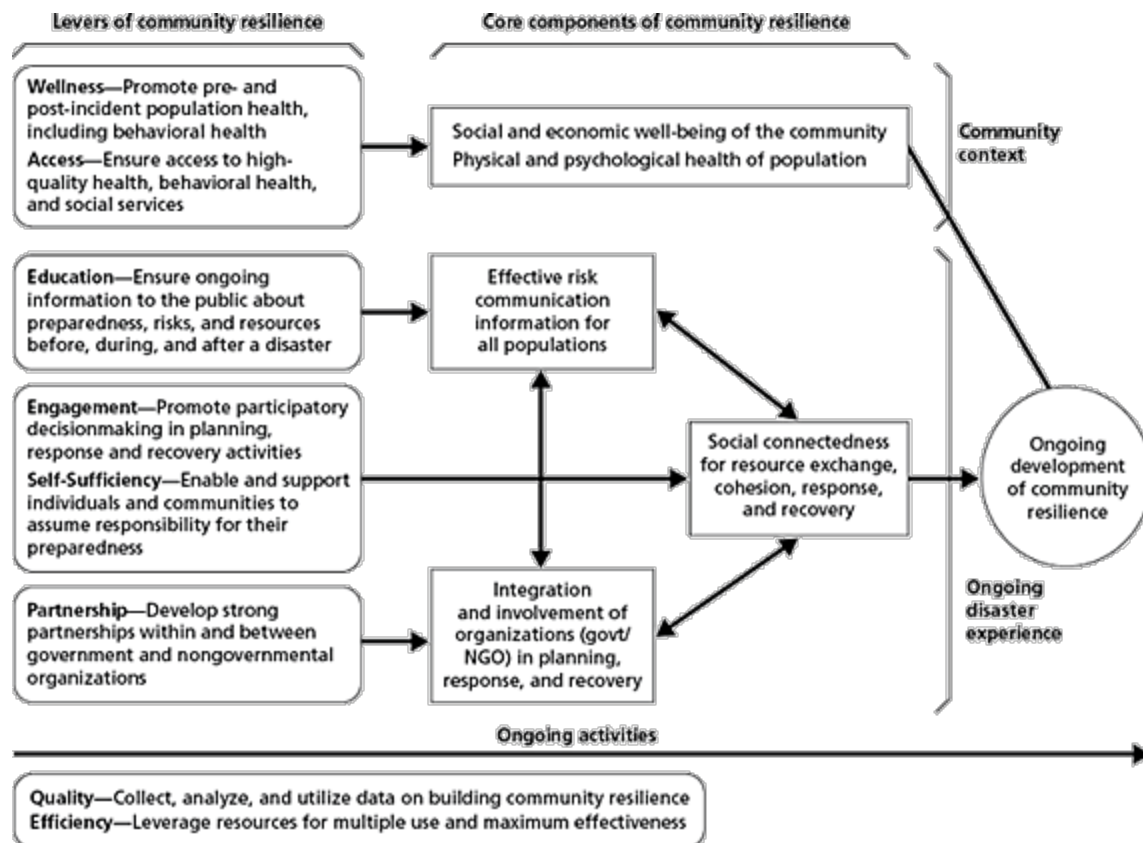


Figure 4: Rand Corporation's Community Resilience Framework

Use Human Centered Design Thinking

(Community Resilience Lever: Engagement)

Human centered design or “design thinking” is a process for innovation that prioritizes the needs and values of the people most affected (Vechakul et al, 2015). Adopting a human centered approach can help break agencies or institutions out of ingrained ways of thinking and doing. For example, if traditional outreach methods are not reaching a changing population, using design thinking methods can help understand the population in question and generate new ways of doing. It is an approach that develops solutions by involving the people for whom the problem is being solved in all steps of process. Human centered design recognizes that problems are increasingly complex and that solutions must be adaptive. It is not a standardized static process in which the same sequence of steps and methods are applied in all contexts but is fluid and most effective when it is adapted to suit different contexts (Vechakul, Patel Shrimali, & Sandhu, 2015).

One recognized framework for public service design by Christian Bason includes three phases, exploring the problem space, generating alternative scenarios and enacting new practices. In “exploring the problem space,” qualitative research tools play an important role to enable empathy with “end-user” experiences with services. Developing empathy for the end-user is a core foundation of design thinking. In “generating alternative scenarios,” a diverse set of stakeholders (including end-users) are engaged to co-create potential solutions. Working in diverse teams challenge assumptions and stimulate new ways of thinking. Design thinking as a creative process facilitates a wide divergence of ideas leading to the creation of alternative

scenarios or ideas. Finally, design thinking offers tools (i.e. concepts, systems maps, graphics, products, etc.) to help give form to new policies and services in practice. The phases of design thinking are not sequential, but are intertwined and overlap between design research, developing ideas for service and implementing ideas to engage a wider audience (Bason, 2017).

Design thinking is particularly suited for emergency management because of its complex and dynamic nature. Human centered design as an approach can respond to the complexities of emergency management and increase public value. If people are involved in the process, they are more likely to respond when needed. People need to see that they are part of the solution. A fundamental characteristic of Design Thinking is its focus on the collaborative way designers work and in participatory methods of co-creation. It encompasses an attitude from designing ‘for users’ to the human centered approach of designing ‘with users’ (Tschimmel, 2012). Design thinking is a structured and inclusive process that can leverage the strengths and insights of emergency management staff, organizations, and community members to increase the likelihood that solutions will be successful.

Design thinking methods can be incorporated into community engagement activities that RCEMHS conducts to co-develop effective outreach and communication plans. The d.school through Stanford University provides a toolkit of design thinking tools and processes that can be used to guide RCEMHS staff and collaborators.

1. Conduct a Community Engagement Assessment

(Community Resilience Lever: Engagement and Quality)

Internal assessment of existing relationships with the community will reveal where strong networks and ties exist and where a gap may exist, particularly among relations with vulnerable communities. A number of the following recommendations build on community engagement and outreach, so using tools to grow engagement further these processes. An existing tool and resource, the Nexus Community Partners Community Engagement Assessment Tool (Appendix B for assessment tool) can be used internally to determine where RCEMHS currently falls on the spectrum of community outreach and engagement. Such tools identify specific activities, limitations, and the purpose for engagement activities. Self-assessment reveals existing relationships, current activities, purpose for activities, and more to move towards a higher capacity of community engagement. Meaningful engagement with diverse organizations depends on the participants, which are often voluntary in nature, and this form of assessment can aid in the most efficient resource allocation (Kapucu, 2006). This exercise may also strengthen internal relationships, which are critical to coordination of projects and resources within Ramsey County.

Recommended strategies:

- Network mapping of RCEMHS relationships through a graphical depiction of network structure.
- Internal mapping or networking of projects, expertise areas, and individuals will allow RCEMHS to improve internal collaboration. Strengthened internal coordination and communication helps eliminate high-frequency errors during a stressful event, as previously discussed.
- Improve community engagement skills of emergency management staff to effectively implement design thinking strategies.

2. Cross collaboration within Ramsey County and with other agencies

(Community Resilience Level: Partnership)

Disasters are trans-boundary and jurisdictional in nature. As a result, organizations across varying degrees of authority are involved in a response. Increased community engagement for preparedness can be a platform for addressing neighborhood public safety/health concerns. Collaborative activities across departments can strengthen community social ties and improve dialogue and trust between the community and public agencies (Plough et al, 2013). Trust in community organizations make them a credible source to distribute resources and information, especially for communities that may be skeptical or distrusting of the government, or isolated intentionally or unintentionally from public affairs. These relationships also provide access into informal networks that are a part of the daily life of the communities RCEMHS serves. In addition, these relationships provide opportunities for delegation and a horizontal spread of action, which reduces the burden on an individual level responsible for emergency response.

Recommended Strategies:

- Leverage existing relationships in other departments that the County has crafted: there are many touch-points in the community every single day.
- Pre-disaster communication builds resilience in communities- but only if it is accessible. Multimedia communications, signs, etc. in inclusive languages help increase reach, especially into vulnerable populations. Content standards and different abilities are also necessary to consider, as discussed in the Community Engagement section in this report.
- Positive feedback for information sharing is sometimes the only incentive to continue doing so, so a culture of credit acknowledgment and emotional rewards reinforce systems thinking and information sharing.
- Having strong community partners and relationships across County departments brings RCEMHS into a core-periphery network. Strong partners act as brokers to the community at large, where existing relationships relay information and resources through trusted channels.
- Model New York's MVAC: a position that served as a coordinator for organizations that respond to disasters by aggregation of information and data, referring, and informing foundations of needs.
- Development of a product for the community with non-profits, private organizations, and the community:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/ceerg%20final%20jan%202030%20final.pdf>

3. Develop an Emergency Preparedness Coalition of Community-Based Organizations

(Community Resilience Level: Engagement and Partnerships)

Akin to the regional Healthcare Coalitions, develop a coalition model to engage community-based organizations who serve identified vulnerable populations. The coalition can help facilitate engagement activities with community members (i.e. end-users) to develop and provide feedback on disaster communication, outreach, planning and response. There is also overlap between community-based organizations, social services and public health. Collaborate

to leverage the touch points that different agencies have with older adults, children under 5, and the Karen community.

Strategies to Leverage Community-Based Organizations:

- Organizational staff can assist with outreach - helping to craft and deliver the message.
- Organizations can serve as a secondary notification and communication point in emergencies.
- Organizations may not be able to release client-specific data due to data privacy laws but could provide aggregate data on people they serve within geographic boundaries of their service areas.
- Engage volunteers from community-based organizations. Provide training and define roles for current volunteers of community-based organizations in the case of an emergency or disaster.
- Organizations can assist connecting older adults to needed resources in the case of a disaster, act as advocates on behalf of individuals.
- Integrate outreach, training and information sharing into regular communication, events and programming conducted by community-based organizations.

Examples of Potential Collaboration:

- Some community-based organizations hold regular programming on topics of interest, RCEMHS could collaborate to deliver a workshop.
- Engage Meals on Wheels to share information in planning for emergencies and/or deliver emergency preparedness kits to clients.
- Emergency kits for members of the Karen population may look different than emergency kits for older adults, shelter amenities may need to be different to account for older adults' functional abilities, and dietary restriction for various populations may need to be taken into account for planning at shelters or potential food distribution sites. Coalition and community members can help define what makes sense for each population.
- Community-based organizations often have partnerships with private foundations. In times of disaster, the organizations could leverage their partnerships to support in response and recovery efforts.

4. Leverage Volunteer Capacity

(Community Resilience Lever: Engagement and Education)

If engaged effectively, volunteers can be an asset during the disaster because of their possible connection to the community. Many nonprofits rely on volunteers to run their programs and organize events, so the connection with individuals willing to volunteer already exists. Utilizing volunteers from other organizations is an opportunity to use resources already available. Engaging with volunteers have the ability to inform disaster preparedness and response in a more holistic way that is reflective of the area being served. These volunteers play a critical role in the ability to help in disaster preparedness and response largely in part because they are already a trusted person in the community.

Training and education are important to engage volunteers. Training should include cultural, linguistic, and developmental needs of the younger and older populations. Training should involve older adults and experts in geriatric care, experts in early childhood education and

pediatric care, as well as leaders of identified ethnic communities in the content development and delivery. Seasoned volunteers can be used to train new volunteers. Volunteers already involved in organizations are dedicated individuals living in the community with untapped knowledge and expertise of the community and can increase responder engagement for RCEMHS. For example, the medical reserve provides this service to the University of Minnesota: students, staff, and faculty are trained in emergency response (CPR, stopping bleeding). In the event of a disaster, a subset of civilians has training on response and can prevent further harm.

5. Community Engagement-Based Model for Emergency Preparedness

(Community Resilience Lever: Partnership, Education, Engagement)

Adopting a community-based disaster management model recognizes communities as stakeholders in disaster preparedness planning. It promotes a bottom up approach that works in collaboration with the top-down ICS model currently used by RCEMHS to address emergencies and disasters (Pandey & Okazaki, 2012). It is essential that government recognizes and that communities realize they have a role to play in emergency preparedness and building community resilience. In this approach communities take part in creating plans and decisions and are a player in the implementation. Community based engagement places more of a focus on relationships between government and the community, community context and long-term engagement. In reference to the IAP2 Spectrum of Participation, a community-based model for emergency preparedness moves RCEMHS from Informing to Involve, Collaborate or Empower stages.

Elements of a Community-Based Approach may include:

- Risk assessment process engaging local community members and incorporates their perception of vulnerability and capacity.
- Asset-mapping with communities.
- Disaster preparedness training/education aligned with objectives and needs of the community.
- Re-granting of funds to community organizations.

Community Engagement Models

The following are examples illustrating various community engagement strategies which empower communities and thus can increase community resilience. Elements of these strategies or modified versions of them could be implemented by RCEMHS in partnership with organizations and community members.

Better Bus stops (Appendix C for more information)

Better Bus Stops is a project of Metro Transit. The goal of the project is to enhance access to opportunity by investing in bus stop shelters, lighting, heat and pedestrian access. The project brought community members who are users of the transit system and traditionally under-represented in the decision-making process into the planning, decision-making and implementation of bus stop improvements. This model is an example of a government agency operating on the “Empower” end of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

The Better Bus Stops project was intentional to invest money in their community engagement activities. One innovative element was to develop a re-granting program. For the project there was a total of \$419,000 devoted to community engagement. Of that, \$217,250 was contracted to their established Community Engagement Team to be subcontracted out to community-based organizations. Organizations were then able to use money to develop and implement community engagement tactics appropriate for their communities to provide input and feedback to Metro Transit. Figure 5 illustrates the Better Best Stops Community Engagement Model.



Figure 5: Better Bus Stop Community Engagement Model

Brooklyn Park Community Engagement Initiative (See Appendix D for more information)

In 2009, the City of Brooklyn Park began the Community Engagement Initiative (CEI). The city was experiencing economic hardship along with a dramatically changing population. This initiative was developed to change the way the city engages with residents and address the lack of community in the city. Brooklyn Park is home to the largest Liberian population outside of Liberia. Today, 49% of the population is non-white and 21% of those are foreign-born (Alliance for Innovation, 2012). The city recognized that people of different backgrounds were living next to each other, but not engaging with each other. There was a lack of community connectedness – a primary indicator of community resilience.

The CEI team was intentionally composed of a diverse community of stakeholders to reflect the population of the city. The CEI held a series of Community Cafés in various accessible locations across the city. Over 400 people attended to provide input on what would enhance their quality of life, their opportunities, what characteristics contribute to their quality of life, what detract, and what did they not want to see change as the city planned for its future (Alliance for Innovation, 2012).

Today, there is a community engagement department within the city government and community engagement strategies are used across departments in planning and decision-making. Brooklyn Park's community engagement initiative falls across the "Involve", "Collaborate" and "Empower" areas of the IAP2 Spectrum. Residents were engaged in the planning; decision-making and community engagement has been institutionalized within the city. This is a model which could be used by RCEMHS in collaboration with other city departments to engage communities in identifying their own assets and vulnerabilities.

Nexus Community Partners (See Appendix E for more information)

Nexus is a nonprofit organization which supports strong, equitable and just communities in which all residents are engaged, recognized as leaders and have pathways to opportunities. One of their initiatives is the Community Engagement Institute, which strengthens communities and community leadership through equity-based community engagement.

Nexus has developed a model of community engagement which connects outcomes to authentic community engagement shown in Figure 6 (Nexus Community Partners, 2018). RCEMHS could use this model as a reference point within their community engagement work. This model also aligns with community engagement and equity priorities in the 2018 Ramsey County Strategic Plan.

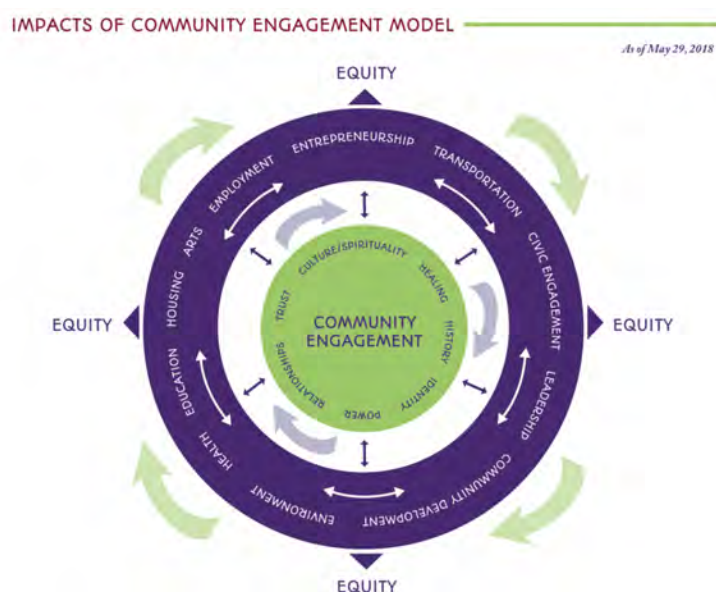


Figure 6: Impacts of Community Engagement Model

Conclusion

Disasters affect everyone, but their consequences do not impact everyone equally. Factors such as network, socioeconomic status, employment, and housing influence how communities respond to those consequences. In a county as diverse and densely-populated as Ramsey, it can be hard to plan a specific outreach and engagement strategy to inform specific communities about disaster preparedness; however, there are similarities between communities

that can inform an effective plan. By prioritizing a human centered approach, RCEMHS can keep the communities at the forefront of their efforts. The models and recommendations provided can be implemented by Ramsey County as well as by or in coordination with emergency management staff of municipalities within the County.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol and Questions

Appendix B: Nexus Community Partners Community Assessment Tool

Appendix C: Metro Transit Better Bus Stops

Appendix D: Brooklyn Park Community Engagement Guide & Initiative

Appendix E: Nexus Community Partners Model for Community Engagement

Appendix A: Interview Protocol and Questions

Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. We are conducting interviews as a part of our Master's capstone project with the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. The project is with Ramsey County Emergency Management & Homeland Security (RCEMHS). This project will assist Ramsey County in identifying social vulnerabilities and assets within targeted demographic groups to better prepare for, respond to, and build resilience against natural or man-made disasters. We are doing exploratory research including interviews with organizations, government agencies and community members. This interview should take no more than an hour. I can provide you contact information if you have any questions or would like more information about the research. Nothing you say will be directly attributed to you. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Nonprofit Organization Interview Questions

1. What is your relationship/position in the community? (Describe your work with the community)
2. What resources or strengths does the community (or your organization) have to help respond to a man-made/natural disaster? What are the barriers? Are there places where community members tend to gather/community networks? (Prompt resources can mean social i.e. networks, people generally help each other, strong feeling of connectedness or material i.e. faith-based orgs, accessible transportation)
3. What are the characteristics that make this community vulnerable to the impacts of a disaster?
4. How do you communicate with clients/those receiving services/community members? What outreach methods have worked for you?
5. What kind of interaction does your organization have with Ramsey County?
6. What information has your organization received on disaster/emergency preparedness? Who has delivered the information (another organization, government)?
 - a. What strengths or resources does your organization have to help the people you serve to prepare and recover from a disaster?
7. Is there anyone else you recommend us talking to?

Community Members Interview Questions

1. Are there common gathering spaces in your community? For example, churches, community centers, etc.

2. What do you believe are characteristics that make communities vulnerable to the impacts of a disaster?
3. What do you believe are characteristics that make communities be better able to mitigate and/or recover from a disaster?
 - a. What type of information is needed to help people be prepared/what would be most helpful?
4. Where do you receive your information, news, etc...?
5. What kind of interaction has your organization had with Ramsey County, if at all?
6. Are there any strategies you have to prepare or respond to a disaster? For example, do you have a plan for losing your home to a disaster? Where did you hear about/learn of that strategy?
7. Is there anyone else you recommend us talking to?

Gov't Agency Interview Questions

1. Can you talk about your relationship with the Ramsey County Emergency & Management? (Prompt: Do you collaborate on programs or initiatives, what is your department's role when an emergency or disaster happens?)
2. How do you collaborate with other departments to provide services to communities? Within the work you do, do you see areas where there may be natural intersection points to collaborate with Emergency Services around preparing people? Where are there barriers?
3. What are you doing for community outreach?
 - a. (Can follow with) In your experience, what challenges have you encountered in community outreach? What works well?
4. Has your department had any interaction with the elderly (60+), young children (under 5), and/or the Karen population? How did you communicate with these groups?
 - a. What do you observe are assets within the XXX community (structural and social capital) that could be of benefit in preparing and mitigating a disaster?
 - b. What do you observe are vulnerabilities within the XXX community (structural and social capital) that could hinder the ability for communities to be prepared for a disaster?
5. Are you aware of any outreach that takes place to educate vulnerable populations (elders, ethnic communities) on disaster preparedness?
 - a. Prompt: What are common and/or effective communication strategies that are currently used to connect with XXXX population? Where do people get their information from?

6. Is there anyone else you recommend us talking to?



WWW.NEXUSCP.ORG/NCEI

Contact: Avi Viswanathan, aviswanathan@nexuscp.org or Angie Brown, abrown@nexuscp.org

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

You are free to share, copy and distribute this material. We ask that you give appropriate credit to Nexus Community Engagement Institute and/or its partners.

We encourage you to share your feedback with us and tell us how you are using the tool or resource. Nexus Community Engagement Institute and our partners intend these documents and tools to introduce practitioners, funders, evaluators, and community members to community engagement and to give the field clarity in its language and principles. However, community engagement is not a field that can rely on written materials alone; it takes a community of practitioners to support one another in practicing community engagement effectively, meeting its challenges, and tapping the strengths within each unique context. We encourage you to seek out experienced practitioners to support you in implementing these tools, principles, and concepts.

Nexus Community Engagement Institute is available for consultation. Please contact us at www.nexuscp.org/ncei or email program director Avi Viswanathan at aviswanathan@nexuscp.org.

Nexus Community Engagement Institute is continuing the work of the Building the Field of Community Engagement (BTF) collaborative. The BTF collaborative was a partnership between Casa de Esperanza, the Cultural Wellness Center, Hope Community, Lyndale Neighborhood Association, the Native American Community Development Institute, and Nexus Community Partners.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

EVERY ORGANIZATION HAS THE CAPACITY TO DO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. Resource limitations can impact the ability to do this work, but commitment and creativity are the only real requirements. We encourage you to use this assessment tool without judgment of yourself or others within your organization. We offer the tool as a guide to help ourselves and our fellow practitioners grow in our understanding of community engagement and to be thoughtful about our own practice of engagement techniques.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS PRACTITIONERS AND ORGANIZATIONS CAN USE THIS TOOL:

- As an individual, to assess your strengths and areas for professional growth
- With the staff in your organization to see where there is agreement, disagreement or tensions about your community engagement efforts.
- With board members to begin or deepen a conversation about community engagement within your organization.
- With new staff or board members to assess what skills they can contribute to your efforts to engage your community.
- To assess where an external partnership could improve community engagement by closing a gap posed by the limitations of your organization.
- To identify where staff or board members require new knowledge or training.
- To glean lessons learned after an event, project or initiative.
- With potential partners (government agencies, nonprofits, community institutions, etc.) to assess whether your approaches are complementary.
- With community members, to assess how they see your work.

SELF-ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Under each question on pages 3-5 are a set of continua to rank your work from **“DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH”** through **“DOING CE”**.
2. **Put a check mark in the box** you believe best reflects where you or your organization is currently at. You may want to consider 1-2 examples to demonstrate why you selected that box.
3. If you are having trouble deciding which applies, it **may be helpful to consider how you think the community would describe your work**, rather than how you internally describe the work.
4. **Below is a key** to help decipher which column to select in each row.

SELF-ASSESSMENT KEY: “CE” = COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING:** Select this column if you don’t know whether you work is outreach, community engagement, or in a stage somewhere in between.
- **DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH:** Select this column if most often you believe your work is mostly outreach rather than mostly community engagement.
- **BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE:** Select this column if you or others in your organization have begun seriously discussing an interest in or commitment to incorporating community engagement practices and principles, but have yet to implement any strategies or policies to do so.
- **WORKING TOWARD CE:** Select this column if you or your organization have begun to implement some community engagement practices, but your organization/team has yet to formally adopt community engagement principles to be at the core and forefront of all the work you do.
- **DOING CE:** Select this column if the vast majority of the time you or your organization are doing community engagement and have formally created systems and practices to continually learn and adapt through community engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Q: WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS?

OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
• Relationships are primarily TRANSACTIONAL , for the purpose of completing a project.						• Relationships are FOUNDATIONAL , continually built between and among people and groups. Staff/institutions continually build the relationships they need to know their community.
• Relationships are often NOT INCLUSIVE of all racial or cultural groups in the community.						• Relationships reflect the DIVERSITY within the community.
• Relationships can be LIMITED to a few community members, often giving influence to those with the loudest voices.						• Relationships are built not just with current leaders, but also with people with an interest and/or POTENTIAL TO BE LEADERS .
• Relationships are SHORT-TERM , so staff have to rebuild them as other projects or issues come up.						• Relationships are transformational and LONG-TERM , so community leaders/members can engage in projects and issues as they come up.

Q: WHY ARE YOU ENGAGING PEOPLE?

OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
• To accomplish a project or a SPECIFIC GOAL defined by the organization.						• To create space for people to CONNECT, RAISE CONCERNS, BUILD POWER and ACT IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS .
• To SEEK BUY-IN OR APPROVAL of something the organization has already planned.						• To CREATE SPACE for the community's assets to be recognized and utilized.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Q: HOW ARE YOU GETTING PEOPLE INVOLVED? WHEN?

OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Primary activities with community include FLYERING, SURVEYS, FOCUS GROUPS, WORKSHOPS, etc.						Primary activities with community include LISTENING SESSIONS, ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS, CELEBRATIONS, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY-BUILDING PROJECTS, etc.
Information is given or feedback is requested AFTER A PROJECT IS PLANNED.						Planning is done WITH THE COMMUNITY from the beginning

Q: HOW DO IDEAS GET GENERATED?

OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
STAFF/ INSTITUTIONS GENERATE IDEAS they think the community will support.						Staff/institutions SUPPORT COMMUNITY MEMBERS in generating their own ideas.
Staff/institutions generate SOLUTIONS TO A PROBLEM they have defined.						Staff/institutions engage in CONTINUAL SELF-REFLECTION to respond to and incorporate people's ideas, feedback, talents, and challenges into the work.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Q: HOW DO YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND STRUCTURES SUPPORT ENGAGEMENT?

OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
• The organizational culture is primarily focused on OBTAINING SPECIFIC OUTCOMES .						• The organizational culture is focused on learning and it values EMERGENT AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES .
• Board and staff may NOT REPRESENT the community.						• Board and staff REFLECT the community.
• The organization ADHERES TO WAYS OF OPERATING that reflect the DOMINANT CULTURE , such as using Robert's Rules for meetings, prioritizing staff to speak, etc.						• The organization CREATES SPACE FOR DIFFERENT CULTURAL WAYS , such as offering cultural foods and social spaces/times, giving elders a special role, etc.
• Racism and power may not be discussed or may be DEALT WITH SUPERFICIALLY .						• The organizational culture supports discussions to UNDERSTAND AND DISMANTLE structural racism, to help heal historical trauma and to claim individual and community power.
• The organization adheres to ORGANIZATION-DRIVEN policies and structures.						• The organization demonstrates a willingness to revisit organizational policies and structures to RESPOND TO COMMUNITY NEEDS AND IDEAS .

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF OR DISCUSS AS A GROUP AFTER COMPLETING YOUR ASSESSMENT:

- Why did you rank yourself or your organization as you did?
- Where do differences exist between your individual work and the overall work of the organization?
- What would you and/or your organization like to do differently?
- Do your responses align with your organization's mission? What changes could advance your mission?
- Where does the staff or board of the organization agree? Disagree? Where is there tension?
- Where does your organization need additional support?
- Where do you need to build the capacity of your organization?
- What are the opportunities for and challenges to doing community engagement?

BETTER STOPS

Community Engagement

What is Better Bus Stops?

A project to enhance access to opportunity by investing in bus stop shelters, lighting, heat and pedestrian access.

"Our front porch to our customers is the bus stop. That's where we present ourselves to our customers really for the first time."
– Brian Lamb, Metro Transit General Manager

A community engagement process, active from March 2016 – March 2017, based in areas of concentrated poverty where more than half of the residents are people of color.

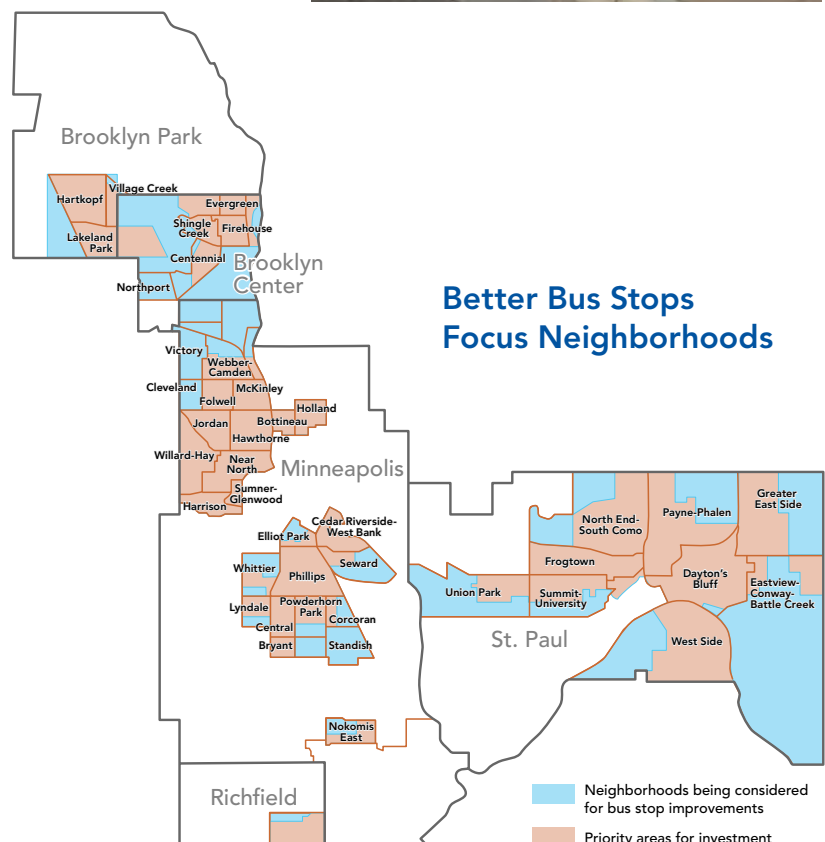


Why focus on community engagement?

To bring the community into the planning, decision-making and implementation of bus stop improvements and to influence the criteria the agency uses to prioritize shelter investments.

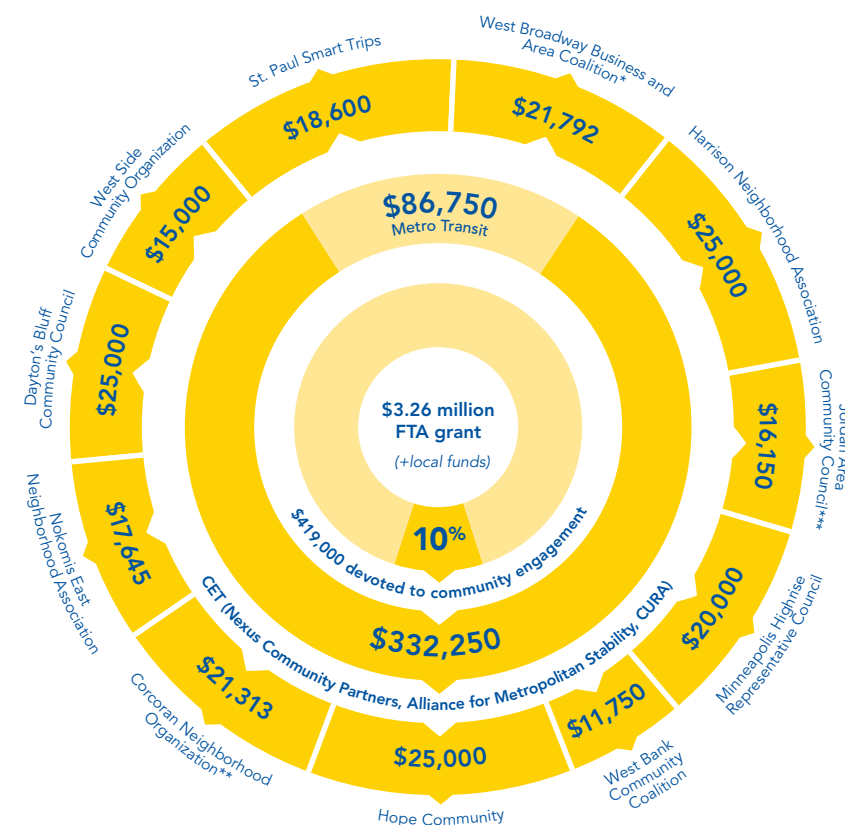
"Community engagement isn't something you check off. It really is the day in and the day out of being visible, asking good questions, and the follow up."
– Community Organization

"The data's important but when you can align that with lived experience, lived outcomes, you get much better informed decision-making."
– Community Engagement Team





Community Engagement Budget



* partnered with Juxtaposition Arts

** partnered with Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization, Lyndale Neighborhood Association, Lake Street Council

*** partnered with Hawthorne Neighborhood Council

\$419,000 devoted to community engagement

\$86,750

kept for Metro Transit, to do more traditional engagement and to provide engagement coverage for the entire Metro Transit service area (including a public engagement plan)

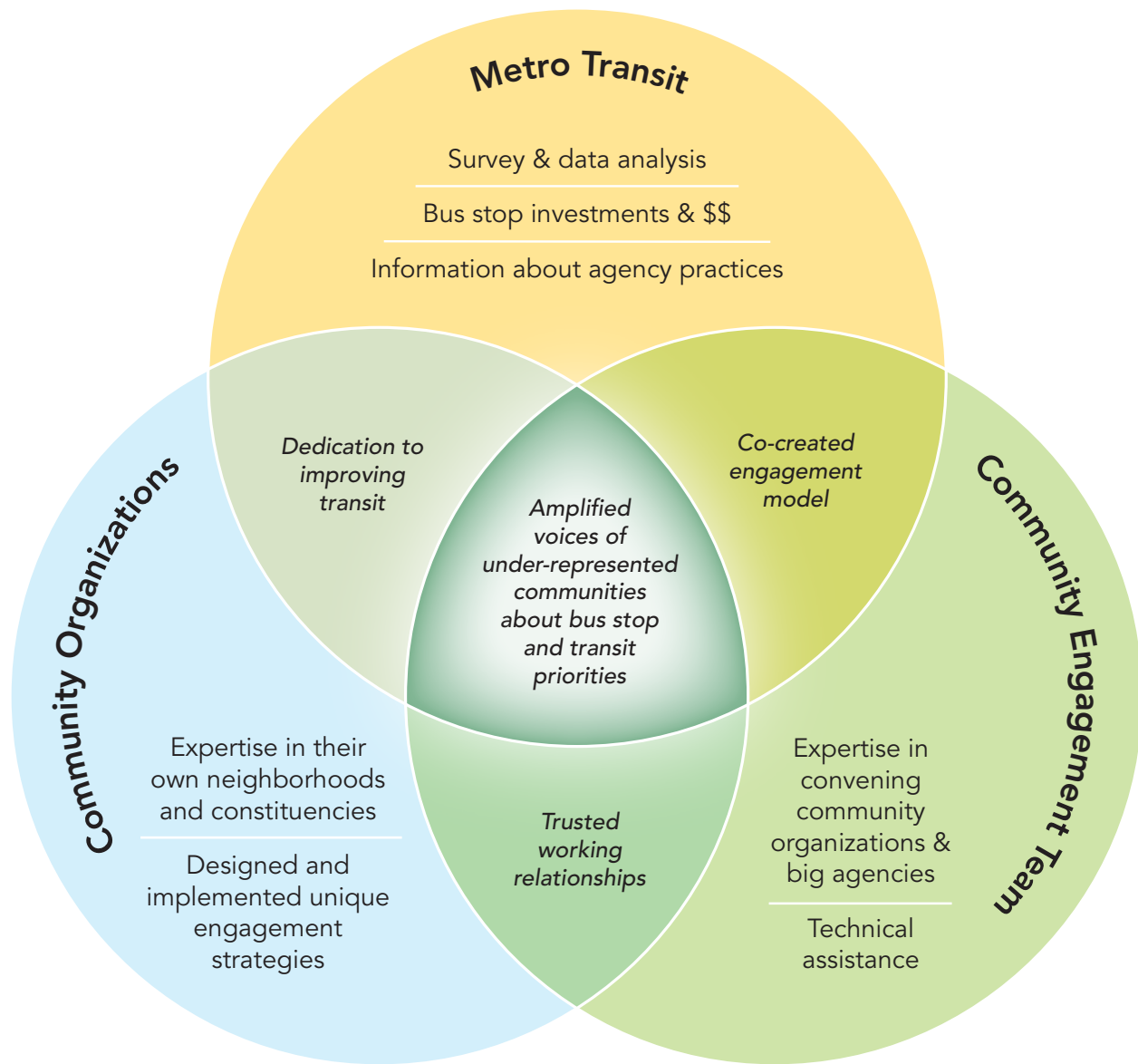
\$332,250

contracted to the CET (Nexus Community Partners, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, CURA), with \$217,250 subcontracted out to community-based organizations

"All the players 'at the table' were paid to be there, rather than paid professional staff and volunteer community members. This created the conditions for leadership development and community ownership of the process – which ultimately yielded high quality results."

– Metro Transit staff

Community Engagement Model



"Co-creation of this model with the CET involved Metro Transit giving up decision-making power in several ways, which was essential in creating the conditions and space for community leadership and ownership of the work and outcomes.

Examples of this include who and how community engagement subcontracts were awarded, along with empowering community organizations to build off their expertise and create their own customized engagement plans for their constituencies."

– Metro Transit staff



Community Engagement Numbers



An estimated **7,000 people** participated in community engagement



2,013 Metro Transit surveys completed
+ 2,230 surveys customized by community organizations



Nearly 200 community engagement events

About the CET

Community Engagement Team (CET) is comprised of Nexus Community Partners, the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota. The CET's work is focused on supporting low-wealth populations, indigenous communities, communities of color, new immigrants and people with disabilities.

"That traditionally underrepresented communities are well represented in the survey is just one measure of the value brought by community organizations. They successfully brought the survey to their communities, and used their relationships in the community to have conversations in ways that would not have been possible had Metro Transit staff or transit consultants initiated the conversation."

– Metro Transit staff

Subcontracted Community Organizations

- West Broadway Business and Area Coalition with Juxtaposition Arts
- Harrison Neighborhood Association
- Jordan Area Community Council with Hawthorne Neighborhood Council
- Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council
- West Bank Community Coalition
- Hope Community
- Corcoran Neighborhood Organization with Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization, Lyndale Neighborhood Association and Lake Street Council
- Nokomis East Neighborhood Association
- St. Paul Smart Trips
- West Side Community Organization
- Dayton's Bluff Community Council

What did we learn?

PRIORITIES FOR WHERE TO LOCATE SHELTERS:

- Where many people wait for the bus.
- Near hospitals, healthcare clinics, social service centers, senior housing, housing and services for people with disabilities, where children are waiting.
- Where residents don't have a car, where residents have lower income.

"Even though ridership may not be as high, shelters are needed near senior housing."
– Survey participant

PRIORITIES FOR SHELTER AND BUS STOP FEATURES:

- Signage and information
- Benches
- Shelters
- Lighting
- Heaters
- Safe street crossings
- Maintenance at bus stops and shelters

"Bus shelters with lighting, heat, benches and maps are extremely helpful to those of us who rely on transit."
– Survey participant

PRIORITIES BEYOND BUS STOPS:

- Bus service and operations
- Equitable distribution of resources
- Fares
- Safety

"When buses run late or too early, peoples' livelihoods are at stake." – Community Organization

"Some people actually don't have cars ... and they rely on the light rail and the bus every day they wake up." – Community Organization

PRIORITIES FOR SHELTER STYLE AND BUS STOP DESIGN:

- A safe path to the bus stop, and safe environment at the bus stop
- Design for all ages and abilities
- Better weather protection

"Wider sidewalks are a must. Too often I can't be visible to flag the bus without being dangerously close to fast driving automobile traffic. When I have a toddler with me I'm 10 times more anxious doing this."
– Survey participant

"[The bus system] has helped my family to attend doctor appointments, grocery stores when there are no other options. It helps us survive."
– Survey participant

"Safety must be addressed through an equity lens because of the different ways that safety shapes and defines bus riders' experiences depending on their location, identity and other factors. We heard from the majority of subcontractors that safety was a top concern for their community members when using transit. The diversity of comments and suggestions on this topic show that safety is defined and addressed differently in every community."
– CET



Community engagement accomplishments

- Engaging and centering the people and communities who are traditionally under-represented in transit decision-making, but are most affected by these decisions.
- Engaging the community in discussions focusing on equity and policy surrounding the investment of resources at the bus stop level to influence the criteria the agency uses to prioritize bus stops improvements.
- Fostering greater transparency on Metro Transit decision-making and providing more information about bus stop improvements.
- Creating opportunities to build capacity within the community on transit issues, by compensating community organizations as full partners.
- Documenting and sharing lessons learned from this model of community engagement.

"[As a result of the Better Bus Stops project] we have closer relationships with individuals from Metro Transit itself, the Metropolitan Council, and from various neighborhood groups..."

– Community Organization

"A major success is that residents in the community feel that we are doing something positive by being out there in the streets engaging with them. We have heard comments such as 'It's nice to see people wanting to do something positive in the neighborhood,' multiple times from the community."

– Community Organization

For more information, the Better Bus Stops Community Engagement Final Report and video, visit the Better Bus Stops website at metrotransit.org/better-bus-stops.

Community Engagement Planning Guide

Working toward engaging the Brooklyn Park community in an authentic, equitable and meaningful way

Developed by Lidiya Girma, Neighborhood Relations Specialist, lidiya.girma@brooklynpark.org



About this guide

This guide serves as a resource to help staff think through the process of developing a community engagement (i.e. public outreach and participation) plan for City projects (policies, programs, infrastructure development, construction work, etc.) by providing questions and key points for consideration.

What is an engagement plan?

An engagement plan outlines a set of specific outreach and public participation strategies with assigned roles and a timeline for new or reoccurring projects that will impact the community either at the neighborhood or citywide level.

The Community Engagement team can help!

The Community Engagement (CE) team exists to assist all City departments and divisions develop and carry out effective community engagement strategies. Use this resource! Work through the questions outlined in this guide with one or more members of the team.

Step 1: do we need to engage the community?

How do we know if our project needs to incorporate some level of community engagement?

Yes	No	Does our project have potential environmental, economic, safety and/or health impacts on the community?
Yes	No	Have community members voiced interest, concerns or opposition to our project?
Yes	No	Would public participation help our project achieve equitable outcomes for our community members?
Yes	No	Will we be asking the community to provide additional funding for our project (i.e. assessment, tax increase, bond referendum, etc.)?

If the answer to at least one of the above questions is a yes, then contact the CE team. Let's create a plan!



Step 2: what we know and don't know about our project

Before we begin developing public outreach and participation strategies, let's think through what we know about our project. Skip the questions that do not apply.

Questions to consider

- What does our project seek to do for the community?
- What are the anticipated impacts (both positive and negative) at the neighborhood level? What about at the citywide level?
- What is the current level of community awareness about our project and its impact?
- What have our community engagement efforts looked like in the past for this or similar projects? Were they effective or ineffective?
- What are the possible consequences/outcomes (if any) of not engaging the community?
- How can our project timeline accommodate a community engagement process?
- What information is missing? What is still unknown about our project (i.e. funding, timeline, etc.)?



Step 3: identifying who to engage

Depending on the nature of our project, we will want to develop an understanding of either or both of the following:

- Relationship between the level of project impact community stakeholders experience and their current level of engagement (awareness and involvement) with our project or the City more generally (see illustration 1).
- Relationship between the impacted community stakeholders' influence on project outcomes and their current level of engagement with our project (see illustration 2).

Questions to consider

- Which specific community members/groups will be most impacted by our project?
 - Which groups are already engaged? Which are currently disengaged?
 - Which groups have a high influence on project outcomes? Which groups do we need to empower to have greater influence?
 - Which groups are easy for us to reach? Which are difficult for us to reach?
 - With which groups do we already have built relationships? With which groups do we need to begin developing connections?
- From the impacted community members/groups we identified, which need to be:
 - Provided printed and electronic information about our project?
 - Invited to give input and feedback on one or more aspects of our project?
 - Invited to help shape and/or carry out the community engagement effort?
 - Included in the development and decision making process of our project?
- Which City departments and external partner organizations should we collaborate with for our community engagement efforts to be successful?

Illustration 1

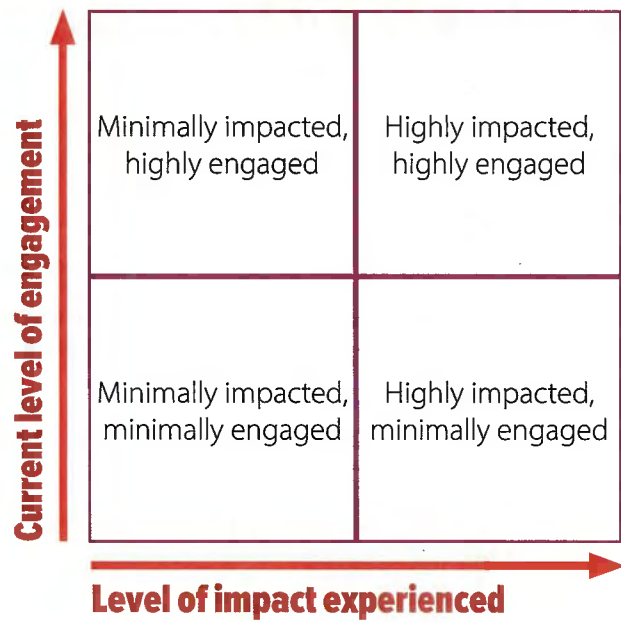
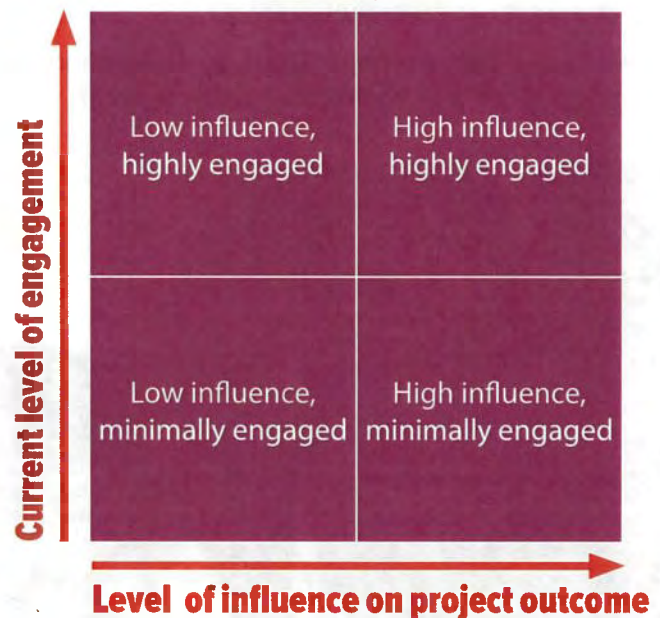


Illustration 2



Step 4: choosing the right community engagement strategies

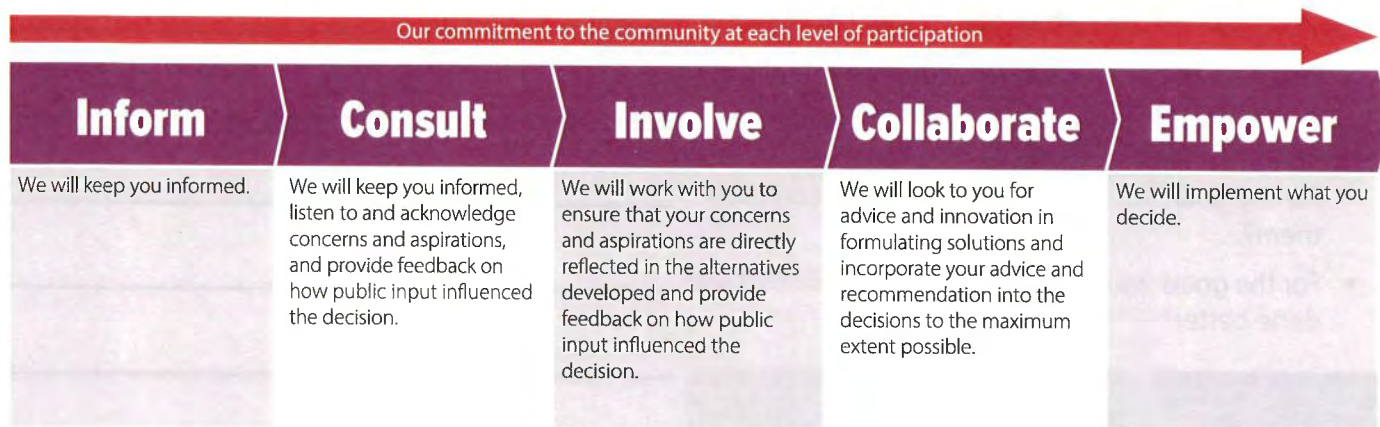
Our engagement strategies should seek to be dynamic, adaptive and responsive to resident needs and circumstances.

Barriers, challenges and opportunities

- There are transportation, language, technological, institutional and physical barriers that limit access to information and active engagement for socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, community members with disabilities, youth, the elderly, and communities of color.
- We have a culturally and racially diverse community that requires varying methods of information sharing and engagement opportunities. One strategy does not work for all.
- We can leverage existing relationships with community members/groups to reach out to and build new relationships with disengaged and under represented populations.

Setting expectations

We should strive to be transparent about the level of influence and control community members can exercise through their input and involvement on a city project. Set realistic expectations to prevent disappointment and frustration.



IAP2: Spectrum of Public Participation

Questions to consider

- Which communication outlets should we use? Will these outlets reach the intended community members/groups?
- For public meetings/gatherings, which physical locations/spaces (both indoor and outdoor) will be the most convenient/accessible for community members?
- For in-person outreach, during which times and days of the week will we be best able to reach the intended community groups?
- How will we make sure our engagement efforts are equitable? How can we limit barriers to public participation?

Step 5: what does success look like?

Assessing our efforts is an integral part of improving our outreach and engagement strategies. It helps us to understand what we are doing well and how we can improve. It also keeps us accountable to our selves and the community.

Questions to consider before the project starts

- If our community outreach and engagement efforts are successful, what outcomes will we see?
- What are the specific goals and objectives of our outreach and public participation efforts?
- What are some indicators (what we can see and measure) that let us know that we have achieved our engagement goals?

Assessing our efforts after the project is done

- Based on the goals we set for our outreach efforts at the beginning of this project, which did we meet and which did we not meet?
- For the goals we met, what helped us accomplish them?
- For the goals we did not meet, what could we have done better?

[illegible]

Community Engagement Initiative

Best Practices and Recommendations



Background

The City of Brooklyn Park was hit particularly hard by the recession, experiencing high rates of foreclosures, increased poverty, and decreased economic opportunity. The city was also experiencing a rapid demographic shift, as the proportion of residents identifying as white fell from 70% in 2000 to only 51% in 2010.

In December of 2009, Brooklyn Park began a five-year Community Engagement Initiative (CEI), bringing together community members, volunteers, and city staff to change the way that the City engages with residents.

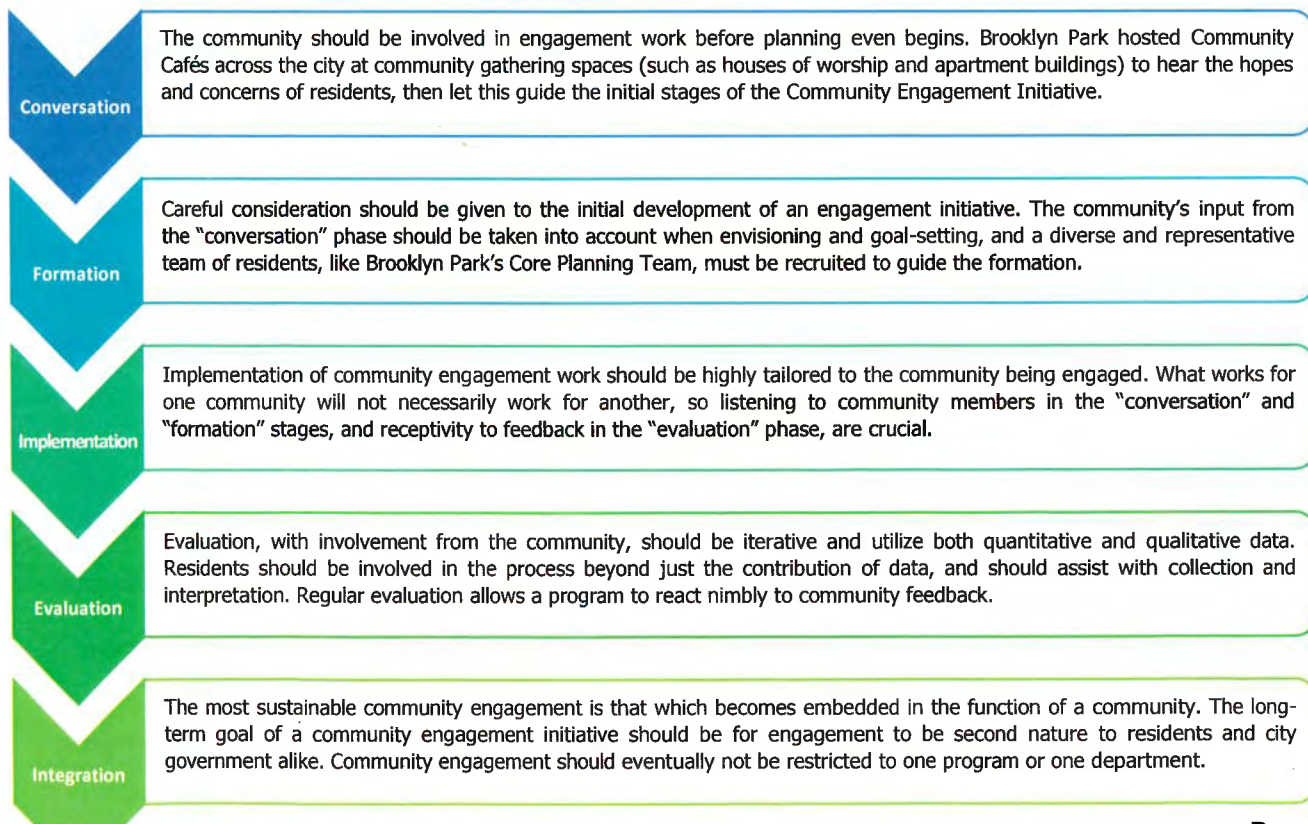
After holding a series of Community Cafés to learn from the community about the issues that are important to them, a core planning team was formed to set a direction for the new initiative. This team of residents, community leaders, and city staff created the strategic goals and structure that guided the initiative, and a new mission statement for the city.

Today the Community Engagement Department is an established part of city government, and departments across the city utilize community engagement in their planning and decision-making. CEI has had a lasting impact in Brooklyn Park through the events, organizations, and partnerships it began, and through the resulting shift in the city's culture.

Brooklyn Park Demographics

Population:	~80,000 (6 th largest city in MN)
Density:	2,906 people/mi ²
Race/Ethnicity:	White – 51% Black/African-American – 24% Asian – 15% Hispanic/Latino – 6% Two or More Races – 3%
Immigration Data:	21% foreign-born Cultural groups include Liberian, Hmong, Somali, Vietnamese, Latino, and other immigrant groups
Average Income:	\$54,196
Median Rent:	\$871 (58% of renters suffer Housing Cost Burden)
Median Age:	32.7 years

Key Stages



Findings

Planning Process

- The Core Planning Team's diversity was crucial. Because city staff and residents were involved in the planning in roughly equal numbers, and represented different major stakeholders in the Brooklyn Park community, a variety of key issues were addressed.
- Direct outreach to particular groups and individuals ensured that underrepresented groups were included in the process from the start.
- The consensus model used required greater time commitment, but resulted in greater buy-in from participants.
- Facilitation by an outside group was beneficial to the planning process.

Volunteer Support

- Participants often faced difficulties balancing the time commitment of volunteering with their other commitments.
- The city would benefit from a more organized and consistent system for engaging and mobilizing volunteers for programs and events, and could consider hiring a volunteer coordinator to reduce burden on other staff.

Resident Empowerment

- Participants feel as if they have a voice in City Hall, and feel more comfortable engaging in city business as a resident outside of CEI as well.
- Enthusiasm for the initiative has been at its strongest, participants said, when residents were driving its direction and programming.
- When transitioning from direct programming to integration across departments, find ways for residents to continue to lead.

Culture Change

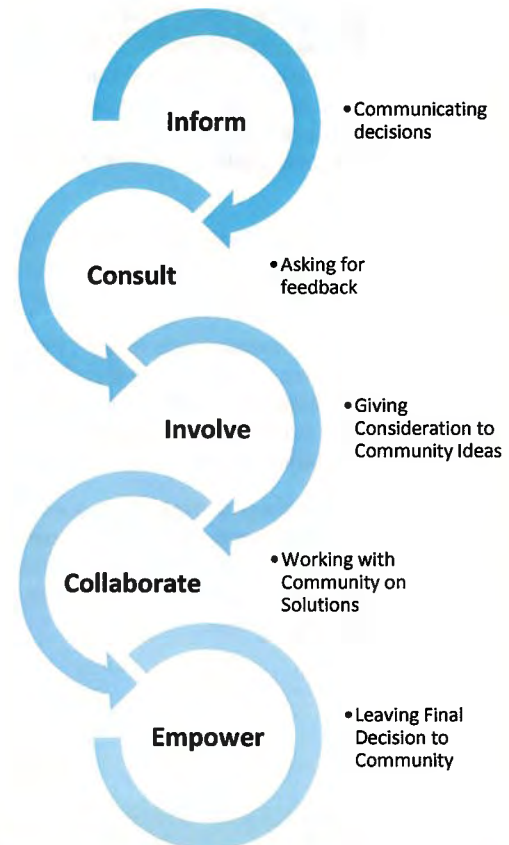
- A major positive result of the CEI was a shift within city government toward a culture of engagement, one in which community engagement became a part of every program rather than a separate activity.
- Staff and elected officials are more accessible to residents.

Diversity and Equity

- Residents noted that as result of CEI they were able to get to know the diverse cultural communities of Brooklyn Park, thanks to the early and sustained focus on diversity in initiative planning and implementation.
- In addition to increased familiarity, residents reported feeling more connected to community members that are different from themselves, and more willing to listen to new ideas and collaborate.

Spectrum of Participation

Adapted from IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum



Successes

Brooklyn Park Pride – Residents are prouder to tell others that they live in Brooklyn Park and feel more invested in the city's future.

Empowered Community Members – Participants feel comfortable in City Hall and feel like they can make a difference in the city.

Leadership Development – Residents received training and had access to new opportunities.

New Partnerships – Partnerships formed brought people and organizations together.

New and Deepened Relationships – Participants made friends and professional connections.

Engagement Embedded in City Culture – Community Engagement became part of how the city of Brooklyn Park functions.

Community Programs and Events – Community created new programs and events.

Celebrating Diversity – Residents got to know and work more closely with the unique cultural communities in Brooklyn Park.



Brooklyn Park CEI Participants at a celebration recognizing their work.

Evaluation of this initiative was made possible through a partnership between the City of Brooklyn Park and the Resilient Communities Project, part of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. For the full report visit <http://rcp.umn.edu/>.

Community Engagement Initiative

Accomplishments



Background

In December of 2009, Brooklyn Park began a five-year Community Engagement Initiative (CEI), bringing together community members, volunteers, and city staff to change the way that the City engages with residents.

After holding a series of Community Cafés to learn from the community about the issues that are important to them, a core planning team was formed to set a direction for the new initiative. This team of residents, community leaders, and city staff created the strategic goals and structure that guided the initiative, and the mission statement and core values that continue to guide the city.

From 2010 to 2015, the youth, diversity, resources, and measurement teams, along with the core planning team, worked tirelessly to plan, implement, and evaluate strategies for meaningfully engaging and empowering Brooklyn Park residents.

Today the Community Engagement Division is an established part of city government, and departments across the city utilize community engagement in their planning and decision-making. CEI has had a lasting impact in Brooklyn Park through the events, organizations, and partnerships it began, and through the resulting shift in the city's culture.

Themes

Renewed Brooklyn Park Pride – Residents are prouder to tell others that they live in Brooklyn Park and feel more invested in the city's future.

Empowered Community Members – Participants feel comfortable in City Hall and feel like they can make a difference in the city.

Leadership Development – Residents received training and had access to new opportunities.

New Partnerships – Partnerships formed brought people and organizations together.

New and Deepened Relationships – Participants made friends and professional connections.

Engagement Embedded in City Culture – Community Engagement became part of how the city of Brooklyn Park functions.

Community Programs and Events – Community created new programs and events.

Celebrating Diversity – Residents got to know and work more closely with the unique cultural communities in Brooklyn Park.

*"We have to stop doing things to people
and start doing things with people."*

- Mayor Steve Lampi



Evaluation of this initiative was made possible through a partnership between the City of Brooklyn Park and the Resilient Communities Project, part of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. For the full report visit <http://rcp.umn.edu/>.

Participation

Volunteers	Hundreds
Team Members	~80 at a time
Events Sponsored (2015)	62
Event Attendees (2015)	3,847
New Neighbors Welcomed	Over 5,300
Neighborhoods Named	31

Notable Accomplishments

A small sample of achievements to come out of CEI:

Goals Met

- 91% feel proud to live in Brooklyn Park.
- 92% feel it is a thriving community
- 91% feel they have opportunity to succeed

Events

- Diversity Fest
- Youth in Government Day
- Citywide Garage Sales

Programs

- Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth
- Neighborhoods Formation
- New Connect

Honors

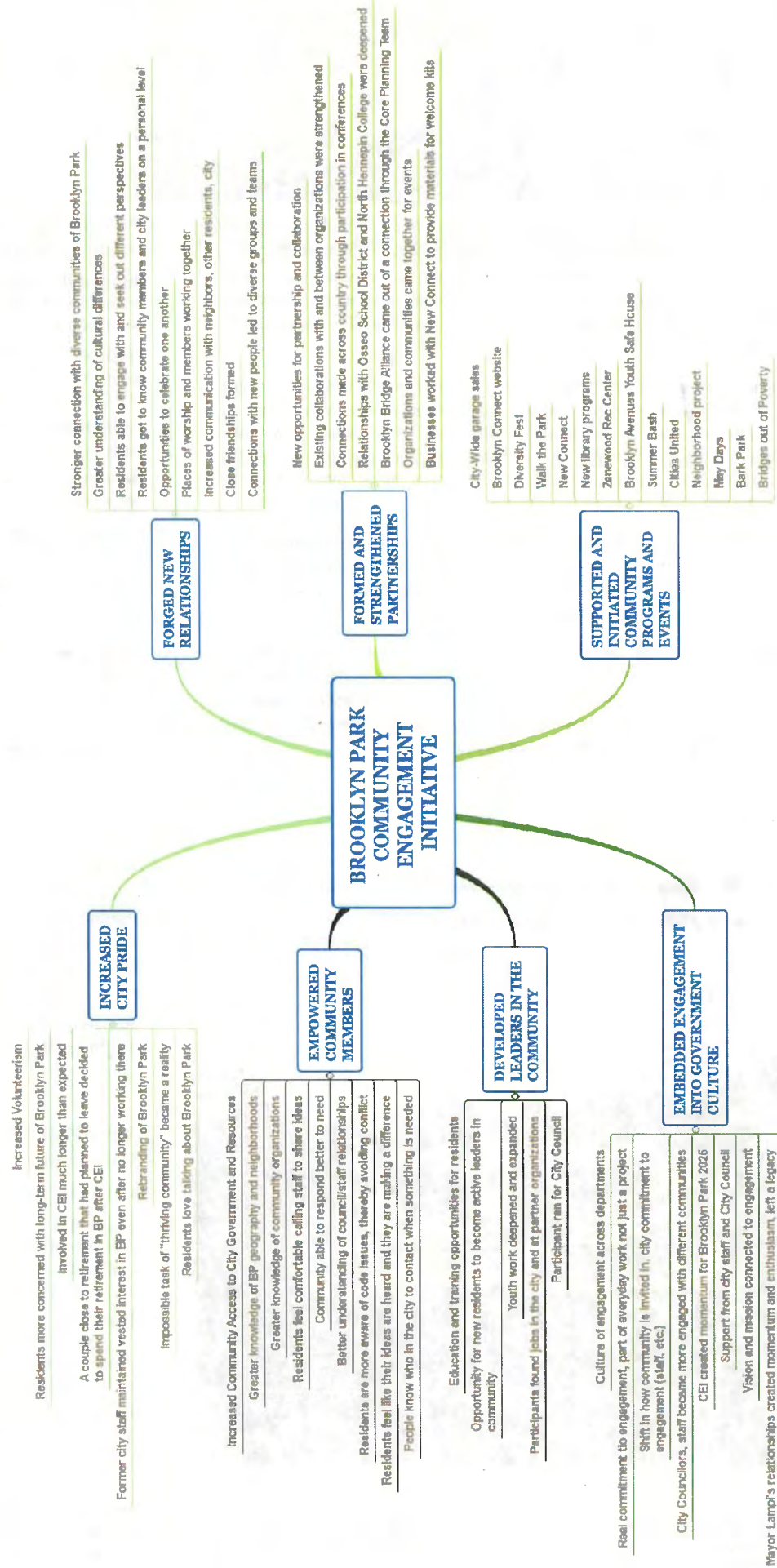
- Featured at 2013 Transforming Local Government national conference
- Invited to attend national Community Engagement Leadership Institute in 2012

Impact Map

Ripple Effect Mapping

Ripple Effect Mapping is an evaluation method that utilizes a combination of participant self-interview and collective discussion to create a visualization of the "ripples" of impact that extend outward from the immediate effects. Participants interview each other in pairs about successes, challenges, and unexpected results of a program, then as a group map out the relationships between the ideas that arose during their interviews. The participatory nature of the evaluation allows for the collective building up of themes and the tracing of chains of events that may have resulted from a program.

A Ripple Effect Mapping session was conducted with 38 CEI participants, volunteers, and team members. The following is a condensed version of the resulting map:





WWW.NEXUSCP.ORG/NCEI

Contact: Avi Viswanathan, aviswanathan@nexuscp.org or Angie Brown, abrown@nexuscp.org

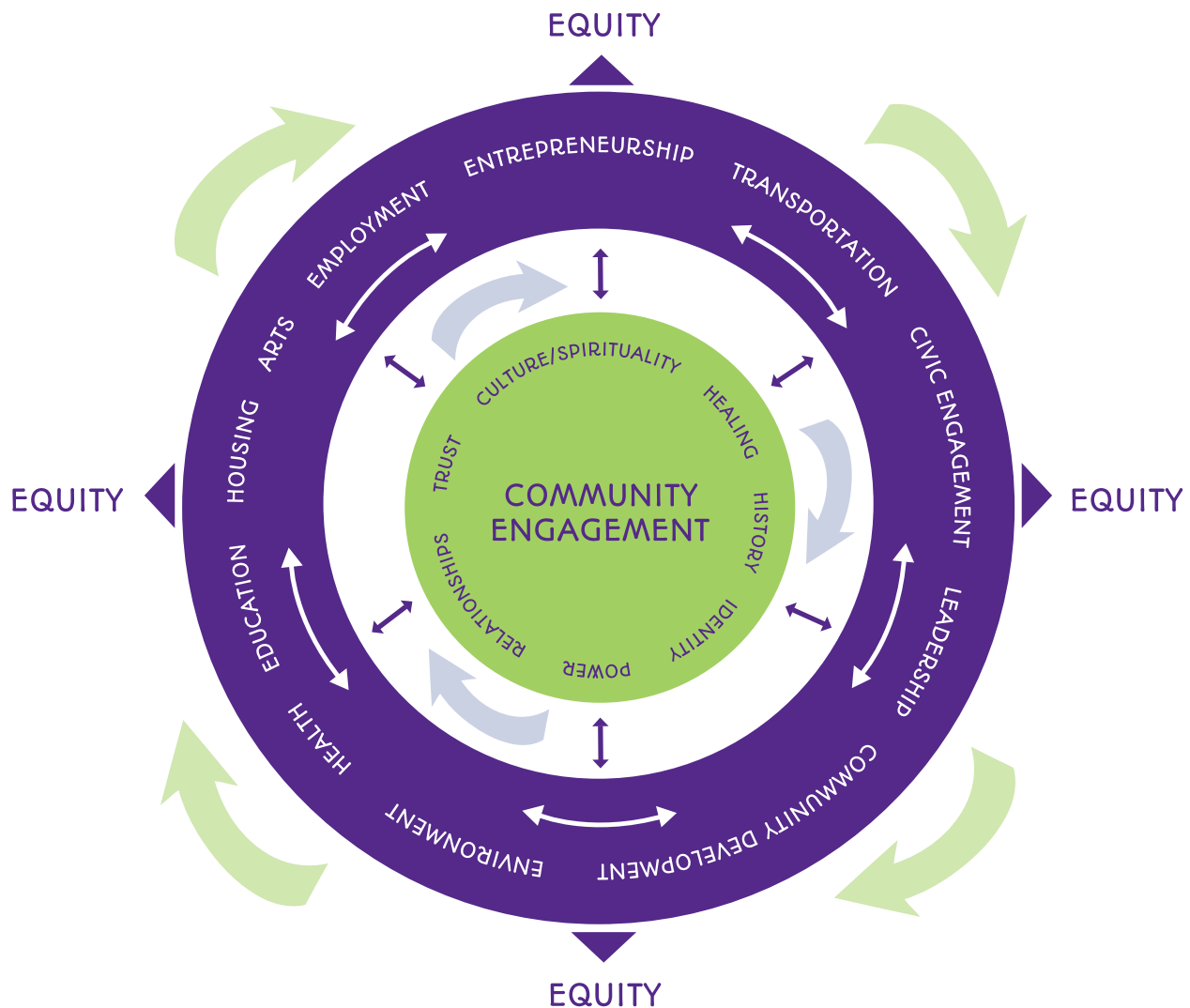
IMPACTS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL

You are free to share, copy and distribute this material. We ask that you give appropriate credit to Nexus Community Engagement Institute and/or its partners.

We encourage you to share your feedback with us and tell us how you are using the tool or resource. Nexus Community Engagement Institute and our partners intend these documents and tools to introduce practitioners, funders, evaluators, and community members to community engagement and to give the field clarity in its language and principles. However, community engagement is not a field that can rely on written materials alone; it takes a community of practitioners to support one another in practicing community engagement effectively, meeting its challenges, and tapping the strengths within each unique context. We encourage you to seek out experienced practitioners to support you in implementing these tools, principles, and concepts.

Nexus Community Engagement Institute is available for consultation. Please contact us at www.nexuscp.org/ncei or email program director Avi Viswanathan at aviswanathan@nexuscp.org.

Nexus Community Engagement Institute is continuing the work of the Building the Field of Community Engagement (BTF) collaborative. The BTF collaborative was a partnership between Casa de Esperanza, the Cultural Wellness Center, Hope Community, Lyndale Neighborhood Association, the Native American Community Development Institute, and Nexus Community Partners.



The Impacts of Community Engagement model describes the outcomes that result from authentic community engagement.

The outer circle components are the tangible, visible goals of the work that community members do together.

The inner circle components are achieved in the process of doing the work and are foundational elements of a healthy community in their own right. These assets are the building blocks for positive change in all of the areas of the outer circle and need to be attended to and will be strengthened in a long-term process, during and beyond the process of achieving an outcome in the outer circle. The importance of these elements is often overlooked and communities' work in these areas is often under-resourced, but is vital in achieving equity.

The wheel as a whole is fluid and dynamic, demonstrating the perpetual interconnectedness of the elements. The model demonstrates the power of community engagement to impact multiple levels and systems, and to create sustained change that lasts beyond a project or campaign. This sustained systems change will impact all elements of an organization, institution, or system, including culture, structures, policies, rules, programs, staffing, and the allocation of resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DEFINITIONS

As of May 29, 2018

Community members and the Building the Field of Community Engagement partners (see cover) developed the following working definitions to describe the elements of the model. Coming to a collective understanding about what these terms mean and how to center them when engaging community will help build the field of community engagement and advance equity.

EQUITY: Fair access to resources and opportunities, full participation in the life and well-being of the community, and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A process that includes multiple techniques to promote the participation of residents in community life, especially those who are excluded and isolated, by engaging them in collective action to create a healthy community.

INNER CIRCLE DEFINITIONS: *Outcomes that are strengthened as a result of community engagement and are an essential part of the process.*

CULTURE/SPIRITUALITY

Community engagement nurtures the practices, beliefs, traditions, and ways of knowing that create cohesion and give people a vision across generations.

HEALING

Community engagement provides the space to draw meaning from a personal or collective story, and to recognize and build on strengths and resilience. It acknowledges and promotes wholeness.

HISTORY

Community engagement is a dialogue between the past, the present, and the future; acknowledging and learning from key events, sorrows, dreams, movements, influencers, victories and aspirations that have shaped how a community expresses its own culture and interacts with people and systems. Community engagement provides a path to healing and building from that history.

IDENTITY

Community engagement supports the maintenance, development, and/or reclamation of a healthy sense of self for individuals and includes a sense of belonging to groups that gives a person connection, continuity, and meaning.

POWER

Community engagement activates and exercises the ability to act for personal and community benefit.

RELATIONSHIPS

The practice of community engagement requires the building of authentic, long-term relationships involving truth, respect, and reciprocity.

TRUST

The practice of community engagement calls for transparency, honesty, and mutual learning and understanding between individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions. It requires being vulnerable and open to deepen relationships and strengthen mutual accountability.

Pioneer Park Master Plan: Best Practices for Community Engagement



Prepared by RCP Fellows:

Vipasha Bansal, Catherine J. Bruns, Gunnar Carlson,
Kyle Franta, Kendra Klenz

Prepared in Collaboration with

Bryce Shearen, Community Services Manager
and Corrin Wendell, Community
Development Manager, City of Little Canada



The project on which this report is based was completed in collaboration with City of Little Canada as part of the 2020–2021 Resilient Communities Project (RCP) partnership. RCP is a program at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) that connects University faculty and students with Minnesota communities to address strategic projects that advance local resilience and sustainability.

The contents of this report represent the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of RCP, CURA, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, or City of Little Canada.



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Resilient Communities Project

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Building Community-University Partnerships for Resilience

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Pioneer Park Master Plan

Best Practices for Community Engagement

Prepared by

Vipasha Bansal, Catherine J. Bruns, Gunnar Carlson,
Kyle Franta, Kendra Klenz

Resilient Communities Project Fellows

Prepared in Collaboration with

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Corrin Wendell, Director of Community Development & Planning
City of Little Canada



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Introduction

Overview of RCP Fellows Program

This report is the result of a collaborative effort between the City of Little Canada and the [Resilient Communities Project \(RCP\) Fellows Program](#). The RCP Fellows Program organizes interdisciplinary teams of University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UMN) graduate and professional students to assist local government agencies with projects and initiatives aimed at advancing their community's sustainability, livability, and resilience. This work was prepared by the Summer 2020 Fellows team, a group of five UMN graduate students with academic backgrounds in Communication Studies, Landscape Architecture, Linguistics, and Public Affairs; detailed team member biographies can be found in [Appendix A](#). Team members were selected via a rigorous application and interview process, with work beginning in mid-June 2020 and culminating at the end of August 2020.

Project Summary

The initial project presented to the RCP Fellows focused on the development of a Pioneer Park Master Plan. Specifically, the Fellows were asked to aid the City in identifying and testing COVID-19-approved community engagement tactics, the results of which would be used to inform the Master Plan. However, conversations with City staff, Council Members, and Parks and Recreation Commissioners, as well as exploratory research in academic and practitioner literature soon revealed that a shift in project objective may be required. After consulting with City staff, a decision was made to pivot the project goal from on-the-ground fieldwork to big picture engagement research and strategizing.

Our early research indicated that an examination of community engagement best practices was necessary in order to provide the City of Little Canada a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of its community engagement. This change in objective was prompted after the Fellows identified a lack of previous engagement with large sectors of Little Canada, including residents adjacent to Pioneer Park. Despite City awareness of and engagement with a majority of stakeholders, the Fellows became concerned that any engagement undertaken without first stepping back would overlook underrepresented or marginalized stakeholders whose needs and desires were currently unknown. Our team quickly recognized that failing to involve the voices of a significant portion of community members would render equitable park planning ineffective and could hinder improvement efforts for Pioneer Park - a public park that all community members should be able to access and enjoy. This concern led the Fellows to redirect the majority of their summer work to focus on the topic of generalized community engagement.

Over the course of the summer, the Fellows and City staff identified and compared key community stakeholders and began development of an overarching community engagement guide that includes targeted recommendations and considerations for the City of Little Canada as it pursues development of a Pioneer Park Master Plan. The following report details the results of this work.

Historical Context

The City of Little Canada

Positioning History

A first step in the RCP Fellows' work was to become familiar with the City of Little Canada and its people. At the outset of the project, the Fellows took a site visit to Pioneer Park; reviewed existing strategic documents such as the 2018 Park System Master Plan and 2019 Strategic Plan; and conversed with City staff, Council Members, and Commissioners on their vision for the Pioneer Park Master Plan. Overall, this early research revealed City pride for its community history, as demonstrated in the book *Little Canada: A Voyageur's Vision* (2018), and a desire to incorporate this history into an eventual redesign of Pioneer Park.

Our team took City interest in highlighting its community history seriously. To better inform ourselves and our work, our team conducted interviews and scoured existing documents to understand how Little Canada's history was incorporated in past community projects and initiatives. Our research was fruitful in that it revealed significant attention to City history in the Park System Master Plan; however, our group also noticed that the City's existing historical narratives excluded mentions of Indigenous and non-settler peoples. When an interview with Little Canada Historical Society President Curt Loschy revealed a lack of recorded information on these perspectives yet a desire to learn more about the history and lineage of Native Americans in the area, **our team conducted additional research on the City of Little Canada's past in an attempt to fill in some of these gaps.**

The results - which include in-depth explorations of the relationships between Native American, Dakota, and French Canadian peoples within the context of Little Canada - ground the findings and recommendations of our report and influenced our decision to develop community definitional language, which can be seen in the [Overview of Community Definitions](#) and [Appendix B](#) sections. We hope that our sharing of Little Canada's well-rounded and diverse history may guide City staff, Council Members, and Commissioners in future discussions regarding **how to appropriately recognize and honor the City's past, present, and future.**

Native American/Dakota History

Minnesota (or Mni Sota) is the homeland of the Dakota people and central to Dakota creation stories. Today, the Dakota have various groups spread across Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Canada, which together form the Seven Council Fires. The Ojibwe also had (and still have) a presence and land in Minnesota.

Dakota land in Minnesota was systematically taken from the Dakota people through a series of treaties with the US government. This land stealing was enabled by the US government's failure to uphold their end of treaty agreements, which meant that Dakota land was never appropriately paid for. For example, a number of treaties underrepresented the true price of the Dakota land, which resulted in the Dakota being significantly underpaid. In addition, the government withheld most of their payments to the Dakota in order to "settle debts" that were never clearly defined. Furthermore, the Dakota were often unaware of the full terms of the treaties they were signing, as accurate and reliable treaty translations were provided infrequently, if at all. Although the Dakota expressed unwillingness to agree to these treaties, they were threatened with military force if they did not sign; consequently, their options appeared to be to sign the treaties and trust they would be paid the money and goods promised to them, or have the government take their land regardless.

Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and Treaty of Mendota

The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and Treaty of Mendota, signed in 1851, were two of the most important treaties signed by the Dakota. Both treaties required the Dakota to hand over large amounts of land in exchange for money, goods, and resources. However, after these treaties were signed, the US government resold the land they had purchased for 15 times what they paid the Dakota for it.

The terms of the treaties originally signed by the Dakota left them with only two 10-mile strips of land. Yet after the treaties were signed, the government changed the terms and removed the allocation of two reservations of land for the Dakota, leaving them with nowhere to go. The Dakota were forced to approve this change in order to receive any of the cash and goods they had been promised. The government then "permitted" the Dakota to live on the land until it was needed for "white settlement."

The Traders' Paper

After signing the treaties of Traverse de Sioux and Mendota, the Dakota leaders were handed the Traders' Paper to sign. The Traders' Paper allowed the US government to use the money owed to the Dakota to instead pay debts to fur traders that they claimed the Dakota owed them. Even before these papers were signed, these "debts" to fur traders were a major reason that the Dakota were not paid for their land.

The Traders' Paper was not read or translated for the Dakota before signing; in fact, many Dakota thought it was another copy of the previous treaties. **In the decade following the signing of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, Treaty of Mendota, and Traders' Paper, over 100,000 white immigrants moved to Minnesota to live on land that was previously owned by Indigenous tribes.**

The US-Dakota War

A combination of crop failure, an inability to hunt on what was now US land, and the failure of the US government to provide promised food, supplies, and money caused the Dakota to starve. Out of options and running out of time, the Dakota declared war on the US in 1862 in a last-ditch effort to reclaim their land. The war lasted only six weeks; the Dakota lost.

Following this loss, a commission tried Dakota men who were accused of “participating in the war.” Although 303 men were sentenced to death, President Lincoln eventually reduced the number to 39 men, who were then executed. **After the war, the Dakota were forced to leave Minnesota altogether, and the US considered all treaty obligations to the Dakota null and void.**

City of Little Canada History

The Little Canada Historical Society website provides the following context for the emergence of the City of Little Canada:

The Mdewakanton Dakota from Little Crow's Village or Kaposia (seasonal home) made their summer home in the area that is today Little Canada because of the abundant fishing and hunting resources. The first white settlers in the region were French/Canadians. Many of the descendants of these settlers still reside in Little Canada. The city's largest lake, Lake Gervais, was named after Benjamin Gervais. He was the first white man to claim land here in 1844. (“Little Canada's History,” n.d.)

Little Crow was a prominent Dakota leader in the US-Dakota war and was also involved in many treaty signings. It is likely that there would have been interactions between Little Crow's village and the Canadian settlers who arrived on what is now Little Canada land. The quality of these interactions may or may not have been friendly - there is very little information available on this matter, so it is impossible to know for sure.

Additionally, the first person to claim land in Little Canada did so in 1844 - *before* the signing of the treaties of Traverse de Sioux and Mendota that gave Dakota land to the US government. Knowing this, it is quite possible that the Little Canada land that was settled could have belonged to the Dakota.

Residents of Maplewood, Minnesota have a similarly complicated history with early settlement. The Maplewood Area Historical Society website provides the following information regarding their town's history:

The written history of Maplewood begins about 165 years ago when European and French-Canadian settlers began farming in this area. Prior to this time, the land was inhabited by the Dakota Indians with occasional visits by French and English fur traders and explorers.

In 1850, a group of families ventured from St. Paul along an Indian trail that is now Hazelwood Street. They were the Bells, Caseys, Conlins and Vincents. At today's County Road C, they turned to the east and began to build their log cabins. The sound of their axes alerted the Dakota who had a hunting camp nearby and thought the land was still theirs.

The Dakota asked them to leave and the newcomers quickly retraced their steps. The settlers made repeated attempts to claim the land they had bought for two dollars per acre from the Federal government. Finally in 1853, after the Dakota moved to a reservation on the Minnesota River, the pioneers could build their cabins. ("History of Maplewood," 2020)

Maplewood's proximity to Little Canada suggests that the settling of Little Canada may have followed a similar path. Both the method of land acquisition and the likelihood of direct interaction between the founders of Little Canada and the local Dakota means that **the Dakota people likely played an important role in the town's history, thereby revealing an additional narrative that should be considered by current and future Little Canada community members.**

French Canadian History

Founding

Little Canada was founded by Benjamin Gervais in 1844, and his descendants still live in Little Canada. Gervais travelled to the US from what is now Winnipeg, along with 75 other French-speaking farmers. Before settling Little Canada, Gervais owned 500 acres in Pig's Eye - now known as St. Paul - after he provided funding for the area's first catholic church; a granite list of founding families can still be found in the cemetery.

When it was first founded, Little Canada was a French-speaking community, and remained that way into the 1900s. However, very few current Little Canada residents continue to speak French.

Major Events and Facts

- In the late 1800's, a tornado killed approximately six people.

- When the church was to be demolished and rebuilt, the demo crew misjudged the amount of dynamite needed; this resulted in many of the windows around town exploding.
- The first commercial grist mill in Minnesota was located in Little Canada. That area is now Grist Mill Park, which was Benjamin Gervais' homestead site.
- In 1976, Canadian Days was founded as a centennial celebration that turned into an annual event; this event is still growing annually.

Although the Little Canada Historical Society has put great effort into tracing the lineages of settlers in the Little Canada area, little to no effort has been made to trace and acknowledge those who were already in the area prior to Ben Gervais' purchase of the land. The Little Canada Historical Society acknowledges that many French-Canadian people also have Native American ancestry, but as of today, no discernible emphasis has been placed on this lineage. Dedicating more time to uncovering this piece of history, openly acknowledging the white French-Canadian settlers *and* the area's original Native American settlers, and expanding current and future community understanding of the multiple narratives that exist within the City of Little Canada will allow for a more robust, complete, and inclusive story to be told.

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Overview of Community Definitions

Creating shared vocabulary

Background

Early meetings of the RCP Fellows, City staff, Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Council frequently utilized “buzzwords” that are popular in today’s climate. However, our team became concerned that differences in interpretation as to the meanings of these words could create confusion during planning and decision making processes. After observing definitional sections within multiple community engagement guides (e.g. Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, 2019; Metropolitan Council, 2016), our team determined that the City of Little Canada would benefit from being able to reference and utilize a similar shared vocabulary, the results of which can be viewed in [Appendix B](#).

The RCP Fellows collaborated with City staff to identify and define words that often emerge during planning and decision making discussions. Many of these conversations were informed by definitions developed by other cities and community organizations. We hope that these terms and meanings will evolve with the development of the City and provide guidance for City residents and local officials as they work to achieve community goals and objectives.

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Review of Literature

What is “community engagement”?

Exploring Community Engagement

Developing community engagement (CE) opportunities that are equitable, accessible, and representative of all stakeholders can be a conundrum for those charged with designing and implementing them. Furthermore, constraints related to COVID-19 have rendered some CE tactics unusable, thus placing additional challenges on top of an already complicated problem.

With these considerations in mind, **our team researched CE strategies utilized by academics, practitioners, and individual communities in order to provide answers to common questions regarding effective CE.** The following section summarizes our findings and presents recommendations in the form of three phases of successful CE: Inclusion, Recruitment, and Consideration.

Inclusion: Who must be at the table?

Effective CE begins with identifying stakeholders and community members key to the issue. Because marginalized and diverse populations are often overlooked or underrepresented in CE efforts, this section reflects on what inclusive CE means, why acquiring feedback from diverse stakeholders is vital to a project's success, and how to better involve communities that are commonly underserved in CE processes.

Defining Inclusivity

Aspiring for inclusive CE demonstrates to citizens that their voice and opinion matters. McMonagle (2017) recommends that CE utilize a deliberative approach, whereby public conversations “must strive to be inclusive and represent the whole community, and participants must be considered equal during the deliberation” (p. 3). Although stakeholders should not expect to have their perspective represented in every CE effort, stakeholders should always be provided “a meaningful opportunity to participate in [the] process and to have their needs, concerns, and interest[s] understood by their fellows” (Briand, 1999, p. 75), even if they choose not to participate.

The Benefits of Including Diverse Stakeholders

Bringing diverse populations into the conversation has multiple advantages. McMonagle (2017) notes that including marginalized and underrepresented groups in public forums improves the quality of conversations, increases stakeholders' willingness to consider alternative perspectives

and ideas, and encourages participants to participate in future CE processes. By contrast, when a CE process is considered exclusionary, it may be labeled unfair or illegitimate, which can lead participants to dismiss the results, reject the adopted changes, or refuse to participate in the future (McMonagle, 2017).

Serving the Underserved

Previous research has noted that parks, monuments, and other outdoor recreation areas are frequented less often by marginalized and underrepresented groups, particularly racial and ethnic minorities (Pease, 2015). Roberts (2007) attributes this low attendance to a number of factors, including access limitations, such as transportation and cost restrictions; communication challenges, particularly lack of multi-language materials; fear of discrimination from other visitors and the space itself; lack of diversity in staffing; and generalized lack of knowledge, experience, and awareness about where to go and what to do. Overcoming barriers such as these begins by identifying and inviting underrepresented perspectives in CE efforts.

Expanding the involvement of racial and ethnic minorities in public engagement is a first step for many communities. In 2016, Smiley et al. analyzed survey data of low-income and minority groups' park preferences in urban Houston, Texas. Their analysis revealed that low-income and minority park users preferred improvement efforts that upgraded current park amenities over new accessibility projects that connected parks to neighborhoods and to one another (Smiley et al., 2016). By attending to the desires of majority-minority park users, the city of Houston was able to streamline the larger park planning process and prioritize improvement efforts that would benefit marginalized community members (Smiley et al., 2016).

Although socioeconomic demographics are instinctive considerations, stakeholders with other characteristics are also frequently overlooked. While seeking to identify best practices for conducting sustainability planning in the "Basin" of British Columbia, Canada, Davis (2010) conducted interviews with 35 local government elected officials and staff to identify three populations that often did not attend CE events: seniors, youths, and members of the business community. With this knowledge, Basin communities made sure to hold separate meetings and events to specifically involve these groups, including a business luncheon, a talk at a community senior center, school classroom visits, and a photography workshop for local high schoolers (Davis, 2010).

Including diverse and representative perspectives in public engagement processes requires introspection, investment, and a willingness to change. Yet identifying the necessary voices is only one part of the equation - the voices have to be willing to show up.

Recruitment: How do you bring them to the table?

It is not enough to identify diverse stakeholders if those invited to the conversation never make it. Broad CE goals of inclusivity, equity, and accessibility begin when community members are called in to CE opportunities, and they must be enacted consistently in order to ensure that marginalized and underrepresented populations are willing and able to fully participate in CE efforts. The next section identifies common barriers to equitable CE and suggestions for removing these constraints on participation.

Barriers to Community Engagement

Despite our best efforts to get all stakeholders to the table, factors such as education, socioeconomic status, and proximity to social networks greatly influence who is willing and able to participate (Ryfe & Stalsburg, 2010). McMonagle (2017) stresses that CE efforts that require community members to opt-in to participate - such as invitations to public forums or mailed surveys - tend to recruit wealthy, educated, and professional community members, which is often not a representative sample of the greater community. Factors such as these that influence and shape who is willing or able to participate in CE are known as *barriers*.

Barriers can be categorized in two ways: external and internal. External barriers impact a person's ability to receive or follow through on an invitation to the table. Timing, transportation and technology access, a person's trust in those managing the participation process, and one's belief that their contributions will make a difference are all examples of external barriers that may physically or emotionally prevent someone from participating in CE (McMonagle, 2017). By contrast, internal barriers are those that impact a person's ability to fully and effectively participate at the table once they have arrived. Common internal barriers to participation include inadequate or nonexistent facilitation, safety concerns, lack of language or communication accommodations, and feelings of tokenism (McMonagle, 2017). Luckily, scholars have dedicated time and resources to identifying solutions for overcoming these barriers.

Overcoming Community Engagement Barriers

One practical theory that has been useful in overcoming participatory barriers is Trinity of Voice (Senecah, 2004). Trinity of Voice evaluates the effectiveness of participatory processes based on their adherence to tenets of access, standing, and influence (Senecah, 2004). The first tenet, access, refers to internal and external barriers of "opportunity, potential, and safety" (Senecah, 2004, p. 23). According to Trinity of Voice, for a CE process to fully overcome access barriers, it must minimally include:

- An attitude of collaboration
- Convenient times
- Convenient places

- Readily *available* information and education
- Diverse *opportunities* to access information and education
- Technical assistance to gain a basic grasp on the issues and choices
- Adequate and widely disseminated notice
- *Early* public involvement, and
- Ongoing *opportunities* for involvement (Senecah, 2004, pp. 23-24)

Solutions for overcoming inclusivity barriers have similarly been proposed by Dougill et al. (2006) in their work on Peak District National Park. Peak Park's location in rural northern England summons a diverse grouping of retirees, vacationers, and younger unskilled workers, all of whom are valuable stakeholders in environmental management decisions yet bring their own conflicts, extremist politics, and intense opinions to the table (Dougill et al., 2006). To address these barriers, Dougill et al. (2006) recommend using social network analysis to identify conflicts among stakeholders and those who may be cut off from existing decision making relationships, which can reduce common internal barriers to participation. They also note that social network analysis can help recognize opinion leaders within a stakeholder group whose ideas and suggestions hold sway with other participants (Dougill et al., 2006).

Ideally, bringing marginalized and underrepresented groups to the table would ensure the inclusion of diverse and representative perspectives. However, these stakeholder voices also need additional support and attention in order to be heard and involved in the decision making process.

Consideration: When they're at the table, how do you make sure they're heard?

Seeking out and acquiring a diverse array of stakeholders and community members is an enormous step towards equitable CE. However, Smiley et al. (2016) note that inviting disadvantaged populations to the table is not enough: their voices and opinions must also be prioritized. The final section overviews strategies for fostering equitable participation during CE, considers the benefits and drawbacks of online CE tools, and suggests innovative CE tactics that have been successfully implemented in communities around the world.

Ensuring Equity

Even after ensuring the attendance and participation of diverse stakeholders, it can be difficult to guarantee that their voices will be equitably heard and hold sway on the final decision. Senecah's (2004) Trinity of Voice theory makes sense of this dilemma through its other two tenets, standing and influence. Standing, or "the civic legitimacy, the respect, the esteem, and the consideration that all stakeholders' perspectives should be given," works together with access to grant participants influence over the outcome (Senecah, 2004, p. 24). "If I have

access to a process but my participation in it is not accorded standing,” writes Senecah (2004), “then I might as well as not have access,” which can leave participants feeling frustrated, suspicious, or disenchanted by a process which they perceive they have no impact on (p. 24). However, when participants are successfully afforded access and standing, they experience feelings of influence, or a genuine belief that their ideas and suggestions have been equitably considered alongside others’, *even if* their contributions were unable to be incorporated in the final decision or outcome (Senecah, 2004).

The work of Johnston and Lane (2019) builds on Senecah’s (2004) Trinity of Voice by emphasizing the need for authenticity in the participatory process. Whereas Senecah (2004) asserts that CE processes must create space for the voice of participants, Johnston and Lane (2019) state that CE must go one step further and seek out *authentic* voices, or “the voices of diverse, quiet, and silent community members” (p. 4). In their research, Johnston and Lane (2019) interviewed CE practitioners to understand how the concepts of voice and authenticity play out in CE work. Two themes emerged during interviews: authenticity of process and authenticity of outcome (Johnston & Lane, 2019). The first theme, authenticity of process, describes CE practitioners’ responsibility to find the right community representatives, distinguish between dominant and underlying perspectives, and report accurate and nuanced findings (Johnston & Lane, 2019). By contrast, authenticity of outcome relates to Arnstein’s (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation - which will be further discussed in the [Overview of Community Engagement Evaluation Tool](#) and [Appendix D](#) sections - and concerns of tokenism and predetermined decisions (Johnston & Lane, 2019). True authenticity of outcome occurs “when the conclusions drawn from CE are a reflection of group perspectives, and when those outcomes can make a difference” (Johnston & Lane, 2019, p. 8). Taken together, Johnston and Lane (2019) and Senecah (2004) establish the need to refine and reflect on the CE process so that the voices of marginalized and underrepresented citizens can confidently emerge.

Highlighting and adhering to the suggestions of underserved audiences is of particular importance in park planning. Khazaei, Joppe, and Elliot (2019) summarize that park planning and management is dominated by the voices of nonimmigrants and long-term park users, which can overshadow the insights of existing and potential marginalized park visitors. Their mapping and analyzing of CE efforts to establish Canada’s first urban park in Greater Toronto, Ontario, revealed that a broad strategy to engage multicultural communities, youths, and urban Canadians did not appropriately reflect “the diversity and heterogeneity of communities living in the neighborhoods adjacent to the Park or individual differences among immigrants,” which resulted in valuable viewpoints being left out of the planning process (Khazaei et al., 2019, p. 308). Had CE practitioners shifted from an equality-based mindset to an equity-based one, the park could have better accommodated for and invited in new and underserved park visitors (Khazaei et al., 2019). Thus, like Senecah (2004) and Johnston and Lane (2019), the work of Khazaei et al. (2019) stresses the need to intentionally involve the voices and views of diverse community members early on in park planning processes.

Community Engagement and Technology

Technology can be a valuable tool for designing participatory processes with equity at the forefront. In her white paper “The Promise and Problems of Deliberation,” Ohio University Professor Laura Black (2011) contends that internet growth and an increase in interactive tools have made it easier than ever for citizens to receive and share information and opinions on public issues, which has positive implications for CE and democracy itself.

One advantage to moving CE online is that information about decision making can be presented transparently and immediately, as participants can “read new stories, watch videos posted by other group members, or visit websites” while a participatory process is occurring (Black, 2011, p. 9), thus addressing Senecah’s (2004) recommendation of making information and education available and accessible through diverse mediums. Another benefit of technological CE is that participants can choose their level of anonymity or personalization, which can protect vulnerable participants, allow for more authentic opinion sharing, and foster closer relationships than may exist in face-to-face interaction (Black, 2011). Finally, incorporating technology into CE can overcome frequent barriers of time, place, and space: community members can involve themselves when and where they want, and the CE itself can be designed to accommodate large or unknown numbers of participants (Black, 2011).

Despite these advantages, technology still struggles to allow citizens to effectively “realize their disagreements are based on differing experience, recognize trade-offs, and make choices based on those realizations” (Black, 2011, p. 4). Consequently, it is important to consider the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing internet and technology for CE purposes; more detailed considerations on this subject can be found in the [COVID-19 Considerations](#) section and [Appendix F](#).

Community Engagement in Action

Identifying, inviting, and accommodating diverse stakeholders for CE can admittedly be overwhelming. However, there is evidence to suggest that innovative solutions for equitable CE is a worthwhile investment of time and resources:

- Gordon and Manosevitch (2010) explore a successful use of **augmented reality** in public participation. Their research examines a CE pilot project called Hub2, which used the online virtual world Second Life to facilitate the planning of a community park in Boston, Massachusetts (Gordon & Manosevitch, 2010).
- Menconi et al. (2020) demonstrate how **card games**, played both online and face-to-face, can aid citizen decision making. Their case study recounts the successful development and implementation of a card game to aid community discussion related to the renewal of a historic Italian urban park (Menconi et al., 2020).

- In 2009, the Eden Project, an “environmental and education charity and regeneration project,” created a 3-day **drop-in creative engagement event** to consult five parishes in England about the possible development of an Eco-town (Eden Project, n.d., p. 1). The Project coordinated with local councils, schools, workshop facilitators, and artists to “create an inviting and immersive environment” that collected participant feedback using stickers, drawings, verbal recordings, and flag placement, among many other tools (Eden Project, n.d., p. 3).
- Siders (2017) discusses the use of **structured deliberative forums** to understand citizen use of and access to Piatt Park in Cincinnati, Ohio. His story recounts the establishment of Community Conversations in Piatt Park, an hour-long open forum held at the public library that used probing questions and a guiding script to provide participants and potential moderators a model for future community conversations (Siders, 2017).

This review of academic, practitioner, and community research on approaches to CE creates a knowledge framework for the report that follows. Later sections will further the broad ideas presented in this segment by identifying specific engagement guides and tactics that may be useful to the City of Little Canada as it engages residents for the Pioneer Park Master Plan, as well as other future projects and initiatives.

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Review of Community Engagement Guides

How do others foster community engagement?

In addition to drawing on academic, practitioner, and community literature related to community engagement (CE) generally, the RCP Fellows also reviewed existing CE guides to identify specific community approaches to this work; detailed summaries of these guides can be found in [Appendix C](#). Our hope is that these existing CE guides and tested practices will help the City of Little Canada plan and model its own CE efforts for the development of the Pioneer Park Master Plan.

The CE guides reviewed by our team were developed by city officials, regional authorities, and CE specialists or organizations. Although not all of the guides reviewed are park-specific, some are. Many of the guides are city and region-specific and come from cities that have made large advancements in CE work, such as Pittsburgh and Austin. A CE guide created by the local Metropolitan Council is also included for a more local perspective. Finally, some guides produced by external groups present generalizable guidance that could be incorporated in cities such as Little Canada. Overall, **our team believes that these CE guides provide instrumental best practices and strategies for effective and inclusive engagement.**

Key takeaways for community engagement that emerged from existing guides include:

- Develop **definitions** of important terms
- Create an **engagement vision or mission statement**
- Use engagement to generate a **project vision**
- Consider **resources and goals** prior to initiating engagement
- Outline **staff responsibilities and capabilities** prior to engagement
- Refer to the **spectrum of public engagement** to orient what CE tactics to implement
 - *(Example: Is the goal of the CE to acquire community input or facilitate a process of co-creation?)*
- Identify **stakeholders**, assess **potential barriers** to engagement, and consider **strategies** for overcoming obstacles and conflicts
- Define a **replicable procedure** to evaluate the best type of CE for a project, create a plan, analyze input, and assess the engagement effectiveness
- Address how the public will be **notified** before, during, and after the engagement

Community Engagement Best Practices

Key takeaways of community engagement literature and guides

The term “community engagement” (CE) is referenced so frequently by universities, nonprofits, and government agencies that it is almost as if the term has lost its meaning. Exploring CE from a deep academic level as well as a broad applicative level was therefore necessary in order for our group to understand the City of Little Canada’s goal of engaging its community members in unique and innovative ways.

The findings of our literature review provide a solid framework for making sense of CE processes and common language. Our research broke CE into stages of inclusion, recruitment, and consideration, which allowed us to identify the ways that accessibility, equity, and sustainability shape CE from beginning to end. Specifically, our research showcased the importance of ensuring that diverse and marginalized populations such as racial and ethnic minorities, low-income residents, seniors, youths, and business representatives are at the CE table. Our findings also considered internal and external barriers that influence stakeholders’ ability to participate in CE efforts and suggested Trinity of Voice (Senecah, 2004) and social network analysis (Dougill et al., 2006) as possible aids in overcoming these obstacles. Finally, our review emphasized the need to prioritize and create space for diverse and marginalized communities to share their authentic experiences and the ways that technology can help and hinder these moves towards equity.

Our findings from various CE guides then demonstrated how the above suggestions have been accomplished in municipalities and organizations around the world. For example, cities such as Seattle have developed CE guides that require that community members, especially underserved and underrepresented populations, be involved in decision making processes early and often to shape the final outcome. Additionally, CE guides from organizations such as the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board have created procedures to assess the effectiveness of CE efforts in bringing in diverse perspectives, accommodating all community members, and measuring the quality of community outreach. Finally, CE guides across the board highlighted new and creative ways to engage community members outside of traditional quantitative surveying and mapping tools, many of which could be replicable and implemented both virtually or in-person in Little Canada.

The RCP Fellows’ attentiveness to both academic and practical understandings of CE was vital to our summer work. Overall, **our team believes that the literature and CE guides summarized in this report present the City of Little Canada with an exciting opportunity to think differently about CE and the relationships that are developed between those in power and those on the outskirts.**

Key best practices for community engagement that emerged from our exploratory research include:

- Develop and adhere to an **engagement vision or engagement mission** for all CE efforts
- **Expand understandings of diverse and marginalized stakeholders** to include youths, seniors, and members of the business community
- Prepare for the **existence of conflict and extremist opinions** among stakeholders and design CE with this past trauma in mind
- Identify and address **internal and external barriers** that may emerge throughout the CE process
- Consider who is advantaged and disadvantaged by the **use of technology for CE**
- Create space for the sharing of **authentic experiences** by prioritizing and protecting diverse and marginalized stakeholders
- Recognize **nuanced and underlying perspectives** that may be overshadowed by dominant voices or over-structured CE questioning
- Balance the use of measurable, highly targeted CE with unstructured, open-ended CE to **empower citizens as decision makers**

Overview of Community Engagement Evaluation Tool

How do we know if our community engagement is succeeding?

The American Psychological Association (2009) defines **civic engagement** as “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern.” Civic engagement seeks to assess community outreach efforts and evaluate attempts to address the public issues that emerge during these community conversations. Specifically, civic engagement can be thought of as the efforts undertaken to involve all community members in decision making as much and as often as possible.

Although quantity of community involvement is of high importance, an additional layer of consideration is also the quality of community involvement. Civic engagement pushes back on community involvement that positions community members as passive consumers or uninformed contributors. Instead, civic engagement proposes community involvement efforts that are well-structured, appropriately guided, and hold decision makers accountable in honoring the needs and desires of the community they serve. It is not enough to host informational sessions or “listening forums” in which community feedback can be ignored - community members must be involved in shaping the decisions that impact their daily lives.

Civic engagement efforts such as these employ a concept known as **collaborative government**. Collaborative government involves transitioning from a top-down form of decision making towards a bottom-up approach that attends to and allows for the incorporation of community members’ diverse lived experiences in public dialogue and deliberation. Together, civic engagement and collaborative government are essential in creating and facilitating community engagement that is equitable, accessible, and reflective of a community’s breadth and depth.

In order to assess the effectiveness of community engagement efforts in the City of Little Canada, our team proposes utilizing an instrument known as the Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969); a document detailing this tool can be found in [Appendix D](#). This instrument merges civic engagement and collaborative government into an evaluative tool that considers the power of those making and participating in public decisions (Arnstein, 1969). The RCP Fellows suggest utilizing the Ladder of Citizen Participation in order to measure, design, and improve existing and future community engagement strategies and tactics.

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COVID-19 Considerations

Why must our community engagement adapt?

Engaging Community While Remaining Socially Distant

Public engagement has long been crucial to city planning and design processes. Facilitating a dialogue between community members and their public representatives is an opportunity to gather new ideas and diverse perspectives, clarify project details, and increase project buy-in from the community. But how can this vital part of the design and planning process remain intact in the age of social distancing?

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyday life for the City of Little Canada, the state of Minnesota, and the greater world. The virus has prompted top local and global medical experts to promote social distancing behaviors and enact limits on group gatherings, both of which have drastic impacts on the in-person events that communities often rely on to receive public feedback. Although restrictions on face-to-face events do not mean that community engagement (CE) must stop, they do require significant changes in well-established practices. Despite these challenges, reimagining public engagement during COVID-19 is also an opportunity for cities like Little Canada to design new ways of involving publics that will remain applicable even after the pandemic recedes.

Aware of Little Canada's commitment to developing the Pioneer Park Master Plan, **our team researched opportunities for CE that would be feasible to implement during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.** The following section summarizes strategies for responsible community engagement during COVID-19, considers the pros and cons of pandemic-approved community engagement tactics, and identifies additional resources for socially distant community engagement.

Summary of Community Engagement Precedents

COVID-19 has completely halted so many of our routines and events, but it should not halt community engagement. The RCP Fellows researched CE initiatives that have been undertaken by cities and organizations during the pandemic that may be applicable to Little Canada; the full results of this work can be found in [Appendix E](#). We also found CE examples that are non-pandemic related but could be easily adapted to adhere to social distancing guidelines if needed. Our exploration includes local cities such as Plymouth and Minneapolis; non-Minnesotan metropolitan cities such as Portland, Oregon and Flint, Michigan; and non-domestic areas such as the City of Thunder Bay in Canada.

Key takeaways for pandemic-approved community engagement include:

- Even during a pandemic, **public engagement should not just be a checkbox**, but rather, an essential part of the decision making process.
- **Bridge the digital divide.** Many events and public forums must move to digital platforms, and it is the responsibility of organizers to promote technological literacy to all residents to ensure that every citizen has access to the participatory platform.
- **Utilize social media.** This isn't just for sharing information or pretty pictures. Allow comments on posts for open forums, promote Twitter or Instagram polls, share information live on Facebook or Instagram, or have City officials participate in “ask me anything” sessions on Reddit. Social media is designed to communicate with a network of people, not just project information.
- **Use multiple mediums** to meet people where they are. Reach out to the community to discover how people can and want to connect. For people who are unable to connect via the internet, consider providing a phone call option or a text-message hotline. Put up physical posters in diverse locations or provide pin-up boards or drop-boxes for people to leave written messages.
- **Record online meetings** for people to watch on their own time. This ensures people with busy schedules or child-care responsibilities can also remain in the information loop. Provide subtitles, ideally in multiple languages, to accommodate hearing or language barriers.

Comparing Community Engagement Tactics

The precedents cited above highlight a number of CE tools and tactics for continuing successful public outreach amid COVID-19. Yet when deciding on an appropriate engagement medium, it is equally important to make sure that it is the right tool for the job.

Included in [Appendix F](#) is an infographic, developed by Black (2011), that **overviews CE technologies that may be useful in facilitating public participation in a time of social distancing**. The graphic evaluates tools on a scale of simplicity to complexity and proposes six different instances in which these tools may be needed for CE: Naming Problems, Framing Issues, Making Decisions Deliberately, Identifying and Committing Civic Resources, Organizing Civic Actions, and Learning Together. The graphic also outlines key advantages and disadvantages of using these tools, which is valuable when considering which marginalized stakeholders are crucial to a project and what access barriers they may encounter.

Our hope is that this graphic may aid the City of Little Canada in determining which CE tactic is best suited for which purpose and decrease the mental workload required to assess the use of CE technologies for the Pioneer Park Master Plan.

Additional Resources for Consideration

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Overview of Survey Questions

Questionnaire and focus group community engagement questions

Groves et al. (2004) define survey as “a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the large population of which the entities are members” (p. 2). Survey design, implementation, and analysis can vary widely, from the people and places being surveyed to the way the information is collected to how often data is collected and by whom (Stoop & Harrison, 2012). These variances were of particular import to the RCP Fellows’ summer work and resulted in our all-encompassing interpretation and use of the term “survey.” Specifically, **our team chose to view surveying as a catch-all for all forms of information gathering from a sample of a larger population**, including quantitative and qualitative questionnaires, stakeholder focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.

In the initial project presented to the Fellows, a key request from the City of Little Canada was to “provide unique and innovative ways to engage the community regarding planning for Pioneer Park.” Although the Fellows’ summer work shifted in project focus, our team understood the need to provide tangible next steps for collecting community feedback that could inform the Pioneer Park Master Plan. As a result, **our team developed a first draft of survey questions, which can be viewed in [Appendix G](#), that may be revised by and disseminated in the near future to aid Little Canada in furthering its creation of the Pioneer Park Master Plan.** In line with our open interpretation of surveying, we designed survey questions with considerable leeway, which we hope will enable some or all of the questions to be asked in an online or paper questionnaire format, during in-person and/or virtual focus groups and/or interviews, or during more creative and informal event settings.

Although surveying has significant advantages in community engagement, **designing, disseminating, and analyzing effective surveys does not ensure that the responses received will be an accurate or representative portrayal of all community ideas and concerns.** “Lurking sources of bias that are not sample-related” can greatly influence how survey results are interpreted and prioritized, which may lead to the overshadowing of nuanced perspectives from marginalized stakeholders (Gideon, 2012, para. 5). To help recognize and address potential bias, the following section overviews a planning evaluation tool that could be used to guide the assessment and prioritization of community feedback and ideas.

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Overview of Planning Evaluation Tool

How do we make sense of the feedback we receive from community members?

The purpose of the Planning Evaluation Tool is to assess community feedback and ideas so that community input can be strategically considered during the City planning process. The use of structured questions to assess and prioritize community feedback has proven to be an effective guide for strategic decision making and has been successfully employed by other municipalities (e.g. City of Ann Arbor, 2017; City of Palo Alto, 2016; Khazaei, Joppe, & Elliot, 2019; Naperville Park District, 2011). **The tool, which can be viewed in [Appendix H](#), presents guided questions that City staff and decision makers in the City of Little Canada should take into account when evaluating community feedback and ideas related to community parks.**

The tool aims to consider how community feedback and ideas relate to or fulfill community understandings of Equity, Accessibility, Sustainability, Diversity, and Community, as defined in [Appendix B](#). It also encourages decision makers to look beyond funding, cost, and other quantitative performance data (Parker, 2016) and instead consider how the feedback or idea reflects previous community input, amplifies the voices of marginalized stakeholders, and aligns with previously established City goals and recommendations.

It is important to note that **this tool does not weigh or offer criteria for prioritizing input**. However, the use of guided questions to analyze community feedback and ideas can reveal critical insights that make the prioritization process easier when comparing suggestions side-by-side.

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Overview of Stakeholder Analysis

Identifying key community groups for public outreach

Stakeholders are those “persons, groups, neighborhoods, organizations, institutions, societies, and...natural environment[s]” who share a relationship with a project, initiative, or similar situation (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997, p. 855). Stakeholder analysis examines a stakeholder’s influence (denoted as “power” on the accompanying graphic) and interest in relation to the influence and power of other stakeholders (Prell, Hubacek, & Reed, 2009). Visualizing the placement of stakeholders can be useful in identifying stakeholders who have been previously marginalized or excluded from decision making, discerning existing or potential conflicts among stakeholder groups, and discovering shared relationships among stakeholders that can be strengthened during community engagement (CE) efforts (Daniels & Walker, 2001; Grimbale & Wellard, 1997; Stringer et al., 2006).



The stakeholder analysis model utilized by the RCP Fellows positions stakeholders based on scales of influence and interest. As a result, stakeholders are placed in one of four quadrants:

- **High Influence/High Interest:** Stakeholders in this quadrant have significant and/or direct interest in and influence on a project’s direction. It is recommended that communication and involvement with these stakeholders be closely managed and considered throughout the process.
- **High Influence/Low Interest:** Stakeholders in this quadrant have the potential to heavily shape a project’s direction, but their limited interest in the project reduces their wielding of influence. It is recommended to provide these stakeholders with consistent project updates and consider how planning decisions may impact their satisfaction.
- **Low Influence/High Interest:** Stakeholders in this quadrant are highly interested in the outcome or decision at hand, but lack the ability to shape or influence the decision making process. It is recommended to keep this group of stakeholders informed and evaluate barriers or constraints that may be impacting their lack of influential power.
- **Low Influence/Low Interest:** Stakeholders in this quadrant require minimum effort, as they have neither great power nor great influence on the final outcome. It is recommended to monitor stakeholders in this group and ascertain if providing additional knowledge influences their interest in the project.

Of the quadrants listed above, those in the low influence/high interest and low influence/low interest quadrants are of particular importance due to their lack of influence in the decision making process itself. Reduced influence could be attributed to various barriers outlined in previous sections of this report, such as language constraints, lack of invitation to the table, inaccessible participatory design, or previously damaged relationships with community engagement organizers. These considerations thus highlight **two goals for stakeholder relationship building and CE design**:

1. How can we elevate low influence/high interest stakeholders to have more power and influence?
2. How can we encourage low influence/low interest stakeholders to become more invested in the project or decision being discussed?

Guided by conversations with City of Little Canada staff, Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and City Council members, the RCP Fellows conducted their own stakeholder analysis for the Pioneer Park Master Plan, the results of which can be found in [Appendix I](#). Although our team made every effort to objectively identify and position a broad swath of stakeholders, it must be noted that **our analysis was inevitably shaped by our own interpretations and perceptions of the City of Little Canada, Pioneer Park, and the challenges revealed in the previous iteration of the Park System Master Plan**. Because of “the difficult dialectic between issue identification and stakeholder identification” (Prell, Hubacek, & Reed, 2009, p. 502), our team’s identification of project and stakeholder issues likely reflects our own interests and biases (Clarkson, 1995; Varvasovszky & Brugha, 2000). Our team thus urges the City of Little Canada to consider these limitations when reviewing the stakeholder analysis results and to conduct (and consistently revise) a stakeholder analysis of their own for Pioneer Park.

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Final Recommendations

Based on the findings outlined in this report, the RCP Fellows present the following recommendations to the City of Little Canada for its future community engagement (CE) work:

1. Investigate and emphasize a well-rounded community understanding of the City of Little Canada's diverse history

The RCP Fellows spent considerable time and effort exploring the City of Little Canada's history and culture from a variety of perspectives. The insight our team gained enriched our understanding of the community's culture, mission, and citizens, and it greatly influenced the direction of our work throughout the summer.

City staff, Council Members, and Commissioners have all noted the importance of Little Canada's history to its people and expressed a desire to include a historical theme in the redesign of Pioneer Park. Although our team supports this idea, we suggest first attending to community members' understanding of what and who that history involves. We believe it is important that any future historical representation extends current community knowledge of the City by appropriately recognizing diverse narratives and people who have not yet been given consideration. Considering that the Little Canada Historical Society supports efforts to learn more about the history and lineage of Native Americans in the area, our team suggests that the City engage with an American Indian historian to help research the local context and tell a more well-rounded story.

2. Identify and foster sustainable relationships with representatives among key stakeholder groups

Our team believes that developing and maintaining stakeholder relationships is critical to the long-term success of CE in the City of Little Canada. Previous conversations with City staff, City Council, and Commissioners have stressed to the RCP Fellows that previous efforts to foster these relationships have been unsuccessful; our team empathizes with how frustrating this can be and thus have invested time and resources this summer in considering new forms of outreach that can be initiated this fall.

The Fellows would like to support the implementation of this recommendation by identifying singular representatives or points of contact for large stakeholder groups and initiating conversations with these stakeholders this fall. After making initial connections, we would communicate to stakeholders the exact nature of the engagement activities planned to facilitate community feedback on the Pioneer Park Master Plan, as well as define the extent of citizen involvement in and control over the final outcome. Ultimately, our goal would be to build a bridge

between the City and stakeholder groups, which hopefully would allow for relationship building to continue after the RCP Fellows' eventual severance with the project. At this time, the RCP Fellows would suggest focusing these relational efforts on youth serving organizations, neighborhood associations, youth sports organizations, school boards, PTAs, and senior centers.

3. Design and prioritize community engagement efforts that are inductive rather than deductive

Our team suggests reallocating time and energy to CE efforts that reflect a bottom-up feedback model instead of a top-down model. Specifically, the RCP Fellows recommend balancing CE that is narrow and leading with CE that is more broad and open-ended. For example, although a survey question framed as "Would you support the inclusion of a splash pad in Pioneer Park?" provides specific and measurable results, it does not permit the sharing of qualitative and nuanced responses, which can tease out underlying thoughts and opinions that reflect the needs of vulnerable and underrepresented community members. Instead, our team would suggest using more open-ended questions such as "How would you feel about the inclusion of a splash pad in Pioneer Park?" or in a perfect world, the entirely unrestrained "What would you like to see included in Pioneer Park?"

Our team acknowledges that more unstructured forms of CE are not always possible and that they may not provide the immediate, quantifiable feedback that City staff, City Council, and Commissioners need as evidence of their tireless efforts to serve the City of Little Canada. However, intentionally designing CE efforts that empower citizens as decision makers and allow for the emergence of new ideas may ultimately lead to a stronger Pioneer Park Master Plan, which is vital considering the document's long-term impact on the future of Little Canada.

4. Conduct community engagement work with accessibility, sustainability, and equity at the forefront

The community definitions presented by the RCP Fellows, found in [Appendix B](#), include descriptions of the terms Accessibility, Sustainability, and Equity. From the very beginning, our team realized the crucial role these three ideas play in the successful design and implementation of CE that includes and reflects all community members of the City of Little Canada. Although our team understands the need to conduct CE quickly, we believe that taking the time to incorporate these three ideas will lead to the development of CE efforts that can be easily replicated for all projects and initiatives with little need for revision.

Overall, the root of this recommendation is a belief that attending to accessibility, sustainability, and equity early and often will result in richer feedback from citizens and enable the creation of a Pioneer Park that is accessed and enjoyed by all community members.

5. Develop a community engagement plan to direct and align all future City planning

The final recommendation presented by the RCP Fellows is likely the boldest: a suggestion that the City of Little Canada seek to develop an overarching community engagement plan that would direct and guide all of its CE efforts. Our team is highly aware of the time, energy, and resources that a project such as this requires, and furthermore, that any focus given to such a process would inevitably result in less focus to other equally important projects. Even so, our team firmly believes that developing a plan such as this would greatly benefit the City's longevity and demonstrate the City's commitment to involving and empowering its citizens as leaders and decision makers.

Even if City staff, Council Members, and Commissioners were to embrace this final recommendation, our team understands that the development of such a plan could not happen quickly. Considering this, we also present a smaller alternative option: the development of a community engagement mission statement that is grounded in the tools and strategies our team has outlined in this report. The creation of such a mission statement would aid in evaluating future engagement efforts on a more manageable scale, and if successful, could serve as the foundation for the development of a more thorough community engagement plan down the line.

Appendix A

Team Member Biographies

Vipasha Bansal (BA/BS University of Texas at Austin) is a second year masters student in Linguistics at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Her research currently focuses on the Hmong language, specifically the dialects spoken in Minnesota. She also has experience in marketing, nonprofits, and film production. In addition, she spent a year teaching English and German in India and Thailand. After her MA degree, Vipasha intends to continue on to a Linguistics PhD.

Catherine J. Bruns (BA Concordia College, MA James Madison University) is a Communication Studies doctoral student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where she studies environmental communication and advocacy. Her most recent publications include a chapter in the book *Water, Rhetoric, and Social Justice: A Critical Confluence* (2020) and a case study in the textbook *Cases in Public Relations: Translating Ethics Into Action* (2018). Outside of academics, she has worked with community arts nonprofits, served on local leadership boards, and assisted with Minnesota election turnout. She is a former college speech competitor and coach and is a 2015 initiate of the Omicron Delta Kappa national leadership honor society.

Gunnar Carlson (BA & MPA University of Minnesota-Twin Cities) spent the first seven years after receiving his Psychology degree as an adolescent therapist. He then transitioned to independent pharmacy management for the next 15 years before returning to graduate school in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Along the way, he has enjoyed service on many boards, including service as a two-time President of the Hopkins Rotary, founder and past chair of the Southwest Metro Chamber of Commerce, and current Vice President of the MN Off Road Cyclists. Since returning to school, Gunnar has enjoyed traveling to Ghana for his Capstone project, working as a research assistant for the Metropolitan Council and interning with the Center for Integrative Leadership and the MN Young American Leaders Program on an Arts Initiative in Greater MN.

Kyle Franta (BLA South Dakota State University, MLA Candidate University of Minnesota-Twin Cities) is a Master of Landscape Architecture student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where he studies ecological restoration and food sovereignty through the lens of planning and design. Kyle currently works as a Landscape Design Assistant and is active in the Minnesota Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architect's Equity Planning Group that focuses on enhancing equity among the landscape architecture industry's professionals, educators, and students. Kyle has also advocated for city planning that facilitates creating healthy communities in small rural towns in a collaborative project titled *Healthy Communities, A Guidebook for Small Towns*. This work was presented at the 2018 International Conference for the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture.

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Appendix B

Community Definitions

1. Community

Community means...

The co-constructed identity that connects those who live, work, and/or play within a particular place and at a particular time.

Community involves...

- Acknowledging past, present, and future histories, experiences, and traumas
- Establishing, maintaining, and revising shared traditions, norms, and relationships
- Having one's individual needs, desires, and ideas considered by and reflected in a greater collective narrative

Questions to consider

1. Who does our identity include, who does our identity exclude, and who are we forgetting right now?
2. What structural and systemic disparities and differences exist in our space?
3. What beliefs, values, and goals motivate those in our space?
4. How does our ideal community vision align with our current community realities?
5. How do community advancement efforts represent, accommodate, and respond to existing community demographics?

2. Engagement

Engagement means...

Actively calling in community members in community problem solving, knowledge gathering, and decision making.

Engagement involves...

- Empowering community members to share their honest thoughts and experiences and allowing the feedback obtained to inform the final outcome
- Developing and implementing varied and accessible public participation opportunities throughout all stages of a project or initiative

- Evaluating community feedback based on openly available, measurable, and equitable criteria that community members have aided in creating

Questions to consider

1. What individuals, community groups, constituencies, and organizations must be at the table and what support must be provided to facilitate their involvement?
2. Who traditionally has not been at the table and what factors may have caused or contributed to their lack of involvement?
3. Is/are knowledge, resources, and power being mutually and beneficially exchanged among all parties?
4. How much influence should/do community members have in shaping a final outcome or decision?
5. What strategies and tactics exist to involve community members and what gaps do they create that must still be addressed?

3. Equity

Equity means...

Committing to the creation of a community that openly acknowledges and actively combats the everyday realities of systemic injustice.

Equity involves...

- Reallocating community resources and decision making power with the goal of bridging opportunity gaps among community members
- Evaluating decision making processes and procedures for unintended bias and dedicating time and energy to improving these systems
- Prioritizing the development of community initiatives and projects that address existing disparities related to access and advancement

Questions to consider

1. How does the issue or decision at hand help, hurt, or otherwise impact various community members?
2. Have current community needs been adequately considered and addressed before current and/or future community desires?
3. Are the interests of all community members being represented accurately and proportionately?
4. Are all community members able to share authentic insights without fear of prejudice or retribution?

5. How do engagement opportunities account for disparities and differences among community members?

4. Diversity

Diversity means...

The equitable representation of internal and external characteristics, perspectives, and experiences.

Diversity involves...

- Purposefully seeking out feedback from an array of types, abilities, and backgrounds regardless of how it advantages or disadvantages the final outcome
- Actively demonstrating a desire to hear and learn from community members' lived experiences during all phases of community engagement
- Resolving to adjust or redesign current and future projects and initiatives that do not adequately incorporate the breadth and depth of the community

Questions to consider

1. What voices and perspectives must be prioritized and what is being done to ensure this occurs?
2. What social capital and connections must be (re)built to support the interest and involvement of a representative community?
3. Which socioeconomic and demographic characteristics are being over-represented, under-represented, or forgotten in community engagement efforts?
4. Is diversity adequately displayed throughout all levels of community leadership and decision making?
5. Are diverse suggestions and ideas making their way out of internal community conversations and into external community projects and initiatives?

5. Accessibility

Accessibility means...

A conscious community consideration for the widest range of abilities within the widest range of situations to the fullest extent possible.

Accessibility involves...

- Acknowledging, reflecting, and accommodating the needs of community members in public community spaces
- Anticipating and addressing internal and external barriers that may hinder community members from participating in community life
- Providing information and data relevant to community decision making transparently, in multiple formats, and in a timely manner

Questions to consider

1. Is accessibility a consideration during all stages or merely the final product?
2. Who or what is not being addressed or involved and why?
3. Is the information being shared about the project and process understandable to all community members?
4. How much, how often, and what type of technology is appropriate?
5. What type of financial limitations exist?

6. Sustainability

Sustainability means...

Constructing a community that responds to the needs and constraints of the present day while predicting the wants and challenges of the future.

Sustainability involves...

- Weighing environmental and community interests against available community resources
- Initiating and maintaining processes that support a seamless transfer of knowledge to future leaders and community members
- Envisioning and aligning projects and initiatives that transcend the community's current legacy and contribute to the well-being of future generations

Questions to consider

1. How does the project or initiative serve multiple communities and will it leave each better off than they are now?
2. Is the project or initiative being discussed financially and logistically feasible?
3. Is the decision making or implementation process repeatable and reasonably modifiable?

4. How might the final result represent or be viewed by the community in five years? 10 years? 50 years?
5. How might the use or purpose of the final product evolve or transition in five years? 10 years? 50 years?

Appendix C

Community Engagement Guides

City of Seattle Public Involvement Policy for Parks Planning Processes

Mission Statement: *Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) will work with all citizens to be good stewards of our environment, and to provide safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn, contemplate, and build community.*

This is the City of Seattle's official policy on public engagement; it is aimed specifically at Parks Planning. Its purpose is to describe the role of park users and neighbors in the planning process and outline situations in which public input will not be solicited. Although this policy was first adopted in July 1999, it has been amended many times since then; the most recent version is from July 2012.

The document lists relevant stakeholders and the potential responsibilities of Parks staff. It also contains a step-by-step list of procedures for developing a community engagement plan. **An important point made in this section is that community engagement must be inclusive, diverse, and racially equitable.**

In addition, the document provides examples of community engagement tactics that may be used, including public meetings and workshops, emails to neighborhood organizations, user groups and councils, online surveys, news releases, and social media. The document also provides questions that help assess the extent of public involvement that is required for any given project. **An important question that should be considered here is: What are the unintended consequences of including or excluding the public in the decision making process?**

Finally, the document outlines what materials should be created for public meetings (such as signs and fliers), what information the materials should contain, and a timeline for their distribution.

Key Takeaways:

- Public involvement should be encouraged in the planning process of any project that would substantially modify the property's use or appearance.

- Stakeholders - including those who do not usually participate in park planning efforts, such as immigrant and refugee populations - should be provided early and thorough notification of all projects and proposals.
- Funding to carry out community engagement in communities where 5% of the population speaks a specific language other than English should be encouraged.
- Whenever possible, the community should be asked for ideas rather than presented with a list of options to choose from.

Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board

Community Engagement Policy

Guiding Statement on Community Engagement: *A well-designed and consistently implemented community engagement process aligns agency decisions with the interests and priorities of Minneapolis residents and park users.*

This is the City of Minneapolis Parks and Recreation's official policy on community engagement. It is reviewed every five years; the most recent review was in March 2019.

Overall, this policy outlines required levels of community engagement that should be undertaken for different types of projects. **The document identifies four levels of community engagement: Inform, Consult, Involve, and Partner.** These go from least to most engagement; the level of engagement required depends on the project. The policy outlines the engagement goal for each level, as well as MPRB's commitments for each.

One key element of this document is its defining of terms related to community engagement. Specifically, **the document provides definitions for Community Engagement, Community Outreach, Consensus, and Stakeholder.** It is important to note that engagement and outreach have been given very different definitions here.

The document also outlines procedures that should be followed for different stages of the project and engagement, such as project assessment, engagement planning, establishment of advisory committees, public notice, and evaluation of a project and the community engagement. It also describes the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the engagement process, including both stakeholders and city staff.

Key Takeaways:

- The key to engaging communities is to ensure that the decision making process is visible, transparent, uses multiple communication channels, recognizes power dynamics, ensures fairness and equitable access to participation, respects viewpoints, and provides opportunities for every stakeholder to voice their opinion.

- Equity and the inclusion of underrepresented groups is defined and deemed critical to the process.
- There is no single formula for determining the most effective engagement strategy for any given project; instead, it should be measured based on the quality and level of participation. This effectiveness should be evaluated from both the stakeholder's and the organization's point of view.

Making Austin: Public Participation in a New Comprehensive Plan

Plan Goal: *To develop a plan that reflects the values and aspirations of the entire Austin community.*

This community engagement guide, written in September 2009, was developed by the City of Austin to outline the role of public engagement in creating a comprehensive plan for the city. Each stage of creating the comprehensive plan is outlined in detail, along with the public engagement activities that will occur at each stage and the materials and information that will be distributed.

The guide summarizes what community engagement activities have already taken place in Austin, as well as those that the city plans to utilize in the future. It also presents a detailed plan of the organization and timeline for community engagement events, detailing four planned community forum series, what events they will include, the goals of each forum, and intended outcomes.

This guide is particularly useful in that it provides a concrete list of community engagement strategies and ideas. **An important point made in this guide is that “citizens must understand what the plan is in order to effectively provide input”; in other words, the project must be clearly explained to the community in order to set them up for success.** To achieve this, the guide divides community engagement into two stages: outreach and education, and information gathering. In each stage, specific suggestions for community engagement tactics, such as utilizing the local media and arranging meetings-in-a-box, are presented.

Key Takeaways:

- Community engagement should be inclusive and open to all, regardless of demographics, location, finances, etc; engaging underrepresented groups who are often uninvolved in city planning is particularly important. The guide presents concrete ideas to achieve this, such as holding community forums in different locations in the city and at different times, pursuing relationships with community leaders, offering translation

options for non-English speakers, and recruiting specific groups to participate in workshops.

- Transparency is important: is the public input being taken into account? Again, strategies to achieve transparency are included.
- Finally, it is important for the process to be fun! There is no need for engagement events to be dry, the more enjoyable it is for participants, the more enthusiasm the project will receive.

Metropolitan Council Public Engagement Plan

Plan Goal: *The goal of this Metropolitan Council Public Engagement Plan is to make a shift in the planning process from thinking about traditional outreach and participation processes to an engagement model that fosters shared problem solving, supportive partnerships and reciprocal relationships.*

This public engagement guide was developed by the Metropolitan Council as part of their preparation to create a comprehensive development guide for the Twin Cities metropolitan area called Thrive MSP 2040. The community engagement plan outlined here is what the council plans to use for this project.

The main argument made in this document is that the needs of the people are the most important part of regional planning, and that **public engagement needs to be a collaborative, equitable process centered on people and communities, rather than on what sort of new infrastructure or facilities will be created.** The guide argues for shifting the community engagement process from more traditional outreach to a model that focuses on collaboration, problem solving and strong community relationships.

The overall message of this guide can be understood through the following quotes:

- A regional public engagement strategy that assures policies are **reflective of all the region's residents and supports prosperity for all** (p. 3)
- In public decision-making processes, **community engagement is an intentional, strategic, purposeful process to connect and empower** individuals and communities (p. 4)
- This Public Engagement Plan recognizes **people as full and equal partners in the region's decision-making processes** at all levels (p. 5)

Key Takeaways:

- Diversity and equity are extremely important. Organizations should actively engage with historically underrepresented communities, as well as people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels.

- Community definitions are also provided. Of particular note is that Engagement and Outreach are defined separately: Engagement is described as a much more collaborative process that aims to generate new ideas and build lasting relationships within the community.
- The plan outlines eight principles for conducting and achieving meaningful engagement: Equity, Respect, Transparency, Relevance, Accountability, Collaboration, Inclusion, Cultural Competence
- Strategies to strengthen the role of community engagement in the planning process are explained, as well as what is involved in each one. Some of these strategies include: have a better presence in communities, leverage existing partnerships, highlight best practices in the field, and use online interactive spaces.
- A list of steps that can be taken before, during, and after a project to measure and evaluate the success of public engagement efforts is provided.

City of Pittsburgh Public Engagement Guide

Guide Goal: *To provide recommendations and resources for equitable, transparent and inclusive engagement for planning and policy development.*

This guide was developed by the City of Pittsburgh in July 2019. This guide is slightly longer than others, but contains rich information, resources, and definitions.

This guide pays particular attention to diversity and equity. Conducting equitable engagement is one of the main focuses of this guide. Equity is defined as “when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their wellbeing and achieve their full potential” (p. 22). **The guide argues that it is the City’s responsibility to engage all communities and make sure underrepresented groups are heard.** It provides a list of factors related to equity, and details strategies for ensuring equitable public engagement, how to achieve them (with examples), and how to determine the success of each one.

At the end of the guide there are **multiple resources that can be used by organizations for their own public engagement timelines.** Some of these resources include example timelines, stakeholder worksheets, a public impact assessment worksheet, an engagement process planning worksheet, a sample communications strategy, a sample website, and a sample survey. Finally, this guide provides a comprehensive list of what makes public engagement effective and sustainable, which are useful evaluation criteria to keep in mind.

Key Takeaways:

- Public engagement is a two-way conversation.
- Best practice is to define from the beginning of a process the intended engagement plan and to make that information available to the public

- There are three foundations for public engagement: Values Based, Decision Oriented, and Goal Driven. An explanation of what these mean is provided in the guide.
- Five different levels of community engagement are outlined, as well as the goals of each type and the responsibilities of the city in each case. From least to most engaged, these levels are: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower.
- Finally, descriptions of the stages of a public engagement process are provided, with detailed information on each step.

Community Planning Toolkit: Community Engagement

This guide to community engagement was developed in 2014 by an organization in Belfast, Ireland called Community Places as part of a larger community planning toolkit.

The guide presents a list of community engagement strategies and a comprehensive analysis of each. In addition to a **detailed explanation of how to carry out each tactic, the document includes the strengths and weaknesses of each, as well as the overall appropriateness of the method and in what situations it would be the most effective.** Some of the most innovative tactics include street stalls, community mapping, Planning for Real (constructing a model of the area in question with ideas written in appropriate locations), and citizen's juries. Some of the suggestions are more applicable to Little Canada than others, but many of the ideas are unique and hands on.

The guide also presents **an evaluation tool of 10 standards to use when evaluating the quality of community engagement.**

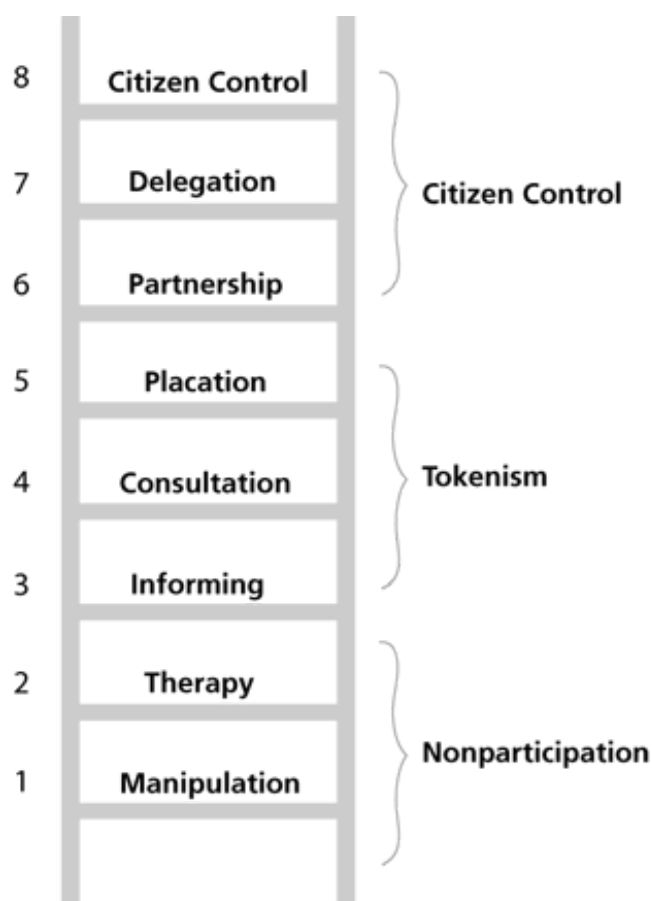
Key Takeaways:

- It is important to define a clear purpose for the community engagement process.
- There are five suggested levels of community engagement. From least to most engaged, these are: Being Informed, Being Asked, Commenting on Decisions, Developing Solutions, and Delivering Services.
- Local community development networks and support organizations should be involved in identifying community stakeholders, their particular interests and needs, and how best to engage with them
- Inclusiveness is important. The guide outlines potential barriers to engagement and suggests various factors that address these barriers when designing engagement.

Appendix D

Tool for Evaluating Community Engagement

The Ladder of Citizen Participation



Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation

The Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969) imagines community engagement efforts as rungs on a ladder. Each of the eight rungs designates a different degree of community engagement, from bottom-tier Manipulation and Therapy that minimizes the impact of citizen contributions to top-tier Partnership and Delegation efforts that empower citizens.

Ideally, all community engagement strategies and tactics would aim for the Citizen Control rung at the top, but reaching that rung is not always feasible. This makes it critical that cities identify opportunities when citizen power *can* be strengthened and consider what type of community relationship is being created. When lower rungs of citizen participation are unavoidable, the engagement must still strive to maintain open and transparent communication so that Tokenism and Nonparticipation can be avoided.

Aiming for the top tier and striving to disperse other citizen participation opportunities appropriately across the Ladder creates realistic expectations for citizens at the outset, which may

decrease the chance that community members will be frustrated by or feel left out of the decision making process. In all cases, **facilitating open communication about decision making processes can help citizens feel more engaged in their participation and to their community, even if they cannot be directly involved in the final decision.**

Ladder Rungs

Nonparticipation

Manipulation

The bottom rung of the Ladder of Citizen Participation disguises public relations efforts as community engagement. In this rung, community engagement serves as a vehicle for those in power to coerce citizens to arrive at a predetermined conclusion.

Example

A marketing campaign on a community's need for a new playground that is being paid for by the company that wants to install the playground.

Therapy

Engagement in this rung contends that citizen frustration with the engagement process is because of the citizens themselves, not the process. In this rung, citizens are highly involved, yet only in ways that fit pre-established engagement norms.

Example

Community engagement surveys are disseminated in English even though the disseminators know that a significant portion of the community speaks only Spanish.

Tokenism

Informing

This first rung of the Tokenism segment of the Ladder is a top-down flow of information from city officials to citizens. Engagement in this rung often happens too late in the decision making process for citizens to provide feedback or contribute to the final outcome and instead is used to notify citizens about the decision itself.

Example

An open house notifies citizens about a new traffic pattern that is currently under construction in order to help community members understand the past problem and in-progress solution.

Consultation

Engagement in this rung creates opportunities for citizen involvement whose results can be measured quantitatively, such as surveys, “listening sessions,” or public forums. Although these forms of engagement may be deemed successful due to high levels of attendance or response rate, they do not account for citizen satisfaction with the engagement process itself.

Example

A public comment period asks for citizen feedback on a list of pre-selected names for a new community building.

Placation

This Ladder rung involves citizens in decision making by placing citizens with less power on community advisory committees or boards. Incorporating marginalized voices in decision making spaces is a valuable step towards equitable community engagement, but it does not guarantee that a citizen’s voice will be heard or that their input will be represented in the final decision.

Example

A female Somali citizen serves on a community advisory board that presents recommendations to an all-White, all-male board with final decision making power.

Citizen Control

Partnership

The first rung of the Citizen Control segment of the Ladder enables power sharing between citizens and officials through dialogue and deliberation. In this rung, decisions manifest through combined input rather than unilateral decision making. Additionally, community representatives in the decision making process are directly accountable to the community members they represent.

Example

A community advisory committee is equally composed of city officials and community-appointed representatives and makes decisions after input is received from all board members.

Delegation

Engagement efforts in this rung place the majority of decision making power in the hands of the citizens whom the decision affects.

Example

A citizen advisory committee is majority community-appointed representatives and minority city officials and makes decisions after input is received from all board members.

Citizen Control

The final top-tier Ladder rung is the most ambitious degree of community engagement and involves placing all decision making control and responsibility in the hands of citizens. Citizen Control is normally accomplished with the assistance of an external corporation or governing agency that designs the program and facilitates citizen-led implementation of the initiative. In true Citizen Control, city officials are only involved as monitors and managers of the end result.

Example

A ballot measure proposes to change the public park opening hour from 7 AM to 8 AM and will be voted on by all citizens.

Appendix E

Community Engagement Precedents

COVID-19 Specific

[Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan](#)

In winter 2019, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation initiated the Cedar-Isles Master Plan project to guide improvements and stewardship at Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles and surrounding parkland, parkways and trails for the next 20+ years. Following the emergence of COVID-19, the project engaged the public through virtual Community Advisory Committee meetings and an online ArcGIS mapping tool; both tactics were publicized on social media and the project website. The mapping tool specifically invited community members to share memories, ideas, and concerns related to the Cedar-Isles Master Plan; upload photos to explain their comments; and agree with or reply to already submitted comments.

[Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan](#)

In 2018, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation initiated the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan project to guide capital improvements in the regional trail area over the next 20-30 years. In June 2020, a draft version of the plan was published online and released for a 45-day public comment period. Due to the pandemic, comments were accepted via an online survey, as well as by emailing or calling the project manager. Printed materials were also available to be mailed or delivered in a “COVID-19-safe manner.”

[Plymouth City Center](#)

In early 2020, the city of Plymouth began developing a long-term vision for its existing Plymouth City Center site. City residents were directed to the project website to take a survey, leave a comment on an online mapping tool, or comment on an online idea board. The idea board structured comments around topics of value, serious concern, big change, and vision for the future; contributors could include a descriptive photo and submit their contact info for future follow up, as well as engage in the comments made by others.

[Crim Fitness Foundation \(Flint, MI\)](#)

Crim Fitness Foundation is a non-profit dedicated to advancing the national agenda for improving community health. During the pandemic, Crim held live-stream “community conversations,” digital lunches, and online instructional sessions to teach people how to use

Zoom and other remote technologies. In response to community need to connect remotely through mindful practices, a Crim Mindfulness Team was created that recorded video series on subjects such as yoga, guided meditation, and mindfulness and nutrition. Between March and July 2020, over 2,400 people participated in the Crim Mindfulness offerings; a follow-up survey completed by 643 of these participants found that “over 90% of individuals who participated in a live-streamed class reported a significant increase in overall wellness.”

[North Bay Parks Master Plan \(Ontario, Canada\)](#)

In June 2020, the city of North Bay began developing a Parks Master Plan to guide city programming and investment in its parks for the next 20 years. To gather community feedback, the city created an online survey and hosted five online community work sessions (one session per city region) on Facebook Live. During each session, project members presented preliminary development themes that had emerged through survey results and private meetings, and community members were invited to ask questions and share comments.

Applicable Non-COVID-19

[Washington Park Master Plan \(Portland, OR\)](#)

In April 2017, Portland Parks and Recreation began public outreach to update its previous Master Plan, which was developed 25 years ago. Engagement efforts included a Party in the Park event, an online Party in the Park event, solicitation of comments via social media, tabling at the local Farmer’s Market, and focus group meetings held in three languages. Public engagement took 18 months, was conducted in four languages, and involved more than 2,500 people. Although the project was completed prior to COVID-19, many of its online engagement efforts, particularly its online event development, function well within pandemic constraints.

[Burlingame Master Parks Plan \(Burlingame, CA\)](#)

In 2018, the Burlingame Parks and Recreation Department began development of its first Parks Master Plan. To engage the community, the city first held in-person individual and small group stakeholder interviews with City staff, Commissioners, community business owners, field users, recreation groups, and school representatives. The city next hosted eight pop-up events at parks, recreation facilities, and community events over the course of three months, which successfully gathered input from over 300 people. An online map survey was also disseminated using Mapita and received more than 540 responses. Later, the city held a public workshop for community members to learn about and contribute to the planning process; this was followed by a second survey circulated via telephone, online, and paper. Burlingame stands as a model for

thorough and staged community engagement, much of which can be conducted during and after COVID-19.

[Northwood Playfield Splash Pad \(City of Thunder Bay, Canada\)](#)

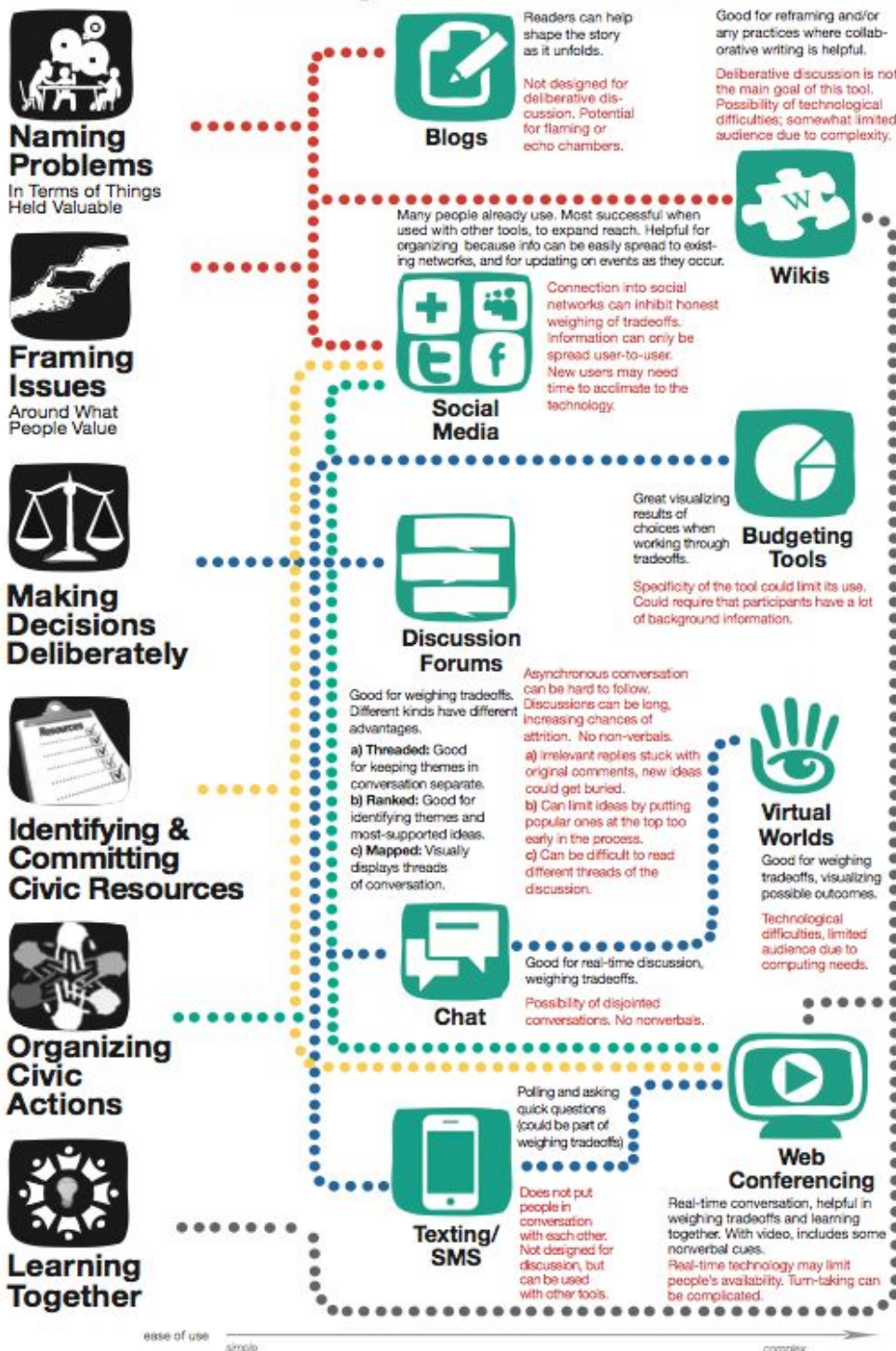
The City of Thunder Bay has previously identified a need to provide splash pads across the City. After the City's Parks & Recreation Open Spaces recommended that the next splash pad be located in Northwood Playfield, the City sought community feedback from residents and the general public on the appropriateness of the location for installation of a splash pad and thoughts on general Northwood Playfield features. To engage community members, the City hosted a public open house at a local youth centre in July 2019. An additional online survey was also made available for those unable to attend the event; the survey was conducted using Bang the Table and made available for roughly one month. Project updates were provided on the project website. Thunder Bay has long been viewed by Little Canada as a city planning model to strive for and highlights the importance of *supplementing* community engagement events with survey feedback instead of *prioritizing* survey data. The two community engagement efforts undertaken by the City of Thunder Bay could also be easily adapted by the City of Little Canada for implementation during or after the pandemic.

Appendix F

Tool for Evaluating Community Engagement Tactics

The Right Tool for the Job

Matching New Media To Democratic Practice



Appendix G

Survey Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. What is your favorite part about living in the Little Canada community?
2. Do you know anything about the history of Little Canada?
Is knowing a community's history important to you?
3. What do you believe is the role of a public park to its community?
4. Have you been to Pioneer Park before?
If so, how often do you visit and what brings you there?
5. What bothers you about Pioneer Park and/or the City of Little Canada?
How does this affect you?
What would help alleviate the problem?
6. When you think of your ideal park, what would it look like?
What features would it have? *Or,*
What is your favorite park and why?

Pioneer Park Survey Questions

Questions about Pioneer Park *specifically*

1. When was the last time you visited Pioneer Park?
 - a. Within last month
 - b. Within last 6 months
 - c. Within last year
 - d. I have not visited Pioneer Park
2. Do you feel safe when you visit Pioneer Park?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure

3. Do you feel welcome when you visit Pioneer Park?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

4. What are your top 3 favorite activities to do in a park?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

5. Of the options below, please choose the top 3 activities/equipment you currently enjoy in Pioneer Park:

Bike Pump Track	Natural Area	Children's Play Area	Basketball Court	Volleyball Court	Outdoor Exercise Equipment
Soccer Field	Multi-Purpose Field	Pavilion/ Covered Shelter Area	Community Room	Walking/ Running Path with Distance Markers	

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

6. What is not available in Pioneer Park that you would like to see added?

7. What would make you want to visit Pioneer Park more often?

Appendix H

Planning Evaluation Tool

This tool presents Yes or No questions for City planning decision makers to consider when evaluating community feedback - all in the context of the community member's power and position in the decision making process.

Before answering the following questions, consider:

1. *Who* is the community member providing input?
2. *Where* does the community member exist on the Stakeholder Analysis?

Section 1: Community Member

Knowledge

- ☐YES ☐NO Does this community member live in the City of Little Canada?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does this community member live near the area their feedback impacts?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does this community member have a strong relationship to the community?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is this community member a current park user?
- ☐YES ☐NO Was this feedback solicited? **Consider whether the input emerged out of a specific community engagement effort or was provided unprompted**
- ☐YES ☐NO Has this community member given feedback before?

Power

- ☐YES ☐NO Does this community member currently have power or influence in City decision making?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is this community member part of a stakeholder group that is currently underrepresented in City planning or decision making?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is this community member part of a stakeholder group that is currently underrepresented in the community?

Section 2: City

Vision and Plan

- ☐YES ☐NO Is the idea consistent with the park's vision statement?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is the idea consistent with the goals and/or recommendations outlined in the [City of Little Canada Park System Master Plan](#)?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is the idea consistent with the goals and/or recommendations outlined in the [City of Little Canada Strategic Plan](#)?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does this idea fulfill or address multiple City goals and/or recommendations?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does this idea contribute to long-term community needs?

Maintenance and Funding

- ☐YES ☐NO Does this idea complement existing park elements and/or programs?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does this idea address an existing park amenity that is currently in poor condition?
- ☐YES ☐NO Would maintaining this idea be a reasonable and feasible expense?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does funding for this idea currently exist?
- ☐YES ☐NO Would it be possible to share funds and/or develop or leverage partnerships to make this idea happen?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does this idea have the potential to generate revenue?
- ☐YES ☐NO Will this idea create a revenue stream sufficient enough to justify an initial investment?

Precedents and Timeline

- ☐YES ☐NO Has this feedback or idea been shared before?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does this feedback or idea relate to previously shared feedback or ideas?
- ☐YES ☐NO Are efforts underway to implement this idea elsewhere and/or in the future?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is this idea time-sensitive? **Consider whether the opportunity for implementation will be lost**

- ☐YES ☐NO Is there current enthusiasm for this idea among other community members?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is there current enthusiasm for this idea among City staff and officials?

Section 3: Guiding Definitions

This section refers to the Community Definitions outlined in the RCP Fellows Final Report.

- ☐YES ☐NO Does the feedback or idea serve the *Community*?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does the feedback or idea promote *Diversity*?
- ☐YES ☐NO Does the feedback or idea support notions of *Equity*?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is the idea *Accessible*?
- ☐YES ☐NO Is the idea *Sustainable*?

Concluding Thoughts / Notes:

Appendix I

RCP Fellows Stakeholder Analysis

Color Key:

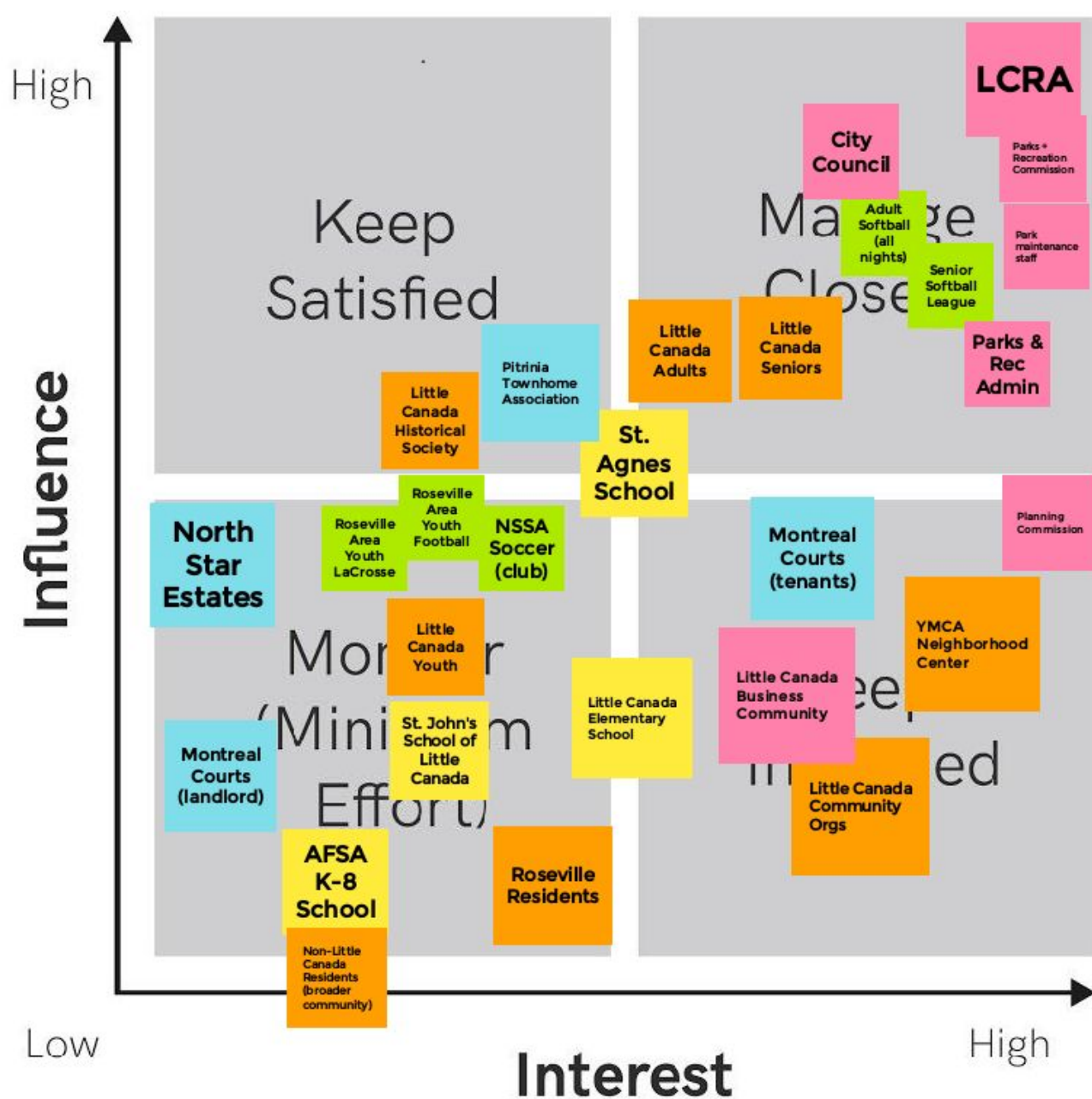
Orange: General population groups and community organizations

Pink: Business and government

Green: Sports and recreation

Blue: Housing developments, neighborhoods, and complexes

Yellow: Schools



APPROVED MINUTES
WYOMING PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
APRIL 5, 2021
7:00PM

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Spangler called the Regular Meeting of the Wyoming Park Advisory Commission for April 5, 2021 to order at 7:00PM

CALL OF ROLL:

On a Call of the Roll the following members of the Wyoming Park Advisory Commission were present: Members Barb Williams, Bruce Spangler, Heather Vandenheuvel, and Claire Luger, Council Liaison

Absent: Amy Buccanero and Angie Schilling

Also Present: Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator and Chuck Almhjeld, Public Works Superintendent

Visitors: None

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

Chair Spangler determined a Quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM: NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY MEMBER SPANGLER, TO APPROVE THE PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 1, 2021 MEETING.

Chair Spangler suggested an amendment to the minutes to show that, on the last page, Mayor Iverson was the one who stated that she knew someone who was interested in submitting a proposal.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY MEMBER SPANGLER, TO APPROVE THE PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 1, 2021 MEETING, AS AMENDED.

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, and Vandenheuvel,

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Buccanero, Schilling

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Resignation of Angie Plante Schilling

Assistant City Administrator Dumais explained that Member Schilling had submitted her resignation so there is another seat open on the PAC. She encouraged the members to spread the word about the opening

and noted that it will be posted on social media, newsletter, and the City website.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER SCHILLING, SECONDED BY MEMBER VANDENHEUVEL, TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF ANGIE PLANTE SCHILLING FROM THE PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION.

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, and Vandenheuvel

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Buccanero

3. Consider application for Park Advisory Commission seat

Assistant City Administrator Dumais introduced T.J. Malaskee who has submitted an application for the vacant PAC seat.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER VANDENHEUVAL, SECONDED BY MEMBER SPANGLER, TO RECOMMEND THE CITY COUNCIL APPOINT T.J. MALASKEE TO SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION.

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, and Vandenheuvel

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Buccanero

4. Resilient Communities Project Introduction

Assistant City Administrator Dumais gave an overview on the Resilient Communities project and asked for feedback from the PAC on whether this is something that they see value in and if so where they would like to see it applied within the community.

Member Vandenheuvel asked where the money for funding this program would come from.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais stated that this program is currently not included in the budget, so it would be something the City Council would have to decide to include in the next budget cycle.

Member Williams noted that one possible idea for where this program could be applied within the community is working on a way to bring seniors and kids together in the parks. She stated many of the City parks are geared towards kids and there have been discussion in the past about ways to bring seniors and kids together and had even talked about attempting to get the AARP Community Challenge grant.

Chair Spangler asked about the scope of work.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais gave an overview of how the University of Minnesota would utilize their student body for the various types of projects for the City.

Council Liaison Luger stated that in the past, the City has worked with WSB to plan parks and asked how this proposal would compare financially rather than going with an engineering firm.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais stated that it would be similar, but would have a smaller scope and the City could look at where leveraging the students versus the engineering firm would make the most sense.

Member Vandenhuevel asked for more examples of what the students can do through the Resilient Community projects.

After discussion, there was consensus of Park Advisory Commission that there is interest in exploring the possibility of taking a closer look at the Resilient Communities program.

5. Comprehensive Plan update with comments

Assistant City Administrator Dumais noted that the Parks, Trails, and Recreation section of the draft Comprehensive Plan update was included in the packet and asked for feedback from the PAC.

Member Williams stated that what stuck out to here was where it states, ‘no additional public park land’ and feels that this may not be a valid statement, because there have been conversations with the Planning Commission about adding additional parkland.

Chair Spangler noted that he had noticed the same phrase.

COMMUNICATIONS:

6. Public Works Tree Inventory Update

Public Works Superintendent Almhjeld gave an overview of the tree inventory project that will be completed through an intern this summer, rather with a part-time employee. He noted that the City has ordered its GIS unit and the software has been purchased so once the intern can begin, the City should be read to begin the tree inventory.

ADJOURN

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY MEMBER SPANGLER, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 5, 2021 MEETING OF THE WYOMING, PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION AT 7:30 PM

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, and Vandenhuevel

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Buccanero

NEXT MEETING:

MAY 3, 2021

7:00PM

APPROVED MINUTES
WYOMING PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
MAY 10, 2021
7:00PM

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Spangler called the Regular Meeting of the Wyoming Park Advisory Commission for May 10, 2021 to order at 7:00PM

CALL OF ROLL:

On a Call of the Roll the following members of the Wyoming Park Advisory Commission were present: Members Barb Williams, Bruce Spangler, Heather Vandenheuvel, TJ Malaskee, and Claire Luger, Council Liaison

Absent: NONE

Also Present: Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator

Visitors: None

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

Chair Spangler determined a Quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM: NONE

CONSENT AGENDA: NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY MEMBER MALASKEE, TO APPROVE THE PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 5, 2021 MEETING.

Member Williams noted that she thinks the motion maker for item #2 under New Business is incorrect and Member Buccanero was listed as absent, but she no longer serves on the PAC.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais noted that she will review the recording to see who made the motion and make the changes to the minutes.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY MEMBER SPANGLER, TO APPROVE THE PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 5, 2021 MEETING, AS AMENDED.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, Malaskee, and Vandenheuvel

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Lion's Park Community Clean-Up Project

Deb Ashby gave an overview of recent Lion's Club discussions about a possible clean-up project at Lion's Park. She stated that their club is quite small, so they would like to try to team up with the City or other groups, such as the Boy Scouts or a local church group on the project together.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais shared some history on partnerships that the City has supported and encouraged in the past. She noted that, to date, the City has not fully participated as a partner in this type of project.

Chair Spangler stated that he would like the City to at least share this project on social media to see if there are any other organizations that can work together with the Lions' Club.

Member Malaskee stated that he would support that Park Advisory Commission be present during this event as partners in the clean-up as workers, but also to use it as an opportunity to meet the community members.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais suggested forming a subcommittee to work on details such as selecting a date for the event.

Chair Spangler and Member Malaskee volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

The Commission discussed possible dates for the event.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER SPANGLER, SECONDED BY MEMBER MALASKEE TO CREATE A SUBCOMMITTEE TO WORK WITH THE LIONS' CLUB ON COORDINATING A CLEAN-UP EVENT AT LIONS' PARK.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, Malaskee, and Vandenheuevel

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Deb Ashby stated the Lions' Club had been hoping to donate a bike rack or a bench for the Veteran's Memorial project, but haven't been able to do any fund raising over the last year due to COVID.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais stated that she will reach out to her after the meeting to discuss options.

2. Consider Applications for Park Advisory Commission seat

Assistant City Administrator Dumais explained that there are two people interested in filling the vacant Park Advisory Commission seat.

Lindsey Hobson, gave an overview of her background, experience, and interest in serving on the PAC.

Jessica Bergen, gave an overview of her background, experience, and interest in serving on the PAC.

Ms. Hobson and Ms. Bergen answered questions from the Commission.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER SPANGLER, SECONDED BY MEMBER VANDENHEUVEL TO RECOMMEND THE CITY COUNCIL APPOINT JESSICA BERGEN TO SERVE ON THE PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, and Vandenheuevel

Voting Nay: Malaskee

Abstain: None

Mayor Iverson stated that she feels there will be lots of opportunities coming up for Lindsey Hobson to serve in some other capacity in the city.

3. Arbor Day/Sustainability Potential Initiative

Assistant City Administrator Dumais stated that one of the proposed initiatives during goal setting was some sort of Arbor Day celebration or event for next fall. She asked if there was still interest from the PAC and if so, she would suggest putting together a subcommittee to work on details of the event.

Member Malaskee asked why the City would do an Arbor Day event during the fall when Arbor Day itself is in the spring and if there was a budget for this event.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais stated that the original rationale was related to uncertainty with the COVID restrictions situation and that it would be more likely that a group could gather in the fall rather than early spring. She explained that there is not a budget for this event, but noted that depending on what the subcommittee decides they are some funds for planting trees around the City and could work with Public Works to see what opportunities there may be.

There was discussion about focusing the efforts on next April rather than something in the fall. There was consensus to table discussion on this event until later in the year.

Member Malaskee asked if there was already an Arbor Day subcommittee.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais explained that the Park Advisory Commission currently serves as the Tree Board, but there is not a subcommittee for the Arbor Day event.

Member Malaskee suggested that the PAC form a subcommittee now because that may give time and opportunity to look at grant opportunities to assist with funding for an event next year.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER MALASKEE, SECONDED BY MEMBER VANDENHEUVEL TO FORM AN ARBOR DAY SUBCOMMITTEE.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, Malaskee, and Vandenheuvel

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Member Vandenheuvel and Member Malaskee volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Member Williams noted that she is also willing to serve, if needed.

OLD BUSINESS:

4. Resilient Communities Project Discussion

Assistant City Administrator Dumais gave a brief overview of how the Resilient Communities program through the University of Minnesota works. She stated that the last time the PAC discussed this they expressed interest in looking at developing a proposal that would serve seniors, and ways to support recreation, aging in place, and accessibility to the City's park system. She explained that included in the packet were 4 reports on similar initiatives from other communities that have partnered with the University of Minnesota through the Resilient Communities project.

The Commission discussed options for working with the University of Minnesota on this project and identified a potential theme for a Resilient Communities project. There was a consensus to consider seniors, accessibility, including becoming a dementia friendly community.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER SPANGLER, SECONDED BY MEMBER MALASKEE, TO DIRECT STAFF TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF WORKING WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA'S RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROGRAM TO LOOK AT WAYS TO MAKE CITY PARKS MORE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AGES, WITH SPECIAL INTEREST IN LOOKING AT WAYS TO INCORPORATE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PROGRAMS.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, Malaskee, and Vandenheuvel

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

COMMUNICATIONS:

5. Railroad Park Project Update

Assistant City Administrator Dumais showed a video that gave an update on the hopes and plans for Railroad Park. She stated that over \$200,000 has been raised from community donations which have been extremely generous. She stated that they staff is working on a tool for the website for individuals interested in donating and are also looking into the logistics of a "Buy a Brick" program

ADJOURN

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY MEMBER MALASKEE, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 10, 2021 MEETING OF THE WYOMING, PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION AT 7:51 PM

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, and Vandenheuvel

Voting Nay: Malaskee

Abstain: None

NEXT MEETING:
JUNE 7, 2021
7:00PM

DRAFT MINUTES
WYOMING PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
JULY 12, 2021
7:00PM

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Spangler called the Regular Meeting of the Wyoming Park Advisory Commission for July 12, 2021 to order at 7:03PM

CALL OF ROLL:

On a Call of the Roll the following members of the Wyoming Park Advisory Commission were present: Members Barb Williams, Bruce Spangler, Heather Vandenheuvel, Jessica Bergan, TJ Malaskee (arrived at 7:06 p.m., Claire Luger, Council Liaison, and Lisa Iverson, Mayor

Absent: None

Also Present: Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator

Visitors: None

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

Chair Spangler determined a Quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM: NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. **Consider approving the minutes of “Regular Meeting” of the Wyoming Park Advisory Commission for June 7, 2021.**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY MEMBER VANDENHEUVEL, TO APPROVE THE PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 7, 2021 MEETING, AS PRESENTED.

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, Vandenheuvel, and Bergan

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

COMMUNICATIONS:

2. **Staff Report**

3. **Park and Trail Master Planning**

Assistant City Administrator Dumais explained how the City Council had arrived at the increase in park maintenance funds in the budget to \$25,000. She stated that staff has reached out to WSB about the possibility of submitting a proposal to the City for putting together a Park and Trail Master Plan. She asked if the Commission had any specific questions they would like to see included in this proposal and master planning process.

The PAC gave feedback on what they would like to see included in the Park and Trail Master Plan.

Mayor Iverson noted that some of the cities trails just end in a stump and asked if WSB could take a look at the trails and see how residents can get from different areas of the City safely to the trail system.

4. Railroad Park Donations

Assistant City Administrator Dumais explained that the City has received some additional donations for Railroad Park from: Xcel Energy - \$1,000.00; Midco - \$2,000.00; and Cemstone – 10 cubic yards of concrete.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

5. Consider Recommending the Resilient Communities Project Applications for Railroad Park Memorial Public Engagement and Aging in Parks: Active Living for All Ages in Wyoming Parks

Assistant City Administrator Dumais gave an overview of the Resilient Communities project application.

The Commission gave feedback on the information included on the application, budget considerations, and things they would like to see in the City parks.

6. Review and Recommend a Preferred Brick Color and Font for the Railroad Park Buy-a-Brick Fundraiser

Assistant City Administrator Dumais presented samples and information from Brick Makers, USA and explained the engraving process for the bricks.

The Commission discussed how the funds will be raised, brick pricing, brick color and the possibility of tying into the color of the Cornerstone brick, engraving styles, the importance of an easily readable font, a review process to ensure that no questionable content was included on the bricks.

Assistant City Administrator Dumais explained that she will work on bringing back parameters for the Commission to consider along with more specific guidelines for the proposal. She reminded the Commission that the past discussion had been that there would be a Memorial Wall to prevent people from walking on names that are being memorialized and that there would be a separate process for people who just want to contribute and have their name on the bricks.

ADJOURN

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEMBER WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BERGAN, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 12, 2021 MEETING OF THE WYOMING, PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION AT 7:56 PM

Voting Aye: Spangler, Williams, Vandenheuvel, Bergan, and Malaskee

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

NEXT MEETING:
AUGUST 2, 2021
7:00PM



Staff Report

Date: July 26, 2021

Presented to: Mayor Iverson and City Council Members

Presented by: Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator

Department: Administration

Reference: Mission and Vision Statements

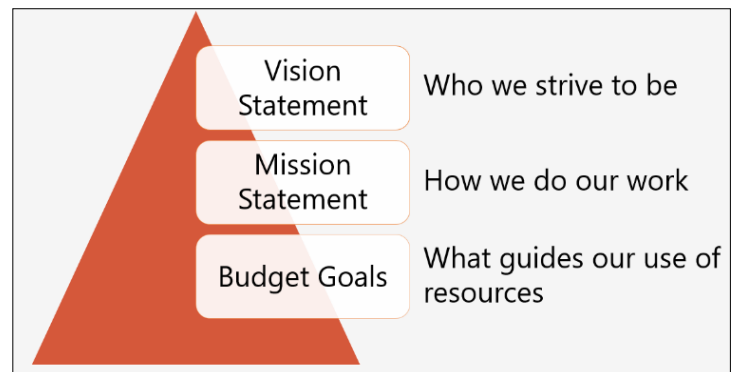
Background Information:

At the June 9th, 2021 City Council Work session, the Council reviewed a draft mission statement, a draft vision statement, and draft budget goals. These statements help to clearly define the council's goals as it makes decisions and allocates resources for the City. Defining these in statements like this promotes transparency to the public by sharing the reasoning behind budgetary decisions beyond just financial tables that may be difficult for some people to understand.

The Vision Statement is the most overarching statement for the City, embodying the aspirational goals of the City, defining who we strive to be as a community and as an organization.

The Mission Statement, defines the day to day approach that the City has to our work. This statement defines how we do our work.

Finally, the budget goals speak directly to how the Council is allocating the financial resources of the City.



During the June 9th, Council Work Session, the Council reviewed and adjusted the draft mission statements to reflect the core values of the Council. The Core Values that were defined by the Council for the draft Vision Statement were:

- Leader
- Innovative
- Economically Sustainable
- Transparent

The draft Vision Statement reflecting these values is:

*The City of Wyoming will be a regional **leader** in providing **innovative** and long term **economically sustainable** government that is **transparent** to all.*

The Core values that the Council identified for the Mission Statement were:

- Efficient
- Connected
- Resilient
- Accessible



CITY OF WYOMING

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The draft Mission statement reflecting these values is:

*The mission of the City of Wyoming is to **efficiently** provide public services, **connect** to our heritage, ensure community **resilience** and be a City that is **accessible** and welcoming to all.*

The Budget goals fit within these other two statements. The draft goals that the City Council reviewed were:

- Maintain Physical Assets and Infrastructure
- Plan for connected and sustainable infrastructure
- Responsive to Community Needs
- Build for Inclusivity



CITY OF WYOMING

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Staff Report

Date: July 26, 2021

Presented to: Mayor Iverson and City Council Members

Presented by: Kelly Dumais, Assistant City Administrator

Department: Administration

Reference: DEI Training dates

Background Information:

The City Council has directed staff to identify a potential training schedule for a council diversity, equity and inclusion training dates with Esperza Consulting LLC. The program that has been proposed is a two part training designed to improve the ability of participants to lead inclusively through their work. The following learning objectives guide the focus and flow for each session:

- Increase cultural self-awareness to ensure a deeper understanding of one's own cultural practices
- Increase one's curiosity about alternative perspectives, ideas, values, and practice.
- Make adaptive shifts in our clinical practice, working relationships with colleagues, clients, and communities we support/serve.

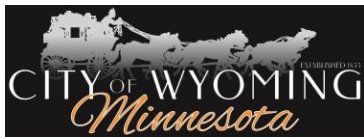
These conversations are meant to develop a shared foundation and language for diversity, equity and inclusion for the City Council. The trainer recommends 3-4 weeks between trainings. Available dates for the training are September 22nd, September 29th, October 13th or October 20th.

Staff request guidance from the Council regarding which dates they would like to schedule the training for.



CITY OF WYOMING

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Date: July 26, 2021

Presented to: Mayor Iverson and City Council Members

Presented by: Robb Linwood, City Administrator

Department: Administration

Reference: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Background Information:

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 – the latest COVID-19 stimulus package – is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill. Within the ARP, the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund provides \$350 billion for states, municipalities, counties, tribes, and territories, including \$130 billion for local governments split evenly between municipalities and counties.

There has been some new guidance that has been added on July 19 that staff is reviewing and we are still awaiting more guidance from the Treasury and Minnesota Management and Budget. This has been a consistent comment by other cities, counties and local government is that there is simply not enough guidance or it is still changing. Staff has put together some potential ideas that we will present to council, these items are yet to be completely vetted by the ever changing guidance. They will include the following:

- Responding to the Public Health Emergency
- Responding to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic
- Loans or Grants
- Essential worker pay
- Critical infrastructure
- Revenue Replacement
- Investments in Drinking water/sewer systems
- Broadband Improvement
- Staff time on COVID-19 economic impacts

What we know so far is the law also spells out a few other details about the aid to local governments, including that:

- ✓ Funds will be released in two payments to local governments, with half following enactment and half paid 12 months following receipt of first payment.
- ✓ There will be no minimum population threshold for payments, but non-entitlement distributions will be capped at 75% of the pre-pandemic city budget.
- ✓ Funds can be used to replace lost revenue.
- ✓ Funds can be transferred between jurisdictions or to nonprofit partners.

- ✓ There is an expenditure deadline of Dec. 31, 2024. (Contracts entered into during the covered period must be completed by December 31, 2016)

The early estimate for the City of Wyoming for funding allocation for the City of Wyoming was approximately \$846,930.00. This number is preliminary and the treasury and other entities have stated to use precaution on the initial numbers as they are not final and subject to change.

How do we request the funds?

The City has requested the fund and we anticipate receiving the first half of these funds this week and the second half will be distributed in Summer of 2022.

What is the time frame for using the funds?

The covered period begins March 3, 2021 and the deadline for spending is Dec. 31, 2024.

What are eligible uses of these funds?

- Responding to the public health emergency.
- Responding to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic.
- Premium pay for essential workers.
- Investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.
- Intergovernmental transfers for eligible uses

What are restrictions on the use of these funds?

Funds cannot be used to directly or indirectly offset tax reductions or delay a tax/tax increase, nor can funds be deposited into any pension fund. Treasury interprets “deposit” in this context to refer to an extraordinary payment into a pension fund for the purpose of reducing an accrued, unfunded liability. More specifically, it does not permit this assistance to be used to make a payment into a pension fund if both: (1) the payment reduces a liability incurred prior to the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and (2) the payment occurs outside the city’s regular timing for making such payments.

Can recipients use funds for administrative purposes?

Recipients may use funds to cover the portion of payroll and benefits of employees corresponding to time spent on administrative work necessary due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and its negative economic impacts. This includes, but is not limited to, costs related to disbursing payments of Fiscal Recovery Funds and managing new grant programs established using Fiscal Recovery Funds.

May recipients use funds for general economic development or workforce development?

Generally not. Recipients must demonstrate that funding uses directly address a negative economic impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency, including funds used for economic or workforce development. For example, job training for unemployed workers may be used to address negative economic impacts of the public health emergency and be eligible.

Can cities put some of the funds in a savings account for future projects?

No. Funds made available to respond to the public health emergency and its negative economic impacts are intended to help meet pandemic response needs and provide immediate stabilization for

households and businesses. Contributions to rainy day funds and similar reserves funds would not address these needs or respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, but would rather be savings for future spending needs.

For broadband investments, may cities use funds for related programs such as cybersecurity or digital literacy training?

Yes. Cities may use funds to provide assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including digital literacy training and other programs that promote access to the internet. Cities may also use funds for modernization of cybersecurity, including hardware, software, and protection of critical infrastructure, as part of provision of government services up to the amount of revenue lost due to the public health emergency

What records must be kept by governments receiving funds?

Financial records and supporting documents related to the award must be retained for a period of five years after all funds have been expended or returned to Treasury, whichever is later. This includes those which demonstrate the award funds were used for eligible purposes in accordance with the ARPA, Treasury's regulations implementing those sections, and Treasury's guidance on eligible uses of funds.

What reporting will be required, and when will the first report be due?

- First report Due Oct 31, 2021 for spending through September 30, 2021
- Annual reports due at the end of October each year

Next steps:

Staff continues to analyze guidance and look at potential projects that were discussed at the June 9th, 2021 budget work session that included the following:

Revenue Replacement

- 2020 Revenue Loss- Building Department
- 2020 Revenue Loss- Police Department
- 2020 Revenue Loss- Administration
- Revenue loss calculations from the U.S. Treasury and MMB are still being finalized

Potential Infrastructure Improvements

- Water Meter Replacement
- Broadband Improvements at Police Department
- Water Main Under Highway 35 near new water tower
- Proceeds used towards new facilities
- 800 MHZ Radio purchases
- Broadband in areas of city underserved
- Water treatment Plant (Used towards matching funds for PFA Loans or Grants)

Quality of Life Improvements/Environmental

- Look for Partnerships Chisago County HHS- residential support
- Master Park Plan
- Citywide Master Trail Plan
- Resilient Communities Project
- Swenson DNR Grants/Utilization as matching funds

Employee Retention/Operations

- Payroll Expenses for work done in relation to COVID-19
- Officer Replacement during the pandemic
- Training for new city wide software

Next Steps: Chisago County has indicated that they will be working with cities, schools, chambers and townships in a collaborative effort. The Chisago County Board of Commissioners invites you to attend a 'Chisago County-wide American Rescue Plan Collaboration Meeting' on Monday, August 16th at 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Chisago County Government Center. The purpose of this meeting is to create an opportunity for all entities in the County to ask questions regarding ARP funds to Baker Tilly, the contracted consultant of Chisago County, and for everyone to discuss the priorities of their communities for their ARP funds. The Board has invited each of Chisago County's townships, cities, and school districts, in addition to the County's Chambers of Commerce, the Chisago County HRA-EDA and others. Please let me know if you are interested in attending as the county has asked for RSVP's for the event.

CHISAGO COUNTY-WIDE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN COLLABORATION MEETING

Monday, August 16th, 2021

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Chisago County Government Center

**313 N. Main St. Center City, MN
55012**



**Event is Open to the Public
Hosted by Chisago County**