

Reference: Monthly Comprehensive Plan Update

- **Tasks 1.6 and 1.7: Community profile and summary of existing plans** – These tasks are complete and included with the Community Profile (attached). Special attention will be paid to including references to other existing plans within the comprehensive plan, so that the other plans carry the authority (“weight”) of the comprehensive plan when it comes to implementation. In other words, the comprehensive plan will establish a clear line of implementation, from vision to actions, that includes the many plans in which the City has invested in recent years.
- **Task 1.8: Equity Policy Methodology** – Given the high priority of equity in the goals, development, policies and implementation of this comprehensive plan, we have created an equity policy methodology to guide all phases of the planning process (attached). We have begun implementing this methodology in the Community Profile, by including several equity metrics that will inform future phases of the planning process.

We are now at the beginning of the Vision phase of the process. We believe that through our pop-ups, key informant interviews and kick-off event, we have received enough input to draft a vision and guiding values for the city. The project team is using that input to draft a vision and set of guiding values (which will be shared with you soon). We are proposing to extend the Vision Phase to account for more community engagement opportunities. It is extremely important that we get the “who” right in these initial stages of the Plan so that we Engagement during the Vision phase will allow us to “test” the vision and guiding values with stakeholders and ensure that it matches the values of the community. The pending scope amendment for this phase will include more targeted engagement activities to reach priority populations such as Latinx, youth, people with disabilities, industrial workers, and residents of the north/northwest portion of the city.

With the proposed scope and timeline changes, the Vision phase is scheduled to last through March.

Steering committee update:

The steering committee was appointed by the Mayor; the roster includes (with some context about each person):

- Betsey Buckheit (Current PC Chair, Steering Committee Chair)
- Tracy Davis Heisler (Current PC Vice Chair, Steering Committee Vice Chair)
- Brian Nowak (Planning Commissioner, architect, sustainability advocate, former and current housing developer)

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- Sean Allen (Exec. Director of Northfield Historical Society, HPC vice-chair, former developer)
- Beth Kallestad (Sustainability planner at MnDOT, former City staff – led climate action plan)
- Crystal Mulvihill (Parent, HR professional)
- Tyler Westman (business owner)
- Willian Estrella (Part-time interpreter city staff)
- Francisco E Murillo Poncianot (St. Olaf grad, economics, library staff)
- Juan Trinidad (School district staff)
- Rachel Estrella (Litigation and real estate attorney, Carleton grad)
- Lahna Tran (long-time Kindergarten teacher in Northfield Public Schools)
- Chao Troung (Owner of Tin Tea, St. Olaf student)
- Robert Morrison (Hospital Board member; business consultant)
- Rhonda Pownell (Mayor)
- Davin Sokup (At-large Council member; staff to MN senate housing and homeless prevention committee)
- Aki Gupta, youth representative
- Patricia Owusu, youth representative

Our first meeting was held on December 18th at 6pm.

Engagement: There have been a variety of pop-up engagement events and individual/small group interviews during the Discovery phase, which also included a large community kick-off meeting and online survey. A complete summary of Discovery engagement is attached, and a more concise recap is included below.

For this first phase NEOO spoke with more than 300 individuals (not including the survey, acknowledging that those who provided feedback during popups and the kick-off meeting may also have taken the survey) at the following events and key informant interviews.

Pop Up Events

1. August 17, 2023: Third Thursdays in Downtown (approximately 20 residents)
2. August 30th, 2023: Northfield Dog Swim at the Northfield Pool (approximately 50 community members, including residents, visiting family and neighbors from other cities)
3. September 15th, 2023: Carleton Student Fair, the Bald Sport (approximately 70 students)

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4. September 16th, 2023: Hispanic Heritage Festival, Central Park (approximately 50 people)

Five key informant interviews/meetings with the following stakeholders:

1. September 28, 2023: Jennyffer Barrientos, Health Communities Initiative
2. October 6, 2023: Jane Bartho, Northfield Chamber of Commerce
3. October 15, 2023: Amy Cernava and Nate Foley, Post Consumer Brands
4. October 11, 2023: Pam Fickensher and Jonathan Davis, St John's Church
5. November 14, 2023: Mar Valdecantos, Rice County Neighbors United
6. December 20, 2023: Youth on Boards meeting

One kick off meeting on October 28, 2023 attended by 76 individuals (including children), and a survey (open from mid-August and closed December, 31, 2023) taken by 244 individuals.

Key themes that emerged from these events, which will be used to shape the vision and guiding values for the Plan, included:

- Small town feel
- Need for affordable housing
- Better mobility options for those who rely on transit, walking or biking. Highways 19 and 3 are particular barriers.
- Parks and trails are a gem, although more benches and amenities are needed and more parks are needed on the north side of town.
- Need for year-round recreation and community gathering spaces that are accessible.
- Most daily needs can be met in the community, but travel time varies greatly depending on where you live. Affordable housing is far from amenities like grocery stores.
- More industrial uses / jobs are needed.
- Need to attract additional medical, dental and mental health services.
- Prioritize Investment for youth, families with small children, new immigrant or refugee residents, those aging in place and commuting professionals.
- Invest equitably in the north, west, and northwest areas of the city.

Upcoming Work:

We are currently working on the first draft vision and guiding values for the plan. Those will be shared with you during our next update. We are also working to firm up additional

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engagement opportunities during the vision phase. Finally, to ensure that the overall project timeline is met (adoption by the end of 2024), we are starting work on some of the analysis that will go into each subject matter chapter of the plan.

Respectfully,

STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Perdu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erin" and last name "Perdu" clearly distinguishable.

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Attachment: Discovery Engagement Summary Report, Equity Policy Methodology, Steering Committee materials