

# Staff Report

**Agenda Item: 7**

**Title: Blueprint for Equitable Engagement**

Action    Discussion    Informational

**Date:** January 26, 2016

**Prepared By:** Ayianna Kennerly, Community Specialist, and Stacy Sorenson, Neighborhood Specialist

**Attachments:** Blueprint for Equitable Engagement

## Requested Action

Approve the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement and forward it to the City Council for final approval.

## Background

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". Inclusive and equitable participation will be critical to achieving the One Minneapolis goal.

The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement is the result of over two years work by the NCR Department. The NCEC discussed the development of the Blueprint at Committee of the Whole meetings on March 12, May 14, and October 16, 2014, and at Commission meetings March 25, May 27, and October 28, 2014. Over two dozen focus groups were held with neighborhood organizations and with cultural communities during the summer and fall of 2014.

The NCEC reviewed a draft of the Blueprint at its Committee of the Whole meeting on January 14, 2015. On May 19, 2015, NCR sent the Blueprint out for a 45-day review and comment period. Informational meetings on the draft were held on July 14 and August 11. In response to requests from the community, the review and comment period was extended through August 14. Written comments were received from 28 groups and individuals. The NCEC discussed the feedback and recommended a substantial re-write of the Blueprint at its meeting on August 25 and during the October 14th Committee of the Whole meeting.

Based on the feedback from the NCEC and the community, significant revisions were made to the Blueprint. The document was made easier to read, used a more collaborative language, added a one-page summary highlighting what are we doing (and why) to accompany a longer section detailing how the work will actually be done, and finally, incorporated the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement.

The redrafted document was sent out for a second 45-day review period on October 16, 2015. Open houses were held on October 24, October 26 and November 5 to solicit feedback on the proposed changes. This time, written comments were received from three neighborhood organizations. The comments praised the improved tone of the document, requested clarification on stated benchmarks,

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and noted minor discrepancies between the document's sections. Revisions based on these comments have been incorporated into the final document.

The Blueprint contains a values statement:

*NCR firmly believes that the involvement of all residents is essential to creating a better Minneapolis. We believe that the entire community benefits when **everyone** has access to information, programs, services and decision making.*

It also contains five strategies:

- **Strategy 1:** *Expand Community Engagement Strategies;*
- **Strategy 2:** *Support Strong, Vibrant and Functional Neighborhood Organizations;*
- **Strategy 3:** *Increase the Capacity of NCR's Community Engagement Efforts by working with Community Partners;*
- **Strategy 4:** *Ensure that City Departments are Well Equipped to Conduct Effective Public Participation: This strategy outlines the way the department will provide consistent training, tools and support for City staff to provide good public participation.*
- **Strategy 5:** *Evaluate and Celebrate Progress.*

Initial work on implementing the Blueprint's strategies has already begun. It is our hope that that Blueprint does not languish on the shelf, but instead becomes a living document – one that is modified when necessary, challenged occasionally, and most importantly, discussed often.