



# One Minneapolis

Residents are informed, see themselves represented in City government and have the opportunity to influence decision-making.

## What strategies are working?

### **THE CITY USES A VARIETY OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS TO COMPLEMENT ITS OUTREACH.**

- The City's interactive social media presence has been successful and drawn lots of followers.
- The Elections Web pages are attractive, content-driven and audience-oriented. This easy-to-use approach has the potential to become a model for other City Web pages.
- The Communications and Neighborhood and Community Relations departments work together to produce video messages for residents.

### **CITY STAFF MEMBERS PERSONALLY ENGAGE WITH RESIDENTS.**

- The direct education services offered by the Elections staff are visible efforts that help the City reach previously underserved populations.
- Community meetings have an impact. Participants talk about the personal connections they have made.
- City Academy participants receive an overview of City government functions.

### **CITY STAFF AND POLICYMAKERS ARE COMMITTED TO UNDERSTANDING RESIDENTS' NEEDS, CONCERNS AND INTERESTS.**

- The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department staff helps departments gain a better understanding of the cultures of the communities within Minneapolis.
- The City's elections outreach efforts enjoy robust support from policymakers and City departments.
- Residents are seeing a change in the City's approach to community outreach and know that City staff are interested in coming to community meetings.
- The City is working to achieve its equity goals: residents see themselves as a part of the city and it informs their participation in the community.
- We are doing a better job of understanding the social and economic issues related to immigration. Understanding concerns about driver's licenses, education and health care helps us forge better relationships.
- New engagement tools and strategies are being developed with the help of the arts and creative community.

### **THE CITY IS ACTIVELY REACHING OUT TO CULTURAL COMMUNITIES.**

- The City offers materials in multiple languages, enabling us to get information to many communities.
- We are building trust with residents by holding meetings in the community and conducting those meetings in residents' own language.
- Thanks to help from the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department, the City is engaging the American Indian, East African, East Asian and Latino communities.
- The Latino Engagement Task Force is working well, with some meetings attracting as many as 500 people. The task force is helping us identify potential participants to serve on boards and commissions. Latino involvement in boards and commissions is increasing.

## What strategies are not working?

### **LANGUAGE REMAINS A CHALLENGE AND A BARRIER.**

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- There are more languages spoken in Minneapolis than the languages we provide translation services for.
- We need to do a better job of translation. You can't literally translate words from English into another language and come out with the correct intent and meaning. It's more nuanced than that.
- We think about interpretation and translation too late in a project's timeframe. Then it's too late for quality involvement.

## **WE NEED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR RESIDENTS' CULTURES AND VALUES.**

- We need help understanding the cultures of the communities within Minneapolis.
- When an outside firm did elections outreach, it attracted very few participants. We can't just assume that our topic is of interest.

## **IT'S DIFFICULT TO OFFER AMENITIES TO MAKE MEETINGS MORE WELCOMING.**

- Even though food is important for a meeting's success, the City's rules and budget restrictions make it difficult to supply food for meetings.
- Offering child care would enable more people to participate.

## **COMMUNICATION ACCESS IS UNEVEN.**

- Many residents don't have regular access to email or a computer. We still face a digital divide.
- The City doesn't take full advantage of radio in communicating to the Somali, Hmong and Latino communities.
- Facebook and Twitter are huge, but not all neighborhood associations are involved with these.
- With 71 neighborhood associations, it's hard to keep the message consistent.
- Because the content of the City's website is managed by individual departments, the ease of use varies throughout the website.

## **SUPPORT AND RESOURCES ARE INADEQUATE.**

- Video is a good way to share information with the community, but the City has reached its production resources cap. Additional resources are not currently available to expand video production capability.
- It takes neighborhood councils up to two hours to repackage City-provided information to make it work for their community outlets.
- Giving neighborhood organizations 14 to 21 days notice is not enough time when seeking feedback. That timeframe is fine for informing the community, but it's too short for obtaining feedback.

## **IT'S HARD TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS.**

- We don't convey the value of getting involved in neighborhood associations, especially to renters.
- It's a challenge to recruit people for boards, commissions and ad hoc committees.

## **WE NEED MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PARTNERS.**

- We rely too much on neighborhood associations. Some neighborhood associations aren't as responsive as others.
- Some neighborhood associations don't do a good job of reaching out to diverse populations. Diversity involves race, age and ethnicity, and some neighborhood associations can't get the whole job done.

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- We don't account for the reality that, if a community activist loves his/her position, that person isn't motivated to recruit his/her competition or replacement. We need new ways to expand engagement and recruit new participants.

## Working in partnership, what strategies could we pursue?

### **MAKE MEETINGS RELEVANT, ACCESSIBLE AND WELCOMING.**

- Be very intentional about calling meetings to ensure it's clear why residents should participate. Spell out the benefits of attending.
- Continue conducting meetings in residents' native language. Residents feel valued and connected when meetings are conducted in their language.
- Continue holding meetings in familiar neighborhood locations.
- Make it easier to provide food for meetings. Offering food enables us to attract a bigger crowd, and this gesture makes people feel respected, welcomed and valued.
- Offer child care to enable more people to participate in meetings and activities.
- Change City Council rules so the public has more opportunities to speak.

### **EXPAND TRANSLATION SERVICES AND CONTINUE CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING.**

- Translate City messages into more languages.
- Address translation needs early in a project's timeline in order to shape the project from the beginning.
- Continue having the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department provide training about the cultures within Minneapolis. Education helps us be respectful of our residents.

### **IMPROVE OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT EFFORTS.**

- Go beyond neighborhood identity and neighborhood associations to encourage people to get involved in community activities. Communicate that this is your city and here's how it works.
- Expand the City Academy and do a better job of marketing this program.
- Offer an incentive to encourage renters to get involved in neighborhood associations. Ask landlords to take a small amount off the rent if a tenant gets involved in an organization that contributes to the neighborhood.
- Leverage partnerships with arts organizations and work more regularly with local artists.
- Use a messenger who has an established relationship with the community we're seeking to involve.
- Fund an ambassador program for elections outreach. The City needs to recruit culturally competent and trusted people to go into their own communities to spread the message about elections. This is a lot to ask of volunteers. This service requires a specific skill set that ought to be compensated.

### **USE RADIO TO REACH OUT TO RESIDENTS.**

- Do more City communication via the radio. Radio is the key to communicating with the Somali, Hmong and Latino communities. Radio is simple and important.

### **EXPAND THE USE OF VIDEO.**

- Begin producing video messages that council members' offices can send to constituents. This could be done by building upon Communications' Newsbites service, which provides text for ward newsletters.

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- Increase funding so that the City can produce more informational videos.
- Partner with youth media teams to create more informational videos. This partnership could increase the quantity of messages and provide creative involvement opportunities for young people.

## **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.**

- Encourage people to give input to the City via Facebook and Twitter. People who don't have regular access to a computer probably have a smartphone, so use Facebook and Twitter to reach these people.
- Post information that is personally likeable so that Facebook followers will share information with friends.
- Tap into Nextdoor, a free private social network that allows neighbors to connect online.

## **IMPROVE THE USABILITY OF THE CITY'S WEBSITE.**

- Help contributing departments present their Web information in a more uniform manner that presents clear, audience-focused information.

## **OFFER MORE SERVICES TO NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS.**

- Provide neighborhood councils with news messages that these organizations could copy and paste into their newsletters or repackage to fit their organizational brand.
- Assemble a contact list of key City partners – neighborhood groups, cultural associations, advisory groups, etc. —and consistently give these groups information that they can disseminate.
- Give neighborhood organizations three to four weeks lead time when seeking feedback.

This conversation had representatives from City of Minneapolis City Council Office, City Coordinator's Office, Communications Department, Elections Office, Mayor's Office, Neighborhood and Community Relations Department, Intermedia Arts, Jordan Area Community Council and Stevens Square Community.