CITY OF SAINT PETER, MINNESOTA
AGENDA AND NOTICE OF MEETING

City Council Workshop Session of Monday, January 31, 2022
5:30 p.m. – Senior Center of the Community Center - 600 South Fifth Street, Saint Peter

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. DISCUSSION
A. HPC Recommendation – Interior Signage/Minimum Maintenance of Effort
B. Windsor Pond Development Release
C. Community Conversation Update
   1. Latinx
   2. East African

III. ADJOURNMENT

Todd Prafke
City Administrator
Memorandum

TO: Todd Prafke  
   City Administrator

FROM: Russ Wille  
   Community Development Director


ACTION/RECOMMENDATION

None needed. For your information and discussion only.

BACKGROUND

During their November 2021 meeting, the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) discussed loosening sandwich board regulations and asked the City Council to consider two other issues. First is an ordinance that would allow the City to order certain repairs or maintenance efforts to buildings within the Heritage Preservation district (see map). The second relates to regulating window signage.

A previous City Council considered such an ordinance in 2015 subsequent to the "demolition by neglect" of the property at 214 South Minnesota Avenue which was subsequently redeveloped and is now the home of Sweet Alice Floral and Gift store.

In 2015, after discussing the merits of such an ordinance, the Council declined to adopt the International Property Maintenance Code and instead established additional revolving loan products with favorable terms in an attempt to incent the maintenance and repair of historic structures.

I have included the 2015 Council workshop staff memorandum that provides additional information and discussion on the issues.

The HPC also asked that the City Council discuss and consider the merits of regulating the interior window signage that is visible from the outside on buildings that are in the HPC district. A more specific example may be the "OPEN" flashing signs that are hung on the interior which are visible from the exterior. The current ordinance does not provide any regulations for interior signage or interior building renovations.

The goal of the meeting is to provide opportunity for the Council to understand the current rules/codes and interpretation and enforcement standards in these two areas. Staff hopes to facilitate a discussion about whether the Council believes changes in signage or building maintenance should be made relative to rules/codes, interpretation, or enforcement.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns on this agenda item.

RJW
WELCOME HOME
TO: Todd Prafke  
City Administrator  

FROM: Russ Wille  
Community Development Director  

RE: Demolition by Neglect – International Property Maintenance Code  

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION  

Members of the Heritage Preservation Commission have been invited to join the City Council to engage in a dialogue related to establishment of an ordinance requiring the affirmative maintenance of commercial structures.  

BACKGROUND  

Constructed at the time of the Civil War, the 214 South Minnesota Avenue building was believed to be the oldest commercial structure in the community. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic places as a ‘contributing’ building within the Saint Peter Historic Commercial District as determined by the Department of Interior.  

In 2014, after years of neglect, the 214 South Minnesota Avenue structure was demolished due a determination by the Building Official that the building was an imminent threat to the public health and safety due to its state of disrepair. Situation such as this are referred to as “demolition by neglect”. Demolition by neglect is defined as:  

"a situation in which a property owner intentionally allows a historic property to suffer severe deterioration, potentially beyond a point of repair. Property owners may use this kind of long-term neglect to circumvent historic preservation regulations".  

- National Trust for Historic Preservation (1999)  

The members of the Saint Peter Heritage Preservation Commission were displeased that it was necessary to order the demolition of such an important historic resource. The Commission had asked that the Community Development Director establish a mechanism that would grant the Commission the authority to address the neglect before it reaches the point where demolition is the only reasonable option. The Commission suggested that the current municipal regulations are insufficient in that the City can only act once the building reaches the state of being a public health threat due to the threat of spontaneous, catastrophic collapse.  

The vast majority of commercial structures in Saint Peter are adequately and appropriately maintained by their owners. However, without affirmative maintenance, perhaps two or three
Historic commercial structures within the downtown are significantly threatened due to the absence of appropriate maintenance.

One structure is known to have significant water penetration through the roof during the spring thaw or heavy rain events. Another prominent historic structure is missing a significant portion of its façade which would allow water to penetrate and accumulate within the wall cavities. When exposed to the freeze/thaw cycle such water penetration quickly causes the deterioration of the wall until such time as it experiences bowing or buckling.

Last October, three graduate students from the Urban & Regional Studies Institute at Minnesota State University Mankato began a graduate research project to determine what may be done to address the concerns of the Heritage Preservation Commission. The students researched what other Minnesota communities are doing to combat demolition by neglect.

The grad students also undertook a mailed survey of property owner within the Saint Peter Heritage Preservation district. The results of the unscientific survey have not been provided as they are not statistically reliable given the limited survey return and methodology. While no detailed analysis was undertaken to determine the standard deviation of the survey results, it is quite possible that the margin of error would exceed the actual survey data.

The written comments of the survey respondents have been provided. Remember that the comments are only indicative of the opinions of individuals and such opinions cannot be assumed to be shared by others unless expressly stated.

The students have ultimately recommended that the City of Saint Peter adopt the International Property Maintenance Code to address demolition by neglect within the community. They have also recommended that the City consider additional financial incentives and assistance to encourage property owners to maintain their property at an acceptable level.

Minnesota State Statutes §471.193 is the legislation that enables Minnesota municipalities to undertake historical preservation. The statutes allows for the:

"enactment of rules governing construction, alteration, demolition, and use, including the review of building permits, and the adoption of other measures appropriate for the preservation, protection, and perpetuation of designated properties and areas."

It is the authority granted in §471.193 which allowed the City of Saint Peter to adopt the current Heritage Preservation Ordinance regulating the construction and alterations to structures within the Saint Peter Heritage Preservation district. Other Minnesota communities have used the authority of statute to adopt the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC). The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office representative Michael Koop suggests that the IPMC provides the exact authority sought by the Saint Peter Heritage Preservation Commission to order affirmative maintenance of structures.

In 2005, the Saint Peter Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the City Council. The plan establishes the goals and policies of the City as they apply to residential, commercial, industrial and recreational interests. It is the goal of the City that:

"Efforts should be made to promote and protect the architectural and structural integrity and vitality of the historic commercial district."
The Comprehensive Plan also establishes the City policy that:

"Historic structures within the Central Commercial District should be preserved in a manner consistent with the standards adopted by the Department of Interior. Public / private investment opportunities should exist to encourage the appropriate renovation, rehabilitation or repair of historic commercial properties within Saint Peter."

The language of the Comprehensive Plan is important in that it allows for the development of rules and regulations necessary to carry out the goals and policies identified in the plan. That is; the goal and policy related to historic preservation creates the logical nexus between the contents of the Comprehensive Plan and the regulations proposed. The adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code would be supported by the contents of the Comprehensive Plan.

In the preface of the IPMC, it states that:

"The IPMC is a maintenance document intended to establish minimum maintenance standards for basic equipment, light, ventilation, heating, sanitation and fire safety. Responsibility is fixed among owners, operators and occupants for code compliance. The IPMC provides for the regulation and safe use of existing structures in the interest of the social and economic welfare of the community."

The intent of the IPMC is also clearly noted as:

"This code shall be construed to secure its expressed intent, which is to ensure public health, safety and welfare insofar as they are affected by the continued occupancy and maintenance of structures and premises. Existing structures and premises that do not comply with these provisions shall be altered or repaired to provide a minimum level of health and safety as required herein."

The City of Faribault is similar in age to the City of Saint Peter. Both communities have a well established and defined historic district which has been place on the National Register of Historic Places. The City of Faribault adopted and enforces the regulations contained in the IPMC.

In January, Building Official Dean Busse and I traveled to meet with Al Ernste the Building Official for the City of Faribault. Given that Mr. Busse had previously worked for the City of Faribault, Mr. Ernste was very forthcoming and frank in his assessment of the ordinance and its impact.

Mr. Ernste noted that the IPMC helps protect property values and doesn’t allow a poorly maintained property to bring down the values of adjoining structures or properties within the immediate area. This is especially true in traditional central business districts where buildings often share party walls or are otherwise structurally interconnected.

Mr. Ernste noted one Faribault structure where the façade was pulling away from the front of the building and subject to potential collapse upon the sidewalk and street. If the City was not able to order the repair of the structure, the neighboring buildings would be compromised and also
subject to collapse. One poorly maintained structure diminished the value and even the survivability of the adjoining properties.

Mr. Ernste indicated that the Faribault City Council had the political will to adopt the ordinance which would require maintenance as determined by the Building Official. While the ordinance was originally unpopular, the attitudes of building owner are changing given the uniform enforcement, consistent standards and the impact of the maintenance efforts of the property owners.

The IPMC allows for the periodic inspection of structures by the Building Official. In Faribault the City advertises that they will undertake inspections in advance to allow property owners the opportunity to address their deferred maintenance issues voluntarily. In Faribault, the inspections are conducted at no cost and are restricted to the exterior of the property.

If a violation of the ordinance is noted, the building owner is given an order to repair the noted deficiency. The order allows a sufficient period of time to complete the noted repairs. The majority of property owners undertake the repair at this point and no further enforcement action is necessary.

If the first order is ignored, the Building Official provides for a second and final notice of repair. At this point the building owners are also given the opportunity to request an extension due to financial constraints or weather conditions unfavorable to complete the required maintenance.

The second notice also states that if no action is taken to address the ordered repair, the City of Faribault will review the non-compliant properties. If no progress to conform to the ordinance is evident or if the property owner indicates an unwillingness to comply with the order the matter is referred to District Court of prosecution as a misdemeanor.

In Faribault, 79 out of the 126 properties subject to the inspection were ordered to undertake some level of maintenance or repair. Of the 79 notices, only 4 were expected to result in legal action via District Court.

Building Official Busse and I will attend the February 17th City Council Workshop and will be able to answer questions from the City Council at that time.

I have included reference materials for the Council's review and consideration.
TO: Todd Prafke  
City Administrator  

FROM: Russ Wille  
Community Development Director  

RE: Windsor Pond Subdivision – Release of Development Agreement(s)  

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION  

None needed. For your information and discussion.  

BACKGROUND  

Windsor Pond is a slab-on-grade, single family housing subdivision located south of Traverse Road. The subdivision has been undertaken in four phases. The development should be completed upon submission of the plat of Windsor Pond Fifth Addition.  

The first phase was undertaken by Valley View Land Company in 2002. The intent was to recreate the Diamond Creek subdivision in Mankato on Hoffman Road across the street from Mankato East High School. The second plat was approved in 2004 and the third addition was approved in 2018.  

With each phase, the City and developer entered into an agreement for development. The agreements provided for acceptance of the plats, established the standards for the installation of public improvements and provided for any easements necessary to locate the various public and private utilities. The agreements also obligated the developer to pay certain fees such as stormwater assessments, parkland dedication fees and the cost of inspecting the installation of municipal utilities.  

At this time, a home buyer in Windsor Pond has asked to be released from the terms of the applicable development agreement.  

A review of the first three development agreements suggest that the developer(s) have met every obligation and have paid every fee identified in the various development agreement(s).  

Please note that the development agreement for Windsor Pond Fourth Addition would remain in place until such time as the fourth phase is satisfactorily completed.  

The goal for your meeting is to review this unusual issue with the Council and see if there are any substantial concerns from a decision maker stand point. If there are none a future recommendation to release the agreements for the first three phases would be likely.  

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns on this agenda item.  

RJW
Memorandum

TO: Honorable Mayor Zieman
    Members of the City Council

FROM: Todd Prafke
      City Administrator

RE: Community Conversations (East African)

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION

None needed. For Council information and discussion only.

BACKGROUND

Please find attached three documents. The first is your Community Conversations Plan. For your meeting I hope to focus on Parts 4 and 5 of the plan. The second is the Latinx Community Conversation report and the third is the East African Community Conversation that occurred in late 2021.

My goal for your meeting is give members the opportunity to better know the plan put in place by the Council, read the Latinx report and how that was processed and to provide opportunity for members to discuss the East African report in the context of Parts 4 and 5 of the plan.

I think the best way to start the discussion will be a review of parts 4 and 5 and having a discussion on what you might see as priorities, knowing that we cannot do everything. I'd also like to provide staff input as to how, when and where those priorities can be reviewed and/or implemented.

A few questions that may help in the start of the discussion of the report are:

- Was there anything in the report that stood out or seemed unexpected to you?
- Are there areas that you might sense as having a larger impact for the East African community and the community as a whole?
- A possible question that is used in your plan is: “If our Community is less welcoming than we desire exampled by X, by doing X we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcomed and increase everyone’s ability to participate in/have access to X (service/opportunity)."

After your discussion I plan to share the report with others in the same manner as we previously shared the Latinx report. Those entities include the School District, Nicollet County, the #ourstpete group, Saint Peter Food Shelf, and others.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns on this agenda item.

TP/bbk
TO: Honorable Mayor Zieman  
Members of the City Council

FROM: Todd Praefke  
City Administrator

RE: Community Conversations (Latinex)

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION

None needed. For Council information and discussion only.

BACKGROUND

Please find attached two documents. The first is your Community Conversations Plan. For your meeting I hope to focus on Parts 4 and 5 of the plan. These are the stages or phases you have now moved to in the Latinex Community Conversation that occurred at the end August.

The second document is the report back from that Latinex Community Conversation.

My goal is to provide opportunity for members to discuss the report in the context of Parts 4 and 5 of the plan.

I think the best way to start the discussion will be a review of parts 4 and 5, have a discussion on what you might see as priorities, knowing that we cannot do everything, and receive staff input as to how, when and where those priorities can be reviewed and/or implemented.

A few questions that may help in the start of the discussion of the report are:

- Was there anything in the report that stood out or seemed unexpected to you?
- Are there areas that you might sense as having a larger impact for the Latinex community and the community as a whole?
- A possible question that is used in your plan is: “If our Community is less welcoming than we desire exemplified by X, by doing X we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcomed and increase everyone’s ability to participate in/have access to X (Service/opportunity).”

I also hope to seek your direction in setting a timeline to review this work. A great time for review might be at a future Goal Session - maybe in the spring of 2022.

After your discussion I plan to share the report with others who have asked for a copy such as the School District and the County.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns on this agenda item.

TP/bal
Goal: To provide a communication opportunity to share information about the City's Diversity/Equity/Inclusion (DEI) work to date and to listen and learn from input about ways to provide equitable opportunity and access to City provided services. We hope to share information and spend more time listening to understand. Our goal will be one part sharing to five parts listening to understand.

Summary of Tactics:
The City Administrator, with support of the Council, will initiate Community Conversations with specified demographic groups in our community.

The proposed demographic groups are:
- Senior Citizens
- New Immigrant
- Black Americans
- Latinix
- Indigenous Peoples
- LGBTQ
- General Population
- Disabled Persons
- Others (that may be identified in the future)

Each Conversation will include discussion of one to 4 "Service Areas" listed below. Those "Service Areas" will be selected based on information gathered and received by the City Administrator who will work to determine the most definable nexus of barriers, current provided services, and services that cities could provide as the basis for the Service Area discussion. The City Administrator may use current or newly developed networks to help determine the "Service Area" topics for each demographic group.

We need to work and have flexibility in that we need to meet with or have "ambassadors" or "community connectors" meet with proposed demographic subset.

The City will work to have the Conversations in-person and virtually, with interpreters, allowing for opportunity to focus on the unique aspects of service delivery/use in each demographic group. This allows for focus and time so each demographic group and service area receives appropriate time for review.

Each discussion will have an assigned facilitator that will not be a City Employee but the City will strive to have facilitators that may be familiar to the demographic groups the meeting is designed for.

The potential Service Areas will be:
• Housing
• Recreation
• Land Use
• Law Enforcement
• Utilities
• Business Development and Opportunity
• Others

Format - The format for the Conversations will be divided generally into five parts:

• Part 1 Introduction:
  o Introduction of issue including articulation of the central question and a secondary question which are:
    ▪ Central question: What obstacles prevent equitable opportunity to participate in/have access to/use the service area?
    ▪ Secondary question: How do we create an environment that is welcoming and provides equitable opportunity to participate in/have access to/use the service area?
  o Sharing of trend data for the past 20 years. Each service area will have its own unique set of data but all will include Census data or State Demographer data on a City- or County-wide basis of the following:
    ▪ Race
    ▪ Ethnicity
    ▪ Income
    ▪ Income by Race or Ethnicity
    ▪ Household size
    ▪ Age
    ▪ Sex
  o Specific service areas may provide other more specific data. (i.e. Housing may include data sorted by Owner/renter, age, race, income among other data points)
  o We will endeavor to provide trending data from the 2000, 2010 and 2020 Census' and State Demographer reports.
  o We will hope to be clear about participants role of the process and that the discussion will add to our understanding and insight and not be instant rule, law or policy changes.

• Part 2 The Conversation - The selected facilitator will lead a discussion on the central and secondary questions using models to enhance dialogue, conversation and common understanding of data and challenges faced by the community. Each service area may have other specific questions related to the specific data points shared in Part 1. This Part will also include a listing of possible or group identified solutions. Each possible solution will be connected to an identified challenge.

The participants will be asked to provide ideas about how to measure whether a specific challenge and solution pairing has been effective.

• Part 3 The Summary - The Facilitator will work to establish commonly agreed to answers for the central and secondary questions and service area specific questions. The Facilitator will work with the group to identify challenge and solution statements, which may look like:
Our Community is less welcoming than we desire exemplified by XXX. By doing XXX we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcomed and increase everyone's ability to participate in/have access to XXX(Service/opportunity)XXX

- Part 4 The Follow Up - The City Council will receive a report from each Community Conversation. The report will include the number of attendees, the length of the discussion and the Challenge Solution Statements. The City Council will receive that report at a Workshop and take one of three actions:

  o Directing further discussion at a follow-up Community Conversation; and/or
  o Directing that a plan be further reviewed/developed towards action on any or all of the Challenge/Solution statements; and/or
  o Directing another group/commission/board/association to provide further review and feedback to the City Council.
  o Provide a feedback loop with participants by pushing communication to them (something like a direct email to participants) that provides them with a summary of conversation, city council response, invitations for task forces or further discussion, and outcomes.

Each report will be highlighted in the City's Hot Sheet electronic newsletter and have a page on the City website.

- Part 5 The Future - The City Council will look for a way to measure whether challenges and solutions which have been identified and implemented have had an impact. That evaluation will occur within 24 months of the conversation. In most service areas success will be measured by 24 month trend line changes. Success will be based on factors determined by the City Council which could include, a change in utilization, survey responses, anecdotal stories or follow-up with original Community Conversation participants.

Not all challenges and solutions will be met as time, funding and participation may vary based on the challenge and solution provided. The Council will review the suggested measures and determine at least one area of measurement for each challenge and solution pairing. While the ability to measure and declare success may change based on the service area and challenge/solution pairing, the data will be shared in the City's Hot Sheet and updated on the demographic group pages of the City's website.
LATINX COMMUNITY DISCUSSION
8/31/21 Draft Plan 02192021

DESCRIPTION
A discussion around equity in St. Peter was held in the Latinx Community, charged by the St. Peter City Council and Todd Prafke. Discussion was facilitated by Angelique Dwyer, with the assistance of Gracie Willaert as note taker and translator. The event was held on August 24th from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the St. Peter Community Center, Room 217. A welcome table was set up in the B Door Entrance with instructions to:

1. Mask up and apply hand sanitizer
2. Fill out a brief survey regarding participant data
3. Head to room 217 for small group discussion

Due to small attendance, an online survey was sent out to targeted members in this sector, as well as subsequent in-person and phone discussions. Gift cards were distributed to participants who contributed to the discussion.

The information gathered in all of these formats is included for your peruse.

23 people completed online/paper survey from 8/24-8/31
8 people attended in-person discussion on 8/24/21
4 people interviewed in-person on 8/27/21;
2 people interviewed in-person on 8/28/21
1 person interviewed via phone on 8/31/21

SURVEY DATA

AGE
0 people under 20
9 people under 30
9 people under 40
4 people under 50
1 person under 60
0 people under 70
0 people under 80

GENDER
18 women
5 men
0 preferred not to say
SEXUAL ORIENTATION
20 heterosexual
1 homosexual
2 pansexual
0 preferred not to say

STATUS
15 people married
5 people unmarried
2 people living together
1 preferred not to say

COUNTRY ORIGIN:
11 people from Mexico
4 people from the U.S.
4 people from Puerto Rico
2 people from Colombia
1 people from El Salvador
1 people from Costa Rica

PRIMARY LANGUAGE:
21 people indicated Spanish
1 people indicated English
1 people indicated both languages were spoken at home
0 people indicated an indigenous language

HOUSING:
9 people rent an apartment
5 people own a house
4 people own a mobile home
3 people rent a mobile home
1 people rent a house
0 people own an apartment

RELIGION:
12 people are Catholic
8 people do not practice
2 people are Lutheran
1 people are Mormon
0 people are Muslim
0 people are Jewish
0 people are Evangelical
In response to the statement: "I feel welcome in St. Peter."

9 people agreed completely
13 people agreed partially
1 person disagreed

In response to the statement: "My family and I feel safe in St. Peter."

19 people agreed completely
4 people agreed partially
0 people disagreed

In response to the statement: "Mi family, my friends and/or I have been a victim of discrimination in St. Peter."

9 people agreed completely
7 people agreed partially
7 people disagreed

When asked to indicate the service areas in which Latinx community members have faced obstacles in St. Peter, responses show that:

9 of 23 people indicated language
7 of 23 people indicated "other"
4 of 23 people indicated opportunities
4 of 23 people indicated school
3 of 23 people indicated laws
3 of 23 people indicated housing
2 of 23 people indicated property
2 of 23 people indicated recreation
2 of 23 people indicated utilities
1 of 23 people indicated business
1 of 23 people indicated work

The open area comments section in the survey will be linked to the next section for clarity.
DISCUSSION

**Central question:**
What obstacles prevent equitable opportunity to participate in/have access to/use the service area?

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<th>HOUSING</th>
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<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Survey</strong></td>
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<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
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<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Survey</strong></td>
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<th>BUSINESS</th>
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<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Survey</strong></td>
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<th>PROPERTY</th>
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<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Survey</strong></td>
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## UTILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>It would be extremely helpful for newcomers and residents, in general, if the white sheet included in the City Utility bill were available in Spanish.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>&quot;The parking lot where I live is not well kept and the electric bill is very expensive.&quot;</td>
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## TRANSPORTATION

| Discussion | Many non-English speaking people shy away from using this service because information about it is not in Spanish.  
Some mentioned that the public transportation is too small and often has too many people, making it difficult to navigate when using this service.  
There are some people in the Latinx community in town who are bilingual but charge non-English speaking people money to take them to do their grocery shopping.  
A participant interviewed via phone mentioned that Reyna Thomas at YWCA is working on getting transportation |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>&quot;Getting a ride to go grocery shopping is a challenge because we don't speak good enough English to call for City Transit. My neighbors who are from Guatemala and don't speak English or Spanish have it even worse. Sometimes they have to pay someone to take them. I think the YWCA is working on a program to take those people food. That would be better because I have not heard good things about the person who offers to take them for money. I think he is taking advantage.&quot;</td>
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## RECREATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Make an abbreviated version of the St. Peter Brochure in Spanish, highlighting sports and events for youth, prioritizing scholarship opportunities. Make this available in the Community Center and via mail for Spanish-speaking families.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>No comments made.</td>
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**LANGUAGE**

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<th>Discussion</th>
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<td>More signage in Spanish around town would be helpful (in businesses and</td>
<td>(in businesses and city offices) for non-English Speaking people.</td>
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<td>city offices) for non-English Speaking people. Since some of the Latinx</td>
<td>Since some of the Latinx population is non-Spanish speaking,</td>
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<td>population is non-Spanish speaking, having visuals is essential.</td>
<td>having visuals is essential.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
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<td>&quot;The language barrier limits my interaction.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;It's hard to communicate freely because my English is not strong.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;My obstacle is that I only speak Spanish.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;My family interprets for me because I don't speak English, but getting</td>
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<td>an interpreter or understanding things in general is hard.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;I don't like going to English classes in St. Peter because the teachers</td>
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<td>assume were are all undocumented and from Mexico.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;I prefer Mankato for English classes, even though I have to get a ride,</td>
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<td>because they have childcare and we do more than just sit in front of a</td>
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<td>computer.&quot;</td>
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**RELIGION**

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<th>Discussion</th>
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<td>People wanted to attend mass on a Sunday at the St. Peter Catholic Church,</td>
<td>People wanted to attend mass on a Sunday at the St. Peter</td>
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<tr>
<td>but were stopped at the entrance and asked to register as parishioners</td>
<td>Catholic Church, but were stopped at the entrance and asked</td>
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<td>in order to attend mass. Whether these were Covid related regulations</td>
<td>to register as parishioners in order to attend mass. Whether</td>
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<td>or a common practice, it was perceived as being an unwelcoming</td>
<td>these were Covid related regulations or a common practice, it</td>
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<td>environment.</td>
<td>was perceived as being an unwelcoming environment.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No comments made.</td>
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**LAWS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• People in town who have either been in court or know someone who has</td>
<td>People in town who have either been in court or know someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>say how unwelcoming the environment was. They were made to feel as if</td>
<td>who has, say how unwelcoming the environment was. They were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they were guilty, in the wrong and/or ignorant.</td>
<td>made to feel as if they were guilty, in the wrong and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When there's an option, people would rather drive to Mankato for legal</td>
<td>When there's an option, people would rather drive to Mankato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>documents (birth certificates, driver's licence, car title etc.)</td>
<td>for legal documents (birth certificates, driver's licence, car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>title etc.)</td>
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</table>
because they feel more welcome; they are treated with respect and are actually able to accomplish their goal.
- Some tellers in St. Peter won’t allow Latinx people to put cars in their names because they require a MN driver’s license. Mankato does allow it because laws have changed. St. Peter tellers are not informed and they judge Latinx people.
- “I tried to get a copy of my daughter’s birth certificate because she was born here, and they would not give it to me. So, I went to Mankato and I got it there.”

Survey.  
“Minnesotans think all Latinos are the same: undocumented and illegal.”

“I had an obstacle renewing my driver’s license. Employees assume that all Latinos are undocumented and are not very professional.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- All information for parents should be available in Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide information using visual content to increase accessibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make translations in audio form or text based (less long emails).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not all parents have email accounts and many rely on the internet from their phones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Find or hire Mayan / Mam to Spanish interpreters so teachers can communicate with parents/students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Schools and teachers ask for Latinx parent involvement in ways that go against Hispanic cultural values. Teachers hold roles of respect that are rarely questioned. Culturally appropriate involvement of parents is not commonly found in academic settings, but rather in family/social settings by hosting raffles, fundraisers, events that feature cultures, values, music and food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Efforts should be made for sports and other extracurricular activities to be more inclusive. For example, providing informational sheets about school sports in Spanish would help students and parents know what they need to do to join a sport (things like getting a physical done, taking a concussion test, any gear they may need etc.)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No comments made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Discussion | • There is a lack of a centrally located place to obtain resources, or a “welcome center” as such.  
• Attempts to reach out to the Latinx community in the past have mostly been in English, making it hard for the Latinx community to know about or take advantage of those attempts.  
• Culture shock was mentioned as a notable obstacle by one of the attendees of the event. The attendee went on to explain that culture shock upon arrival to Minnesota is common and difficult to navigate if one has no prior knowledge of what living in Minnesota is like. Some examples provided include getting used to the winter weather and what is needed to stay warm and drive safely, others included the Saint Peter community's acceptance or lack thereof in regards to new Latinx community members. |
| Survey | "It's not easy adapting to living in St. Peter. Locals are not very friendly toward brown people they don't know."  
"There are obstacles because we're Latinos." |
DISCUSSION

Secondary question:
How do we create an environment that is welcoming and provides equitable opportunities to participate in/have access to/use the service area?

Some comments shared were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create a “Latinx Welcome Center”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hire a Spanish-speaking Latinx employee who represents the City.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Find a Latinx Gustavus student to start as an intern to start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Task an organization such as #OurStPeter with searching for grant funds to support this position in order to hire someone full time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The welcome Center would provide information such as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Where City buildings are located (social services, courthouse, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o How to pay utility bills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o How to enroll kids in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Immunizations needed for school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Information on free clinics and medical assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create a WhatsApp or Facebook Group called: “Latinos de St. Peter”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Use the group to share general information about living in Minnesota in a visual / audio friendly manner. Some posts might be:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Helpful tips to make sure your pipes don’t freeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o What to do when parking on the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Weatherizing your tires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Where to get free winter clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Information about the Food Shelf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Accepting free food without a stigma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Free backpack program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Driving safety:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Winter driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Travel with blankets or extra coats in the winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keep gas at a quarter tank in the winter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Create a Radio Station in Spanish

- Feature basic St. Peter info regarding:
  - schooling
  - weather
  - utilities
  - Parades / events
  - farmer's markets

Spanish teachers at the school and professors at GAC (and GAC's radio club) would be helpful in setting this up, as would Latinx students in both schools in creating a Youtube channel and/or radio programming. This is something that could also be done in the Somali community, for instance.

Host events that celebrate inclusivity

- Multicultural Nights at the Schools
  - St. Peter Fiesta at the Community Center in the Spring
  - Día de los Muertos throughout St. Peter in the Fall
    - Create a Día de los Muertos Passport (like Girls Night Out) with stops at various locations like:
      - El Agave (window display and dinner/drink special)
      - La Mexicana (window display and bakery special)
      - River Rock (art display and hot beverage special)
      - St. Peter Community Center (hallway display)
      - St. Peter Library (book display)
      - School displays (altars displayed in hallways)
      - Christ Chapel Gustavus (altars displayed in Chapel)
    and raffle prizes from local businesses.

Host a career fair and workshop

- Address and improve the lack of employment and career opportunities for the Latinx community. Topics could include:
  - Resume building
  - Interview preparation / mock interview
  - Employment opportunities in the area/ networking
  - Information on benefits and what they mean (including health insurance and retirement packages)
  - Skill assessments
Challenge & Solution Statements

Our Community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by a lack of City documents available in Spanish. By translating into Spanish the white sheet that accompanies the monthly utilities bill we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcome and increase everyone’s ability to participate in/have access to general information.

Our Community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by a lack of sporting opportunities specifically directed toward our Latinx community. By translating an abbreviated version of the St. Peter Brochure that highlights opportunities and scholarships for Latinx youth, we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcome and increase everyone’s ability to participate in/have access to these recreation opportunities geared toward diversity and equity.

Our Community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by a lack of transit signage and schedule information available in Spanish. By providing transit signage in Spanish around the City and making schedule information available in Spanish (in the Spanish version of the brochure or via mail, etc.) we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcome and increase everyone’s ability to participate in/have access to the City’s resources.

Our Community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by a lack of central resources for Latinx citizens. By creating a “Latinx Welcome Center” within the St. Peter Community Center, we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcome and increase everyone’s ability to participate in/have access to the City’s resources.

Our Community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by a lack of training in governmental and community service offices to ensure that current laws are applied in an unbiased manner toward citizens from all ethnic backgrounds. By providing helpful, current and unbiased service to all of our residents, we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcome and increase everyone’s ability to participate in/have access to the City’s resources.

Our Community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by a lack of employment opportunity and advancement for non-english speaking community members. By diversifying employment opportunities, offering workshops via a career fair and training our minority residents, we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcome and increase everyone’s ability to obtain upward social mobility and financial prosperity.
Community Conversations

East African Discussions

October 2021

ISSUED BY
Mohamed Abdulkadir

Note Taker
Kamil Jamac
Introduction & Background

A discussion around equity in St. Peter was held by the East African Community at the Hikmah Center in St. Peter in response to a request from Todd Pfafke and the City of St. Peter. The discussion was facilitated by Mohamed Abdulkadir, assisted by Kamil Jamac as note taker. The event was held on October 9th, 2021, at 5pm.

In total, there were 28 attendants who completed a survey and 20 participated in the discussion. There were 8 follow-up in-depth conversation regarding the topic of this report. In certain sections, survey data will appear in line with the discussion points.

Project Description

Primary Question of Discussion is as follows:

1. Central Question: What obstacles prevent equitable opportunity to participate in/have access to/use the service area.

2. Secondary Question: How do we create an environment that is welcoming and provides equitable opportunity to participate in/have access to/use the service area?
**Project Survey Data**

The scope of the Community Conversations project encompass the East African Community from varying ranges of age, gender, housing, etc. All information was self-identified.

**Survey Results**

1. **What is your age?**
   - 20 and under: 4
   - 20-30: 2
   - 30-40: 5
   - 40+: 14

2. **What is your gender?**
   - Male: 12
   - Female: 16
   - Other: 2

3. **Marital Status**
   - Married: 15
   - Single: 11
   - Divorced: 1
   - Prefer not to say: 1

4. **Country of Origin**
   - US: 2
   - Somalia: 20
   - Nigeria: 1
   - Ethiopia: 2
   - Other: 3

5. **Home Language**
   - English: 7
   - Somali: 24
   - Swedish: 2
   - Arabic: 1
   - Other: 2

6. **Housing**
   - Own: 1
   - Rent: 33
   - House/ House: 9

7. **Religion**
   - Islam: 27
   - Other: 1

8. **Do you feel welcome in St. Peter?**
   - Yes: 15
   - No: 3
   - Prefer not to say: 3

9. **Do you feel safe in St. Peter?**
   - Yes: 23
   - No: 4
   - Prefer not to say: 1

10. **Have you or someone you know been a victim of discrimination in St. Peter?**
    - Yes: 17
    - No: 2
    - Prefer not to say: 2
Discussion / Listening Session

The Service areas in which East African community members have faced obstacles which prevent equitable opportunity to participate are detailed below as well as suggestions on how to create an environment of welcome and provide better solutions:

11. In what service areas have you faced the greatest obstacles in St. Peter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Opportunities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Discussion

**Housing**

13 of the 28 respondents identified this area as an issue.

Housing is the 2nd most challenging service area for the community.

- Lack of large family units
- Some landlords are not providing proper notice for lease termination and/or eviction
- Lack of empathy for challenges faced by single parent households by landlords.

**Comment:**
Sometimes landlords neglect to perform maintenance tasks in a timely manner (doesn’t know who to turn to). I have asked them many times to fix.

**Solution(s):**
- When approving new apartments, ensure there is a requirement for more large family units
- Make a city resource available to help facilitate communication and ensure everyone is treated fairly

**Recreation**

Of the 28 respondents, 1 cited issue with recreation.

**Comments:**
- There are times when the lights in the parks are shut off while the families are actively utilizing the service.
- We don’t experience any issues accessing parks, the Community Center, Library, etc.

**Land Use/Property**

Of the 28 respondents, only 2 currently own their own property in St. Peter.

- The community, although interested in purchasing property, are blocked by a lack of financing which does not include interest.
- Lack of education around home ownership in general
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement</th>
<th>Of the 28 respondents, 5 cited law enforcement as an obstacle.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>• &quot;We have good credit but cannot find appropriate financing.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution(s):</td>
<td>• City built housing which can be bought by the community from the city directly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• City partnership with local Non-Profits to provide property purchase opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• City offering housing grants to support down payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• City offer loans at reduced interest</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Of the 28 respondents, 4 cited Utilities as an obstacle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>• Even for individuals who have never missed any payments, they have never felt welcomed when they visit to make payments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is a fear that missing or even being 1 payment late will result in immediate disconnection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Utilities are expensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment:</td>
<td>• &quot;When I go in and hand off my check for the month, I am not acknowledged. I have been making personal visits there for years.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both homeowners and renters agreed that St Peter Utility bills are sky high and are struggling to pay although some of them mentioned they got some support from MVAC.

Solution(s):
- No direct solution has been addressed but they agreed a more welcoming environment could be helpful.

Business Development & Opportunity

Of the 28 respondents, 3 cited obstacles to business development.

- The main challenges are financial support or education on how to navigate the system – banking, loans, city requirements, zoning, etc.
- Legal help in the formation, registration, and permit filings remain a confusing obstacle for many.

Solution(s):
- More outreach from SBA and other non-profit organizations.

Language

Of the 28 respondents, 17 cited challenges with the language barrier.

They shared what happens when they visit offices or stores:

- This is the biggest pain point for the community.
- Social services do not provide in-person translation, leading to the community members consistently feeling alienated.
- Not only Social Service but many government buildings do not have bi-lingual staff.
- Sometimes the translated document provided is not an accurate translation.
- Many who speaks very good English feel others withdrawal from conversations because of the accent.

Solution(s):
- Hiring Interpreters will ease the tension.
- Dealing with accent:
1. Calm down
2. Simply apologize and ask them to repeat
3. Ask politely if they could spell or write

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of the 28 respondents, 10 cited school as an obstacle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This is the 3rd most challenging service area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is only 1 liaison who is responsible for all 3 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is a general lack of support from school staff when it comes to disciplinary situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The school police officer is seen as taking a stance against Somali students in every situation. They do not believe he is there to help their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This was a heated discussion as multiple families had recent encounters in which they felt their children were mistreated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The community believes the school does not take their concerns seriously, nor do they actively listen when students complain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:
• Parents encouraged to discipline their children.
• Example: One parent said our children are not angels, too. We need to educate our children how to respect officers, how to deal when incidents occur in the school sites and speak clearly and share what happen for the school staff, like if someone wants you to fight in the schools.

Solution(s):
• Members of the community have acknowledged that there has been a marked improvement in their relationship with the school district.
• A more collaborative decision-making process among the school staff, school resource officer, and students/parents when it comes to disciplinary actions.
• The students' voices should be respected and not disregarded. This will dramatically lessen the alienation students feel towards school authority.

Challenge and Solution Statements
Community identified solutions to current challenges, along with their accompanying metrics for measurement:

1. Our community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by a lack of interpreting services. By hiring a liaison at each government facility (social services, City Admin, School System) we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcomed and increase everyone's ability to participate in/have access to a community that is safe and easy to live in.

2. Our community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by law enforcement using biased tactics (“terrorist”, constant traffic stops, poor rhetoric) when dealing with Somali students. By becoming more involved in community events and receiving cultural training, we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcomed and increase everyone's ability to participate in/have access to unbiased treatment from law enforcement.

3. Our community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by Property/Housing. By providing more access and education towards first-time homeowner resources, developing apartments with more bedrooms for larger families, along with finding grants (federal, state, or local), to assist with down payment assistance and availability to buy affordable housing, we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcomed and increase everyone's ability to have access to safe and affordable housing.

4. Our community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by limit of work availability in St Peter. The lack of employment opportunities among non-English speaking community members is a constant concern. By establishing dialogue and conversations between the community and employers, with a particular emphasis in the Human Resources personnel at the work place we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcomed. This increases everyone's ability to participate in/have access to a fulfilling and sustainable job.

5. Our community is less welcoming than we desire, exemplified by a lack of supporting Somali Organizations existing in St. Peter Area. By creating a “Supporting Community Centers” we may be able to reduce the number of people that feel unwelcome and increase everyone's ability to participate in/have access to the City's resources.