

# Information Item

Community Development Committee



**Meeting Date:** March 20, 2024

## Topic

Community Leaders Collaboration Expo and Presentations

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	All
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Minn. Stat. § 473.145
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Emma Dvorak, Senior Planner, Gabriela Olvera, Planner, Darcie Vandegrift, Principal Researcher, Yumi Kashihara, Associate Planner, Gillian Greenberg, Associate Planner, Magaly Ruiz-Barrios, Intern
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development / Research, Local Planning Assistance

## Background

The Community Leader Collaboration is modeled off the curriculum of the Young Leaders Collaboration, whose presentations were made to Council in May of 2023. This time, the program has been expanded to include people of all ages.

The Community Leader Collaboration consists of 30 participants in three organizations. The organizations were selected through a competitive application process which prioritized uplifting voices of historically marginalized groups, youth, immigrants, and other individuals who are typically not involved in the public process and building their capacity to engage directly with the Metropolitan Council. Over the course of six workshops, participants completed over 100 interviews with their peers on topics including pedestrian and transit safety, housing affordability, land use needs for cultural and community connection, habitat conservation, park access, and inclusive communities. The project will culminate in each organization presenting recommendations directly to the Metropolitan Council on March 20th, 2024. Participants will connect directly with Council Members and staff to share results from their work.

The Council Project Team included four staff and two interns. The Council staff team collaborated with the participants to build recommendations within the scope of the Council's jurisdiction, including innovative ideas that think about cross-cutting issues in new ways.

## Community Leaders Collaboration Expo

On March 20th, 2024, participants will present their engagement findings to Council Members and staff. Before the Council meeting, an Expo will be held at 3:00 pm in the lobby with poster presentations. The Community Leaders Collaboration Expo is an opportunity to hear directly from residents about their personal experiences and research related to Council authorities. On March 20th, 2024, participants will present their engagement findings to Council Members and staff. Organization members will present their research and policy recommendations to Council Members and staff.

At 4:00 pm, presentations will begin in Council Chambers. The schedule will include three 10–15-minute presentations, each followed by a brief time for questions.

## Policy Implications

Participating Community Leaders hail from many communities across the region including the Urban Core, and Suburban and Emerging Suburban Edge. Participants are youth, adults, people of color, new Minnesotans, and other communities that have been historically excluded from having a voice in policy making. Their recommendations come from careful study of Council authorities, research, and lived experiences. Particularly, community leaders focused on:

- Robust public transportation system as a catalyst for economic opportunities. By providing various transportation options, communities can overcome geographical barriers and improve access to employment centers across urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- In suburban areas where reliance on personal vehicles is more common, the availability of safe multi-modal transportation options, such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and reliable public transit, can enhance connections with commercial and recreational spaces, and build social connections.
- The need for neighborhoods that allow residents to foster strong social connections. Our policies should prioritize affordable housing options that cater to multigenerational households and large families.
- Housing resources that are multi-lingual and culturally responsive.
  - Islamic financing structures (Sharia-compliant) funding for homes addresses housing access for Muslim communities. plays a significant role in addressing the housing needs of Muslim communities, particularly those who adhere to Islamic principles and seek financial products that align with their religious beliefs.
  - Using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for housing applications is essential for promoting financial inclusion and ensuring access to housing opportunities for individuals who may not have a Social Security Number (SSN) but are still residing in the United States.
- Participants highlighted the preservation and access to greenspace not only as a sustainability initiative, but as a priority for improving the physical and mental health of communities.

We look forward to welcoming our community leaders to the Council's Committee of the Whole on March 20th.

