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 person from El Salvador
1 person from Costa Rica

PRIMARY LANGUAGE:
21 people indicated Spanish
1 person indicated English
1 person 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 person rent a house
0 people own an apartment

RELIGION:
12 people are Catholic
8 people do not practice
2 people are Lutheran
1 person 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 people 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?

### HOUSING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Nothing mentioned in discussion.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>“It’s difficult to get a job that’s going to pay me well enough to afford to buy a house.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Pay rates are an obstacle.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The parking lot where I live is not well kept and the electric bill is very expensive.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s not easy to get approved to rent in St. Peter.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OPPORTUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>There is a lack of jobs in town for non-English speakers beyond minimum wage / hard labor jobs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>“It was hard for my family to find work because we don’t speak English. There is a lot of discrimination in St. People toward non-English speakers.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BUSINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>No comments made</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>No comments made</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>No comments made.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>“When there is a tornado warning there is nowhere to hide.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>“The parking lot where I live is not well kept and the electric bill is very expensive.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 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 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>“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.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>No comments made.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LANGUAGE**

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

**RELIGION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>People wanted to attend mass on a Sunday at the St. Peter Catholic Church, but were stopped at the entrance and asked to register as parishioners in order to attend mass. Whether these were Covid related regulations or a common practice, it was perceived as being an unwelcoming environment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

**LAWS**

| Discussion | ● People in town who have either been in court or know someone who has, say how unwelcoming the environment was. They were made to feel as if they were guilty, in the wrong and/or ignorant.  
● When there’s an option, people would rather drive to Mankato for legal documents (birth certificates, driver’s licence, car title etc.) |
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.” |

**SCHOOLS**

| Discussion | ● All information for parents should be available in Spanish.  
|            | ● Provide information using visual content to increase accessibility.  
|            | ● Make translations in audio form or text based (less long emails).  
|            | ● Not all parents have email accounts and many rely on the internet from their phones.  
|            | ● Find or hire Mayan / Mam to Spanish interpreters so teachers can communicate with parents/students.  
|            | ● 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.  
|            | ● 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.) |

| Survey | No comments made |
| 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. |
| Surveys  | “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:

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

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