

Blueprint Summary

The City of Minneapolis has a goal of **One Minneapolis: Disparities are eliminated so all Minneapolis residents can participate and prosper**. This goal is directly related to the work of the NCR department and serves as the overarching goal for this document.

The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement is a 5 year plan to ensure an innovative and equitable engagement system for the City of Minneapolis. The plan will be used as a roadmap to better achieve the department’s mission, “Engaging Communities for a Better Minneapolis”, between 2015 and 2020. Inclusive and equitable participation will be critical to achieve the One Minneapolis goal. For the purposes of this document, we are using the following definition of Equity and Community Engagement:



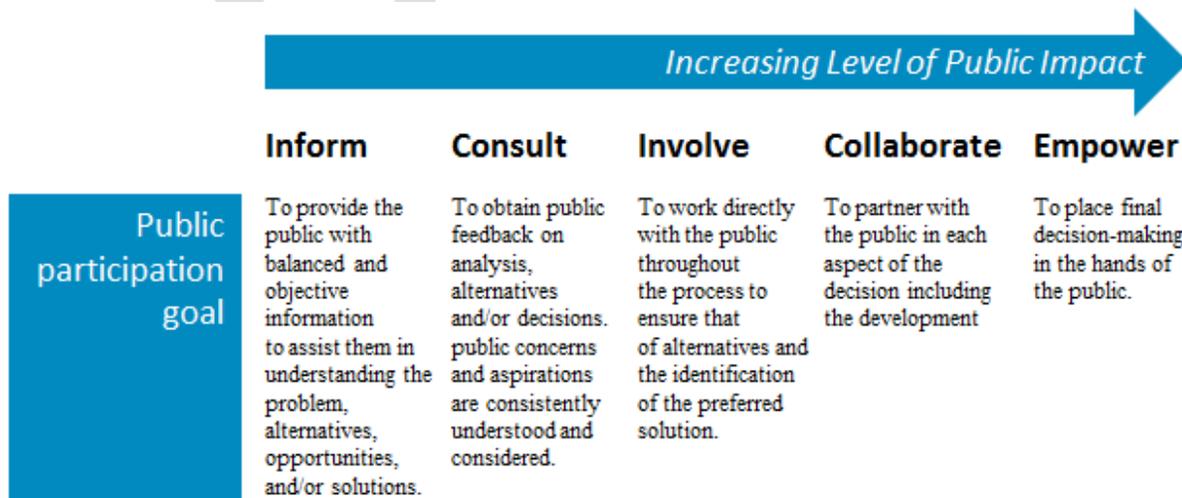
Equity: Fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people.

Community Engagement: A process that includes multiple strategies to promote the participation of residents.

The City of Minneapolis is growing and becoming more diverse, requiring expanding and creative practices of inclusive participation and community engagement. To eliminate inequities, the City and community must work together to create a city that provides abundant opportunities for everyone.

International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Engagement

Along with the City’s adopted Core Principles of Community Engagement, the department will use the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement is a process that the department will use to create a consistent engagement model for the City.



What We Heard

In the summer of 2014 the NCR Department held a series of conversations to get input from residents on ways that the City could do engagement better. That feedback was then used to draft the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement document. Then in the summer of 2015 we brought the draft document back out to residents. We found that overall; residents felt that the City could do a better job with its engagement work by:

1. Developing a more consistent way of handling public participation across all City departments;
2. Be more culturally sensitive when doing public participation ;
3. Working better with neighborhoods to clarify their role in the public participation process;
4. Recognizing the current engagement efforts of Neighborhood Organization; and
5. Defining other avenues for people to get involved.

Goals

With the information we gathered from the engagement process, we've developed five goals with specific activities that will help us ensure an innovative and equitable engagement system for the City of Minneapolis:

- **Goal 1: Expand Cultural Engagement Strategies:** This goal will guide the department in developing and promoting engagement strategies that will peak the interest of under-represented groups.
- **Goal 2: Support Strong, Vibrant and Functional Neighborhood Organizations:** This goal will ensure that the department and neighborhoods are working together to find creative ways to engage cultural communities in our City and help neighborhoods function seamlessly.
- **Goal 3: Increase the Capacity of NCR's Community Engagement Efforts by working with Community Partners:** This goal will help the department look at ways to expand successful partnerships that are in-line with the goals of the Blueprint document and the City goal One Minneapolis.
- **Goal 4: Ensure City Departments are Well Equipped to Conduct Effective Public Participation:** This goal outlines the way the department will provide consistent training, tools and support for City staff to provide good public participation.
- **Goal 5: Evaluate and Celebrate Progress:** This goal will ensure the department's efforts are truly effective.

Value Statement

NCR firmly believes that the involvement of all residents is essential to creating a better Minneapolis. We believe that this is not a zero-sum game, and that increasing access for some need not result in the loss of power for others.

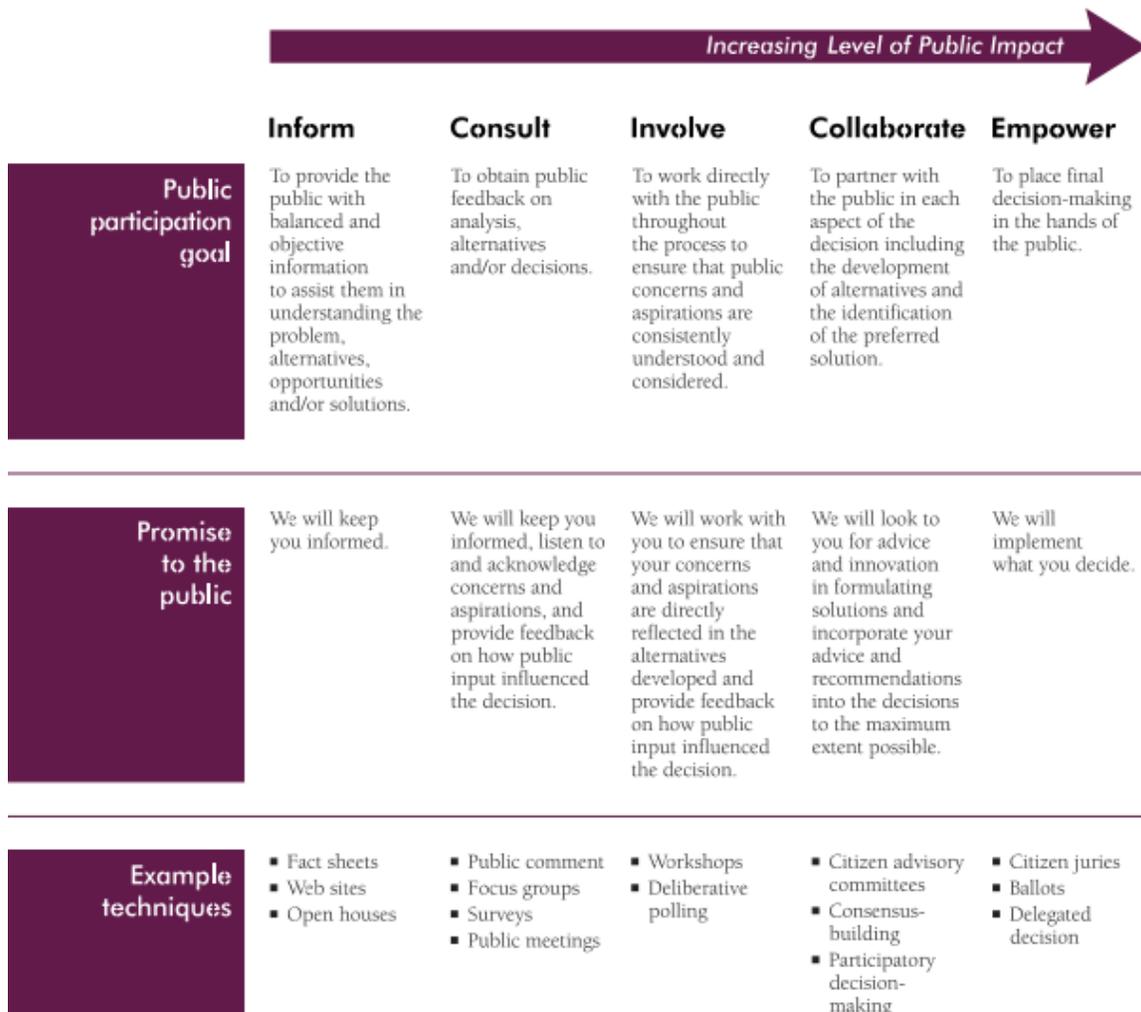
Introduction

This document focuses on inclusive and equitable participation that meets people where they are to ensure that all community voices are sought and valued, and that decisions reflect the communities which they impact. We give particular attention to communities of color and other underrepresented groups; as these voices have not been represented in decision making in a way that reflects Minneapolis demographics.

Each community – be it geographic or cultural – has individual strengths and unique needs. We recognize the capacity that exists within each cultural community, and we acknowledge the work taking place within Minneapolis’ communities – specifically, our 70 recognized neighborhood organizations.

A consistent Public Participation process

In order to provide a consistent service across City departments and in the community, NCR will be using the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) model for the community engagement process when providing training to City departments. This model has proven to be effective, it provides good techniques for staff to properly conduct public participation processes. It also provides residents with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way and communicates to residents how their input affects the decision that needs to be made.



The Core Principles of Community Engagement

In 2007, the Minneapolis City Council adopted the Core Principles of Community Engagement. These principles were adopted to show the City's commitment to community engagement and lay the ground work for City employees and community members to start from the same page. They are:

1. **Right to be involved** – Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. **Contribution will be thoughtfully considered** - Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will be thoughtfully considered.
3. **Recognize the needs of all** - Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. **Seek out involvement** - Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. **Participants design participation** - Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. **Adequate information** - Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. **Known effect of participation** - Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

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Goals

Goal 1: Expand Cultural Engagement Strategies

Our cultural communities are an asset to the City. In order to appropriately engage and build trust, the City must promote strategies that will peak the interest of under-represented groups. Additionally, it is important for the City to learn and value relationship structures within cultural specific organizations and other community respected systems.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Expand successful cultural engagement strategies with the Latino, African American, American Indian, Southeast Asian, East African, Senior and Disability communities. An example of a successful engagement strategy is the Soccer Connection. NCR organizes a weekly soccer league held at Farview Park, where members of the Southeast Asian community in Minneapolis come to play soccer and at the same time learn about opportunities to get involved with the City of Minneapolis and about important City information.
2. Support risk taking with new or different community engagement strategies.
3. Provide leadership training for cultural communities. Currently the NCR department and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission sponsors the One Minneapolis Fund. which supports leadership development and cultural engagement through non-profit partnerships.
4. Learn priority issues for cultural communities to recommend collaborations with shared interest. The City currently has a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Indian Community which lays out priorities that the City and the Community have agreed on to work together. This may serve as a model for work with other communities.
5. Develop a concrete communication plan that focuses on the best ways to reach non-English speaking communities and other under-represented communities. These best practices may include utilizing culturally specific organizations, radio and newspaper, expand the use of social media, increase the use of teleconferencing and other unique methods such as posting signs at bus stops, restaurants, coffee shops and other high traffic or community gathering spaces.

Goal 2: Support Inclusive, Vibrant and Effective Neighborhood Organizations

Neighborhood organizations are an asset to the City. In addition to the project-based work carried out over the past two decades through NRP, neighborhood organizations are an increasingly integral part of the City's engagement efforts. In order to be effective in this work, the City and neighborhoods must work in partnership to enhance engagement, and employ strategies that connect diverse residents with each other and with City efforts.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Work in collaboration with neighborhoods to increase involvement of under-represented communities in neighborhood organizations. Focus on engagement strategies and on identifying and removing barriers to full civic participation and meaningful engagement. .
2. Support a culture of learning that allows for risk-taking, challenging of assumptions, appropriate measurement, and assessment. Facilitate new partnerships and mentorships amongst neighborhood and community organizations.

3. Recognize the changing role of neighborhood organizations within the City of Minneapolis. The NCR department will work in collaboration with neighborhood organizations to support a vision for neighborhoods that includes increased community engagement efforts while still valuing project-based work.
4. Provide enhanced training and technical support to neighborhood organizations. Expand NCR Learning Labs that focus on understanding and engaging under-represented communities as well as continuing training on non-profit management and City processes.
5. Streamline the bureaucratic processes of the NRP and CPP programs. Update department policies (as appropriate) to ensure that processes and policies support efforts aimed at increasing equity.

Goal 3: Increase the Capacity of NCR’s Community Engagement Efforts by working with Community Partners

Community partnerships are vital, and are at the very core of NCR’s work. Much of our strength as a department comes from our relationships, our work with partner organizations, and being able to connect partners with each other and with other government departments.

By working to strengthen and support partnerships with other organizations with a similar vision and values, NCR hopes to increase our collective capacity to fulfill the needs and the dreams of all Minneapolis residents – regardless of their background.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Expand work with funders to ensure that resources are available to community and neighborhood organizations.
2. Develop new and promote existing training opportunities, particularly those such as the Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute (BCLI) that foster leadership development.
3. Work with colleges and universities to identify and share the best practices of nonprofit organizations.
4. Continue City programs such as the One Minneapolis Fund, the Community Innovation Fund, the Community Participation Program, and others that encourage partnerships and outreach.
5. Support activities that bring City staff out into the community, such as NCR’s Community Dialogues, training for City employee’s that provides an in depth look into best practices for engagement with cultural residents.
6. Recognize that each organization functions in its own way. Allow for the necessary time to develop true partnerships and create welcoming environments.
7. Support scalable partnerships, from single events to long-term collaborations.
8. Encourage partnerships that support creative engagement activities and ways of providing input beyond just attending meetings.

Goal 4: Ensure City Departments are Well Equipped to Conduct Effective Public Participation

The City of Minneapolis and its employees must value the input of all residents in order to achieve the Minneapolis Goal of One Minneapolis. Ensuring that City **staff has** the necessary tools and support in public participation will positively impact residents and the City enterprise.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Provide training support to City departments. Training will include:

- a. **Public Participation and Core Principles of Community Engagement:** NCR wants to work towards standardizing the way that city employees seek input from residents. NCR will train city employee's using the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) model and the Core Principles of Community Engagement that were adopted by the City Council in 2007.
 - b. **Community Dialogue:** NCR has developed and implemented training for City employee's that provides an in depth look into best practices for engagement with cultural residents.
 - c. **Translation and Interpretation Services:** The City is mandated by federal law to provide translation and interpretation services when requested. NCR's goal is to train City staff on best practices to go above and beyond what is required to make residents feel welcome.
 - d. **Community Engagement Liaison Network:** NCR wants to gather together City employees for whom public participation is a key component of their jobs on a regular basis to discuss best practices and issues that may arise in their daily work.
2. Recognize the value of cultural engagement at the same level as neighborhood engagement. NCR will provide training and tools to City departments so that they are equipped to properly get input and feedback from cultural groups and leaders during the key points of City projects, initiatives and policy-making. Training will include:
 - a. Ways to modify meeting structures to reflect the norms and values of different cultural communities and ways to focus recruitment efforts on building rapport & trusted relationships in communities and infusing community voices in decisions.
 - b. Best practices for providing translated materials and interpretation for all meetings where the decision making process is underway and provide quality assurance of translated documents.
 3. Review current engagement practices of City departments and, if needed, work together to make necessary improvements. The Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) is preparing an update to the City's Community Engagement Process Model Guidebook. NCR will use this guidebook to train City staff on public participation methods.
 4. Examine ways in which board and commissions can adopt new ways to conduct business that can increase their appeal to new potential board and commission members from all communities. NCR is developing a new City policy to support non-English speaking residents who wish to serve on a City board or commission.
 5. Support the City with policy and ordinance changes that recruit, train and appoint people of color and people with disabilities to City advisory boards to ensure accurate representation of the city's diverse communities. NCR plays a key role in getting the opportunities to serve on boards and commissions out into the community to ensure that more people are aware of the opportunity to serve on City boards and commissions.
 - a. **Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute:** NCR and the City Clerk's office have collaborated with Nexus Community Partners on a training program called the Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute (BCLI) that trains and prepares residents of color to be successful on a board or commission. Residents who complete this program are highly encouraged to apply for city boards and commissions.
 - b. **Streamlined appointments process:** In 2009, NCR and the Clerk's office restructured the timing of board appointments to be made twice per year. This allows the City do to targeted outreach and makes it easier for residents to know when opportunities to serve on City boards and commissions are available to them.
 - c. **One Minneapolis Fund:** A small grant program supporting leadership development and cultural engagement through non-profit partnerships.
 - d. **Minneapolis City Academy:** Is a five-week course in which residents learn about City operations and programs. Participants are encouraged to consider joining City boards and commissions or neighborhood boards.

6. Increase the accessibility and approachability of City meetings. Begin working with City leadership to expand the time and locations of meetings so that residents can more easily interact with local government.

Goal 5: Evaluate and Celebrate Progress

Creating processes and outcomes that are fair and just can be difficult. It's important to take the time to ensure that that our efforts are truly effective. When we do succeed, we should celebrate our accomplishments, and share the new-found knowledge with others.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Continue and expand the reporting mechanisms for work supported by NCR-managed contracts, particularly those focusing on community activities and outreach work.
2. Promote community and department successes in NCR communication and training efforts.
3. Support periodic evaluations of the community engagement work utilizing external and independent program evaluators.
4. Identify new measures – both quantitative and qualitative - for tracking community engagement activities.
5. Establish and support an independent, peer-supported recognition and mentoring system that celebrates best practices among community and neighborhood organizations.
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7. Establish and support an independent, peer-supported recognition and mentoring system that celebrates best practices among community and neighborhood organizations.
8. Recommit to the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Core Principles of Community Engagement.