



Great Places

We welcome our growing and diversifying population with thoughtful planning and design.

What strategies are working?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS MEANINGFUL, AND TRUST IS GROWING.

- The community engagement model we created is working. The community is engaged in meaningful ways. Communities of color feel they are part of the process. Churches and nonprofits are engaged in collaboration. Organized groups have a voice.
- We are building trust with the Latino community. Latino business owners are able to talk about problems such as licensure. We can have a conversation about how to resolve issues, change policies, and improve programs and services. More Latinos are being recruited to serve on advisory councils.
- The City's outreach to diverse populations is much better than it was three years ago. In the past, residents of the East African community didn't think the City would listen to them. Now there is a belief that the City is willing to listen and work with the community. Trust is growing.
- Because there is trust and a welcoming atmosphere, communities of color have a greater sense of place.

EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO BOOST HOMEOWNERSHIP.

- The partnership between the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department and the Housing Division of the Community Planning and Economic Development Department has led to a revamped housing strategy.
- The City is meeting with real estate agents to encourage them to reach out to the Latino community and help agents understand the specific housing needs and interests of Latino families.
- Nonprofit partners are working to improve outreach about diversifying homeownership.

WE RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF PLACE-MAKING.

- Groups are using City resources — public art, the Great Streets program and Special Service Districts — to create destination areas for businesses. The City has begun looking at how to assemble these place-making resources into a comprehensive toolkit with a cohesive programmatic mission. This effort could help lift up racially concentrated areas of poverty.
- The City is providing technical resources and pointing organizations toward resources and assistance for place-making.
- The City Council supports place-making efforts.
- We recognize that culture is a big part of the place-making process. Projects such as the Midtown Global Market and Mercado Central are examples of place-making projects. We have made the notion of a cultural corridor a reality in some areas of Minneapolis.
- The community conference brought diverse populations together to talk about a sense of place.

What strategies are not working?

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AREN'T COORDINATED OR ADEQUATELY FUNDED.

- The City has place-making resources — public art incentives, Special Service Districts, Great Streets, etc. — but we haven't put these together as a comprehensive toolkit. Right now these programs are spread throughout the City enterprise.
- The City and the State aren't coordinating their housing funding.
- Job resources aren't coordinated or directed to communities of color.
- Organizations committed to community engagement work separately, rather than in coordination.
- Organizations with dollars aren't very diverse. Funds aren't coming to nonprofits that are run by and for people of color. The nonprofit sector gets excluded when development is planned.

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- There is too much emphasis on one-time grants and a one-size-fits-all approach.

UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS FACE EXCEPTIONAL BARRIERS.

- Landlords take advantage of UNDOCUMENTED workers. If mom and dad are undocumented, they may be forced to put up with substandard housing and illegal rental contracts. If they complain about code violations, they get evicted. Some landlords charge extra fees for every pet and every child.
- Policies present barriers instead of opportunities to undocumented workers. Undocumented workers can't qualify for Section 8, down payment assistance or Neighborhood Revitalization Program services.

THERE ARE BARRIERS TO HOMEOWNERSHIP.

- Cultural values affect immigrants' ability to buy a home or get line of credit. Immigrants may have grown up with the value that *not owing* money is good credit, but that's a problem when trying to qualify for a mortgage. For others, interest on loans creates a barrier.
- There is a lot of interest in homeownership within the Latino community, but CLUES (Comunidaded Latinas Unidas en Servicio) has a waiting list for its homeownership class.

THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH AFFORDABLE HOMES AND HOMES FOR LARGER FAMILIES.

- As families grow, their housing choices narrow because large, affordable homes are hard to find. Minneapolis loses opportunities for growth when families leave the city because they can't find housing.
- East Africans prefer to have their businesses in Minneapolis, but they move to the suburbs to find adequate housing. Why is the City friendly to their business interests but not their housing needs?
- When kids reach school age, their families move out of the city because of concerns about the Minneapolis School District.
- Homebuilders don't understand housing needs of Latino families. Developers are building homes without dining rooms, but for Latinos the dining room is very important. This is where the family gathers. This may seem like a small thing, but it makes a big difference.
- The City pays a lot of attention to affordable housing, but it isn't focused on building larger homes to accommodate families. We need to serve these constituents if we want to grow our population.
- Developers don't have incentives to build affordable, family-size housing. They have incentives to pack in a lot of units. They meet density goals by building micro-apartments.
- We aren't clear about what affordable housing really is. Are we talking about mixed incomes in the same building or two separate buildings catering to two separate income levels? The City leaves too many design decisions up to the developer.
- We have racially concentrated areas of poverty as well as concentrated areas of affluence. We aren't offering housing choices across all geographic areas.

THE CITY DOESN'T USE PLAIN LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE WITH RESIDENTS.

- The City sends out notices to homeowners and business owners that use technical and bureaucratic language. You shouldn't have to decode a message from the City.

Working in partnership, what strategies could we pursue?

EXPLORE OPTIONS TO LESSEN THE BARRIERS TO HOUSING.

- Convene a focus group to document the barriers that our housing policies present to undocumented workers. We need to better understand the complexities presented by immigration status.
- Ask the Community Planning and Economic Development Department to explore steps that can be taken to address barriers to housing that result from immigration status and/or cultural values.

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- Help the Latino community become homeowners. This is an opportunity for growth for Minneapolis.
- Explore loan structure and credit options to enable East Africans to buy homes.
- Encourage the City and State to coordinate their housing funding and direct more housing resources to communities of color.

MAKE MINNEAPOLIS A VIABLE PLACE TO BUY HOMES AND RAISE FAMILIES.

- Work with the school district to improve educational opportunities for young people.
- Retain the people who already live in Minneapolis by ensuring they can find housing for their families.
- Attract new residents by ensuring that Minneapolis is a welcoming place.

ENCOURAGE CONSTRUCTION OF FAMILY-SIZED HOUSING.

- Encourage builders to use more flexible housing designs, so homes can be adapted for changing needs.
- Change zoning and create financial incentives so it makes good business sense for developers to build affordable, family-size housing.
- Enact design guidelines for City-owned land to encourage the construction of the type of housing the community needs. The City's approval of development plans needs to be more intentional.
- Make affordable housing part of every request for proposals for downtown housing development.
- Encourage development that has housing for mixed incomes within the same building. Overcome the pushback from developers to get this done.
- Use inclusionary zoning to mandate affordable housing in all neighborhoods. This can create location choices for low-income residents who would like the opportunity to live closer to their jobs. They may find that their savings on transportation costs will offset the higher cost of living in downtown.

DO MORE TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC SUCCESS.

- Offer assistance to enable immigrants to get lines of credit for a business.
- Offer rent subsidies for businesses in key locations.
- Coordinate job resources and direct more resources to communities of color.
- Do more to support and fund the nonprofits that are run by and for people of color. Be more intentional about how we're investing dollars so we capitalize on and leverage these trusted organizations.
- Develop the capacity and skills to deliver services within cultural community organizations. Select a few organizations and develop their capacities so they can be integrated into the service delivery system to better assist their communities.
- Assemble various City programs and incentives — public art, Special Service Districts, Great Streets — into a comprehensive toolkit with a mission aimed at creating place-making opportunities.
- Focus efforts on cultural districts. Look at how we can align resources to develop vibrant business districts and address racially concentrated areas of poverty.

MARKET MINNEAPOLIS' DIVERSITY.

- Promote tourism and leverage Minneapolis' diversity as an attractive asset to visitors.
- Leverage our diversity to attract people moving out of larger cities. When people move out of large cities like Chicago or New York, tier two cities like Minneapolis are attractive because of our lower cost of living. We can compete for these residents if we pitch our city as a vibrant and diverse place to live.
- Showcase Minneapolis' diversity by hosting national conferences.
- Communicate that there are Latinos in Minnesota and market Latino hubs.

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IMPROVE COMMUNICATION TO RESIDENTS.

- Simplify the language used in City notices so it is understandable to all recipients. That means long-time residents as well as newcomers.

This conversation had representatives from City Council Office, City Coordinator's Office, Community Planning and Economic Development, Neighborhood and Community Relations, CLUES, Metropolitan Council, NACDI and ULI.