BROOKLYN PARK COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY FINAL REPORT

This report serves as a documentation of the process and outcomes of the 2017 Brooklyn Park Community Assembly and was completed by Nou Yang with input from David Schultz, Miriam Zevin, Chalonne Wilson and Sally Brown.

Contents

SUMMARY

Over the course of three weekends in November and December of 2017, a diverse group of 45 Brooklyn Park residents met to learn about local government and make recommendations to strengthen local government structure, electoral processes, and public participation. The Brooklyn Park Community Assembly is the last of three communities participating in the Minnesota Community Assembly (MCA). The goals of the Minnesota Community Assembly are:

- Provide participants with an understanding of the differences between what national, state, and local governments do.
- Describe the structure of local government.
- Explain the variety of ways local government can be set up.
- Determine what the most important values or goals participants have or would like to see their local government secure.
- Indicate what it is participants would like to retain and change in their local government.
- Upon review of potential reform options, develop recommendations regarding what participants would like to see in terms of the structure of local government and what role as residents they have in it.
- Produce a final report on their recommendations to be delivered to appropriate stakeholders and the media.
- Encourage participants to become more active in their communities.
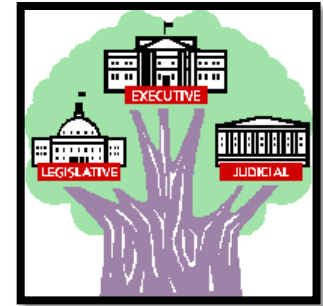
These assemblies are intended to inspire new models for resident-led reform and improvement on local government issues; to inform policymakers, researchers, and funders focusing on democracy, civic participation, and local government issues about the priorities of the community; and to promote active participation among residents in local government and in their communities. The hope is that this process will potentially provide blueprints for reform in other communities.

The Brooklyn Park Community Assembly lasted a total of eight days, over a period of three weekends. A group of 45 community members participated in all days of the assembly. Participants were selected to represent the diversity of Brooklyn Park. During the eight days, participants learned about civics, different government structures, the process of decision-making, and challenges of local governments. They gained leadership development skills, learned about various community engagement strategies, and were engaged in a visioning process for their city. Throughout the assembly, residents had a chance to connect to each other, build new relationships, and meet staff from the City of Brooklyn Park including the mayor, city council members, the city manager, and Community Engagement staff.

The Brooklyn Park Community Assembly is a collaboration between Hamline University and Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. The Hamline University project team included:

- Dr. David Schultz, Head Researcher
- Miriam Lea Ziven, Minnesota Community Assembly Manager
- Ms. Julie Caroll, Graphic Designer
- Mr. Riley Davis, Logistics
- Mr. Wial Eltag, Social Media Intern
- Mr. Caleb Payne, Student Assistant
- Ms. Farhiya Ali, Student Assistant
- Mr. Adewale P. Adenodi (Philip), Student Assistant
- Ms. Arshia Hussain, Student Assistant

The facilitators from Amherst H. Wilder Foundation were Nou Yang, Chalonne Wilson, and Sally Brown. The effort is sponsored by the Joyce Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

WHY BROOKLYN PARK?

Brooklyn Park, Minnesota was one of three cities selected to participate in the Minnesota Communities Assembly (the other cities were Red Wing and Willmar). In selecting the cities, including Brooklyn Park, seven criteria were initially employed.

1. Communities with local public officials interested and supportive of a Community Assembly to explore improvements in local political reform and exploring alternative voting systems.
2. Communities with local residents interested and supportive of a Community Assembly to explore improvements in local political reform and exploring alternative voting systems.
3. Communities with changing demographics and a growing percentage of the population including people of color.
4. Communities that are respected as leaders and influential in local government in Minnesota.
5. Communities representing different geographic regions in the state.
6. Communities experiencing challenges in governance.
7. Communities which are home rule cities, and which possibly also include within their charters the capacity for its citizens to use initiative or referendum to bring about institutional government reform.

There are several reasons for the seventh criterion. First, while mindful that no funds or resources for this project will be allocated for the purposes of lobbying or political activity, the

thought was that home rule charter cities would afford the project a better test for citizen assemblies. Statutory cities require local governments to seek approval from the state for any changes to their local form of government, whereas changes to home rule cities would instead be subject to local citizen approval. Home rule cities, by their very name, have more autonomy to make changes to their structure of government and that might incentivize individuals to participate in the MCA project.

The decision was also made to consider among home rule cities those that also had within their existing charters the permission for its citizens to use initiatives to make changes. While all charter cities require citizen approval of charter amendments, testing to see if there were differences between home rule cities and home rule initiative cities was thought as potentially significant.

Methodology of City Selection

According to the Minnesota League of Cities and the State of Minnesota, there are 853 incorporated municipalities in the state. Of those 853 cities, 107 are further classified as home rule charter cities. It is from this list that MCA short list was constructed. In further refining this list, we consulted the Minnesota League of Cities for their list of cities that allowed for citizens initiatives. We also asked the League for their recommendations for cities that were experiencing demographic changes and governance issues.

Employing the above criteria, Brooklyn Park was one of the cities selected. It represents a demographically changing suburb in the West Metro region. As the largest major-minority or near majority-minority city in Minnesota, it demographically represents the future of what other Minnesota and U.S. communities will look like over the next few years. Brooklyn Park is rapidly growing in population and still operating with basically the same structure it had when originally incorporated in 1969. Because of these factors, Brooklyn Park was seen as a strong community to determine how successful and beneficial a community assembly would be in terms of facilitating resident engagement.

PROCESS OF PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

The Minnesota Community Assembly has been continually adjusting its outreach methods throughout the entire grant process with its first three cities. The goal for each of the three, including Brooklyn Park, has been to obtain an assembly that statistically mirrors its community along several relevant characteristics. These characteristics include gender, race and ethnicity, income, age, and, when possible, partisan affiliation. Census data has been consulted to obtain much of the demographic data. Partisan affiliation has been more difficult to determine, especially given the fact that election data for communities are not always exact or because potential participants have not consistently provided this information. This means in some cases we have had to make estimates of partisan affiliation for a community. So far what we have

learned is that we may start with a base in terms of a targeted demographic, needing a minimum of two rounds of postcard mailers and community leader meetings in order to reach out and secure the sample we want for the assembly. After this, each community has its own inclinations towards social media, newspapers, and radio.

Community Outreach for Participants

For Brooklyn Park, the Minnesota Community Assembly sent out two rounds of postcard mailers to 15,000 randomly selected households in Brooklyn Park. These addresses were provided by a third party vendor. Thirty radio ads were placed with La Raza radio during the month and a half recruitment period. Print ads were placed with Lavender Magazine, and local newspaper, The Sun Post. The City of Brooklyn Park sent out emails inviting residents to sign up as well as having the MCA posters available on a table for individuals to take on their way in and out of the front doors of city hall. Advertisements were placed with social media targeted towards the residents of Brooklyn Park over the age of 18. There were 11,211 people reached via Facebook alone in Brooklyn Park, with 9,800 post engagements and video views during the month and a half engagement campaign.

David Schultz and Miriam Ziven of Hamline University met with community leaders to listen and talk about concerns, as well as to gauge possible interest in sharing outreach information and flyers with their communities. These meetings included: Nausheena Hussain, Brooklyn Park Islamic Center/Reviving Islamic Sisterhood; Mamadee Sesay, Executive Director from Organization for Liberians in Minnesota; Alfreda Daniels, Community Organizer from the NW Suburbs Community and Labor Coalition; Comfort Dondo, Phumulani MN African Women Against Violence; Michael Bichard, North Hennepin Community College Diversity Office; Fata Acquoi, Education Organizer at African Immigrant Services; Abdullah Kiatamba, Executive Director of African Immigrant Services; and Monica Yaa Habia, Project Coordinator at African Immigrant Services.

With these outreach efforts, over the course of one month and a half, the MCA recorded 282 online participant applications.

Demographics of Brooklyn Park Community Assembly

Based on the most recent Brooklyn Park census data estimates from 2015, the goal was to select 50 assembly members and six alternates. Below are the actual number of participants versus desired demographic details of the Brooklyn Park Community Assembly.

AGE	Brooklyn Park Percentage	Ideal # of Participants	Actual # of Participants
20 to 24	6.80%	5	3
25 to 34	15.80%	10	6
35 to 44	13.10%	8	14
45 to 54	14.00%	9	8
55 to 59	6.10%	5	2
60 to 64	4.70%	4	6
65 to 74	5.70%	4	4
75 to 84	2.40%	3	1
85 years to over	0.80%	2	0
n/a		0	1
Total		50	45

GENDER	Brooklyn Park Percentage	Ideal # of Participants	Actual # of Participants
Male	48.70%	24	20
Female	51.30%	26	25
Total		50	45

SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION OF RACE	Brooklyn Park Percentage	Ideal # of Participants	Actual # of Participants
Black	26.00%	13	17
White	51.00%	26	14
Asian	15.00%	7	5
Hispanic or Latino	6.00%	3	5
Mixed	2.00%	1	3
other	0	0	1
Total	100.00%	50	45

INCOME	Brooklyn Park Percentage	Ideal # of Participants	Actual # of Participants
> $10,999	4.70%	2	3
$10,000 - $14,999	2.90%	1	1
$15,000 - $24,999	8.70%	6	4
$25,000 - $34,999	9.30%	7	4
$35,000 - $49,999	15.40%	8	6
$50,000 - $74,999	16.90%	9	11
$75,000 - $99,999	15.70%	8	4
< $100,999	17.10%	9	7
N/A	0	0	5
Total		50	45

POLITICAL AFFILIATION	Brooklyn Park Percentage	Ideal # of Participants	Actual # of Participants
Independent	20%	10	13
Democrat	55%	27	22
Republican	25%	13	5
other	0	0	5
Total	100%	50	45

A total of 65 residents were confirmed to attend the night before the start of the first day of the assembly. Fifty individuals were scheduled participants and six were alternate participants in case a scheduled participant was unable to attend. The morning of the first day, 44 participants and 1 alternate were confirmed in attendance. A total of 45 participants showed up for the duration of the assembly. Participants received compensation for their participation, including a stipend of $1,200.00, meals and refreshments during the time they spent at the assembly, plus childcare reimbursement for the individuals who required it in order to attend.

Local vendors were contracted for catering as the assembly also has a side goal to invest in the local economy.

SCHEDULE FOR BROOKLYN PARK COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY

Over three weekends, for a total of eight days, the Brooklyn Park Community Assembly explored what it means to be an active community member, learned about the community engagement continuum, and studied local government in detail. They also considered proposals to strengthen their local government relative to structure, electoral processes, public participation, and the value of their current structures and processes. The summary below offers a brief look at the eight day process (see Appendix A).

First Weekend: Getting to Know Each Other, Community Engagement & Government 1.0

On November 3rd, day one of the first weekend, the focus was on building a sense of community, including co-creating working agreements about how we will all show up and participate. It was also designed to gauge the experiences of the participants, ground them in their own values, examine different levels of community engagement, and provide them with basic information about different government levels and Brooklyn Park specifically.

We felt it was critical to start off with establishing agreed-upon group norms and expectations. Below are the working agreements which the group created and felt are important to the success of this assembly:

1. Respectful communication
   - Active listening
   - Disagree in a courteous manner
2. Participation
   - Speak your truth
   - Make sure everyone gets a chance to talk
3. Commitment
   - Everyone is in charge of group development
   - Show up with a positive attitude and be willing to learn and share
4. Have self-awareness
   - Be aware that you are aware
   - Be mindful of how you speak
5. Be aware of our differences
   - Be open minded - Don't offend and don't take offense
   - Respect everyone's ideas and opinions even if they are different

These Working Agreements were made into table tents to remind the assembly of their group norms and were present for the duration of the eight day assembly. They were revisited often by both members and facilitators. Establishing these group norms helped the group anticipate how to handle differences and future conflict, and created expectations for how to show up.

Moreover, the assembly was asked to develop accountability practices in order to hold each other accountable to these ground rules. The list included:

- Use respectful tones
- Be mindful of what you say
- Leave room for follow up or clarification
- Call people in rather than call people out - If you are going to call people out as a way to create awareness, do it respectfully
- Share with a facilitator and have the facilitator address it with the entire group if appropriate
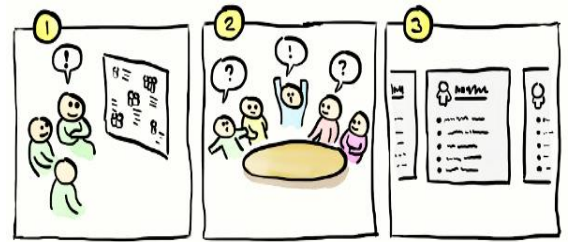
The day started with a "Yes/No/It's Complicated" activity. The goal was to gauge who is in the room. There were three large boxes outlined on the ground with blue tape. The facilitator asked participants to move to a box appropriate to their response to the statements read. This activity engaged people's bodies as well as their minds. All statements were focused on people's civic engagement experience and included items such as:

- I have voted in a presidential election
- I have voted in a local election
- I have attended a city council meeting
- I have called a government official to address a concern
- I have been unsure of who to contact about a community concern
- I have worked on a neighborhood or community improvement project

This exercise quickly got people engaged and gave them a sense of the topics that will be covered in the session. Also, this gave people a sense of the diversity of the assembly, the various experiences, and feelings present about interaction with local government.

As a result of the varying levels of experience with government in the Brooklyn Park Community Assembly, it was important to establish a common understanding of different levels of community and government engagement. We utilized the Community Engagement Continuum based on the work of the University of Minnesota Citizen Professional Center and adapted for the Brooklyn Park Community Assembly.

Community Engagement Continuum

Pre-determined	Feedback	Input	Co-creation	Community-led
Goals and outcomes of project are set by government.	The work is already in motion but needs community reaction on how well it is going.	The work is partially developed and needs community ideas and contributions to help flesh it out or improve the project.	Government partners with community to develop an idea, while working together from inception to implementation. Decision-making is shared.	Community members initiate ideas, make decisions, and direct projects for community improvement. Government may be involved as a supportive role.

The assembly examined the pros and cons of each level, then explored what it takes to be an active community member: knowing your internal motivations and core values, having knowledge and connections, knowing resources, and understanding external circumstances. We spent time on a values exercise, where individuals prioritized their top 3 values, followed by reflection on how they were living out these values and how these values were influencing their engagement or lack thereof with local government.

PERSONAL VALUES CHECKLIST

Achievement: sense of accomplishment			
Innovation: creation of new methods and practices, creativity			
Adventure: exploration, risks, excitement, fun			
Personal Freedom: independence, making my own choices			
Authenticity: being frank and genuinely myself			

After prioritizing personal values, the assembly members shared in large group how values have impacted their lives. Sample responses included:

- Helped me be consistent and focus
- Values give me guidance and life satisfaction
- Values hold people accountable
- Values can create connections and cause conflict

The assembly was reminded that being an active community member requires knowing your core values, as well as knowing what you care about/your personal interests, knowing your power and influence, knowing how things work coupled with knowing who to connect to can multiply your power and impact when you are trying to create change.

Taking into consideration all of the things we have talked about, we asked the assembly to reflect and discuss at their tables on what has encouraged their involvement and what has been a barrier to their engagement in local government. During the large group report out, people shared the following barriers:

- Spending a lot of hours working and being involved with my child.
- Lack of knowledge. I don't know so I don't participate.
- I move a lot so it is hard to get engaged.

And, what has encouraged them to engage with local government:

- Joining the Police Citizens' Academy
- I had an encouraging neighbor
- Connecting with other parents
- Dealing with a lot of people experiencing injustice
- Having children - PTO, committees, soccer games
- Networking at garage sales, dog parks, etc.

Before government content was delivered, thirty minutes were allocated to assembly members completing a pre-survey, designed by the Jefferson Center, to measure attitudes and knowledge (see Appendix B). Content on government was spread over the course of the three weekends. The first content covered the three levels of government (local, state, and federal) and delivered by Wilder facilitators. Following the lesson on government, a local community member, Marika Pfefferkorn, was invited to be a guest speaker to share her experience with, understanding of local government, and ways she has been involved in local government.

After each day, a brief survey as exemplified below was administered to collect feedback for continuous improvement.

MN Community Assembly Session Feedback Form
Your feedback is important to us and used to improve future sessions.

Date: Sunday 11/19/17	Topic: Deep Dive Part II Understanding Problems of Local Government and Reforms, Government Panel	Location: North Hennepin Community College, 74ll 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Give us your thoughts about the following items below by putting a check mark in the column that best represents how today went:

		Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	Overall Session				
2	Quality of Session Content				
3	Quality of Session Activities				
4	Quality of Session Facilitators				
5	Pace of Session				
6	Usefulness of the Session Information				

Please answer the following questions.
- What about the session was **most helpful or valuable** to you?

- What is one thing we can do to **improve the session**?

- Other comments:

Participant feedback of November 3rd, day one of the first weekend are as follow:

- 92.31% of respondents rated the session good to excellent.
- 91.89% of respondents rated the quality of session content good to excellent.
- 86.84% of respondents rated the quality of session activities good to excellent.
- 94.87% of respondents rated the quality of session facilitators good to excellent.
- 89.75% of respondents rated the pace of the session good to excellent.
- 89.74% of respondents rated the usefulness of the session's information good to excellent.

The remaining percentage per survey item above was rated "fair."

Some open-ended comments:

"Helpful going over the community engagement continuum."

"The check-in seemed disorganized. I wish we can get more details in each section - not enough time."

"Marika is a great speaker...very helpful information about my community...energy was great."

"I would have preferred teachers or educators that could act as facilitators more knowledge is needed - fundamentals are important."

"This program/assembly is super great and timely. Heat needs to be turned up. Better food."

"Informative but kinda a long day."

"Improve - have us leave at 4:30. Do not need an hour for lunch. Everything else is great."

"Shorter time spent on value/self-interest portion. Provide more paper for notes."

"The realization that people do have a voice and can make an impact."

"Marika was the most valuable player. She was very informative. She excited me. I am encouraged to work on some boards & commissions. Give me more material on the board and commission."

"Pre survey was too long! Wish it was until the end."

Suggestions for the future - day one of the first weekend:

- Improve logistics such as more organized check-in process, room temperature, have handouts available, more paper for note taking, better quality food, shorter lunch and leave by 4:30pm.
- Continue the following content: Continuum of Engagement, values and active community member but make it shorter, general government 101 but have it done by an expert, specific local government information but invite city staff to present along with someone such as Marika.

- Continue the following processes: small group discussion, allow for more time for each section, and more large group discussions.

On November 4th, day two of the first weekend we started the session with a harvest poem to recap people's experiences from the previous day (see Appendix C), then defined governance and that governance may take many forms driven by many different motivations and with many different results. The assembly then learned about the following eight qualities of good government.

- Accountability: Public institutions are required to justify decisions and outcomes to the public.
- Participation: All citizens should have a voice in making public decisions and in directing the work of public institutions.
- Equity: Public institutions aim to ensure relevant opportunities for all citizens to improve or maintain their well-being.
- Effectiveness and efficiency: Public institutions produce results that meet public needs while making the best use of public resources.
- Transparency: Processes, institutions, and information are accessible to the public, and enough information is provided for the public to understand and monitor them.
- Strategic vision: Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development.
- Consensus orientation: Public institutions work to understand and address differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interests of the community.
- Trust: All citizens trust that public institutions are working in the best interests of the community.

We had the assembly personally reflect and rate all eight qualities then talk at their tables to reach a group decision regarding their top five qualities of good government. Each table shared their list and reasoning.

The assembly was then tasked with coming up with a prioritized list of the qualities. Some individual members began to share their personal thoughts on why certain qualities were more important:

- Equity - people won't participate if there's no equity
- Strategic Vision - leaders without this cannot lead
- Participation - without it decisions may not be best for the people
- Participation - is key to strategic vision; power should always reside with the people
- Participation and consensus fall under accountability
- Participation - garbage collection was a win for the community and only happened when there was participation. People may rebel if not included in the process. It precedes accountability.

The assembly decided to postpone making a final decision on their top five due to lack of consensus and lack of time. The group agreed to revisit this again during the second weekend.

Next, we engaged the assembly in an interactive activity called BAFABAFA to simulate what happens when people of diverse cultures, values, and beliefs come together. This activity was important for this new group to experience, notice, and name the following:

- We all act and make decisions based on our personal values, beliefs, culture, perspectives.
- We all make assumptions and judge others when we don't agree or understand others who are different from us.
- We need to be aware of our assumptions, ask questions, and stay curious when we don't understand.

The assembly was encouraged to be aware of themselves and remember these lessons as we continue to work with this very diverse group over the next few weeks.

The assembly was then given an opportunity to role play five scenarios of interactions between residents and local government. After reading the scenario, each small group was instructed to analyze and discuss the issue, taking different perspectives into account (What's the issue about? Who is affected?). Each small group had to also identify potential solutions to the problem and present it in a skit. Guiding questions used were:

a. What can you do as interested community members?
b. What strategies are needed to change the situation - mobilizing, education, services, policy changes, etc.?
c. Which of the qualities of good governance would you apply to solving this problem?
d. How could government be involved?

This was an opportunity for the assembly to apply all of the concepts presented so far. An example of one of the scenarios is:

Adolescents in the community have been hanging out in the central area of the city after school and on weekends. Some of them stand in the sidewalks around some of the businesses. Others congregate in large groups in a couple local parks. Some community members have felt intimidated and have complained that they don't feel safe going to the parks. Business owners have complained that their businesses are being hurt by the youth presence.

Day two of the first weekend ended with 1) a visioning exercise to think about what would make their city a great place to live; and, 2) an opportunity to explore critical issues in Brooklyn Park that the assembly members cared about.

To facilitate the visioning exercise, we used the World Cafe method. The key questions that were used to harvest information from the assembly about their vision for Brooklyn Park consisted of:

- What could the role of government be in the community?
- What could our relationship be with a government in that role?
- What could our city look like if we both stepped into those roles fully?

The result was that the assembly envisioned a Brooklyn Park where:
- People feel connected to their neighbors.
- There is a hub to connect people to resources.
- There is simultaneous growth yet stay rooted.
- Diversity is valued.
- The city council is diverse.
- Local residents and government co-create solutions together.
- The practice of local government was to facilitate rather than dictate.
- There is a downtown that is prominent and vibrant.
- Residents are listened to.

This vision was used as a way to guide decision-making on final recommendations.

Lastly, we utilized the process of Open Space Technology to engage assembly members to dialogue about the most critical issues facing Brooklyn Park from the resident perspective. We

allowed for seven issues to be suggested from the assembly: Equity, Youth Involvement, Better Community Center, Keeping Money Here, Diversity, Police Bias, and Better Jobs.

The assembly was able to pick one of these seven topic areas to gather and engage in conversation and share their concerns. The idea was that these community issues of concern might help inform local government recommendations later.

Participant feedback for November 4th, day two of the first weekend, are as follow:

- 100% of respondents rated the session good to excellent.
- 95.34% of respondents rated the quality of session content good to excellent.
- 93.02% of respondents rated the quality of session activities good to excellent.
- 100% of respondents rated the quality of session facilitators good to excellent.
- 88.37% of respondents rated the pace of the session good to excellent.
- 93.02% of respondents rated the usefulness of the session's information good to excellent.

The remaining percentage per survey item above was rated "fair."

Open ended comments:

"Helpful: Learning how diverse the community is."

"Speaking about good governance."

"The last activity we did (marketplace). But do more group activities with the whole room."

"Discuss diversity talk/listen to people with different views. Need more time in open space discussion."

"I liked the market place discussion at the end. I wonder if people don't know the difference between equality and equity? I love the change of time with lunch and end time."

"Helpful: the reflections of the prior day and done in the form of a poem, easily relatable! Improve: identify people who are not participating, and get them involved."

"The amount of movement today was a big upgrade."

"Helpful: world café."

"Helpful: making the information and process practical. Improve: more table group meeting versus changing tables."

"Nice to see facilitators more lively. Less acting – planet and skits. I feel there was a wasted time in these activities that could have been used more wisely with other methods."

## Second Weekend: Understanding Data, Government 2.0 & Local Government

On November 17th, day one of the second weekend, Erin Spaeth from Minnesota Compass presented on trends in Minnesota and how data can be used. Five important trends to consider for the state of Minnesota are:

1) **Aging population**
2) **Highest proportion of adults working in the nation**
3) **Growth in diversity**: Black and Asian population has tripled; Hispanic population has quintupled; and an increase in the foreign born population, especially from countries in Asia and Africa. Note: Brooklyn Park's population is increasingly made up of foreign-born residents. It has the third highest foreign-born population among large cities in Minnesota.
4) **Highly educated adult population**: 71% have degrees beyond high school.
5) **Future workforce shortage**: Our region is home to some of the largest racial gaps in employment in the nation; by 2050, half of our region's working-age population is expected to be of color. In the coming decades, greater numbers of migrants, both domestic and international, will be necessary to meet our state's workforce needs and to buttress economic activity.

All of the participants agreed that data is useful and can help in decision-making. There was some discussion about the accuracy of data and the need for disaggregating of data. Erin shared that Brooklyn Park is a very data-driven city and that MN Compass can provide city-specific data points via their Geographic Profiles tab.

Following this presentation, Miriam and one of the facilitators clarified the difference between nationality, race, and ethnicity because some people seemed confused during Erin's explanation of disaggregating of data. This was an unanticipated topic of conversation but people found it valuable.
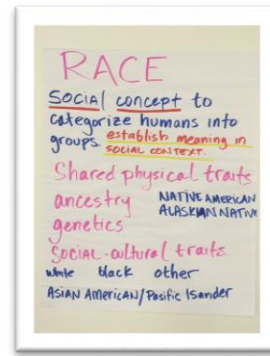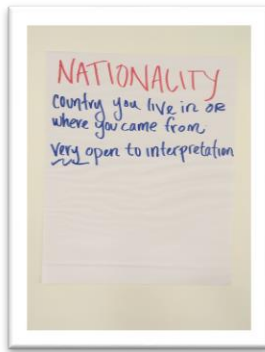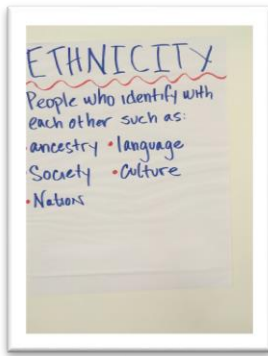
The group then mapped out the community assets of Brooklyn Park, which included individuals, institutions, and community resources. This exercise made participants realize where they have a lot of assets and where there are gaps. This got the participants thinking about what needs to be resolved in order to achieve their vision as well as Brooklyn Park's 2025 vision and create equity across the city.

The last activity of the day involved participants telling stories and practicing active listening. The assembly was instructed to tell a story in small groups around a time when they tried to create change and it was either a success or it failed. While one person talked, the listeners were tasked with listening for facts, feelings, or values.

The design of this day was meant to help the assembly gain and practice leadership skills that were important to the process of crafting final recommendations later:

- Using data as evidence
- Mapping existing community assets
- Identifying people's values or feelings versus facts
- The use of storytelling to convey or persuade the listener
- The important skill of listening to understand rather than listening to respond

Participant feedback for November 17th, day one of second weekend are as follow:

- 86.37% of respondents rated the session overall good to excellent.
- 79.54% of respondents rated the quality of session content good to excellent.
- 88.63% of respondents rated the quality of session activities good to excellent.
- 95.46% of respondents rated the quality of session facilitators good to excellent.
- 77.28% of respondents rated the pace of the session good to excellent.

- 90.69% of respondents rated the usefulness of the session's information good to excellent.

The remaining percentage per survey item above was rated "fair" or "poor."

Open ended comments:

"I loved learning about MN Compass. Even though it is not always the intent of the activity, I greatly enjoy having the time and opportunity to meet fellow member of the assembly. Encourage more people to speak more - one person spoke 9 times today. Pace is sometimes a bit slow. Also, consider providing alternate forms of caffeine - soda/diet soda."

"Have morning break space farther from lunch."

"Helpful knowledge about MN Compass. Excellent data. Asset mapping was very helpful about B.P. Improve healthy lunch option."

"Seeing all the data on MNCompass.org. The active listening exercise was very good."

"Improve the data organization and better food."

"Most helpful: Listening exercise and info on MN Compass."

"Really enjoyed the data portion. Improve the MN Compass facilitator."

"Data access could be a handout. Today was slow did not feel we really moved forward."

"Too much reflecting and discussions."

"Most helpful: The breakdown discussion of differences between nationality, race, and ethnicity. I also liked the asset activity."

"Data slow pace today. Need upbeat speakers so we wouldn't fall asleep and get restless."

"Morning data collection was good. But, I was confused as to what this info would do for me... "

"Mapping the assets on the map was messy."

"Use of mics was still a problem."

Suggestions for the future – day one of second weekend:

- Make sure more people speak.
- Improve healthy lunch option.
- Continue to have data portion but improve MN Compass facilitator and make it more interactive with a lot of time to explore the site. Information not covered can be on hand-out. Also, be clearer about how this can help assembly members.
- Continue to have storytelling and asset mapping exercises.
- Improve pace and not so many reflecting activities in one day.
- Continue to have people use microphones so everyone can hear.

On November 18th, day two of the second weekend, facilitators opened up with an harvest poem to recap people's experiences from the day prior. Also during the opening, the facilitators made space to address an anonymous comment that was posted on the "parking lot" wall (a place where anyone can share a comment or ask questions that we might not have time to discuss): "What about the human race?" We assumed this was in response to yesterday's conversation about the difference between nationality, race, culture, and ethnicity. Here is a summary of Nou Yang's, one of the facilitators, response:

> "I want to address and offer thoughts where I can as it relates to some of these issues or questions on the blue wall. Yesterday someone put a comment about the human race and while this notion of human race is nice (yes we are more alike than different) and an ideal to strive towards (because we all want to be to be treated equitably), it's not the reality of many people's experience. I wish we as humans could work that way. I know it is possible that people will see me for who I am, not the color of my skin because of people in my life. But then I am reminded of things like the systematic depopulation of the indigenous people of this country since the arrival of Europeans, and slavery practices and policies, Jim Crow laws, and the Chinese exclusion act and the policies and practices of the Japanese Internment camps...and more recently the Muslim ban. Sometimes our culture, ethnicity and race determines how we get included or excluded. Identity politics is related to social-historical politics, local and transnational policies. Choosing to focus on who we are is not always of our own choosing because sometimes others choose it for us. The personal is the professional and the political. Focusing on the identity of race or ethnicity does not minimize my desire to be treated as a human being. I invite you to consider that there are multiple truths... It's not an either or; rather, it is a "both and" issue for me. This is the idea of multiplicity. I believe that we can come together around our commonalities and humanness and yet we can be valued and validated for our different experience. This is in fact why we are here trying to figure out how to make our communities better. I invite you to be aware of your biases (me included), be and stay curious about others, build relationships and be open to learning other people's truths. Here are some wonderful books as resources, such as A Good Time for the Truth, for your continued learning."

The immediate audience response was positive. People came up to express appreciation for naming this in the large group as it is an important topic.

Given that the assembly told their stories yesterday, the purpose of the morning was to hear from three local residents who are actively engaged in advocacy work within the political arena.

We invited three local Brooklyn Park residents who are doing policy related work at the local, state, and transnational level to come speak to the participants to share their experiences: Comfort Dando, Fata Acquoi, and Thaomee Xiong. All the speakers were inspirational and

reminded participants that change starts with a small group of individuals who are passionate about an issue.

Rather than use the traditional panel format, we had a brief introduction of the speakers then divided the group into three groups. Each speaker spent an allocated time per group. This allowed more time for the assembly to hear from and ask questions of each of the guest speakers.

The afternoon was dedicated to Professor Schultz who came to teach the group about different ways different local governments are structured, as well as processes for decision-making, challenges local governments face, and reforms that could improve government (see Appendix D). Throughout Dr. Schultz's presentation, different levels of power surfaced:

- Power within
- Power over
- Power with

- Power for
- Transactional power

- Transformative power

Assembly members brought up the following concerns and questions about their local government:

- Conflict of interest issues in city council
- Reasonable number of city council members
- Youth involvement in government, such as youth council
- Pros and cons of a part-time mayor
- Role of the city manager versus the mayor
- Lowering the voting age to 16
- Pros and cons of part-time vs full-time city council members
- Why government is so slow at getting things done

Dr. Schultz underscored the importance of understanding the historical context of how systems were designed if we want to change it. Additionally, changing the government system is a political process and requires cultural change, attitude change, and values change at both the systemic and individual level. We must remember that individuals design systems and how they design systems is influenced by their values. Lastly, in order to change government systems, we must know what our values are.

Participant feedback for November 18th, day two of the second weekend, are as follow:

- 97.73% of respondents rated the session good to excellent.
- 97.73% of respondents rated the quality of session content good to excellent.
- 92.11% of respondents rated the quality of session activities good to excellent.
- 92.73% of respondents rated the quality of session facilitators good to excellent.
- 94.74% of respondents rated the pace of the session good to excellent.
- 97.73% of respondents rated the usefulness of the session's information good to excellent.

The remaining percentage per survey item above was rated "fair" or "poor."

Open ended comments:

"David Schultz is a genius both in terms of his style and content. How he delivers information about local government makes it easy for most anyone to understand and make sense of the power we as residents have to institute meaningful change in our community."

"I wish we had more time with Professor Schultz."

"Nou was very powerful. More open heart felt teaching."

"Most helpful; very good information: David's lesson on government was excellent and informative. Did not understand the point of the morning panel. With all due respect, I did not gain meaningful insight out of the morning session, others did. That's fine. One size does NOT fit all."

"This was the best session to date! Love all the content & facilitators. Just more paper. I am a big note taker."

"Improve: Timely lunch."

"Guest speakers provided good information and knowledge. Improve more time for Q & A with guest speakers."

"Improve: one person in our panel group dominated the questions for our 3 panelists."

"Most helpful was Gov 101. Today was great. LEARNED A LOT!"

"Nou was so powerful and professional. What a role model. Look forward to tomorrow."

"I'd like to know more specifics about the history of BP government and it's current state. Today was one of my favorite!"

"Listening to the stories and experiences of the panelists and facilitator (Sally & Nou). David's presentation on local government was enlightening. More stories from the participant people who have stories to share. We should connect more with our stories and experiences like Nou and Sally did this morning."

"Most helpful: Nou- look up to you for being vulnerable. Thank you."

"Most helpful: the panel - the three ladies. Improve: we can't sit this long."

Suggestions for the future – day two of the second weekend:

- More storytelling and sharing of relevant experiences from assembly members, facilitators, and panelists.
- Be more proactive about talking about issues of race, equity, culture in the future. Make sure it is part of the conversation - people resonated with it.
- If we have a panel again, be more clear on purpose and what we want assembly to pay attention to; structure the panel better to allow more people to speak; prepare the panel members; and not have them facilitate/moderate their own circles.
- Bring David Schultz back and give him more time He is a great lecturer and his session is extremely valuable and educational.
- Consider having the BP panel at this time.
- Organize the time better so they are not sitting so long.

On November 19, day three of the second weekend, David came back in the morning to teach about how local government can be structured, the power of local government, and ways government can improve (see Appendix E). The afternoon was dedicated to talking specifically about Brooklyn Park's local government.

Jay Stroebel, Current City Manager and Josie Shardlow, Community Engagement Coordinator gave a brief presentation to the Assembly that included the Brooklyn Park 2025 Goals and each of their roles.

Following the presentation, a Wilder facilitator moderated a panel with Jay Stroebel, Josie Shardlow, and resident Marika Pfefferkorn. Questions were collected earlier from the assembly but this did not stop some assembly members from asking impromptu questions during the panel. Overall, the assembly greatly appreciated meeting the City Manager and the Community Engagement Coordinator and learned a lot about what the City of Brooklyn Park is doing for their community. The majority of the participants were not aware previously that they had a city manager nor that their mayor was part time.

The last activity for this day was to revisit the eight qualities of good government. The assembly was reminded of how their small groups prioritized these qualities from last weekend and invited to reach consensus on one prioritization list for today. They were instructed to talk at their tables about which qualities were most important to them. Each table then would share this in large group. For every quality that was mentioned, it received a colored dot, which represented one vote. The quality with the most votes would be the top quality.

The list of eight qualities of good government, in order of most votes by table, followed by a brief reason if it was available:

- Equity (8) - Equity is what speaks to the fact that certain communities still don't feel connected. Even though the city thinks they did to work, they need to do more.

- Accountability (7)

- Participation (7) - Participation goes both ways. People participate in the process and build trust. If we don't know where we're going, we don't know how to hold people accountable.

- Transparency (6) - Training on government employees and cops. I pay a lot of money to live in Brooklyn Park, they should take care of me in a transparent way. I trust them to be transparent.

- Trust (5)

- Strategic vision (3)

- Effectiveness and efficiency (2) - Generate more income, better budget. Using money effectively.

- Consensus orientation (*1 person advocated for the importance of consensus)

Participant feedback for November 19th, day three of the second weekend are as follow:

- 97.5% of respondents rated the session good to excellent.
- 95% of respondents rated the quality of session content good to excellent.
- 95.12% of respondents rated the quality of session activities good to excellent.
- 95.12% of respondents rated the quality of session facilitators good to excellent.
- 92.69% of respondents rated the pace of the session good to excellent.
- 95.12% of respondents rated the usefulness of the session's information good to excellent.

The remaining percentage per survey item above was rated "fair" unless otherwise noted.

Open ended comments:

"As much as I enjoyed the city manager and community engagement coordinator being here, I feel like they were bombarded with questions that really didn't pertain to them - almost most of the info is on the BP website. We need to educate the group more (that's not your responsibility). But Miriam didn't do a good job of sort of gearing/leading them up or attempting to. Education is key!! Thank you for this opportunity. Many need it I think initially from day 1. There's so much that our group does not know!"

"Local government and Professor David presentation - thanks. Excellent was how the community member changes the explanation and representation."

"Explanation of the structure of the local government was very helpful. Did not know the city manager exist. As someone who has no experience with government/policy some of the term that come up in the questions are over my head so when answering question it would be great to just go over what it is we are talking about. Also, it gets disruptive with too many questions that are personal rants and stories."

"Moderate the Q & A session with the city people. It became a venting session."

"Panel was really informative. Improve: Make people stay on topic with their questions."

"We need more added days so we can know more about Brooklyn Park."

"Helpful: David Schultz lecture. No more circle!"

"Improve: At times today, individual participants went off topic and made a number of Anti-Trump statements. Not everyone in the room is anti-Trump and millions of people believe that certain factions mis-characterize and misrepresent his positions, beliefs, and values. So let's avoid personal commentary on the Presidents, politicians by name or references. Other note: Fred Williams analogy on Equity was brilliant! He has a great mind! Chalonne, her artwork is exquisite, absolutely love them on the poster sheets."

"Learning about the 2025 plan. The seats are uncomfortable."

"Participants should be allowed to ask direct question to the people overseeing Brooklyn Park resources and taxes revenue."

Suggestions for the future – day three of second weekend:

- Continue to bring in City Panel to share what is happening at the local level. Consider bringing them in earlier and improve moderation of City Panel to allow some direct Q & A from audience, control and minimize audience rants and personal issues.
- Facilitators work to ensure political neutral space. Reference back to working agreements.
- Continue to have David Schultz come in for government teach outs.

Third Weekend: Deliberations on Reforms

The focus of the last weekend was deliberations and creating the recommendations for local government. A caucus method was used to allow all participants to first think about what they want to recommend for reforms and then to cluster with others who share the same passion.

Two full days were dedicated to deliberations, planning, and rehearsal of presentation. During the second round of rehearsals, the assembly was instructed to write praise and constructive feedback on note cards. There was to be no dialogue about feedback due to time. It was up to the group to decide what to do with the feedback given to them. At the end of day two, it was brought to the attention of the Wilder facilitators that there were two white participants who upon reading one of their notecards became very upset. Serendipitously, both notecards stated something to the effect that "only the white people were talking during the presentation." Both individuals made assumptions about who may have written these notecards and felt called out. Upon reviewing one of the notecards, Nou Yang, one of the Wilder facilitators, realized that she had written one of them. The facilitators decided to create space during the morning of the last day to address this issue for a number of reasons:

- This aligned with several items listed in the group's Working Agreements.
- The top principles of good government of the group included equity, transparency, and accountability.
- This was a moment of intention does not equal impact. This was an opportunity to clarify.
- Talking about racial equity is a leadership lesson for everyone.

In the morning of the last day, Nou Yang, Wilder facilitator named the issue – that someone was hurt from an anonymous comment – and that due to the reasons listed above, it necessitated that we create space to address the issue before moving on with final preparations. Nou accepted full responsibility for writing the comment and from one human being to another apologized for hurting her feelings. However, as a leader, someone who cares about equity issues, and as a person of color, Nou does not want to apologize for writing that comment. She explained that her intention was to create awareness in the group of a pattern that we often see which is that white people take up majority of the space. This is not the time to dis-engage but to figure out "What are you going to do about it?" It was the entire groups' responsibility to do something about this pattern. Sally Brown, another Wilder facilitator also shared that as a white person you sometimes do not notice things. When people of color name patterns, it might feel uncomfortable but stay with the discomfort. This is how we learn about other perspectives and our own white privilege.

Because this last weekend was dedicated to the assembly preparing for their presentations, we did not do any session evaluations. Rather, we just handed out the overall program evaluation. It should be noted that the facilitators had to address a racial equity issue during this last weekend. The facilitators noticed and named for one group a pattern of majority white assembly members speaking during their presentation.

ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

This process resulted in the following eight reform areas. It is our observation that the reform areas chosen relate back to the most critical issues assembly members posed during week one, help advance the assembly's vision of Brooklyn Park, and are guided by their prioritization of the eight principles of good government.

Assembly members were asked to vote in terms of level of importance for all reform areas and leave any comments they might have about their vote. Summary of votes immediately follow each reform area. (Note: not all members voted.)

REFORM #1

Establish "Neighborhood Voice": To improve the quality of our neighborhood and to promote public safety while answering community concerns and engaging local businesses. This will also foster a meaningful relationship between residents and local businesses.

- We will utilize the existing neighborhood initiative structure to advance community equity and increase involvement.
- This will require the creation of 12 neighborhood assemblies that would present concerns to city council improving communication efforts.
- There will be volunteer leads including a coordinator and two assistants.
- There will be quarterly committee meetings made up of neighborhood representatives.
- Monthly Neighborhood community engagement activities will take place.
- There will be intentional recruitment and marketing strategies including email and door knocking.
- We are asking the City to provide meeting rooms, budget, and stipends to volunteer leads.
- These neighborhood groups will present Concern & Question to city council and, as emergencies arise. Examples of issues could include land use, transportation, community development, Parks and Recs, environmental concerns, public, beautification, and Emergency Task Force creation.

The Assembly was asked to vote on the level of importance of "reform #1: neighborhood voice" for the community of Brooklyn Park to consider. The numbers following each ranking indicate the number of assembly members who gave that ranking, followed by relevant comments:

- ☐ Very important - 16
  - Nourishing of these assemblies will allow BP to prosper as well as keep crime rate down but how will we get buy in?
  - Allows wider representation of all residents
  - Council with advisory support
  - Community voice is important
  - It is necessary to inform the city council; lighten the load for council members to give and receive information in the areas they are elected to serve; inclusive of all (youth, elder, diverse communities, faith communities); and available for special needs of the City.
- ☐ Important - 7
  - Need to explore more how the stipends will be paid.
- ☐ Moderately Important - 1
- ☐ Slightly Important - 0
- ☐ Not Important - 0

REFORM #2

Reorganize Districts, Mayor Position, and Remote Participation
- Move from 3 Districts with 2 Council Members to 6 districts with 1 Council Member representing each District
  - Council Members must live in the District to be better connected to their community.
  - Neighborhood council meets once a month and talks to city council quarterly.
  - Council Members must work with the 2 Neighborhood Assemblies per District in order to create community connection for each Council Member.
- Move from part-time, weak mayor system to full-time, weak mayor system
  - The mayor needs a raise but should not have veto power. Continue to be face of the city.
  - Keep City Manager position. Someone needs to run daily operations of the city.
  - A part-time mayor keeps people at lower incomes from being able to run as mayor and serve the city. Moving to a full-time position will promote equity and allow more people of all incomes to consider running for mayor.
- Create remote participation system in order to improve community voice and participation in city council meetings beyond live feed for viewing

- Council Chambers are equipped to install Boxcaster ($499)
- Social Media Form is free (google hangout or Facebook)

The Assembly was asked to vote on the level of importance of "reform #2: reorganize districts, mayor position, and remote participation" for the community of Brooklyn Park to consider. The numbers following each ranking indicate the number of assembly members who gave that ranking, followed by relevant comments:

☐ Very important - 17
- A part-time mayor keeps people at lower incomes from being able to run and serve in public office.
- Current city council is not representing all of the city. Most specifically the southern half of the city, which is also the most densely populated.
- Council w/advisory support
- Will need to discuss how to pay for full-time mayor.
- This will get more diversity on the city council.

☐ Important - 4
- I would definitely use remote participation

☐ Moderately Important - 4
- Remote participation is very important but full time mayor and City Manager will utilize more money.
- More people will need to be involved, especially from those districts. Consider what happens if there is a lack of representation?

☐ Slightly Important - 0
☐ Not Important - 0

REFORM #3

Establish a Multicultural and Diversity Commission (MDC) to recognize, celebrate, and unify isolated communities to leverage our diversity
- MDC must reflect the diversity of the community
- Goals include expanding BP Farmers Market, establishing multicultural celebrations, global market/trade shows, advocating for residents, supporting local partners, and promoting awareness

The Assembly was asked to vote on the level of importance of "reform3: multicultural and diversity commission" for the community of Brooklyn Park to consider. The numbers following each ranking indicate the number of assembly members who gave that ranking, followed by relevant comments:

- ☐ Very important - 14
  - So important
  - We want to embrace and include diverse populations and do it well.
  - This is very important to the community
- ☐ Important -10
  - Diversity is very important, but BP already has commissions and task forces focused on these issues. Will need to distinguish what is different about this proposal and why; otherwise, it may be difficult to convince the city council to create more. Budgetary issues will need to be discussed.
- ☐ Moderately Important - 0
- ☐ Slightly Important - 0
- ☐ Not Important - 1
  - I won't feel comfortable by having events specific to a culture I'm not part of.

REFORM #4

Establish a Commerce and Community Development Initiative that will bring diverse cultures "home to the park" by enhancing and cultivating the Brooklyn Park community through improved amenities and business infrastructure

- Updated community center
- Build a 610 Downtown (a downtown area along highway 610)
- Enhance Brooklyn Blvd
- Enhance communication (signage, city ambassadors, annual "ride with the mayor")
- Budget analysis
- Reach out to local large businesses

The Assembly was asked to vote on the level of importance of "reform 4: commerce and community development" for the community of Brooklyn Park to consider. The numbers following each ranking indicate the number of assembly members who gave that ranking, followed by relevant comments:

- ☐ Very important - 11
  - 29% increase in property taxes in 8 years is unacceptable.
  - We need this reform for a better and bigger BP, a beautiful Downtown in the future.
- ☐ Important - 10
  - Liked how this proposal had a budget supported by local government. More discussion will have to occur in terms of how much and where exactly to invest.
- ☐ Moderately Important - 4

- Some great ideas that might be incorporated into current events and might involve businesses in funding some of this.
☐ Slightly Important - 1
- BP already has a strong identity in my opinion
☐ Not Important - 0

REFORM #5

Community Policing and Resident Review Board
- Create a BP Resident Community Review Board to help the city deal with complaints and make recommendations to the city council, mayor's office and Police Department to ensure that the Brooklyn Park residents are living in a safe and equitable city; and to hold government and police accountable for their actions, policies, procedures, and decision-making processes.
- Implement initiatives that support community policing (creating a Police Equity Plan)

The Assembly was asked to vote on the level of importance of "reform 5: community policing and resident review board" for the community of Brooklyn Park to consider. The numbers following each ranking indicate the number of assembly members who gave that ranking, followed by relevant comments:
☐ Very important - 8
- Helps prevent crime if done correctly.
☐ Important - 8
☐ Moderately Important - 6
- Could be part of Neighborhood Voice and Neighborhood Crime Watch. All goals are important and this recommended effort says we need to do more PR around what the city has done and in doing around these issues.
- Important but I need more information
☐ Slightly Important - 2
☐ Not Important - 2
- No way.

- No vote; just a comment: This discriminates who BP Police Department can hire when it is already a hard field to get outstanding officers. Why bring such challenges to hiring? This would be unethical hiring practices.

REFORM #6

Incentive and Support for Small Local Business
- City-sponsored campaigns to support patronage of local businesses
- Resident and minority owned businesses to have preference in contract biddings and RFPs
- City-sponsored trade fair
- Job board for local businesses on city-wide website
- Incentives to property owners leasing small businesses at city-owned mall
- Development of downtown and business hubs
- All of this will encourage influx of more businesses and NGOs into Brooklyn Park, and promote local and small businesses

The Assembly was asked to vote on the level of importance of "reform 6: incentive and support for small local business" for the community of Brooklyn Park to consider. The numbers following each ranking indicate the number of assembly members who gave that ranking, followed by relevant comments:

- ☐ Very important - 7
  - Minority owned and small businesses need to be in BP not moving away to different city due to high taxes and rent.
  - May fund much of this via DEED grants and other funding sources. Bring YMCA to the city soon because they provide pool, youth, and senior programs, early childhood center, and many more programs for all.
- ☐ Important - 11
  - This will represent the people better
  - Liked idea of local government supporting minority and city owned businesses. Will need to specify how ideas will be implemented.
- ☐ Moderately Important - 4
- ☐ Slightly Important - 4
  - I need more clarification
- ☐ Not Important - 1
  - Hire the best. Don't limit contracts as that discriminates.

REFORM #7

Invest in youth engagement (age range 14 -23)
- Establish a location for youth services that provides vocational training, personal money management, household management, business education, technology and government 101 training.

- Support a team of 6 lead roles: 2 of those being for qualified high school leaders to gather twice a month to talk about youth issues.
- There is a great need for housing for homeless youth.

The Assembly was asked to vote on the level of importance of "reform 7: invest in youth engagement" for the community of Brooklyn Park to consider. The numbers following each ranking indicate the number of assembly members who gave that ranking, followed by relevant comments:

☐ Very important - 13
- Future of BP start with the pride of city of young people.
- So very necessary
- Important but some of these efforts already exist, such as youth in government (provided by YMCA), Tree Trust is in Brooklyn Park
- Connect back to 2025 Vision

☐ Important - 7
- BP seems to have a lot of youth engagement already but there were good ideas proposed.
- Need to be more specific on proposals.
- Engagement is needed and important.
- Explain more about what is Tree Trust.

☐ Moderately Important - 3
- Needs more direction. Too broad.
- We can't tell council members what to do or invest in. Needs more clarity.

☐ Slightly Important - 0
☐ Not Important - 1

REFORM #8

A Review of the Existing Initiative and Referendum Process for More Clarity
- Requires a review of the Charter Commission
- Requires a revamp of how the city works. It is currently challenging to understand and navigate Brooklyn Park. The city should make it visually easy to navigate the website.

The Assembly was asked to vote on the level of importance of reform 8: review of existing initiative and referendum process" for the community of Brooklyn Park to consider. The numbers following each ranking indicate the number of assembly members who gave that ranking, followed by relevant comments:

☐ Very important - 9

- Addresses citizen rights to make change to city charter. The reforms here would help all citizens understand how to be involved in city government.
- ☐ Important - 9
  - Nice that ordinances were presented.
  - Commerce development
  - These ideas need to be separated into different proposals
- ☐ Moderately Important - 7
  - Difficult topic but there are some good strategies for trying to explain it.
- ☐ Slightly Important - 2
  - A lot of this information is already out there. This involves more resident accountability than city accountability.
- ☐ Not Important - 0

Presentation to Local Government

On the last day of the Brooklyn Park Community Assembly, November 19th, these recommendations were (unofficially) presented to Mayor Jeffrey Lunde, city staff, and city council members. City Community Coordinator Josie Shardlow also attended the presentation. The two council members who showed up to the presentation were Terry Mark (Central District) and Susan Pha (West District). Absent were the following Councilmembers: Rich Gates (Central District), Mark Mata (Central District), Lisa Jacobson (East District), and Bob Mata (West District).

Mayor Lunde was very impressed with all of the recommendations. He expressed gratitude to the residents and that "good things happen when neighbors are connected." Mayor Lunde invited the assembly to officially attend a future city council meeting and present these recommendations to city council members. Councilmember Parks commented that he believes in investing in youth and in answering the residents' call. Councilmember Susan Pha thanked the community for being here and spending time on this project. She praised the community on the job they have done. She referenced that she is the first person of color elected to city council and how important it is for the city council to have diverse voices because our lived experiences inform how we see the world. For example, they all have slightly different views of equity.

Councilmember Pha said she believes that, "Our city council should look like our community" and looks forward to having some of the assembly members in the near future become city council members.

OVERALL ASSEMBLY EVALUATION

At the end of the assembly, a post-survey was distributed to collect feedback on overall process and to measure change in thinking, attitude and behavior, which would indicate the level of impact the assembly had on residents (see Appendix F). There were several challenges to the evaluation process, including:

- There were 45 participants in the assembly but only 44 individuals completed both pre and post surveys.
- Out of a total of 44 total respondents, only 21 pre surveys matched post surveys. Pre and post surveys were counted as a match, whether was an exact match (pre-survey was NYY190 and the post-survey was NYY190) or similar enough to count as a match (pre-survey was NYY190 and the post-survey was NYY). This issue of inconsistent identification code was due to the fact that the pre survey codes were created by participants and not tracked. Participants had to rely on their memory for the identification code during post survey and couldn't remember their exact identification code.

Therefore, the survey results presented in the following sections sometimes are based on all 44 respondents and at other times based on the 21 matched pre and post surveys (see Appendix G).

Outcomes Evaluation

The following are outcomes that were achieved.

Participants learned about structure and process of local government.
- 68% of participants agreed with the statement, "I know enough about how the City of Brooklyn Park government is run" at post survey (48 percentage point change from pre survey)
- 50% of participants agreed with the statement, "I know enough about my local elected officials for the City of Brooklyn Park" at post survey (33 percentage point change from pre survey)
- 50% of participants agreed with the statement, "I know enough about non-elected City of Brooklyn Park government staff" at post survey (37 percentage point change from pre survey)

Participants are able to identify values or goals they would like to see in local government.

- When asked, participants identified the following four characteristics often associated with good government as the ones they most value:
    1. Equity 64%
    2. Participation 61%
    3. Transparency 56%
    4. Accountability 50%
- 61% of participants agreed with the statement, "City of Brooklyn Park elected officials and government staff are concerned about the same issues I'm concerned about" at post survey (31 percentage point change from pre survey)
- 80% of participants believed that community members should frequently or always influence decisions made by local government.

Participants are encouraged to become more active in their communities.

- 78% of participants said that they will more closely follow local government.
- 61% of participants said they will attend a City Council meeting
- 92% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I believe it is my responsibility to be informed about local government."
- 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I believe it is my responsibility to participate in government decision-making processes."

Participants will take action after the assembly ends.

During the last weekend, participants wrote down next steps they wanted to take after the assembly ends. Here are some of their identified action steps:

1. Have people of like-minds to volunteer their time to move on with the assembly on their own. The goal would be to meet and deliberate things that affect our city.
2. Host a Book Club, and read MN and BP themed books.
3. Take a few days to process all of the information.
4. Have a Brooklyn Park Community Assembly reunion.
5. Encourage each other to continue to be involved.
6. Have quarterly lunches for the group.
7. Use our Facebook page. After the first weekend, a Facebook page was created for them per their request.
8. Have a class for other people to be educated on this topic. Everyone needs it.
9. Get on commissions or be on city council. Build support for that through this group.

After the assembly, the group continued to use Facebook and Group Me to communicate with each other. They are continuing to hold meetings on their own to further refine their recommendations and prepare for their officially presentation of some of their

recommendations to the Brooklyn Park City Council. Moreover, one of the participants applied for and received the Brooklyn Park Community Engagement Liaison position. Other members are sharing opportunities to get more involved in local government.

Process Evaluation

Overall, the assessment of the assembly experience revealed that the majority of participants were satisfied. More specifically, results indicated that:

- **88%-93% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the process** (fairness of the process, opportunity to participate, issues addressed in the process, diversity of the people)
- **91%-98% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the facilitators** (performance of facilitators, neutrality and objectivity of the facilitators, fairness of the facilitators, the way you and others were treated by the facilitators)
- **88%-93% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the discussions** (quality and civility of the discussions, the way they were treated during discussions, degree to which people were respectful of differing viewpoints and degree to which the discussions were open, honest, and understandable)
- **93% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the outcomes** (the overall outcomes of this process , fairness of the outcomes, level of input on the outcomes and level of influence in determining the outcomes)
- **88%-93% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the format and materials** (2-3 days over 3 weekends every other week, materials, models and tools shared, how engaging the sessions were)
- **91%-95% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with logistics** (overall project management, site coordination, communication with participants, and conducting this project in a fair and unbiased manner)

Quotes from participants about their overall experience:

"What an interesting and enriching experience it is to be part of this group!"

"This process was very important because a democracy is a government that is ran and represented by the people. Having our voices heard is extremely important."

"Good process from beginning to end. Understanding why we started where we did to lay the foundation for the whole assembly."

"It's important because more people should be actively involved in government decision. It will improve our cities, states, and perhaps our country. It may be a step in getting us less polarized politically."

Additionally, there were several open-ended comments that suggested specific areas for improvement. They are grouped below according to similarity in themes and should be considered for overall planning:

1. **More days for learning and earlier**

"Structure more days for Professor Schultz to do government teach out"

"More information on current city structure and process"

"Shifting the civics lessons to the first day would help set up the foundation of knowledge"

"Put more emphasis on reforms, solutions"

2. **More specific information about local government**

"More guest speakers from local government"

"More education on what is already in place in our community and how city government works"

"Perhaps, provide some basic information on what is available to the public and have the assembly explore prior to the visit from local government"

3. **More time to work on recommendations**

"More group assignments"

"More time for actual work"

4. **Consider bringing in guests or facilitators that would add diversity to the team**

"Most of the facilitators were women. "

"No men of color, black, Hispanic, etc."

5. **Considerations for process management**

"Have an overview of whole schedule (each day)."

"Sundays or Fridays may not be very ideal if you want to reach out to a larger group in certain communities."

"Maintain the format such as small group discussions but tailor to the specific needs and aspirations of those communities."

"Students to have more flexibility."

"We had 2-3 people who were routinely disrespectful by yelling, not waiting to be called, preaching their viewpoints at inappropriate times, etc. It would be nice to indirectly call these people out."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ASSEMBLIES

Overall, the assembly process provided a good opportunity to inspire people to get involved in and be change agents at the local government level. Furthermore, it brought people together across race, culture, ethnicity, neighborhoods, etc. to learn and attempt to make change for the betterment of the entire community. Lastly, this experience fostered new relationships between local government and residents, and between residents. We learned that several elements of the Brooklyn Park Community Assembly especially worked well and should continue and identified some areas for improvement.

Below is a list of key recommendations for future assemblies. These recommendations are organized based on three areas: 1) content and design, 2) facilitators and 3) project management.

1. CONTENT AND DESIGN
   - **Design the curriculum to meet a variety of experiences and learning styles** - Ensure diverse teaching methods are being utilized throughout the entire assembly process to meet different learning styles. Offer a mixture of large group and small group discussion as well as opportunity for individual reflection in order to meet learning needs and give people time to process content and make meaning. It will be important to name early on that people are on a continuum in terms of experience, knowledge, and learning. Invite people to be patient with the learning process; as well as encourage people to share what they know and to ask questions. Lastly, prior to the start of the assembly, as a baseline, consider providing some basic information about their local government to all participants.
   - **Connect to community members** – There is value in creating local connections and having local residents be guest speakers, especially those who are actively engaged in trying to create change in government and have a lot of knowledge. However, ensure there is a clear purpose, effective moderation of panels if this is used, and advanced preparation of guest speakers.
   - **Have plenty of time for deliberations and preparations -** Allocate more time for assembly to deliberate on reforms and give more structural support to the process of crafting recommendations (i.e., list out issues of passions or change, then what structures or policies that need to change in order, power analysis on issues - who has power to make the change).
   - **Invite local government to assembly** – Having the opportunity to meet the mayor, city manager, and city council members is powerful and empowering. Schedule a time for

local government staff to attend a session to share their vision, structure, special initiatives, community engagement strategies they are using, etc. Consider doing this earlier in the assembly process. Definitely invite local government representatives to the final presentation of recommendations and consider inviting them to welcome the assembly at the beginning.

- **Practice flexibility and responsiveness** – Be attentive to what is happening in the group and utilize information from the regular feedback surveys for continuous quality improvement. Also, allow people to host themselves (i.e., move around if needed during session or use the bathroom even if it is not an official break time).

- **Use high engagement activities** – Sprinkle throughout the assembly, hands-on or movement activities such as the human continuum or Yes/No/IDK boxes, storytelling, ice breakers and Kahoots to fully engage participants. Kahoots will require the use of iPads or cell phones.

- **Allocate more time for government lessons** - Bring Professor Schultz in earlier and allocating more time to learn government content. Consider using some videos to compliment Professor Schultz teachings and because his time is limited.

- **Clarify purpose and focus of assembly** - Make it clear from the beginning that the assembly is about civics and about leadership development and inspiring people to get involved in local government.

- **Prioritize key leadership content** – Important leadership content to cover are continuum of engagement, values exercise, visioning exercise, asset mapping, and understanding use of data. However, shorten values activity and make the MN Compass presentation more hands-on with a focus on Brooklyn Park data.

- **Be more proactive in talking about race, culture, equity, and nationality** – Rather than waiting for these issues to arise, strategize and build into the curriculum time to discuss how these issues matter to government structure and policy and community engagement.

- **Expand diversity of facilitation team** - Given the perspectives and experiences of the facilitation team, consider bringing other guest facilitators that could broaden the diversity of the facilitation team (i.e., male and other cultures). Be aware of personal biases and work on providing a space where everyone is welcomed and feels safe to be themselves.

2. FACILITATORS
- Should have experience with addressing issues of race, culture, and equity
- Should have knowledge and experience of various facilitation techniques
- Should have knowledge and experience of different teaching methodologies in order to meet different learning styles and make sessions engaging
- Should ensure diversity on the facilitation team

- Should practice being responsive and flexible to the group and process
- Should have clear roles and responsibilities among facilitators
- Should have frequent communication and scheduled planning and debriefing sessions

3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT
- **Effective sharing of responsibilities –**If possible, separate roles and responsibilities between facilitators and content expert as well as having a project manager in charge of logistical coordination and communication.
- **Use local vendors** - By using local vendors for food it is a great way to invest in the local economy and it promotes local businesses. Leverage assembly member connections for vendor referrals.
- **Offer a variety of food and beverages** – Provide meals that meet a variety of dietary needs and is culturally diverse. Offer water bottles and filtered pitchers but also have cups available. Offer multiple beverages besides water, coffee and tea. People appreciate having a variety of beverages throughout the day such as orange juice, regular and diet soda.
- **Use regular and various communication methods with participants -** Utilize multiple ways of getting information out to people (i.e., Facebook, Group Me, post documents online and email). If using email, it is important to confirm that people are receiving information.
- **Have a complete schedule with all dates, times, and locations** – Provide a full schedule to the assembly at the beginning including an overview of what to expect and content to be covered.
- **Make available a few iPads** – By having iPads available, the assembly members are able to immediately access research and online resources as well as type up their recommendations via google docs.
- **Special accommodations** – Secure and offer a prayer room at every session. Also, having the last day, typically on Sunday, run from 1:30pm-5:00pm help accommodate church goers. This might be something to consider for all Sunday sessions.
- **Collect session feedback on a regular basis –** Disseminate a brief session survey after every session about how the day went and want could be improved. This allows the facilitators and project managers to gauge how things are going and be responsive to people's needs.
- **Hire student workers** - student workers are integral to the efficiency and success of the assembly. They assist with set up and clean up, note taking, data entry, check-in table, social media, and other logistics.
- **Employ an overall survey to analyze change in attitude and behavior –** It is important to work with a Research Team to ensure that questions measure desired outcomes and

there is fidelity to the survey administration process. It is also important to consider the additional cost of research to the budget or contract.

- **Strategic recruitment –** Use various strategies and local outreach efforts to recruit a diverse representation of the local community.

APPENDIX

Appendix A:

Schedule of Brooklyn Park Community Assembly

Appendix B:

Pre-Survey

Appendix C:

Harvest Poem

November 3, 2018 Example

Appendix D:

Government 101 Content

Appendix E:

Government 102 Content

Appendix F:

Post-Survey