

# SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • MAY 19, 2022 • VOL. 1 • NO. 10



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Xe Moua (left), with sisters Youa, Linda and Anna Yang of North Minneapolis, fish for bass in the Kenilworth Channel between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake on May 15. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

## Residents debate how best to enjoy and take care of Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Soon, a light-rail train will stop in one of the most natural areas of Minneapolis. The Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) is considering how to plan for the future of Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles, and whether to build amenities there.

What they're hearing from residents is a protest against anything that would take away from the natural feel of the park.

The comments submitted by residents through the master planning process for the area repeat this statement: Do not make Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles a busy urban hub of activity like Harriet and

Bde Maka Ska. A man-made approach will not make these lakes better.

People are asking why the guiding principals for the master planning project assume that more amenities are better.

"Have you considered that it's ok to have a natural lake in the city? Do you realize how rare this already is?" asked one person via the online survey that closed on March 4. Anonymous comments and feedback were shared at an open house on April 30, the last public engagement process during the initial phase.

"Less is more," wrote another. "Keep it green/natural. Keep it open. The fewer

permanent structures the better. Lake of the Isles is not Lake Harriet or Bde Maka Ska. It has an entirely different feel and should remain that way. I think this intangible value gets lost in the discussion. It's subtle. Probably unrecognized by most. It's quiet, calm, peaceful. Lake of the Isles has the most green space of any of the Chain of Lakes. Or, at least it feels that way. And we should keep it that way. As residential development in Uptown and surrounding areas continues to grow, we are losing more and more green/open space. It



## MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS AT GF SQUARE OPEN HOUSE

By **Jill Boogren**

Questions about community input, justice and preservation of the George Floyd memorial dominated feedback at a public works virtual meeting on future reconstruction of 38th and Chicago on April 26, 2022. It was one of two open houses – the other held in person at Phelps Park – that marked the start of a year-long process intended to redesign the intersection.

According to the city of Minneapolis,

the streets were built in the 1960s and have "exceeded their useful life." The project encompasses 38th St. from Park Ave. to 10th Ave., Chicago Ave. from 37th St. to 39th St., and sidewalks.

Minneapolis City Council President Andrea Jenkins and Council Member Jason Chavez, whose wards 8 and 9 include George Floyd Square, and project leaders vowed to involve the public throughout the process, something Minneapolis



## WHAT'S NEXT FOR MPD?

### After Minnesota Department of Human Rights issues report on discriminatory, race-based policing, the city considers how to move forward

By **Cam Gordon**

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) issued its findings

and began work on a consent decree, in response to their investigation into civil rights violations of the city of Minneapolis on April 27, 2022.

The investigation, started following the murder of George Floyd, found that "there is probable cause that the city and MPD engage in a pattern or practice of race discrimination in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act. This includes a pattern of discriminatory, race-based policing as evidenced by racial disparities in how police officers use force, stop, search, ar-



## BLACK GARNET: SELF-EMPOWERMENT AND EMOTIONAL STRENGTH



Dionne Sims

### Dionne Sims opens first Black-owned bookstore in state

By **Chloe Peter**

Dionne Sims has loved books since before she could read, when her mom would read out loud to her. Once she could read, books were a consistent refuge whenever the world felt too overwhelming. They still are to this day.

Since then, Sims has started her own bookstore, Black Garnet Books. She

began by operating through pop-ups and a temporary location at Merci Tattoo in Uptown. Books are currently available on BookShop.Org. A physical location is opening late this summer on the ground level of Hamline Station Apartments, 1305 University Ave. W. in Saint Paul. Black Garnet Books is currently the only Black-owned bookstore in Minnesota.

In the months following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, Sims was looking for comfort in the form of books and wanted to buy from a Black-owned bookstore, but the closest one was in Chicago.

She tweeted about how Minnesota didn't have one, and that it would be her dream to start one on her own. It was then that community support and enthusiasm started rolling in. Within 48 hours, Sims' GoFundMe to raise money to open the store had reached its goal and within a week, it raised over \$100,000.

"There are many other Black readers who feel the same way [that books are a refuge], and we deserve spaces where we are the main focus and not an afterthought," Sims said.

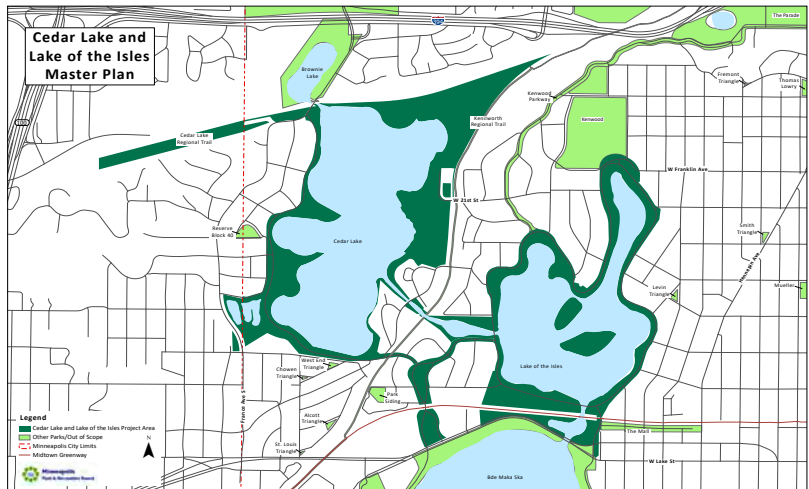
Representation is important







The Cedar-Isles master plan includes Dean Parkway, as well as a section of Cedar Lake Trail. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



**WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING?**

I don't think there should be any permanent structure built on Lake of the Isles for programming (such as a permanent winter warming house structure), and it is disheartening to see that both proposals include permanent structures. Lake of the Isles has a different character than Bde Maka Ska and Harriet, and I enjoy Isles more because it feels more natural and less groomed, and it doesn't have the busy beaches and the buildings that the other lakes have.

Easy access and continued long-term maintenance to the Cedar Lake Trail is crucial. This was the original urban bike highway in the nation and should be respected as such.

The concepts seem to emphasize increasing "gathering spots," which is something readily available at other lakes in the city. Cedar Lake currently provides an alternative not found at other lakes. I believe maintaining the less developed, more natural environment of Cedar Lake is critical.

If we are considering closing the parkway to vehicles I think the greatest benefit comes from closing the entire Lake of the Isles Parkway or leaving the entire thing open. So my personal input would be thinking about having a parkway open to

vehicles during the week and entirely closed to vehicles on weekends.

Please do not permanently close Lake of the Isles Parkway from East 25th Street to West 21st Street and reroute traffic through the neighborhoods.

I do not want activity stations or other ideas that pull from the nature. The lake is a great place to walk around and relax. I do not want additions that will crowd and pull away from the serenity.

How is the scientific community represented in these proposals? Where is the analysis of lake ecology and the impacts of further development on the viability of the lakes as natural environments? Has the MPRB done further work on studying wetland restoration as a way to bring back better water quality in the Chain of Lakes, and especially in Brownie, Cedar, and Isles? Why isn't significant wetland restoration presented as an option for the long term vision?

MPRB cannot afford the infrastructure it has today. How can it afford to add more costly infrastructure to its portfolio? What is the long-term maintenance plan for keeping the infrastructure usable and safe? And how will we pay for it if we already are stretched to maintain what we have?

The people who live in these neighborhoods, and use these areas the most clearly don't want any more construction. We don't want boardwalks and concrete where there is now green space and water. We don't want further construction. Listen to the people. The vast majority of public comments all voice the same thing. No new construction. Protect our green spaces.

I do not support any closure of the Grand Rounds to traffic other than pedestrians and bikes. For a system that is trying to attain equity, where is the equity for seniors and those with mobility issues?

Please incorporate the SWLRT "remnant lands" into the Cedar-Isles master planning process. This area has been cultivated by Kenwood Elementary students as a part of their outdoor and environmental learning by planting flowers, particularly cup flowers, that hold water and attracts birds and butterflies. Keeping these 38 acres open and undeveloped allows students to continue their program.

I so much appreciate the current bike trail system but do not want to further develop Cedar Lake. Leave it as undisturbed as possible.

~ Anonymous comments submitted to MPRB

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is crucial that we maintain what is left. We need to consider that just being in a natural/open space is enough - without having to do something when we get there. We don't need to be guided or entertained. Just clean water, trees, habitat, and well-maintained trails."

"People can go elsewhere if they want a paved paths or amenities," stated one comment.

The Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan (Cedar-Isles) will create a 20-30-year vision for Cedar Lake, a section of Cedar Lake Trail, Lake of the Isles and Dean Parkway. The process began in fall 2019 and is expected to finish in 2023. The Cedar-Isles area is the only part of the Minneapolis park system that does not have an updated plan, observed MPRB planner Emma R. Pachuta.

Some are concerned that the plan

doesn't include wetland restoration, and that no one has analyzed how any work on trails, bathroom buildings, rental kiosks, picnic pavilions or activity hubs will affect the wildlife.

One commenter wrote, "I would like to see that water quality and unique natural environment of Cedar Lake and surrounding parkland remain the highest priority."

Another said, "Prioritize animal habitat and water quality over human desires. We as humans need to fit ourselves around the health of the lake and the wildlife preservation, not the reverse, for long-term health of the lake."

Some are concerned about what they see as an attempt to "over commercialize" the lakes.

How does the existing turf grass in the area fit into the desire for a natural space? Some want the grass for recreation and others want to see "rewilding" or "littoral edge expansion."

Another debate: Do improvements in this prosperous part of the city take away resources from other areas, or does it make things more equitable and inviting?

"MPRB cannot afford the infrastructure it has today," wrote one person. "How can it afford to add more costly infrastructure to its portfolio? What is the long-term maintenance plan for keeping the infrastructure usable and safe? And how will we pay for it if we already are stretched to maintain what we have?"

**CLOSE THE PARKWAY?**

Whether to close the parkways is a hotly debated topic, with some favoring the move and others against it. One concept calls for closing Lake of the Isles Parkway between 25th and 21st. By making Cedar Lake Parkway a one-way, there would be space for a two-way bike trail. Other ideas are to close the parkways occasionally, such as for events or on the weekends. But there are concerns about seniors

and those with mobility issues accessing the area.

**WHAT'S UP NEXT? IS THERE A PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE INPUT?**

"We're working on one preferred park concept based on all the feedback we received," stated Pachuta. "We believe this next iteration will align more closely with what the community hopes to see."

The preferred park concept will be released this summer, starting up another round of engagement. Staff will provide both in-person and online ways to weigh in. To sign up for email updates about the Cedar-Isles Master Plan, head to the project page: [www.minneapolisparcs.org/cedar-isles](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/cedar-isles) under the Get Involved tab.

Learn more from MPRB planner Emma Pachuta about this process:

**HOW HAVE YOU REACHED OUT TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS?**



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▶ 3 BLACK GARNET

for young people to excel. A John Hopkins study found that Black students are 13 percent more likely to enter college if they had at least one Black teacher by the third grade. The same study found that the college enrollment of Black students more than doubled when they had two or more Black teachers in elementary school. Books can also be a way that students see themselves represented. A study done by Literacy Minnesota found that multicultural books can help students better understand current world issues while promoting unity and empathy.

One day, a group of high-school age friends came into a Black Garnet Books' pop-up. They kept squealing over the book covers on the YA section, according to Sims. They said things like, "This looks like you!" or "I want to do my hair like this!"

"It is such a sweet, joyful thing to hear," Sims said. "Black kids don't get to experience that enough, and if they do, it's usually because they searched high and low for it, versus it being the first thing they see."

Sims believes that representation and inclusion is important. She mentioned that reading stories about different ethnicities, cultures, and ways of life can open kids up to the expanse of the world and humanity.

"Allowing kids to read stories that are outside of their life experiences is one way we build collective acceptance, rather than just tolerance, or worse, intolerance," Sims said.

However, finding books that allow students to see representations of the BIPOC communities can be difficult. A study done by University of Wisconsin-Madison compiled statistics from publishers in 2018 and found that only 1 per-

# DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: [ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)

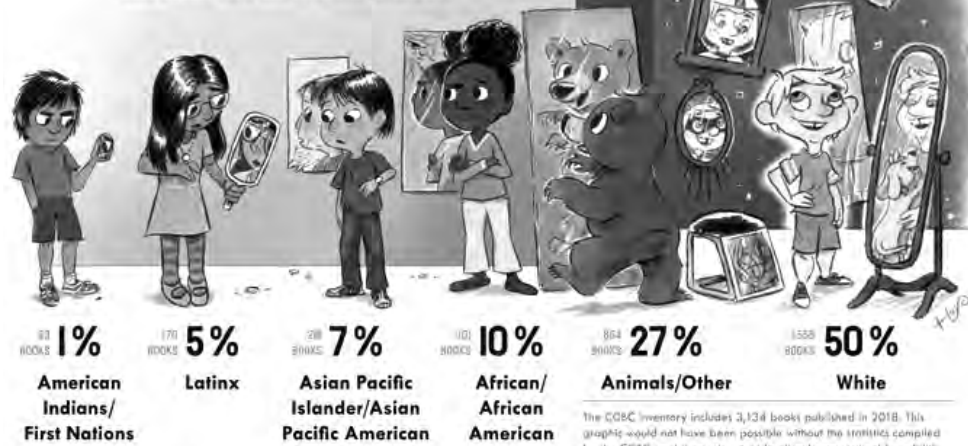


Illustration by David Huey, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen. Released under a Creative Commons BY-SA license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>). The CCBC inventory includes 3,134 books published in 2018. This graphic would not have been possible without the statistics compiled by the CCBC, and the review and feedback we received from Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffith, K. T. Harving, Destina Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. Many thanks.

cent of children's books include characters who are American Indian/First Nation and 10 percent African/African American while 50 percent included White children. Sims' advice to parents trying to find stories about or written by the BIPOC community is to follow more authors of color and BIPOC-owned bookstores on social media.

"Check out initiatives like 'We Need Diverse Books' and The Free Little Library's 'Read in Color,'" Sims said. "If the same old places you get your book recommendations from aren't uplifting the words of marginalized authors, expand your circles."

Recently, Sims helped contribute to

the 1619 Project book drive, an initiative to help provide access to access to Nikole Hannah-Jones' work around the lasting impact of slavery on the United States. She partnered with Bookshop.org to donate any copies obtained through the book drive to schools in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The response from community members was overwhelming as they ended up with 740 books that were donated to 13 different schools and educational groups.

Sims said that her favorite book right now is "The Blood Trials" by N.E. Davenport, which came out on April 5, 2022. It's a Sci-fi/Fantasy about a young Black woman fighting the ways in which imperi-

LOCAL BLACK PUBLISHERS

**Planting People Growing Justice**  
PPGLI publishes books that focus on leadership development, cultural appreciation, and career exploration. Selections include: "Justice Makes a Difference," and "Gumbo Joy." It is operated by St. Thomas professor Dr. Artika Tyner. [www.ppgjli.org](http://www.ppgjli.org)

**Strive Publishing**  
Strive Publishing was founded to help solve two problems: the need for culturally relevant children's books; and the underrepresentation of Black authors in book publishing. We all have a stake in the critical work of uplifting Black voices in children's literature, and we can make the greatest impact through working together. Founded by Mary Taris, the office is located in the same building as Golden Thyme Coffee & Cafe. [www.strivepublishing.com](http://www.strivepublishing.com)

**In Black Ink**  
The mission of In Black Ink (IBI) is to create spaces where stories and voices of people of African heritage are celebrated, documented, and archived through publications, professional development trainings/opportunities, and public presentations. IBI fosters a strong culture of literacy via social enterprising and economic support of artists and professionals. IBI is located at 938 Selby Ave. Its executive director is Rekhel Si-Asar.

alism, bigotry, and racism are affecting her family and country, but with rich magic on her side.

"It's the kind of book that I finished and felt excited about the kinds of stories that are coming out for young Black folks to read," Sims said.

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Pachuta: MPRB has implemented a number of strategies over the last couple of years to engage both nearby residents and regional audiences about their vision for this area of parkland. Strategies include online surveys, in-person events, online meetings, Community Collaborator projects, social media stories, presentations to neighborhood groups, in-person and virtual tours, signs in the parks, and in-person onsite interviews. We're always adapting and trying new ideas to continue to get the word out to people who use or want to use the parks.



Emma Pachuta

Public feedback highlights are regularly shared with the Cedar-Isles Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC is charged with representing voices of the community and making final recommendations about the project. Community Engagement Summary Reports for the Visioning Phase and Initial Park Concepts

phase are on the Cedar-Isles project page.

WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD FROM PEOPLE SO FAR?

Pachuta: We heard overwhelming support for making water quality improvements within the master plan project area, so we formed a Water Quality Subcommittee comprised of Community Advisory Committee members to identify water quality goals for the master plan. These goals were shared at CAC Meeting #10 in April, and will be front and center as the project team creates the preferred park concept.

Alongside the broad consensus about the importance of water quality, we heard a wide range of hopes and concerns. Check out the community engagement summary reports for the visioning phase and initial park concepts phase to learn more.

IN WHAT WAYS WILL THIS PLAN HELP MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

Pachuta: 1. Identifying rigorous water quality goals outlined by the CAC subcommittee

2. Incorporating design elements that proactively address climate change: increasing restored natural areas; implementing a "littoral edge" around both lakes (an area below the water's edge that is permanently submerged with plants and

aids in flood mitigation, water quality improvements, and has ecological benefits); and aiming to preserve natural areas and reduce erosion through formalizing and reducing the number of paths through natural areas, to name a few.

3. The master plan can prioritize projects, so it is possible to outline water quality or natural areas improvements as the first-tier priority for future improvements.

4. The water quality subcommittee plans to make high-level recommendations outside the scope of the master plan, including formalizing a collaborative community-agency citywide committee to continue monitoring and developing rapid solutions for water quality in the face of a changing climate.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET AND WHERE WILL THE FUNDS COME FROM?

Pachuta: Parks and Trails Legacy funds are supporting the budget for the creation of the master plan. If or when the plan is adopted by the board of commissioners, staff will then work to begin identifying funding and implementation opportunities. A benefit of having an adopted master plan for a specific park area is that it often opens new funding opportunities that would not be available without an adopted plan.

WHERE ARE WE CURRENTLY IN THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS?

Pachuta: MPRB just wrapped up the Initial Park Concepts phase, which is Phase 2 of 5 for the master plan process. MPRB Master Plan phases are as follows:

- Phase 1: Pre-design/visioning – fall 2019-summer 2021
- Phase 2: Initial park concepts – fall 2021-spring 2022. *This is the phase that just ended.*
- Phase 3: Preferred park concept – summer-fall 2022
- Phase 4: Draft plan – fall-winter 2022
- Phase 5: Final plan – winter 2022-spring 2023. *Phase 5 is when the final plan is presented to park commissioners, who ultimately vote on whether to adopt it.*

Two different initial park concepts were released in December 2021. MPRB gathered feedback and guidance from the public, partner organizations, internal staff, and the Community Advisory Committee to inform next steps. There were some "big ideas" presented in the initial park concepts. Some of the big ideas were not well-supported by the community, and will not make it into the preferred park concept.

LAKE HARRIET BANDSHELL REPAIR UPDATE

Wood shingles on the roof of the Lake Harriet Bandshell and its adjacent concessions building are failing and will be repaired beginning this fall.



The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) understands the importance of rehabilitating these iconic buildings. Lakeside entertainment at Lake Harriet has been a part of the Minneapolis park system since 1888. Lake Harriet has

seen two entertainment pavilions burn down, one destroyed by a tornado and a "temporary" bandstand last 60 years before the current Bandshell, the fifth at Lake Harriet, was built in 1986.

Now, after 36 years, it's time to repair the Bandstand for future generations. High winds this spring exacerbated damage to the roof and the MPRB fielded a lot of questions and concerns over the fate and safety of the Bandshell area.

WHAT'S BEING DONE RIGHT NOW?

Bentz Thompson Reito, the firm that originally designed the Bandshell buildings, is close to completing a comprehen-

sive analysis of the buildings. It's a full evaluation looking at the roof, building structure, electrical, HVAC, code compliance and accessibility.

That report will be available this spring and used to create a plan for renovations. MPRB staff will share recommendations in the coming weeks, which will assess short- and long-term options for repairs and financing.

HOW QUICKLY WILL THE BUILDING BE REPAIRED?

Roof repairs will be bid out to contractors this summer, with work scheduled to begin in the fall. Repairs will likely be phased over several years.

WILL THE BANDSHELL AND CONCESSIONS BUILDING REMAIN OPEN?

Bandshell entertainment, restaurant operations and bathroom availability are expected to continue as normal this summer. Repairs are anticipated to begin as soon as Bread and Pickle closes for the season. The cycle of performing repairs and updates to the buildings during off-peak seasons, and keeping everything open and operating during the summer is an option being considered by MPRB staff.

Visit the Lake Harriet Bandshell Repair project page and sign up for email updates to stay informed about this project.



# TO EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO SAVOR THE WORLD

## We are building restorative communities in the Twin Cities. Will you join us?

It's time to start healing. But how do we create a healing community when people are hurting?

"A traumatized gang member is more likely to cause trauma. A cherished person is going to find the way to cherishing themselves and others," says Father Greg Boyle, the founder of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles. "The culture is the number one thing. We do all the other things, like job training, but they're secondary to a culture that heals."

Homeboy Industries is the largest gang rehabilitation and reentry program in the world. It began in 1988 as a job training program called Jobs for a Future. Father Greg, or Father G as he is known, created the program as an alternative to gang life for at-risk youth after becoming the priest at Dolores Mission Parish in Boyle Heights in East Los Angeles. The church sits between two housing projects, and, when Boyle arrived in 1986, there were eight gangs at war with each other. The area had "the highest concentration of gang violence in the world."

In those early days, Boyle, a Jesuit, helped homies get jobs. Their motto was: "Nothing stops a bullet like a job." But he soon realized that jobs aren't enough.



By Eric Ortiz

A healing-centered approach works better than a job-centered approach. He couldn't "save" young men and women trapped in gang life. They had to want to change themselves.

"I learned that saving lives is for the Coast Guard. Me wanting a gang member to have a different life would never be the same as that gang member wanting to have one. I discovered that you do not go to the margins to rescue anyone. But if we go there, everyone finds rescue."

Today, Homeboy Industries has an annual budget of \$14.7 million and serves more than 9,000 community clients each year. The nonprofit organization offers a range of services, such as tattoo removal, workforce development, substance abuse treatment and mental healthcare. They provide a community of support with "those whose burdens are more than they can bear."

They also have 400 organizations from around the world that are part of the Global Homeboy Network. Their mission is to create therapeutic communities that offer job skills training, cost-free programs and services, and social enterprise employment.

The job isn't to fix people. It's to build kinship, accompany people, see them, listen to them, and point them in the right direction.

"Our choice always is the same: save the world or savor it. And I vote for savoring it," Boyle explains. "And, just because everything is about something else, if you savor the world, somehow – go figure – it's getting saved."

We can learn a lot from Father Greg Boyle and Homeboy Industries. Here in Minnesota, there are many people and groups working to restore and heal com-

munities. The Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association (LHENA) and I are looking to bring some of them to Minneapolis this summer. We are organizing four monthly Twin Cities Community Pop-Up Markets with Bread, a unique incubator for retail businesses that focuses on communities of color. The markets will be at Mueller Park in the Lower Hill East neighborhood, or the Wedge, starting in June.

These outdoor pop-up markets will bring together local business vendors, restorative practice leaders, wellness practitioners, community organizations, food trucks, musicians, artists, and community members for a vibrant marketplace. The markets will be free, accessible to all, and designed to build local connections, boost the local economy and empower the community. They also will have a restorative focus with yoga, meditation, talking therapy, art and more.

LHENA is working with restorative practices organizations – including the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute, Restorative Justice Community Action and ManUcan Consulting (Manu Lewis) – to create restorative communities. This work will equip residents and businesses with the tools to create strong communities that have the core values of open-mindedness (giving up fixed ideas), presence (meeting people where they are without judgment) and appropriate response (how can we best help and serve?). The goal is to create a restorative community framework that any community can use.

Bread and LHENA believe economic empowerment and opportunity, combined with restorative practices and action, can drive real social change and cre-



A young artist at a community festival at Mueller Park in 2021. (Photo courtesy LHENA)

ate communities that work for everyone. We have heard from many Minneapolis businesses, organizations and residents that are concerned about current trends in the city. People are wondering how we can revise civic policies to be more community-minded and restorative.

The markets can show how businesses, restorative practitioners and the community can work together to create restorative communities. After the summer restorative pop-up markets, the plan is to organize more restorative pop-up markets. They can be a stepping-stone toward creating restorative communities across the Twin Cities.

To be a vendor, sponsor or volunteer at this summer's Twin Cities Pop-Up Markets, let us know.



Eric Ortiz lives in the Wedge with his family. When he's not community building, he's the director of media for Granite Media and writes bilingual children's books with his kids. Their first book was "How the Zookalex Saved the Village," available in English and Spanish on Amazon.

# FACED WITH CONTROVERSY, PARK BOARD ONCE AGAIN FAILS TO GOVERN

The Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board is in a difficult position when it comes to Lake Hiawatha and the Hiawatha Golf Course. It has been eight years since the 2014 flood that inundated the golf course and revealed unpermitted groundwater pumping, yet the park board still has not passed a plan to deal with the issue. A two-year-long public engagement effort guided the creation of a master plan to reduce the golf course to nine holes and add wetlands, water treatment, and additional recreational opportunities, but the park board keeps failing to move it forward.

The sticking point is Hiawatha's historical role in the integration of city golf courses and the importance it continues to hold among Black golfers in Minneapolis. A group of golfers campaigning under the banner of Save Hiawatha 18 have made it clear that they consider anything less than 18 holes to be an attack on this heritage. Unhappily for the board, they face the reality that keeping 18 holes of golf at Hiawatha isn't compatible with resolving the major water issues plaguing the site. Dealing with flooding and pollution requires



By Ian Young

space, and there isn't enough space to build a flood-resilient 18-hole golf course, as well as the needed water management facilities.

An alternative proposal by Save Hiawatha 18 illustrates the cost of keeping 18 holes at this location. Their proposal would disconnect Minnehaha Creek from Lake Hiawatha, leaving the lake stagnant and unsuitable for recreation. It would also route a drainage channel along most of the non-golf-course shoreline, and would require lowering the level of both Lake Hiawatha and Lake Nokomis by three feet. Even if the park board acted against the wishes of surrounding neighborhoods to pursue an idea like this, it would be subject to approval and permitting by regulatory agencies such as the DNR and MPCA. These agencies would likely reject any plan like this that pushes our water problems into other jurisdictions, at which point the park board would find themselves back to square one, having wasted staff time and taxpayer money with nothing to show for it.

This sort of difficult decision is the reason we have elected leaders. It's their job to sort through the complicated technical details, to listen to affected communities, subject matter experts, and their own staff, and to synthesize that informa-

tion into a decision that best serves their constituents. It's also their job to understand that you can't always make everyone happy and that they will sometimes face harsh criticism, even for making the right decision.

Unfortunately, some commissioners seem to be following the example of the previously-seated board, who twice failed to advance resolutions about Hiawatha, instead passing the buck to the current board. Most recently, commissioners deadlocked on a procedural vote to schedule a public hearing on the Hiawatha Master Plan, leaving us once again with no forward progress of any sort.

More delay will not change the facts of this problem or cause a magical solution to arise where there wasn't one before. Meanwhile, continued inaction is causing tangible harms:

- As anger rises on both sides over the constant revisiting of this issue, the rhetoric surrounding it is becoming more bitter and divisive.
- More than 1,000 pounds of trash per year enters the lake from the stormwater pipe. Some of this trash remains in the lake and harms the ecosystem there, while some of it travels downstream into Minnehaha Falls and the Mississippi River.
- An unquantified amount of phos-

phorous pollution enters the lake from a combination of upstream agriculture, golf course runoff, and groundwater pumping. This contributes to the lake's murkiness and causes toxic algae blooms that keep the beach closed much of the summer.

• We continue to roll the dice on when the next flooding event will damage the existing golf course. The concern is a "10-year" flood event, which happens on average once every 10 years. Nobody can predict when the next one is, but we are now eight years past the last event, so the odds are only getting worse.

We don't elect leaders for them to hide behind nice words and hope that problems go away on their own. During debate on the recent resolution, Commissioner Shaffer stated that "this could be our story." Indeed it might. This may be the defining moment in which our newly seated park board decides if they will run away from every difficult decision, or if they will acknowledge their responsibility to lead, even when it's hard.



Ian Young is with Hiawatha 4 All. Find more at [info@hiawatha4all.com](mailto:info@hiawatha4all.com).

## SOUTHWEST Connector

The Southwest Connector is a twice monthly community publication in Southwest Minneapolis, owned and operated by TMC Publications, CO. Visit our website for our calendar and publication dates.

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### Story ideas always welcome.

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### Unsigned letters will not run.

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### Printing by: ECM/Adams Publishing Group

This issue of the Connector is printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink. Approximately 95-97% of material that enters the print facility is recycled.

Delivery: Bjorn Willms, 612-235-7197, [Delivery@swconnector.com](mailto:Delivery@swconnector.com)

Mail subscriptions available at \$80/year.

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Member of Minnesota Newspaper Association and Midwest Community Free Papers.

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# OPTIMISM IS NOT FOR THE FAINT-HEARTED

## TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

Why is pessimism so compelling? Is it that we fear being disappointed?

Is it so foolish to have optimism and hope?

My experience is that optimism seldom leads to complacency. Rather, it's pessimism that steals our energy for doing good.

So, why are so many of us making the choice to believe that the Democrats will get destroyed in the midterms? Why are we so perfectly willing to roll over in our hearts already? I don't get it.

Sure, the Biden Agenda has been blocked by the increasingly obstructionist and treasonous Republican Party. And yes, anyone following politics also knows that two senate "Democrats" have also been in the way of even the most marginally progressive bills.

But will the trend toward the presidential party losing seats in a midterm election necessarily become the reality in this election? Are we so certain that we will re-elect this corrupt and crazy party that not only supports Q and denies the



By **Larry LaVercombe**

insurrection, but actively ignores every other crime we've witnessed, including the withholding of arms from Ukraine? Are you sure we are going to go right back into denial again? Do we really have such a low opinion of ourselves?

This brand of pessimism has been the prevailing bias since day one of our new administration, and I, for one, am tired of it.

We've worked so hard. Meanwhile, the moral degradation of what can no longer be recognized as the Republican party becomes more and more obvious. The Red Party keeps trumpeting their obvious lies. Their ultra-conservative Supreme Court has shown its true colors, and with disturbing ease seems ready to roll back 50 years of precedent by overturning Roe v. Wade. What next? Will they strip away the right to marry? They just might.

So, is there reason to be pessimistic? Of course. Will that benefit us in any way? No. It won't.

Perhaps I'm a Pollyanna. But do you believe that this country has no moral compass? Do you believe that it's wasted effort to work for justice and equality? Do you believe that there is no point to working for progress in this country, and that rather, we are destined to be the backward nation that a large number of the foolish

and selfish want us to be? We have been experiencing a horrifically ugly and mendacious backlash for five years, yes. But are we really doomed?

I don't think we are. I believe that since we first elected Obama, we have known that hope and truth and justice have a chance. I believe that truth can outweigh lies.

And let's think critically about "the polls" for moment, shall we? Biden has a low approval rating right now. Fine. He has never been loved by the progressives, anyway. And no Red Republican is ever going to admit that a Democrat does anything right. (Contrast this to Bush's approval rating after 9/11, when the Dems put party ideology behind us.)

Meanwhile, Biden's every attempt at "progress" has been thwarted by the monolithically regressive Red Party, and sure - by a couple of red-Democrats, too. But do we really think that us "non-reds" are going vote in a majority of autocrats again, after what we've been through?

My point - my fear - is that all this hand-wringing is going to lead to lethargy on our part. If we all think we're going to lose, then some of us won't bother to vote. And that is how we will lose.

I, for one, plan to do everything I can to stop that from happening. I refuse to

participate in this negativity.

And, I for one, am not afraid of looking foolish. If I'm disappointed, so be it, but I'd rather be disappointed than full of regret that I didn't lead with hard work and a positive, can-do attitude.

Especially now. After 50 years of precedent, the regressive anti-abortionists are about to have their day. They'll get their big victory. Are we just gonna go sulk? Or, are we gonna go out and elect a greater majority of non-reds than we already have, and then go pass a voting rights bill, so we can end this tyranny of lying and White privilege forever.

That future exists in a place just as likely as the one where all goes to hell, again. Do you think it will be less hellish if we start planning for it, now? Let's create a positive future instead, and start believing in it now.

It's time to put our own boots on. Aren't we tired of being trampled by their ugly desire to "own the libs?" Here's what I say:

Full steam ahead toward owning the reds.

**Larry LaVercombe** is a writer, filmmaker, and activist, born in Detroit and arrived in Minneapolis in 1975. He lived in a treehouse in San Diego before getting an MFA from the USC Film School. He writes most days, and as Team Larry he has been selling residential real estate in Minneapolis for 26 years.

# CELEBRATING JACKIE ROBINSON'S LEADERSHIP LEGACY

The Minnesota Twins recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's debut in Major League Baseball. Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute was represented during the celebrations. Special activities were held throughout the Twins' game against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Target Field.



By **Dr. Artika Tyner**

The ceremonial first pitch was thrown by three of our local students, Nah'Lyiah Davis, Abigail Mutua, and Aniyah Stewart. They were winners of the team's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Writing Competition held in partnership with PPGJLI. The topic of the contest was: "What it truly means to be a drum major for justice."

Jackie Robinson exemplified the goals of the PPGJLI. We seek to plant seeds of social change through education, training, and community outreach. Jackie did the same by promoting these core nine values of courage, persistence, justice, determination, integrity, commitment, teamwork, citizenship, and excellence.

The Minnesota Twins recognized Jackie's lasting impact by celebrating youth and future generations as they continue to break barriers, push for social equity, and serve as an inspiration for everyone. His impact on baseball, society, and history was monumental.

Jackie was the first African American to play in Major League Baseball and his contribution was immeasurable. He was



Winners of the PPGJLI writing competition, Nah'Lyiah Davis, Abigail Mutua, and Aniyah Stewart, threw the first pitch at a Twins' game that also recognized the 75th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's debut playing baseball. (Photo submitted)

signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers on April 15, 1947, and that single act was a major milestone in the game and the country's history. That same year, he was honored with the inaugural "Rookie of the Year" award.

His signing marked the beginning of the end of racial segregation in professional baseball. The son of a sharecropper, it was unfathomable at the time that an African American would reach the pinnacle of America's Pastime.

His uniform bore the No. 42 and in honor of his achievements, Jackie's uniform was retired across all major league teams, the first athlete to ever be honored in that way. On April 15, 2004, a new tradition was instituted called Jackie Robinson Day. On that day each year, every

player on every baseball team wears the No. 42 on their uniform.

Jackie received numerous accolades and awards during his renowned 10-year baseball career, but it was also a time when he suffered some of the worst of racism. He served his country proudly in World War II, and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal and Presidential Medal of Freedom.

One of the greatest baseball players of all time, he died in 1972 at the age of 53.

Jackie's legacy lives on in the game of baseball and the many youths that dream of following in his footsteps. He leaves us all with a leadership challenge to take action when he stated: "Life is not a spectator sport. If you're going to spend your whole life in the grandstand just watching what goes on, in my opinion you're wasting your life."

**Through her organization**, Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute, Dr. Artika Tyner seeks to plant seeds of social change through education, training, and community outreach. She is a professor at St. Thomas University.

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Wallin Education Partners President and CEO Susan Basil King remarked, "It's a wonderful, hands-on approach." (Photo submitted)

# WALLIN HELPS STUDENTS RISE

nances, making sure they had access to a college degree.

"He started working with one high school, South High, that he had attended," King recalled. "Today that partnership has grown to 58 schools." She said Wallin came from a modest background, growing up on a farm in Hastings. "He was a person who just had a strong view of what he could give back, and he made it happen. That's why I call it a Minnesota story."

The foundation's high record of college graduates is based on its three-pronged system, according to King. That consists of one-on-one as well as group advising, financial help and access to internships and networking. "We're successful because we don't offer just financial aid, but also support," she said.

Career counselors with master degrees are assigned by the Wallin Education Partners to work with each scholar throughout their college experience. King said the counselors stick with the students in an advisory capacity, and the youth get help with resumes and internship pipelines. The scholars are also encouraged to get to know fellow Wallin recipients.

Another reason for Wallin's success with its scholars is the partnership between the organization and the 58 high schools. High school student counselors are made aware of the scholarships and get a weekly report on which of their recommended students have applied and how close they are to finishing the application. "It's a wonderful, hands-on approach," King said.

"We have a graduation rate of 91 percent," said Jean Carlos Diaz, manager of marketing and alumni relations at Wallin Education Partners. He said that typically a graduation rate for students with barriers can be as low as 11 percent. "At Wal-



When students in our community lack the support they need to pursue an education, we all lose. When students are seen, supported, and set up to succeed, we all win..."

[wallinpartners.org](http://wallinpartners.org)

lin, when donors give, they can see the impact. We are committed to see our scholars not only get to college, but graduate."

King said Wallin's basic program supports students attending four-year colleges. A few years ago the foundation started working with students planning to attend community colleges. "St. Paul College is one of the original three schools we used to pilot that program."

She added that Wallin is looking at a program this year with 171 students attending community college for two years and then transferring to a four-year university. It is called the Two Plus Two program.

Diaz said Wallin currently has 269 students in St. Paul, with 34 of them at St. Paul College. "We also have a great relationship with Dunwoody. Wherever a student may go, there are many pathways, and we are here to provide that," he said.

### EQUITABLE AND NEEDS-BASED

Wallin Education Partners has just completed its 30th year and last August moved its offices from Minneapolis to 451 Lexington Parkway in St. Paul. King said that at its inception, the program was funded by Wallin himself. But others wanted to help. "In 2007, the program became a foundation," King explained.



"We are committed to see our scholars not only get to college, but graduate," stated Jean Carlos Diaz, manager of marketing and alumni relations at Wallin Education Partners. (Photo submitted)

She said many might ask why the public would want to give to a wealthy organization, but she said that although the Wallin family supports 50 scholars every year, this year there are 300 students being funded just in the freshman class.

"Wallin Education Partners is funded by all sorts of donors," King said. "We are exclusively funded by donations and receive no public money."

King reflected that the pandemic has affected Wallin in the same ways it has affected other service organizations, although she said the staff was able to move from in-person meetings to remote meetings pretty easily.

"A signature of Wallin is the in-person meetings, but we had to change that and for the past two years almost all connections with students have been remote. But our retention remains strong." King said statistics have shown one million fewer students in college from the fall of 2020 to the



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6 WALLIN

fall of 2021. “We were anticipating that, but have not seen it. We really stuck with it and assumed our scholars would be successful. Part of it is attitude.”

King said the most recent class of Wallin scholars includes 89 percent who are students of color. Seventy-one scholars are first-generation college students. “I think even though it was not spoken of in the early days, the nature of the program has been for low-income students even 30 years ago,” she said. “We did not think of it as equity building, but really that is just what we are doing. We are speaking of it more clearly now, but it has always been the driver since the beginning.”

King joined Wallin eight years ago. Her career has been half in the non-profit sector and half in the private sector. “I was a management consultant for about a decade for companies that wanted to grow, and I helped them move in that direction,” she said. “I come from a family of educators, so Wallin felt right. If you have a program that is clear, that is best. Wallin was working well when I got here.” King said she has been in Minnesota for most of her career life, but she grew up in Detroit.

She said selecting applicants for the program is totally equitable and needs-based. “A lower-income category is the common denominator, but the application process is multi-dimensional. It does not just consider grades, but merit in a variety of ways. We no longer require the ACT, and we look for commitment to family, other things involved in high school and outside of school, essays and recommendations.”

King said the number selected could easily be doubled, and she knows they would be successful. So far Wallin has served over 6,000 scholars with 1,300 currently enrolled. The success rate is not just limited to high graduation rates.



“We have 96 percent employed, and 40 percent go on to graduate school immediately,” King said.

MINETTE SAULOG: ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER

One of the students who has benefited from a Wallin scholarship is now president of its alumni board and has been the recipient of the counseling and networking opportunities offered, as well as the financial assistance.

Minette Saulog was born and raised in St. Paul, the older of two children. Her parents were educated in the Philippines. She attended Central High School.

“When I was a senior, I got this slip from my counselor about my GPA being high enough to apply for a scholarship from Wallin Education Partners,” Saulog said. “So I applied, did all the essays and everything, went for it and got it. I got a general scholarship from the Wallin Foundation. This was in 2014, and it pales in comparison to what it is now with the

number of donors.”

Saulog described herself as being super excited. She took a job also, but when she had so many classes it was difficult, she was able to quit the job and rely on the scholarship. “Just having that comfort level was so great,” she said.

She said having an advisor through Wallin as a component of the scholarship was very important to her. “I had two advisors; when one left, I was given a new one. They both helped me so much and were there for me.” Saulog said she was changing majors and in “decision paralysis.” Saulog remarked, “Just having that support system was such a big deal to me.”

Saulog said she also participated in job fairs with other Wallin participants and various school events. “It was really cool, and you felt like you were in this little club.”

One thing that Saulog emphasized was that she never felt the pressure that if she had one bad semester or one failed class, her scholarship would be dropped. “I took calculus three times,” she said. “The first time it was the wrong calculus class, so I dropped. The second time I couldn’t do it and dropped so it would not affect my grade point. The third time, I passed. Even when I was struggling, I did not feel like if I fail this one time, they will pull the rug out from under me.”

She said that the stressors of being the first one in her family to go to college in the United States and coming from another country and being on her own for the

first time were eased by her Wallin supporters.

“Wallin saw every scholar as a whole person, and now that I am on the alumni board, I hear that over and over again. It makes such a big difference,” Saulog said.

When she graduated, Saulog did not have immediate plans for graduate school. She had felt prepared to go to college and had become very involved with activities on campus, but she did not know how to easily transition after graduating. “You work from 9 to 5, and it gets to be routine, and maybe your friends have moved away,” she said. “I wondered how to spend my time and how to make friends.”

Saulog had attended a couple of alumni workshops and enjoyed them. She met some members of the alumni board at Wallin and stayed in touch with one of them. In the spring of 2019 the alumni board member reached out to Saulog, who joined the board. “It’s a welcoming experience, and I feel like I can give back,” Saulog said. “It’s the dream of many scholars to be able to at some point be a donor or partner.” She said she is very passionate about her position as president, and is pleased with all the friends she has made on the board and the networking opportunities.

“I am trying to remind people we are here for you as you do life things, and there are so many ways you can stay connected. We recognize that everyone has a story, and Wallin does an amazing job of honoring that.”

Diaz said the Wallin Education Partners has a large alumni community that provides a lot of opportunities for graduates. And many scholars become staff members. “One-third of our 28 staff members are former scholars,” he noted.

According to Diaz, Wallin has three times as many applicants as it can provide for financially. “We would like to be serving as many students as we could, because we know it works.”

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# LIVING INTENTIONALLY

## FROM YOUR CENTER WITHIN

With Memorial Day around the corner, we as a community, country and individuals take time to honor those who have served and died in active military service. With wars raging in various parts of our world, I also include an intention in my own mindfulness practice for optimal well-being and outcomes for all those negatively impacted by the many traumas caused by violence.

How can I use my intentions and influence to contribute positively to this world? How do I live my best life no matter what arises in the present moment? The words of Mary Oliver's poem from "The Summer Day" comes to mind, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

Creating intentions helps you clarify what is most important to you and who you want to be in the world. Intentions provide a roadmap for you to live an authentic, healthy, and empowered life. Living with intention aligns your choices with your values, goals, and visions. Easier said than done! Here is an excerpt from my book, "Living From the Center Within: Co-Creating Who You Are Becoming."

The process of being human is amazing and complex. Why do people having similar experiences react so differently?



By Michele Rae

Some people are resilient, happy, and satisfied, living from their strengths, passions, and gifts. Others with comparable circumstance are miserable and think they are victims. The unseen world of beliefs, intentions and thoughts have profound influence on the small decisions we make every day.

What gets in the way of living by your intentions? Take a few minutes to consider any self-sabotaging behaviors, self-talk, inner criticism, or limiting beliefs that negatively impact you. Where do you see lack, unworthiness, scarcity, or feel stuck? Change does not occur without the discomfort and sacrifice of leaving old beliefs, meanings, and habits behind. Living your best life takes intentional choice.

### HERE ARE A FEW MORE CONSIDERATIONS AS YOU CLARIFY YOUR INTENTIONS:

What matters most to you?  
What does your ideal future look and feel like?

What are your intentions to be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy?

What do you intend for creating and sustaining positive meaningful relationships?

What inspires and energizes you?  
Do you live in balance, giving and receiving generously?

What are you grateful for?  
What no longer serves that you are willing to release?

How can you incorporate reflecting on your intentions on a regular basis into your life?

### QUALITIES OF THE OLD ERA

Depletion  
Secrecy  
Citizens with borders  
Hidden information  
Exclusivity  
Self-serving  
Despising differences  
Separation  
Blame  
Win-Lose strategies  
Alienate  
External locus of power and responsibility  
Scarcity  
Deconstruction  
Polarization  
Greed  
Antagonism  
Violence  
Entitlement  
Agitation  
Dominance  
Break down  
Discrimination

### QUALITIES OF THE NEW ERA

Sustainability  
Transparency  
Global/universal citizens  
Shared information  
Inclusivity  
Mutually beneficial  
Honoring diversity  
Interconnectedness  
Responsibility  
Win-Win strategies  
Collaborate  
Internal locus of power and responsibility  
Abundance  
Reconstruction  
Common ground  
Compassion  
Solidarity  
Peace  
Mutual accountability  
Equanimity  
Freedom  
Break through  
Equality

into this new era of being human. This process involves co-creating a new paradigm together. We focus on envisioning a future that supports the highest good for all beings. We are invited to give our allegiance to the dawning of what is beginning.

I continue my intentions for the transition from what I call the 'old era' into a 'new era' in my book, as well. I feel the old era crumbling. It is messy and painful. Can you feel the expansion of the possible qualities

We are also setting intentions in our community together. I believe we are in a time of enormous potential for positive transformation and growth. When you imagine an ideal future in our world, what does that look and feel like to you? Here are a few of my ideas noted in another excerpt from my book:

When we relax and trust the process of the birth quake occurring in humanity as a natural progression of development, we open our imagination to create and innovate. By doing this, we are more capable of intentionally participating in impacting who we are becoming as we transition

of a new era? Let's set our intentions for the future together.

You matter. Your intentions matter. How are you intending to create a life you love personally, interpersonally, and professionally?



**Michele Rae, RPh, MA, NBC-HWC** is the founder of The Center Within, LLC and author of "Living From the Center Within: Co-Creating Who You Are Becoming." She provides holistic coaching designed to accelerate and support personal, professional, and organizational transformation.

## ▶ 1 WHAT'S NEXT?

rest, and cite people of color, particularly Black individuals."

The report concluded that discriminatory, race-based policing is caused primarily by an organizational culture which emphasizes a paramilitary approach to policing, as well as an inadequate accountability system.

MDHR Commissioner Rebecca Lucero, wrote, "Former and current city and MPD leaders have not collectively acted with the urgency, coordination, and intentionality necessary to address racial disparities in policing to improve public safety and increase community trust. Without fundamental organizational culture changes, reforming MPD's policies, procedures, and trainings will be meaningless."

"Race-based policing is unlawful" the report said, "and especially harms people of color and Indigenous individuals – sometimes costing community members their lives."

"This news is not a surprise to the Black community," said Minneapolis Director of Regulatory Services Saray Garnett-Hochuli. "What pains me in this is that we needed a report to validate what Black people have been saying for decades, years. I challenge all of us to do right by the city because this has to change."

### CONCENT DECREE BY SEPT. 1?

The report calls for the creation of a consent decree to help correct these racist practices. Such a decree would be developed by the MDHR and city government and would result in a court-enforceable agreement of changes to be made. The court order would be issued by a judge and include the independent oversight of a monitor or monitoring team that reports to the court.

"MDHR will meet with community members, MPD officers, city staff, and other stakeholders to gather feedback on what should be included in a consent decree," said Lucero.

"We need to take a different approach to addressing racial discrimination within MPD, and in the city of Minneapolis



It's our responsibility to change the culture, and to make sure that the racial discrimination that has plagued the city of Minneapolis ends with us."

**Emily Koski**

community can trust."

Lucero is hoping that by the end of July the department will have met with city officials and negotiated the terms of the decree so that they can present something to the courts by Sept. 1. She said, "It is imperative to immediately address the state law violations identified by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and to submit a proposed consent decree to the court by September 1, 2022, to address the violations of the Minnesota Human Rights Act."

### CUAPB, CAIR GATHER PUBLIC INPUT

Community members and organizations are also exploring options for the decree and MDHR has invited anyone to visit their website and submit ideas for potential changes that could be part of the court order.

One organization, Communities United Against Police Brutality (CUAPB), has held over two dozen meetings to gather community input and has had canvassers going door to door to educate people and gather their thoughts.

"We are right now exploring every consent decree that has happened in the country to see what has been successful," said Center for American and Islamic Relations (CAIR) Executive Director Jaylani Hussein. He says they have looked at similar decrees in Baltimore, New Orleans and New York, and have a draft of roughly 30 ideas already that they plan to prioritize and refine before submitting them to

as a whole," said Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski. "Accountability starts with us. It starts with every leader serving with the city of Minneapolis – and it starts with a consent decree to address racial discrimination in policing in the city of Minneapolis, and to do so in a way that our

MDHR.

"We are already seeing the mayor defend the police and working to combine the federal and state investigations and court orders," he said. He believes that the scopes of the investigations are different, and that two court orders are preferred. To that end, in the weeks ahead, he will be working with CUAPB and others to "galvanize the community."

He is calling for "an immediate review of all complaints that the office has failed to act on, to make sure that officers who are still on the force are held accountable."

### PUBLIC SAFETY AUDIT TEAM

Koski agrees that the consent decree presents a promising opportunity. "What I'll want reflected in the consent decree is the Minnesota Department of Human Rights' suggestions, and recommendations, as far as action steps, that can be taken to remedy the problems that were identified in the report," she said. "Beyond that, I would like to see the input of community members reflected in the content of the consent decree – especially, and it should go without saying, the input of our BIPOC community."

As a member of the city's audit committee, Koski has spearheaded the creation of a new Public Safety Audit Team in the internal audit division. She initially brought up the idea up after the police shooting of Amir Locke, because, she said, "instituting an audit team/auditor who oversaw the Minneapolis Police Department would create the proper checks and balances between the police department, mayor, and city council."

"A Public Safety Audit Team would serve as a body that provides oversight of our public safety systems – their conduct, practices, and policies – to increase accountability and public trust," she said recently. "The audit team will also be able to assist in the implementation of the consent decree."

On April 28, Minneapolis Director of Internal Audit Ryan Patrick provided a presentation on the current recommendations for the Public Safety Audit Team. According to the charter, the internal audit office is one of the only city departments

or divisions that is independent of the mayor's office and the police department and reports directly to the council.

According to Patrick, a public safety audit team could serve as a body that provides oversight to increase accountability and public trust. It would also be able to assist in the implementation of the consent decree.

Other jurisdictions Koski points to that have created Police Accountability Auditors or audit teams that are either the same, or similar, to what is being recommended include Aurora, Colo; King County, Wash.; Denver, Colo.; Portland, Ore.; and, San Jose, Calif.

According to Patrick, "Based on the amount of risk that exists in the public safety sphere, we think it's important to add dedicated resources to the internal audit team," he said. Because the city's concept of public safety is evolving the extra monitoring could be especially valuable. "Internal audit remains only oversight body outside of the executive reporting line," he added. It also has the "free, full, and unrestricted access to information, structure to report non-public/confidential information."

With both federal and state Investigations going on and court orders that may take years to complete, Patrick said, "Internal audit staff can provide and build institutional knowledge, relationships, and trust while maintaining independence."

Whether or not it is required in a consent decree, Koski is committed to working on the establishment of a Public Safety Audit Team. "Creating a Public Safety Audit Team will allow us to create institutional checks and balances on our executive branch's authority over all public safety functions in the city of Minneapolis," she said.

"We need to take collective action, and act with urgency, coordination, and intentionality," Koski wrote in a recent newsletter. "It's our responsibility to change the culture, and to make sure that the racial discrimination that has plagued the city of Minneapolis ends with us."

To learn more and share your ideas with MDHR, see <https://mn.gov/mdhr/mpd/>.



# JOIN US TO EXPLORE THE FUTURE OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

In the 20th century, we made major public investments to transform the metro Mississippi River for commercial and industrial purposes. However, some of that old infrastructure is no longer useful, presenting an opportunity to reimagine our relationship with the river.



By **Colleen O'Connor Toberman**

We hope you'll be a part of this reimagining. Find more information below about free summer walking, biking, boat and kayak focus-group tours of the locks and dams. We'll ask big questions about the river's future, including should we remove some dams?

What we do with these old dams will affect water, wildlife and recreation here in the Twin Cities, as well as downstream and even beyond. Large-scale dam removal has never been done in a setting as urban as the Twin Cities. The Mississippi River's global prominence only adds to the significance of this potential opportunity and might inspire other communities to reconsider the future of their rivers, too.

There are three locks and dams in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The first two, Upper and Lower St. Anthony Falls, are on either side of the Stone Arch Bridge in downtown Minneapolis. Eight miles further downstream is the Lock and Dam No. 1, also known as the Ford dam.

These three structures were initially built to facilitate commercial shipping, but these days barges no longer travel through these locks. The Corps is studying the future of these locks and dams because they no longer fulfill their original purpose. They do provide some important



Lock and Dam No. 1, also known as the Ford Dam. (Photo submitted)

functions, but they also fragment wildlife habitat and alter the river's natural flow.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) believes the Corps should continue owning, maintaining and managing the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock. This lock and dam still serves many essential functions. They manage the river's upstream water levels to provide reliable drinking water to 1 million Twin Cities residents, block the spread of invasive carp upstream and prevent the collapse of St. Anthony Falls.

However, the Lower St. Anthony Falls lock and dam and Lock and Dam No. 1 are prospective candidates for removal, which could reap major benefits. Removing these two dams would reconnect 39 miles of the Mississippi River and could restore the types of rapids and floodplain habitats upon which many rare, threatened and endangered species rely. The river would also become shallower and have a faster flow, enhancing recreational activities from whitewater paddling to

shoreline fishing.

Dam removal does have potential drawbacks. Costs to remove the structures and restore the river bottom would be significant. While new recreational opportunities could draw many users, some current flatwater activities like rowing would need to move elsewhere. The Ford and Lower St. Anthony Falls dams also generate hydropower, though at modest levels that would not be difficult to replace with other renewable energy sources.

Each of the three locks is undergoing a disposition study to help the Army Corps assess whether the structures should remain in place and, if so, who should own, maintain and operate them. The Corps is now finalizing the study for the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock, with the study for the Lower St. Anthony Falls and Ford locks and dams anticipated to begin this fall. There will be multiple opportunities for the public to comment on the design and conclusions of that study.

These studies are just the early steps in what will likely be a long process. Congressional authorization would be required for any significant lock and dam ownership changes, modifications or removal. Any of these outcomes could be costly. And a big step like dam removal may require further study and community engagement after the Corps' initial study process. Should the dams be slated for removal, it could be 10 or even 20 years before structural work begins.

We're eager to see a robust scientific review and community engagement process regarding the future of these two locks and dams with plenty of time for community members and other stakeholders to raise questions, look at alternatives, examine evidence and seek solutions.

Join us to begin imagining the Mississippi River of the future, a river no longer bound by its industrial past. Together, we can chart a 21st-century course to protect and restore the Mississippi and all the communities and wildlife that depend on its health. Macalester College, FMR and many other partners are leading a series of focus-group tours open to all community members interested in exploring these questions. Biking, kayaking, boat and walking tours are available for various dates and times this summer at no cost.

To learn more or sign up, visit [fmr.org/lock-focus-group-tours](http://fmr.org/lock-focus-group-tours). We're also happy to give special presentations to community groups upon request.

**Colleen O'Connor Toberman** is the Land Use & Planning Director at Friends of the Mississippi River. She can be reached at [ctoberman@fmr.org](mailto:ctoberman@fmr.org) or 651.222.2193 x29.

## BRIEFS

### SOUTHWEST RESIDENT NOMINATED FOR PUBLIC HOUSING BOARD CHAIR

On May 12, the council approved Mayor Frey's nomination of Tom Hoch to be the next Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) board chair. Hoch worked for the MPHA in the 1990s for 7 years as the deputy executive director. More recently, he was the president and CEO of Hennepin Theater Trust and, in 2017, he ran for mayor of Minneapolis. The appointment is for three years ending on Dec. 31, 2024.

### STATE POLICE INCREASE PRESENCE IN CITY

In April, the city council authorized agreements with the Minnesota State Patrol and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) that will add patrols and investigators in Minneapolis. There will be added patrols in a "North Focus Zone" that covers the West Broadway Business Corridor, and a "South Focus Zone" along Lake Street from Hiawatha Ave. to Interstate 35W and from Nicollet Ave. to Hennepin Ave. The State Patrol will have four officers work four hours on Thursday, Friday and Saturday each week. The city will pay the State Patrol \$400,000 based on an hourly rate. The BCA have will have 13 investigators working in the city police department helping investigate violent crimes. The BCA will be compensated up to \$300,000 during the term of the contract. The city or state may terminate the agreements at any time, with a 30-day notice, but they are not set to expire until Dec. 31, 2023.

### STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor Jacob Frey gave his 2022 State of the City address via a video recording on April 26. In it, he highlighted changes within city government and his spending proposal for the \$43 million of remaining funds from the American Rescue Plan

Act (ARPA). The address was given a day before the release of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights findings of police civil rights violations. "This spring season has cast a new light across our city, bringing with it a palpable renewed sense of hope and optimism," he said. "From meetings in city hall to conversations at the many groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings, I'm struck by a newfound sense of purpose and focus, a resolve to attack the day with purpose." His spending plan includes funding for affordable housing, public safety, and economic recovery, as well as climate and public health. The council began meeting to discuss the proposal on May 6, held a public hearing on May 16, and is expected to consider amendments and approve a final budget for the funds on May 26.

### APARTMENT BUILDING NEAR 50TH AND FRANCE

The city planning commission has recommended the city council approve the site plan, variances and rezoning for 5121 and 5129 France Ave. S. to allow the construction of a new four-story, 28-unit apartment building on the two lots. It would replace the two single-family homes that are currently there.

### COUNTY ZERO WASTE PLAN

Hennepin County is working on a new zero waste plan. They are defining zero waste as preventing 90% or more of all discarded materials from being land-filled or incinerated. The new plan will complement the county's newly adopted Climate Action Plan and provide the foundation for the 2024 Solid Waste Management Master Plan. To help develop the plan, people are invited to share their thoughts and experiences in recycling, composting, and reducing waste online. Keep updated on the effort by visiting [beardhennepin.org/zero-waste-future](http://beardhennepin.org/zero-waste-future).

Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

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# GRUBS VS NEMATODES: SHOWDOWN IN THE SOIL

Large bare patches of dirt, tufts of dead grass, and birds feasting on insects squirming from the ground – if your lawn is starting to look like a scene from “Grapes of Wrath,” you might have grubs.



By **Russ Henry**

Grubs are causing homeowners consternation in lawns from the Twin Cities down through southeast Minnesota. Japanese beetles spend the larval part of their life cycle as a grub, and grubs love grass roots. They live in the ground eating the roots of our lawn grasses until those grasses die out. Turf that has been eaten by grubs will pull up easily like a rug.

The bad news is that grubs damage our lawns and adult Japanese beetles can wreak havoc on our favorite garden plants, shrubs, and trees. The good news is that these beetle grubs are easy to control using organic techniques.

To understand how to control grubs it is important to know the difference between dirt and soil. Dirt is simple; any percentage mixture of sand, silt, and clay combined with a relatively small biomass of living bacteria can be called dirt. Dirt doesn't have much life in it and can't support a wide array of microscopic organisms, which is ultimately why dirt is so easy for grubs to grow in.

Soil, on the other hand, combines the components of dirt with a wide array of living micro and macro-organisms. Perhaps the most important organisms in soil for fighting grubs are fungi and nematodes.

Fungi is a key component in soils because it provides nutrient cycling by transforming sand, silt, clay, and organic matter into plant food. It also grows in an underground matrix or web that holds individual soil particles apart from one another. This matrix formation allows air

and water to flow through the soil. In this way, fungi is essential for creating a habitat for a community of soil microbes.

## OK, THAT'S GROSS

This is where nematodes enter the story and it all takes a stranger than sci-fi turn. Nematodes are microscopic worms and are the mortal enemies of Japanese beetles. Surreptitiously sliding into the bodies of grubs underground, nematodes infect grubs with bacterial diseases that knock the grubs dead. The nematodes then engage in a Caligulian orgy, eating the grub from the inside out, while reproducing prodigiously inside the corpse of the fated grub. As lovely as this is to imagine, the results speak for themselves. Lawns with high numbers of beneficial nematodes never have enough grubs to do any damage.

Cultivating a healthy soil system in a lawn starts with caring properly for plants. Plants exude approximately 40% of the sugars they make through photosynthesis out of their roots in what are called root exudates. These exudates are delicious to fungi, and encourage them to colonize roots. Fungi then extend into the soil where they chemically mine nutrients out of soil and ship them back to plants. This beneficial, symbiotic relationship is made possible because plants are able to photosynthetically create sugars and are willing to share them.

## OFF THE TREAD MILL

Common practices associated with conventional lawn care weaken soil ecosystems. Herbicides and synthetic fertilizers damage, or kill beneficial fungi and nematodes sometimes resulting in higher grub populations.

Mowing practices are a critical driver of turf health because the way we mow can either stimulate or suppress photosynthesis. Grass plants photosynthesize using chlorophyll stored in leaves or blades of grass. When we damage the blades of

grass, we reduce a plant's ability to photosynthesize.

Dull mower blades tear and shred grass blades leaving them weakened. Mowing shorter than 3 inches and cutting off more than 1/3 of the leaf blade both have a similar effect on most turf grass in that they severely limit photosynthesis and cause grass plants to shed roots restricting their ability to feed fungi. This suppresses a plant's ability to produce healthy habitat for themselves.

## BRINGING IT HOME

Regular aeration and over-seeding can help control grubs. Aeration is the process of pulling small plugs of soil from the ground and depositing them on the surface using a machine or hand tool. Aeration alleviates compaction and allows air and water to flow into the ground, stimulating the growth of beneficial fungi. Over-seeding adds youth and vigor to the turf.

Nematode eggs and fungal spores can be purchased from reputable labs and added to your soil to help control grubs. On their own, eggs and spores won't do nearly as much to control grubs as combining them with aeration and over-seeding. It is important to make a home for the nematodes by aerating before adding them to the soil.

Grub infestations are a sign that soil is less than healthy. Using time tested organic methods to reduce grubs will have the simultaneous effect of supporting grass health and strengthening turf.



**Russ Henry** is a south Minneapolis resident who has served on Homegrown Minneapolis, a local food policy body, and the Minneapolis Parks Pesticide Advisory Committee. He is the founder of Bee Safe Minneapolis, an education and advocacy branch that works with community partners to create safe places for pollinators, one garden, yard, business, school, church, conversation at a time.

# COMPOST PICK UP OPPORTUNITY

## TANGLETOWN

### NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BY **Sally Bauer**, executive director



Have you ever wondered what happens to your organics recycling? Our city of Minneapolis organics recycling ends up at a commercial compost site in Rosemount, Minn. where 20,000 tons of or-

ganics are processed annually. The finished compost is made available for landscaping and now you have the chance to get your hands on it! This high-quality compost adds nutrients to your yard and gardens and will help your plants thrive. This year, you're invited to get your compost at the Plate to Garden Compost Pick Up Event on Saturday, May 21 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Mayflower Church (106 E. Diamond Lake Road).

Here's your chance to have your former food scraps that are now compost right in your yard! The commercial compost site will deliver a load of compost

and neighbors can stock up for all their gardening needs. Bring your own fillable containers for a suggested donation of \$2 per 20 pounds of compost. If you need to use one of the provided burlap bags, an additional \$1 per bag is requested to cover the cost of the bag. First come, first served. Proceeds from the event help support future environmental programming.

If bringing your own refillable containers or shovels for loading, please ensure all dirt is cleared from your items to ensure no spread of invasive jumping worms.

Sponsored by the Tangletown Neighborhood Association and Mayflower Church.

## EAST HARRIET

### FARMSTEAD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BY **Megan Nolan**, coordinator

Project: Reimagining East Harriet Farmstead Neighborhood Association (EHFNA)

EHFNA is looking for a relaunch of the EHFNA brand, assets and collateral in collaboration with the EHFNA Executive Team – president Maggie Zawasky, vice president Jenny Taplin, treasurer Kendra Lewis, secretary Richard Michel, and one at large board member to be determined.

We are looking for proposals from interested companies and individuals.

Goal: Engage community members by creating an identity and website capa-

ble of informing the community of what's happening in the city and our community. Create dialog and engagement in our year-round community programs, events and communications.

For more information, contact :

Kendra Lewis, treasurer, Neighborhood Engagement Chair, [kgablewis@gmail.com](mailto:kgablewis@gmail.com); or Megan Nolan, administrative assistant, [info@eastharriet.org](mailto:info@eastharriet.org)

## ELECTRIC SUNDAY JUNE 4

Electric Saturday on June 4 from 9 a.m. to noon at First Universalist Church (3400 Dupont Ave. S.) will showcase over 15 electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Owners will be available throughout the morning to answer questions about owning electric cars. Electric bikes owners will also be displaying their e-bikes and answering questions.

Check out e-mowers and snow blowers, too. Information about Xcel Energy's EV charging programs will be available. Fresh Energy, MNIPL and other climate organizations will also be sharing renewable energy resources and advocacy opportunities.

Brian Anderson, from Let's Go Zero Carbon, will make presentations throughout the morning about buying, charging, and living with electric vehicles.

To show your e-bike or EV, contact

Lane Ayres at [lanebfa@gmail.com](mailto:lanebfa@gmail.com). This community event is sponsored by the First Universalist Church climate and environmental justice team.

Send in events and press releases.

news@  
**SWconnector.com**

## NEIGHBORHOOD BRIEFS

### BOOK CELEBRATION MAY 22

A book celebration of “Church on the Move” by Rev. G. Travis Norvell will be on May 22, 4-5:30 p.m. at Judson Memorial Baptist Church (4101 Harriet Ave.). Author Bill Lindeke will answer questions. There will be a Grape Nut Cookie Contest and solar panel tour at Judson, followed by a group bike ride to Prodigal Pub (26th St. and 1st Ave.).

### TASTE OF ANWATIN MAY 26

The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association will run the Anwatin Craft Fair again this year alongside Taste of Anwatin on May 26. “This is an important community service project for Anwatin Middle School, and we want to do all that we can to support the event with the availability of local baked goods, arts, and crafts,” said planners. “We are hoping our neighborhood crafters will host a table at the Anwatin Craft Fair on Thursday, May 26, 2022, from 5-7 p.m. To bring the craft fair back better than ever, we are only charging \$5 for a table this year.” Register to participate in the craft fair at the BMNA website ([bmna.org](http://bmna.org))

### LHENA BAKE SALE JUNE 4

LHENA Bake Sale and Abi's Salvadoran Food will be on Saturday, June 4 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in the parking lot at 2828 Lyndale Avenue South next to Abi's Restaurant. “Our bake sale was a huge success last year and we are back again!” said planners. Be involved by dropping off baked goods, volunteering for a shift to greet neighbors and take orders, or distribute flyers ahead of the event.

### RESTAURANT FAN CLUB

The LHENA Restaurant Fan Club has been gathering for over a year. Since its launch it has supported 22 different restaurants with events. To learn more, contact Joan at [joan@thewedge.org](mailto:joan@thewedge.org).

### OPEN STREETS LYNDALE

Play, eat, bike, walk, dance, sing, and more at this free, family-friendly event on Sunday, June 5 from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Open Streets will be along Lyndale Ave. S. from W. 22nd St. to W. 42nd St. More than a street festival, Open Streets Lyndale allows neighbors to experience city streets as public spaces where communities thrive.

### SSCO RENTAL DISCOUNT PROGRAM

Get involved in the Stevens Square Community Organization and receive special discounts on your rent. Some volunteer opportunities that could earn you \$\$ toward your rent: helping at Red Hot Art events; attending community meetings; maintaining green spaces in the summer; and participating in a neighborhood clean-up.

### BRUNCH AT THE WATER TOWER

A new historical marker will be installed at the Washburn Water Tower by the end of this month. On Saturday, June 18 at 10 a.m., there will be a brunch and an opportunity to learn about the historic tower. Volunteers are needed to weed and water at the water tower this summer.

### GAME LEADERS NEEDED

The Minneapolis Park Board and the Kingfield Neighborhood Association are hosting a co-ed soccer program for 4-8-year-olds this summer and are looking for game leaders. The Little Kickers Program uses little-kid teaching games, led by 2 or 3 parent-coaches, to groups of a 12-20 4-8 year-olds. Parent coaches do not commit for being team soccer coaches and don't need to be athletes or have experience playing soccer. The program is also in need of an adult or two to help manage a couple of “administration” tables each Wednesday evening from 5:30-





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Maria P.,  
 Human Services Technician/Certified Nursing Assistant



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**1 GF SQUARE**

Public Works Director Margaret Anderson Kelliher acknowledged is not usual practice.

“Lots of times what happens is that we bring out pictures and drawings to communities and say, ‘Here’s what we have. React to it.’ Here we’re asking for your input from the beginning of the process,” she said.

Much of the meeting was devoted to explaining how the community could participate – a notion that was met with a fair amount of skepticism.

About 80 attended the virtual meeting. Many of those who submitted comments remained anonymous.

A couple participants suggested that the city has a history of ignoring community input, as with its 2021 postcard survey that was limited to two design options, neither of which reflected the wishes of community members who wanted to keep the intersection closed to vehicle traffic.

Project manager Alexander Kado commented that the postcards were regarding an “interim design,” implying it had no bearing on this project.

“This is the first time the city has comprehensively engaged the community stakeholders around what the future of this intersection should be. We’re outlining a year-long process to do that,” he said, and encouraged people to share their opinions.

Deputy project manager Trey Joiner gave an overview of community involvement, which to date includes an online engagement survey and listening sessions with about 30 stakeholders. Focus groups and other public meetings will be held this summer, with preliminary concepts shared in the fall. The city also plans to establish a Co-Creation Team that would meet monthly to review information and recommend a preferred final concept to the project team. There were no details yet on the selection process.

Asked who would be the decision maker if there is a difference between what the community and other stakeholders want, Joiner said it would be up to the mayor and city council.

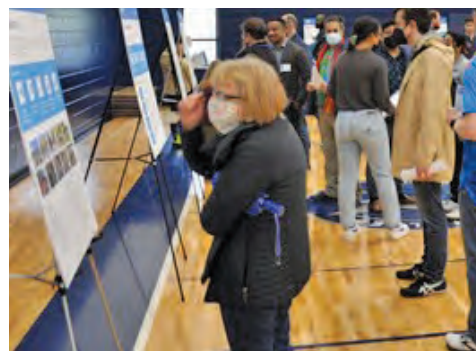
**JUSTICE**

George Floyd Square continues to be a site of pilgrimage and protest against racial injustice. An attendee asked why justice wasn’t one of the design goals.

“I think justice could become one of the engagement goals if there’s enough support for that,” Kado replied.



The city is gathering input on the future of George Floyd Square. (Photo above by Jill Boogren, below courtesy of Minneapolis)



Another asked what the city is doing to address the 24 demands in Justice Resolution 001, which Kado recognized as a recurring theme in listening sessions.

Asked to what extent the Square will be policed, Kado acknowledged the history of tensions between police and POC communities and said the murder by police of Amir Locke - highlighted these problems. *(This meeting was held one day before the Minnesota Department of Human Rights released its finding that the Minneapolis Police Department engages in a pattern or practice of race discrimination, in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act. See related article starting on page 1).*

**THE MEMORIAL**

A number of people had questions about preserving the memorial and keeping the Square a sacred space – especially if the memorial is treated separately from road reconstruction.

**LISTENING SESSION RECAP**

Project desires:

- Support & hope
- Community influence
- Clear communications

Intersection design:

- George Floyd Square, a sacred place
- Rethink vehicle access
- Preserve public space

Additional needs:

- Trauma and healing
- Protect local businesses
- 24 Demands for Justice
- Public safety concerns

- Information from city of Minneapolis

Kado recalled an interviewee who said racism always seeks to erase history.

“As I’ve thought about this project and what a reconstruction project is, you’re literally ripping up the pavement,” said Kado. “It’ll require further understanding around what a memorial looks like in that space and how we preserve and protect instead of erasing that memory.”

One attendee asked if public works is coordinating with the George Floyd Global Memorial (GFGM) to ensure that the memorials are not disturbed and that guests can safely grieve and reflect.

According to Kado, the memorial process is still not defined and there are no plans to remove any items that are out there.

“This project won’t be successful, nor will it ever be implemented without having more concrete plans in place around the memorial,” he said.

There seemed to be a departure from the community-led approach when it came to “art” in the space, which GFGM considers offerings to the memorial. On the one hand, public arts administrator for Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) Mary Altman, praised the groundbreaking work of GFGM caretakers to conserve the pieces. On the other hand, Altman said it’s likely the city will commission art as part of the process and that the city would bring on an artist or artists “to help build the vision for public art at the site.”

The Minneapolis Arts Commission would have a role, and, as Altman described, it’s a “complicated” process engaging and contracting with artists and getting the necessary approvals.

An attendee commented, “It sounds as though when talking about the city commissioning artworks or art being approved by the arts commission, the city’s planning on complete control, despite saying it’s led by a community-led process.”

**DESIGN**

There were several calls to explore closing the intersection to vehicular traffic.

“We know a pedestrian plaza, pedestrian-only area, is very popular,” said Kado.

Public works will also explore transit through the intersection. The D-Line was originally slated to go through there, but according to Kado, those plans have been removed from the reconstruction and the D-Line is on detour routing. This is the same for the 5 and 23 buses which used to go through the intersection.

“This project will really determine if and how transit does come back to this space,” said Kado.

There were a number of questions about other concerns – such as adjacent properties and businesses, faith-based organizations, air and water quality – that the project team said fell outside their purview.

About 50 questions still remained at the close of the two-hour meeting. According to Kado, no immediate changes are planned for the intersection this summer. Construction would begin in 2024.

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