

# 2014

## Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission Annual Report



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

## Members of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission 2013-2014

**Matthew Barthelemey**, District 6  
Representative

**Doron Clark**, District 4 Representative, Second  
Vice- Chair

**Matthew Dobratz**, City Council Appointee

**Andres Hortillosa**, City Council Appointee

**Denis Houle**, District 2 Representative

**Ishmael Israel**, Mayoral Appointee, Chair

**Henry Jimenez**, Mayoral Appointee

**Brittany Lewis**, City Council Appointee

**Kenya McKnight**, District 5 Representative

**Carol Pass**, District 7 Representative

**Kirk Roggensack**, District 3 Representative

**Francisco Segovia**, District 8 Representative

**Saciido Shaie**, City Council Appointee

**Jeffrey Strand**, District 1 Representative

**Tessa Wetjen**, City Council Appointee

During the period from July 2013 to June 2014 members of the NCEC volunteered over 524 hours at meetings of the Commission and the various committees and task forces. For most Commissioners, this commitment of time was in addition to other volunteer work with neighborhood and community organizations.

In addition, Commission members attended 23 community meetings to discuss the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement and Community Innovation Fund, a number which does not include the numerous meetings of neighborhood organizations that Commissioners regularly attend. The NCEC members were also had a major role in planning and conducting the annual Community Connections Conference which was attended by over 600 neighborhood and community representatives.



*(Photo Credit: A youth perspective of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, Doron Clark)*

## Major Initiatives

### One Minneapolis Fund

The program was started in early 2013 as part of the City’s racial equity effort. Non-profit organizations in Minneapolis that work in cultural communities may apply for small grants to fund programs for leadership development and community engagement. In the first year of the program \$62,000 was awarded to grants to the Lao Assistance Center, Pillsbury Waite House and the Conflict Resolution Center. All of these projects involved leadership training for residents in underrepresented communities.



*(Photo Credit: One Minneapolis Fund Committee members hard at work, Jeffrey Strand)*

The total available funding for the second year of the One Minneapolis Fund was increased to \$80,000. In late 2013 the NCEC One Minneapolis Fund Committee reviewed and revised the funding guidelines for the program and issued an RFP for applications in February 2014. By the April deadline, 22 applications were received which were reviewed by the Committee members and ranked according to the program goals. In May the NCEC adopted the Committee’s recommendations and in June the City Council reviewed and approved the recommendations. Grants were awarded to the following organizations:

Lake Street Council	\$15,000
Appetite for Change	\$15,000
Asian Media Access	\$15,000
Council on American Islamic Relations	\$10,000
Youth Care	\$10,000
Twin Cities Media Alliance	\$10,000
Organizing Apprenticeship Project	\$ 5,000

The One Minneapolis Fund Committee has begun to evaluate the first year of the program and will prepare a report to the NCEC on possible improvements in late 2014.

## Blueprint for Equitable Engagement

The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement is a multi-year strategic action plan to ensure an equitable community engagement system for the City of Minneapolis

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



1. Neighborhood Organizations: We aim to help neighborhood organizations assess whether or not their outreach efforts, board decision making processes and distribution of resources is being conducted with a lens of equity and inclusion. The City intends to include the 70 neighborhood organizations as partners in addressing racial disparities in our community. With access to local political and social resources neighborhoods are able to utilize millions of dollars annually and become central places of empowerment for marginalized local;
2. City's Board and Commissions: The City has a goal of having the advisory and planning boards and commissions reflect the diversity in the community;
3. Cultural Outreach and Engagement: The department's Access and Outreach team has staff dedicated to providing access to engagement where cultural norms and/or practices, language and disability create barriers; and
4. City Enterprise Outreach and Engagement. The department supports the community engagement efforts of City departments and connects this work with the efforts stated above.
5. This effort has been guided by the NCEC's Equity Steering Committee which developed a process of conducting focus groups with community based and neighborhood organizations. The purpose of these sessions is to access current views towards the City's engagement system and to suggest changes. Through August 2014 members of the NCEC and NCR have conducted eight focus groups. The findings of all of the meetings will be presented in a report at the end of the 2014.

## Community Innovation Fund

The Community Innovation Fund (CIF) is a program called for in the 2008 *document Framework for the Future*. The CIF is intended to provide grants to neighborhood organizations to foster innovative and

locally-relevant approaches to City identified goal. The aim of the program is to provide funding for projects which test concepts in neighborhoods which can later be replicated throughout Minneapolis. The program is also aimed at fostering collaboration between neighborhood organizations and between neighborhoods and other community-based organizations.

The first grant period will cover the years 2014-2015 with \$300,000 proposed in total funding. Applications for CIF funding are scheduled to be received in late 2014. In early 2013, the Commission and NCR staff conducted nine listening sessions throughout Minneapolis to hear from representative of neighborhood organizations on how the program should be structured. Based on the input received, draft guidelines for the program were developed through the NCEC Committee of the Whole. In June 2014 these draft guidelines were distributed to neighborhood organizations for comment. The Commission is scheduled to finalize the guidelines in September 2014

### **City Department Engagement Task Force**

This Task Force was established in November 2013 to evaluate the current public engagement practices of City departments and make recommendations on possible improvements to department engagement practices. The current Task Force builds on the work of an earlier task force which issued a report in June 2012. Through 2014 the Task Force has had six meetings to review the previous work, examine engagement practices in other cities and determine case studies of Minneapolis projects to use in evaluating the effectiveness of engagement practices.

Through the remainder of 2014, the Task Force plans to conduct a series of focus groups with the Public Works department and neighborhood organizations to gather information on these case studies. This work will lead to drafting a manual on engagement methods for all City departments to use.

### **Community Connections Conference**

Each year the Neighborhood and Community Relations department hosts an annual conference. The conference is a gathering of neighborhood and cultural organizations for the purposes of 1) sharing experiences and best practices; 2) Facilitating connections between organizations; and 3) supporting stronger relationships with the City of Minneapolis.



The Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission selects members to participate in the planning and development of the conference.

### **Policies and Procedures Manual**

In October 2013, the NCEC adopted a Policies and Procedure manual which covers how the Commission conducts business. This manual was the product of a task force which met several times through 2013 to draft the document.

## NRP Policy Board

The NRP Policy Board is comprised of 11 members representing the Minneapolis Mayor, the Minneapolis City Council, the Hennepin County Board, the Minneapolis School Board, the Minneapolis Park Board, and the Minneapolis State Senate and House delegations. In addition, four of the 11 members of the Policy Board are selected from the membership of the NCEC. During 2013 – 2014 NCEC representatives to the Policy Board were Jeffrey Strand (who was elected as chair of the Policy Board), Andres Hortillosa, Kirk Roggensack and Denis Houle.

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

- NRP Phase II Action Plan for the Holland Neighborhood (November 2013)
- NRP Phase II Action Plan for the Marshall Terrace Neighborhood (November 2013)
- A joint Neighborhood Priority Plan for the Kenny, Lynnhurst, Tangletown and Windom Neighborhoods (November 2013)
- A joint Neighborhood Priority Plan for the Southside United Neighborhoods which includes the Bancroft, Bryant, Central, Corcoran, Longfellow, Cooper, Howe, Hiawatha, Powderhorn and Standish-Ericsson neighborhoods (March 2014)
- Review of a neighborhood grievance (November 2013)
- Approval of a policy for the Neighborhood Relief Fund (June)



*(Photo Credit: NRP Policy Board, Jeffrey Strand)*

## Presentations

### Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives Analysis

August 2013

Charleen Zimmer of Zan Associates, consultants for the project, presented an overview of the study of various transit alternatives in the Nicollet-Central Avenue Corridor. The discussion with the Commission focused on the engagement process followed in the study, particularly among transit users and under engaged communities.

### Lao Assistance Center

October 2013

The Lao Assistance Center received a grant from the One Minneapolis Fund. Chanida Potter and Sunny Chanthanouvong described the history of the center and presented an overview of the Lao Leadership Institute a program which is aimed at training Lao residents to become involved in civic groups such as neighborhood organizations.

### Conflict Resolution Center

November 2013

This was a presentation from another One Minneapolis Fund grantee. Karmit Bulman, Executive Director of the Conflict Resolution Center and Lavelle Taylor, volunteer mediator and Conflict Resolution Center Board member attended. They described their program which trains youth, particularly from communities of color, in mediation skills.

### Jennifer Scherer

December 2013

Jennifer Scherer, Vice President of the Lind Bohanon Neighborhood Association was recognized by the Commission for receiving the Dorothy Richardson award from Neighbor Works America. Jennifer received the award for her work on access and disability issues.



*(Photo Credit: Jennifer Scherer and Jeffrey Strand, Jeffrey Strand)*

### Pillsbury United Communities, Waite House

December 2013

Francisco Segovia, Executive Director of the Waite House shared information on their Community Circles Project, another One Minneapolis Fund project. The Community Circles are a place where people can meet with members with in their own community to discuss issues in their neighborhood where language and cultural norms aren't a barrier. Initially participants were survey about what issues they faced in their neighborhood, and now the next step in the program is to begin training the participants about building power, being effective in Neighborhood Organizations and how to use E-democracy.

### **Conservation District Ordinance**

**February 2014**

John Smoley of CPED attended to present information on the proposed Conservation District Ordinance. He shared that in response to development pressures in some neighborhoods, the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) has drafted a Conservation District Ordinance.

### **Digital Equity Effort**

**April 2014**

Elise Ebhardt of the Minneapolis IT Department discussed the Digital Equity Program in Minneapolis. It is a program to bridge the digital divide and close the employment gap in Minneapolis. The City of Minneapolis IT Department Partnered with PCs for People, USI Wireless, University of Minnesota-Broadband Access Project, and the Minnesota WorkForce Centers in Minneapolis. The Commission discussed how neighborhood organizations can become more involved in expanding internet access in the city. There was agreement that the goal should be for every resident to have internet access.