

TOWARD

Culturally Enriched Communities



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Introduction



Culturally Enriched Communities recognize the potential that lies within each individual and thereby, include spaces that support diverse ways of living and being in the world, contributing to the prosperity and well-being of all people.

The state of Minnesota consistently ranks among the top 10 states in the country in terms of quality of life, based on well-being indicators such as employment rates, education, income, safety, health, environment, civic engagement, accessibility to services, and housing (Hess & Frohlich, 2014). In parallel, the Greater Minneapolis and St Paul (MSP) region is noted among the country's most innovative cities, for transportation infrastructure and economic development, programs to help immigrants start businesses and artists buy real estate as well as public health efforts (Eugenios, Hargreaves, & Rawlins, 2014). The MSP region has also been named by the researchers at Parenting Magazine as one of the top five places in the country to raise a family (Schmidt, n.d.). And, with over 180 parks within its boundaries, Minneapolis holds the title of the Nation's best park system (The Trust for Public Land, 2015) and is ranked as one of the top biking cities in the country, with 92 miles of on-street bikeways and 85 miles of off-street bikeways (City of Minneapolis, 2015). The arts scene follows suit--the MSP region is second only to New York City in live theater per capita and is the third-largest theater market in the United States.

This report is centered on the question of what would it take for Minnesota to continue to prosper and flourish in the future and what role can the built environment play in the process?



Cultural Wellness Center

Positioning the state for a vibrant and prosperous future is tied to demographic projections that by 2040, close to 40% of Minnesota's population will be people of color, many of them international immigrants (Metropolitan Council, 2012). In 2013, only about 18.1% of Minnesota residents were people of color versus 37.4% at the national level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Although Minnesota enjoys high ranks in many quality of life indicators, it also experiences disparities in health, education, and income between whites and people of color. Given that a diverse population is key to economic and cultural vitality, designers, planners, policy makers, housing developers, neighborhood organizers, and others who are striving to unravel how to integrate the state's social, economic, cultural, environmental, and technological resources face multiple questions:

- How can Minnesota attract and retain a diverse population?
- How can communities support diverse needs and nurture in residents a feeling of value and commitment?
- In what ways can stereotypes and barriers for the creation of healthy and thriving communities break-down?
- How can design support culturally diverse businesses and development of homes and neighborhoods that support diverse ways of living?
- What kind of design interventions can create forums for public engagement that tap a community's diversity and support health and well-being? And,
- How can the area's multiculturalism be translated into income-generating opportunities?

Culturally Enriched Communities are an inherent part of planning processes that strengthen an area's ability to plan for the growth in diversity in ways that can position the region to rank among the best in world while improving upon the indicators of uneven disparities. Culturally Enriched Communities include environments that support diverse ways of living. Recognizing the potential that lies within each individual and group and how places, both public and private, can impact one's ability to be the best that they can be, Culturally Enriched Communities allow for the creation of municipalities that can contribute to the prosperity and well-being of all people. The creation of Culturally Enriched Communities relies on planners, policy leaders, housing developers, and others who feel an obligation to understand those they are working with and are interested in the lives of others.

These decision makers recognize that people construct meaning in life through different ways, that is, how they cook, what they eat, what they wear, how they socialize, how they speak, how they pray, and how they play is diverse. Diverse ways of living are outcomes of numerous factors including distinct ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds, histories, religions, incomes, ages, gender, abilities, and circumstances. As a result, the design of public and private spaces must be adaptable and flexible, able to be easily adjusted to the multiplicity of lifestyles and needs that our region's future will hold.



When Principles of Culturally Enriched Communities are applied to a home, it could mean designing a kitchen so that it can be used as an open or closed space with built-in adaptability that would not require expensive remodeling to accommodate cooking practices. In a public space, these Principles could translate into signage in different languages and gathering areas that bring people together and allow for connections to form and stereotypes to break.

Professionals working toward Culturally Enriched Communities are willing to move beyond the basics, the comfortable, and the familiar to understand the people they are working with as individuals who change and evolve as they move through their lives. These professionals consider the impact of the designed environment on the construction of marginalization and difference — from limiting the types of foods one can eat, to the relationships one can form, the dress he/she can wear, traditions the family can practice and pass down, and aspirations for the future. As a result, these community building development programs are committed to the eight Principles of Culturally Enriched Communities and in turn, they:

- 1 Foster partnerships and create synergies among stakeholders that range from policy makers, designers, and planners to business and community leaders, institutions, and community members.
- 2 Use community engagement to strengthen the values and unique character of a given region and community at levels that include homes, neighborhoods, cities, the region, and the state.
- 3 Bridge the local and the global, enabling residents to retain their global connections and build economically thriving communities.
- 4 Celebrate the diverse histories, traditions, backgrounds, and meaning-making practices of the many people that comprise a community.
- 5 Create opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to interact with each other in meaningful ways, helping break down stereotypes and challenge assumptions.
- 6 Support the health and well-being of everyone, accounting for the diverse ways by which humans cook, eat, sleep, socialize, dress, pray, recreate, exercise, etc. and for the needs of people of all ages, races, abilities, ethnic backgrounds, and socio-economic status.
- 7 Strengthen job and educational opportunities that bring about equality and social justice and enhance the economic prospects of an area.
- 8 Recognize that an open mind is crucial for innovation to flourish. This often implies exploring new ideas and new ways of doing things.

Steps for working *Toward Culturally Enriched Communities*:

1 CONSIDER CHOICE

Effective planning for the future cannot take place without acknowledging the multiple ways by which people construct meaning in their lives. Often, those choices are bounded and limited as a result of factors such as health, income, and educational disparities; stereotypes; access to opportunities, and circumstances, all of which are impacted by the built environment.

2 UNDERSTAND DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

Time, energy, and funds need to be devoted to capturing diverse perspectives and experiences - from policy makers to community members who are immersed in the problem/issue on hand. Rethinking where expertise lies is an instrumental part of this process.

3 DEVELOP PLANS AND POLICIES

In developing plans and policies, account for the complex and multi-dimensional perspectives identified. These must be flexible and adaptable to accommodate multiple uses and users.

4 ACT AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

The built environment can be a medium for challenging assumptions and creating dialogues about the creation of communities where everyone can thrive.



Deep Roots, Bright Blooms - Rose Gardens

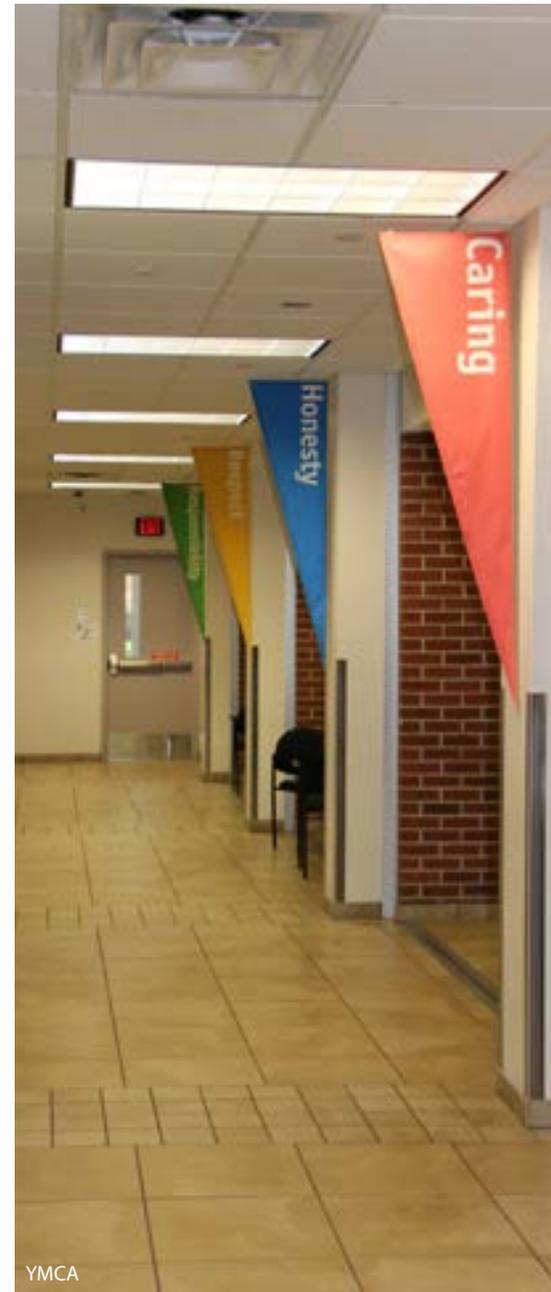
In celebration of their 100-year partnership, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts teamed together to create gardens. Garden designer Rachel DeVries took inspiration from paintings in the museum's collection for a spring tulip garden and a summer installation of annuals at Lake Harriet's Rose Gardens (Planted Paintings Pop Up at Minneapolis Park, n.d.).

How and who can use this report

This report is part of on-going study of what it would take for Minnesota to continue to prosper and flourish in the future and the role that the built environment can play in the process. Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, Ph.D. is the Principal Investigator in this study, the results of which provide direction for the creation of housing and communities that support diverse ways of living. The study's various phases are as following:

- Phase 1 Explorations of cultural differences in housing needs began in 2001 with the Hmong community. By 2009, the study expanded to include five local cultural groups: Hmong, Somali, Mexicans, Ojibwe and African Americans.
- Phase 2 The collaboration between ULI MN and Tasoulla Hadjiyanni that resulted in this report started in 2010 through interviews with 23 affordable housing providers in the Twin Cities.
- Phase 3 The interviewees pointed to the multiplicity of private, non-profit, and governmental organizations involved in the planning of affordable housing as a challenge. Building synergies among all stakeholders was identified as an integral part of the process of working toward affordable housing that meets diverse needs and helps bridge existing health disparities. Collaboration was to be nurtured and infusing cultural issues into such centralized sources of knowledge as ULI MN's Minnesota Housing Policy Tool Box was a step in this direction. During this phase, the Housing Policy Toolbox was redesigned and reconfigured to better relate how to support diverse ways of living and meaning-making when creating housing choices. See http://www.housingpolicy.org/toolbox/index_1_MN.html.
- Phase 4 At the suggestion of the Regional Council of Mayors, the study was expanded beyond housing to include Culturally Enriched Communities. Interviews with local organizations provided best practices for how to engage the area's diverse demographics. The examples shared have been compiled into this report. As more best practices are identified, the report will be updated.
- Phase 5 As Phase 4 focused mostly on the Minneapolis experience, the study is being expanded in 2015-2018 to include perspectives from suburban and rural Minnesota. The findings will supplement this report.

By sharing best practices, the report demonstrates how communities can implement the eight Principles to strengthen Minnesota's economic and cultural vitality. Lessons learned from Minnesota-based institutions and organizations create a broad base of solutions and interventions that can provide Minnesota's communities with city planning tools that position the state for a vibrant future. Planners, affordable housing providers, policy leaders, elected officials, neighborhood organizers, and others who advocate for a healthy and connected Minnesota should see these examples as a beginning and not an end, as the base for dialogue for what a community can become and how to reach the state of a Culturally Enriched Community.



Synergistic Communities

Culturally Enriched Communities are planned in ways that foster partnerships and create synergies among stakeholders that range from policy makers, designers, and planners to business and community leaders, institutions, and community members.

Approximately 18% of Minnesota's current population is people of color (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Preparing for the future, especially one where demographic projections expect 40% of the population to be people of color, requires planning efforts that operate according to the principle of collaboration.

How can elected officials, planners, advocates, builders, and community members ensure that planning decisions account for diverse needs? How can the way be paved for future leaders that are representative of all communities? And, in what ways can synergies be built, bringing together sectors that are typically separated, such as transportation, business, and housing development balanced with public health?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Collaboration has long been lauded as an effective means of bringing about change as well as planning for change. In the case of Culturally Enriched Communities, collaborations with designers, planners, the public and private sectors, educators, public health advocates, community members, organizations, and institutions can shed light on the ways that community settings can strengthen their social, economic, and cultural character.

When multiple perspectives are represented around the planning table, synergies can form and the potential increases for thriving communities to materialize. Participants can voice their opinions and craft the direction of planning efforts; explore holistically how different programs can be connected to meet goals; and take advantage of capacity-building, partnerships and leadership in creating an environment for change that is sustainable.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Providing institutional and organizational settings that foster conversations across multiple sectors,
- Ensuring that diverse perspectives are around the planning table.
- Supporting organizations that bring together people of different backgrounds who collaborate toward a shared vision.



Urban Land Institute Minnesota's (ULI MN) mission is to engage public and private sector leaders to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and join in meaningful strategic action to create thriving, sustainable communities.

ULI MN acts as a facilitator of idea exchange between local, national and international leaders and policy makers. Through synergistic relationships, ULI MN is dedicated to improving housing options, transportation, communities, and the job force. The meeting space in ULI MN's office, located strategically in downtown Minneapolis, allows for convenings where ideas are shared and critiqued.

what can i do now?

- 1 Find out who is working on issues that matter to the future of your community.
- 2 Figure out how to connect with these people or organizations.
- 3 Reflect on what you want to learn and what you can offer to these dialogues.

Synergistic Communities (continued)



McKnight Foundation's conference space
Photo credit: McKnight Foundation

The McKnight Foundation's mission calls for grant-making, collaboration, and encouragement of strategic policy reform to unite and empower those served. Eric Muschler, Program Officer, noted that "innovation and solutions come from people who are closest to the problem." McKnight's role is to "listen and hear what is being learned on the ground, what's changing, and then be a voice that supports it in a broader community sense." This translates into citizen participation that engages communities in new and different ways as a funding criterion as well as a meeting space overlooking the Mississippi river that pays tribute to the city's origins while providing a setting to plan the region's future.



The Musicant Group
Photo credit: The Musicant Group

Musicant's motto is "Creating Great Places Where People Want To Be." Working with commercial property owners, neighborhood groups, real estate developers, shopping centers, houses of worship, non profits, and the public sector, the Musicant Group transforms public and common areas into places of destination and delight; places where people want to be and gather. The spaces used range from parking spots such as the PARK(ing) Day celebration planned by the business association Experience Southwest to Open Street events such as the Wabasha Street Block Party in St Paul.



Intermedia Arts

Intermedia Arts' colorful exterior wall is a landmark on Minneapolis' Lyndale Avenue. As a space that brings together people of different backgrounds, the organization raises awareness and builds self-esteem by empowering youth to use "art-based approaches to solve community issues." Their Open Stages program, hosted by teen performers, gives youth the opportunity to learn the ins-and-outs of performing art, including planning, marketing, performance and tech. Art mediums include film and media, literary, performing and visual arts, and dance.

People-Centered Communities

Culturally Enriched Communities use community engagement to strengthen the values and unique character of a given community and region at levels that include homes, neighborhoods, cities, the region, and the state.

The cities of Minneapolis and St Paul boast more than 100 neighborhoods, some more diverse than others. The question for planners of Culturally Enriched Communities is how to capture the wisdom that exists within these neighborhoods in planning efforts and how to support and strengthen community connections?

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Sense of Community (SOC) is partly constructed through a shared emotional connection, either a shared history or a history community members identify with (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The notion of SOC has implications for planning as SOC has been found to be related to various indexes of quality of daily life, such as life satisfaction; mental, physical, and social well-being; perception of safety and security; and even individual ability to use problem-focused coping strategies (Mannarini & Fedi, 2009).

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Partnering with a community organization or agency to uncover a shared vision of the future in a proactive way prior to projects being proposed and evaluated.
- Using community engagement in the planning stages of a project and responding to neighborhood-specific needs.
- Organizing forums for public participation and finding ways to sustain those partnerships. Community needs can rarely be identified and implemented in short time spans and in some cases, years may pass from initial data collection to final implementation of a design or program.
- Including settings within a community for members to come together and share thoughts and ideas.
- Celebrating sustained partnerships through exhibits, festivals, markets and visible forms of communication.



Responding to the love of soccer among Somalis and Latinos, the [Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board](#) has created artificial turf fields throughout the city. As Jayne Miller, Superintendent, notes “parks are the great equalizer in any community...because everyone has access to them...we make sure that our policies and procedures aren’t barriers for people to use our facilities and services.” The Minneapolis Park System is the #1 park system in the US ([minneapolisparcs.org](#)).

Photo credit: Minneapolis Parks and Recreation

what can i do now?

- 1 Learn about the diverse neighborhoods within your city/area.
- 2 Connect with local organizations who focus on people and diverse cultures.
- 3 Familiarize yourself with the current and projected demographic statistics for your area and the state.



Medtronic - A Fortune 500 Company

Medtronic, a Fortune 500 company, celebrates its connections to the broader community. The company’s mission is displayed in the welcome desk area for all visitors and employees to view. It states: “Our mission is to improve the health of people and communities through focus, innovation and leadership. We partner with our communities to help people live healthy and productive lives.”

In addition, a large atrium showcases a world map, highlighting the Fortune 500 company’s mission through people-centered statistics; in 2013, 9.6 million lives improved in over 140 countries.



Taste of Greece Festival

Minneapolis boasts many festivals and exhibits that celebrate the city’s cultural and ethnic diversity as well as bring people together. These take place in museums, outdoor plazas and parks, as well as streets and religious establishments. Founded in 1989, the Taste of Greece Festival is held yearly at Saint Mary’s Greek Orthodox Church in early September. The festival includes Greek food, traditional dances, homemade pastries, church tours, wine tastings, cultural demonstrations, a marketplace and a childrens’ area. The festival is the culmination of hours of volunteer work by church members and raised funds are used to support philanthropic efforts locally and abroad.



Cedar Riverside Neighborhood

Currently, the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood is home to a largely Somali immigrant population. Thousands of Somalis came to Minnesota in the early 1990s and now, the Twin Cities area has one of the largest concentrations of Somalis in the country. The influx of Somalis transformed Cedar-Riverside physically as well as demographically and Somali grocery stores and restaurants as well as social services and mosques line the area streets. The Cedar Cultural Center, which strives to “promote inter-cultural appreciation and understanding through the presentation of global music and dance” (The Cedar, 2015), holds over 200 events each year, including events that engage Somali community members.

Globally-Oriented Communities

Culturally Enriched Communities bridge the local and the global, enabling residents to retain their global connections and build economically thriving communities.

Approximately 7.2% of Minnesota's population is foreign-born, compared to 12.9% nationally--about 1 in 14 Minnesotans (2010-2012). Their origins are from places as diverse as Mexico (71,000); India (26,000); Laos, including Hmong (24,000); Somalia (21,000); Vietnam (19,000); Thailand (15,000), and China (14,000) (Minnesota State Demographic Center, n.d.). A designated refugee resettlement area, Minnesota has an unusually large refugee population--one in five of the state's new immigrants has been a refugee or asylee fleeing persecution in their homeland. In 2008, almost 45% of the Minnesota immigrants granted legal permanent residency status (also known as a green card) were refugees or asylees. Most other Minnesota immigrants receiving green cards in 2008 (32%) were the immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. In parallel, Minnesota has an undocumented population, which could range from 55,000 to 85,000--the exact number is unknown (Owen, Meyerson, & Otteson, 2010).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Minnesota's foreign-born residents are a significant and growing economic force, contributing as employers, workers, consumers, and taxpayers. Studies have concluded that the economic benefits of immigration to the region outweighed the costs by a ratio of about 2 to 1 (Kielkopf, 2000; Owen, Meyerson, & Otteson, 2010).

The success of immigrant entrepreneurs is important to the long term success of their communities. Businesses can help immigrants integrate into the community (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), contribute to economic growth (Rajjman & Tienda, 2000b), create social solidarity within the immigrant community (Min & Bozorgmehr, 2000), and provide upward mobility for the second generation (Rajjman & Tienda, 2000a).

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Providing easy and affordable access to an international airport.
- Taking advantage of opportunities to transform places into global gateways, such as ethnic food markets.
- Creating spaces for diverse businesses to flourish.
- Rethinking language used to describe the immigrant experience--does it speak of opportunity and growth?



Local/global connections are firmly established through airports with international connections. The [Minneapolis - Saint Paul International Airport](#) serves twenty non-stop international markets. According to Phil Burke, Director of MSP Operations, efforts to celebrate the area's diverse cultural roots as well as enable visitors to learn more about the region, include exhibit spaces that feature works by local artists, renovated bathrooms whose walls are adorned with Minnesota imagery, mosaic floors that showcase Minnesota's character and natural landscape, as well as an international fair.

what can i do now?

- 1 Learn about the global connections of the diverse population in your community.
- 2 Visit immigrant businesses and connect with the owners.
- 3 Read Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

Immigrants and diverse businesses can spearhead economic development as employers, consumers, taxpayers, and workers. See more detail below.

Employers:

- In the US, 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their children--18% (or 90) of the 500 companies had immigrant founders while the children of immigrants started another 114 companies. Placing these figures within the context of the foreign-born population of the United States averaging 10.5% since 1850, means immigrant entrepreneurs are overrepresented on the list of founders of Fortune 500 companies. As the Partnership for a New American Economy report notes, "The revenue generated by Fortune 500 companies founded by immigrants or children of immigrants is greater than the GDP (gross domestic product) of every country in the world outside the U.S., except China and Japan" (Partnership, 2011, p.2). These Fortune 500 companies had combined revenues of \$4.2 trillion in 2010, \$1.7 trillion which from immigrant-founded companies (Partnership, 2011).
- From an employment standpoint, immigrant-owned businesses account for approximately 3% of Minnesota's businesses and employ approximately 21,000 workers, generating sales and receipts of \$2.2 billion. In 2002, there were 7,700 Asian businesses and almost 4,000 Hispanic businesses operating throughout the state (Fennelly & Huart, 2009).
- The St. Paul Neighborhood Development Center reports that, as of 2002, 138 immigrant-owned businesses had created 386 new jobs, and spent \$5.6 million on payroll, rent, supplies and other expenses (Fennelly & Huart, 2009).

Consumers and Taxpayers:

- Across the US, immigrants have collectively added \$3.7 trillion to US housing wealth and account for 17% of the new demand for housing and 33% of the new demand for rental units (Feinblatt & Marczak, 2013).

- In MN, immigrants have an estimated \$5 billion in purchasing power (Corrie & Radosevich, 2013). Combined, ALANA, which stands for African, Latino, Asian and Native American (ALANA) have \$12 billion dollars in Consumer Power (Corrie, 2014).
- Both urban and rural areas benefit from the economic development spurred by immigrants. In south-central Minnesota, Latinos added nearly \$500 million to the economy through their labor contributions, their spending as consumers, and the increased demand by employers for regionally supplied goods and services (Corrie & Radosevich, 2013). In Southwest Minnesota, Latino workers generated \$45 million in state and local taxes in 2000 (Kielkopf, 2000).

Workers:

- Most of Minnesota's foreign-born residents are working-age adults between the ages of 18 and 65 who counterbalance the trend of Minnesota's general population toward a greater proportion of older adults who are not of working age (Owen, Meyerson, & Otteson, 2010).
- In terms of education and skills, immigrant workers are concentrated at the very-low and very-high skill ends of the spectrum: 27% of the state's foreign-born adults lack a high school degree (compared to just 9% of native-born adults), while 32% hold a 4-year college, graduate, or professional degree (compared to 31% of the native born population). The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce reports that many of the state's low-skill immigrants are currently working labor-intensive, low-paying jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, and a variety of service industries. The Chamber is concerned that without an expanded immigrant labor force, key industries will be unable to find the workers they need (Owen, Meyerson, & Otteson, 2010). Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development also projects that the industries expected to see the most growth between 2006 and 2016 are concentrated in both high-skill and low-skill fields (2008).

The Light Rail Transit



The Light Rail Transit (LRT) plays an important role in fostering connections, providing easy and affordable access to areas such as the two cities of Minneapolis and St Paul, the Mall of America, and the Minneapolis/ St Paul International Airport. Transit-oriented development along the light rail translated into hundreds of new housing units -- including million-dollar condos, market-rate apartments and low-income housing that cater to the region's increasing population. The Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) helped the development of the LRT by coordinating and facilitating processes that brings together all interested parties -- governing agencies, developers, and neighborhood and community interests.



Minneapolis Institute of Arts - The Yamantaka mandala

The **Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA)** mission is to “enrich the community by collecting, preserving, and making accessible outstanding works of art from the world’s diverse cultures.” Engagement with the diverse cultural groups of the region translates into galleries in which all members of the community can relate to and find ways to connect to their past and heritage. These galleries range from the newly renovated African Galleries to the Tibetan Yamantaka Mandala created by monks of the Gyuto Tantric University while in residence at the MIA, the first of its kind to be made permanent through a collaboration with 3M. Cultural sensitivity carries through the installation of exhibits, such as Native American shields which according to tradition, should not be facing each other.



Karmel Square Somali Mall

Located in the Whittier neighborhood of Minneapolis, **Karmel Square Somali Mall** houses over 150 Somali businesses, acting as a global gateway. Nearly always bustling with activity, the Somali Mall is comprised of two buildings that house food vendors, clothing stores, tailors, shoe shiners, and cell phone shops (Eveland, 2014). Two prayer areas are also found here to support the religious needs of Muslim Somalis, including the largest mosque in the state. Many of the businesses are run by women, providing them and their families with opportunities for financial independence.



Midtown Global Market

The **Midtown Global Market's** mission is to “build upon the economic, social and cultural assets within the surrounding communities and welcome the diverse peoples of this community to share and celebrate together the healthy foods, arts, crafts and other aspects of their heritage.” Housing over fifty vendors, it is one of the largest indoor, internationally-themed public markets in the area. Prominently located on Lake Street, the market establishes the area as a “global gateway.” The slogan “Many Tastes, One Place” perfectly represents the unique experiences of food, shopping, entertainment, and play space.

Meaning-Making Communities

Culturally Enriched Communities celebrate the diverse histories, traditions, backgrounds, and meaning-making practices of the many people that comprise a community.

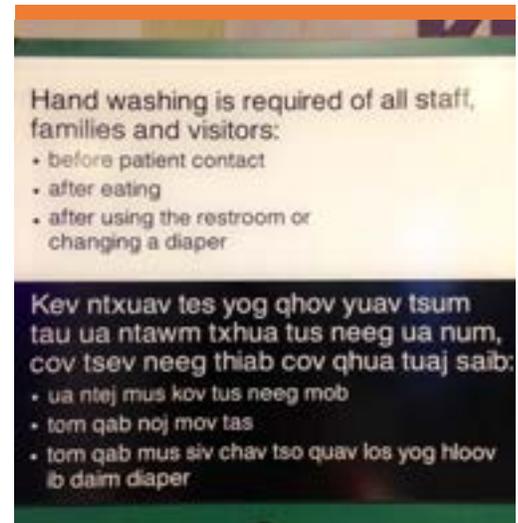
Diversity in the population implies diverse means of constructing meaning in life, from how family relations are nurtured to dress traditions, food practices, religious rituals, languages spoken, music and dance preferences, etc. Meaning-making activities include gathering with friends and family to share stories from the past, practicing religious customs and rituals, decorating using colors, textures, and objects that create a preferred aesthetic, cooking traditional foods that generate familiar smells and tastes, and speaking a native language.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The experience of Minnesota's Latino population can serve as an example to help illustrate the variety of meaning-making environments that are needed to attract and retain a diverse population. The number of Latinos has greatly increased since the 1990 census and in 2014, it was just over 278,315, and as the fastest-growing minority population in the state, these numbers are expected to continue to grow (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). In 2005, Mexico opened its 46th consulate in the United States in Saint Paul, Minnesota to serve the rapidly growing Mexican community. In addition, there are at least 22 churches offering services in Spanish, nine Spanish-language newspapers, multiple tortilla makers, and nine Mexican soccer leagues in Minnesota. Furthermore, over 57 organizations have been formed in Minnesota to serve the Latino community and provide services related to the arts, culture, community, education, environment, human services, legal, medical health, mental health, and recreation (Ahmad, Ortega, Carrizales, & Pratt, 2001). Hispanic shops, restaurants, markets, and bakeries are becoming a more common sight around the MSP region.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Identify spaces in your community where festivals and gatherings can take place and secure funding/permits to allow these events to happen.
- Create guides that enable residents and visitors easy access to information about cultural events.
- Explore barriers to meaning-making processes from access to foods to lack of representation.



10.6% of Minnesotans (around 574,000 people) speak a language other than English at home (Ryan, 2013). Behind English, the most common languages spoken in the homes of Minnesotans ages 5 and older are Spanish (about 198,000 speakers), Hmong (54,000 speakers), and Somali (37,000 speakers) (data from 2010-2012) (Minnesota State Demographic Center, n.d.). [Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota](#) display signs in both English and Somali languages throughout the hospital.

what can i do now?

- 1 Read about different religions, taste different types of foods, attend festivals with dance and music from around the world.
- 2 Learn a different language.
- 3 Talk to someone from a cultural group other than your own everyday.

Meaning-Making Communities (continued)



Mill City Farmers Market

Food has long been linked to both physical and emotional well-being (Hutson, 2008). The **Mill City Farmers Market** is one of multiple Farmers Markets operating in the area. Mostly open mid-April to mid-November, the markets offer places for gathering and celebration of local produce, allowing residents to connect with each other through food. They are also a forum for spurring local businesses and entrepreneurship as vendors range from local honey producers to bakeries and jewelry makers.



Mercado Central

One of the major arteries that runs through the city of Minneapolis, Lake Street, has transformed into a stronghold for the Latino community. **Mercado Central**, through its prominent location and bright color, attracts people with its many bakeries, restaurants, and shops for items that range from clothing to boots and music.



Minnesota's Museum of Russian Art

Dedicated to the preservation and presentation of all forms of Russian art and artifacts, **Minnesota's Museum of Russian Art** is the only North American museum of its kind. Testimony to the Russian community that now calls Minnesota home, the Museum offers educational programs and diverse exhibitions to engage community members and visitors so they can explore new perspectives on the history, heritage and art of Russia and surrounding cultures. Housed in a renovated Spanish colonial type church building, the museum is testimony to the philosophy that "learning about other cultures enriches our lives."

Relationship-Building Communities

Culturally Enriched Communities create opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds within neighborhoods and communities to meet and interact with each other in meaningful ways, helping break down stereotypes.

Interrace magazine consistently ranks Minneapolis in the top ten cities for interracial couples (Bakeman, 2011). Yet, many parts of the region remain racially segregated, their poor image exacerbated by crime statistics and media representations. In other scenarios, cost is a factor that determines where people can live. Living life through a stereotype impacts peoples' ability to imagine who they can be and how they can fulfill their dreams (stereotypethreat.org). Communities that are stereotyped are impacted in their ability to attract and retain a diverse population, which affects their long term ability to prosper and thrive.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Studies show that the most effective way to prevent crime is to invest in healthier children, stronger families, better schools, and cohesive communities (National Crime Prevention Council, 1996). Crime, both actual and perceived, can be an example of a stereotype that Relationship-Building Communities challenge. Minnesota's violent crime rate increased from 42 per 100,000 residents in 1960 to 269.6 in 2004 (Reinhardt, 2007). Although there is no evidence that increases in immigrant populations are associated with increases in crime, many people perceive areas with people of color as unsafe. Despite the record numbers of immigrants arriving in the state in recent years, FBI Uniform Crime Reports indicate that Minnesota has been experiencing a steady decline in both violent and property crimes for several years (Owen, Meyerson, & Otteson, 2010). Crime's economic and social impacts, include human suffering as individual victims suffer loss of life, mobility or income; family members suffer loss or disabling of a loved one; convicted criminals lose freedom and caring for family; society suffers by feeling less safe in our homes or community and loss of taxpayer dollars expended, and taxpayers' contributions.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Create opportunities for residents of your city/town to venture into neighborhoods they have never visited.
- Increase safe places and perceptions of safety so people are comfortable being outside and free to interact with one another.
- Support the creation of programs where elders and youth can come together, such as urban gardens, city streets, museum gatherings, etc.



Almost a third (31.3%) of Seward community's population is foreign born, compared to 16.1% of Minneapolis' population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Kerry Cashman, Community Coordinator of the [Seward Neighborhood Group](#) talked about community building: "We came up with the idea of having meals together, ongoing. And so we set up two sets of meals, four Tuesday nights, and the request was that if you said you would come, you had to come to all four...and we would have a topic each week. And they'd be like, talking about gardening or talking about animals or food or traditions, holiday traditions and then eating together. And it was amazing."

what can i do now?

- 1 Explore the vocabulary you are using and its potential implications.
- 2 Consult with the local law enforcement to learn more about how to increase safety and where.
- 3 Think about potential stereotypes and ask "Is this true and how would I feel if someone would stereotype something about me?"



Rondo Neighborhood

One of Saint Paul's most historic neighborhoods and a thriving African American community, the **Rondo neighborhood** was severed in the 1950's due to the construction of Interstate 94. Currently, Rondo is part of the Summit-University Neighborhood and is home to approximately 17,002 residents, two-thirds of whom are renters, many below poverty levels (Minnesota Compass, 2014). Residents believe that increased social interaction between youth and elders can aid youth advancement. Front porches can act as intergenerational building blocks that help foster community connections and keep youth out of trouble.



Hennepin County Government Center
Photo credit: Hennepin County Communications

The **Hennepin County Government Center** in downtown Minneapolis offers an indoor atrium and an outdoor plaza, equipped to host gallery exhibits as well as performances. The Summer on the Plaza series runs June through August with musicians, dancers, education workshops, etc. The Hennepin Gallery exhibits are part of the county's commitment to serve the community with a variety of fine arts and educational displays. Examples range from the Celebrating Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month to the "8030 Project," a photograph installation that was created as a community participatory public art project to raise awareness of the estimated 22 U.S. veterans and soldiers who commit suicide every day.



Little Earth

Little Earth is a planned urban housing development that includes apartments, townhomes, and other amenities, located south of downtown Minneapolis in the East Phillips neighborhood. Founded in 1973 with the intent to offer affordable housing for the city's Native American population, it is the only Native American preference project-based Section 8 rental assistance community in the United States. The Little Earth Urban farm uses community gardens to foster interaction among community members as well as increase access to healthy food choices for the entire Little Earth community.

Health-Supporting Communities

Culturally Enriched Communities support the health and well-being of everyone, accounting for the diverse ways by which humans cook, eat, sleep, socialize, dress, pray, recreate, exercise, etc. and for the needs of people of all ages, races, abilities, ethnic backgrounds, and socio-economic status.

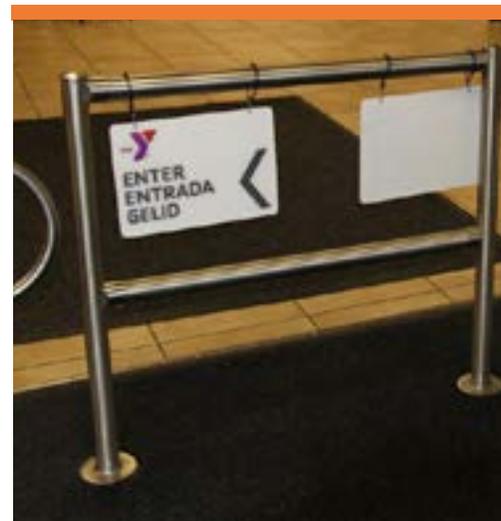
Although Minnesota is one of the healthiest states in the nation, it also has some of the widest health disparities between people of color and whites. The Minnesota Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative identifies environmental factors, including living conditions, among the reasons associated with differences in health (Office of Minority, 2009). Understanding the role of the built environment in supporting or suppressing health and well-being is instrumental to efforts to eliminate health disparities.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Losing familiar ways of living and cultural dislocation partly explain the well-being concerns found among displaced people and minority groups (Bammer, 1994; Bliss, 2004; Papadopoulos, Lees, Lay, & Gebrehiwot, 2004; Tomashek et al., 2006). In fact, the effects of losing one's cultural connections and sense of continuity can carry forward through generations (Hadjiyanni, 2002). Strengthening cultural connections can support health and well-being, enabling people to contribute to the overall community as well as reduce the amount of resources and costs associated with health disparities. On the next page, we outline some of these disparities in more detail.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Provide opportunities for exercise and active living in diverse ways, accounting for potential gender, cultural, religious, etc differences.
- Encourage healthy lifestyles through knowledge and skill development, such as cooking classes, dietary courses, etc.
- Allow and provide space for fresh food markets to thrive year-round in diverse places that are easily accessible.
- Modify local codes to allow small gardens within front yards and open spaces.



The YMCA works “side-by-side with [their] neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive” (The YMCA, 2015).

Director of Member Services Brian Kline explains, “One of our stated goals is to make our facilities and everything available to all people...this means having signs in three different languages even though there is not enough room on the sign...Also, [to accommodate the needs of Somali women, who swim clothed] that means extra stress on our filters, extra stress on the chemicals...You have to be more vigilant on the pool chemicals and replacing filters.”

what can i do now?

- 1 Familiarize yourself with the health statistics of your area.
- 2 Learn about potential health disparities and their causes.
- 3 Be a role model for a healthy lifestyle.

Health disparities can manifest in many aspects of life, from overall life expectancy to illnesses such as diabetes and mental health. These can impact communities at levels that range from individual families and health providers to schools and the criminal justice system.

Life expectancy: Overall life expectancy varies vastly by race: 83 years for Asians and 61.5 years for Native Americans. One's zip code was linked to life expectancy, strongly correlating socioeconomic status, place, and health. In the MSP region, residents of the highest income areas have an average life expectancy of 82 years, while residents of the lowest income areas have an average life expectancy of 74 years, and these areas typically have high concentrations of people of color (Helmstetter, Brower, & Egbert, 2010).

Obesity: Minnesota had an overall lower obesity rate compared to the national rate in 2010. Unlike other racial/ethnic groups, where rates appeared to be declining slightly, obesity rates in Native American children ages two to five years continued to rise--at 28%, the rate was over twice the Minnesota all race/ethnicity obesity rate of 12.7%--the national rate is 21.1%. Similar disparities exist for Hispanic children ages two to five (16.8%) and for Minnesota Asian children, many of whom were Hmong (15.1%) — the national rate is 11.3% (WIC Program, 2012). If rates continue to rise, Minnesotans will pay around \$3.7 billion a year in health care costs by 2020 (Benson, 2008).

Diabetes: Minnesota's rates rank lower than the national rates for all groups except Native Americans. In Minnesota's Hennepin County, a region with many urban Native Americans, 18% have diabetes, versus 15.9% at the national level (this includes both Type 1 and 2) (Helmstetter, Brower, & Egbert, 2010 ; National Center for

Chronic Disease, 2014). The annual cost of diabetes in Minnesota in terms of medical costs, disability, lost work, and premature death is estimated at over \$2.7 billion (Minnesota Diabetes Program, 2012).

Mental health: In Minnesota, depression among Native Americans is pervasive and suicide rates among male youth ages 18-19 are six times higher than any demographic in the state (Minnesota Department of Health, 2011). Nationally, one life is lost to suicide every 15.8 minutes, making suicide the eleventh-leading cause of death overall and the third-leading cause of death among youth and young adults.

Mental health's implications carry over in schools. During 2006–07, approximately 44 percent of Minnesota students aged 14 and older living with serious mental health conditions and who received special education services dropped out of high school. Minnesota spent \$140 per capita on mental health services in 2006, or \$721.0 million (2.8 percent of total state spending that year) (NASMHPD Research Institute, 2006).

The Criminal Justice System is also impacted by mental health (James & Glaze, 2006). In 2006, 1,623 children were incarcerated in Minnesota's juvenile justice system (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, 2008). Nationally, approximately 70 percent of youth in juvenile justice systems experience mental health disorders (Skowrya, & Coccozza, 2007). In 2008, approximately 2,300 adults with mental illnesses were incarcerated in prisons in Minnesota (Sabol, West, & Cooper, 2009)--national data show 31 percent of female and 14.5 percent of male jail inmates (Steadman, Osher, Robbins, Case, & Samuels, 2009). Additional costs include reliance on public services for needed care, health insurance and housing (The Kaiser Family Foundation, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Spokes Bike Walk Connect



Spokes Bike Walk Connect offers an Earn-a-Bike program. Director of Spokes Sheldon Mains describes it as a program “where people can come in and work for four weeks on a used bike that we give them. We help them figure out how to fix it. And they leave after four weeks with a working bike.” Spokes teaches biking to new immigrants and this commitment is reflected in a mural that adorns the wall of their bike shop. In the words of Mains: “We did a mural on the wall...of the lounge/classroom/kitchen and it’s a big bicycle with a key...and then on the wall we have the bicycle parts in English, Spanish and Somali.”



Hmongtown International Market

Health and well-being encompass many aspects, including a sense of purpose and belonging, physical health and a sense of security. **Hmongtown International Market**, located in Saint Paul, Minnesota, acts as a small glimpse of the streets of Southeast Asia, employing hundreds of people. This year-round, ten acre indoor/outdoor market houses a farmer's market with fresh fruits and vegetables, a food court with Southeast Asian dishes, and over 200 vendor stalls. In response to growth, the market plans to expand.



Hennepin County Medical Center

As the largest emergency hospital in Minneapolis, the **Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC)** is open to all members of the community and recognizes the spiritual needs of different faiths. The new Spiritual Center can be found in HCMC's Red building and is available 24 hours to patients, families and staff. HCMC's Diversity Consultant Melissa Johnson discusses the motivation behind the new Center in stating, "We had a chapel before, but we knew we needed a space that was inviting to everyone that has some kind of prayer or meditation need." HCMC also has a food program that caters to diverse preferences as well as exhibit spaces that showcase local artists and communities.



Kwanzaa Community Church

Located in North Minneapolis, **Kwanzaa Community Church** thrives on the belief that every life is significant, every life has meaning and value, and relationships should be cherished and prioritized. Their outreach efforts include being a place of refuge from prostitution and the sex trade through their Northside Women's Space. They were awarded the Public Health Award in the category of "Thriving and Violent Free Youth." Minnesota is emerging as a leader in the fight against juvenile sex trafficking through laws such as Safe Harbor and models such as No Wrong Door that aim to "Ensure access to safe and supportive housing" for victims.

Capability-Building Communities

Culturally Enriched Communities support and strengthen job and educational opportunities that bring about equality and social justice and enhance the economic prospects of an area.

Culturally Enriched Communities align with a shift in policy making that includes measures of quality of life for a nation's residents among the indexes of prosperity rather than relying simply on economic indicators such as the GDP (Nussbaum, 2011). As a social justice theory, the Capabilities Approach asks:

“What is each person able to do and to be?
In other words, the approach takes each person as an end, asking not just about the total or average well-being but about the opportunities available to each person. It is focused on choice or freedom, holding that the crucial good societies should be promoting for their people is a set of opportunities, or substantial freedoms, which people then may or may not exercise in action: the choice is theirs”
(Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18).

Moving beyond the “us” versus “them” paradigm, Culturally Enriched Communities recognize that everyone benefits when resources, improvements, and opportunities are spread throughout all areas of a region.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Income and educational disparities impact overall quality of life in a region.

Income disparities: Close to 25% of people of color live in poverty in our region (Metropolitan Council, 2014). In 2011, the number of Americans living in poverty reached an all time high of 46.2 million--a family of four living on less than \$23,634 per year (Sutter, 2013). Although the percentage of Minnesotans who live in poverty does not match the national level, it still exceeds 500,000 people, inching above 10% in the state (Coggins, Legg, & Smith, 2013). According to a recent report by UNICEF, 1 in 5 American children are living below the poverty line -- over 194,000 in Minnesota alone, where one in five Minnesota families faces hunger and food insecurity (KARE 11 Staff, 2013).

According to a report by the Minneapolis Foundation (2006), in Minnesota, 17% of immigrant families lived in poverty; this was nearly three times the poverty rate among native-born families (5.5%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).



Project Sweetie Pie uses gardens and urban farming as devices for teaching and helping youth enjoy learning and explore diverse career paths. The organization serves as an example of supporting equality, conserving local resources, as well as enhancing North Minneapolis' economic prospects. Founder Michael Chaney discusses the importance of providing opportunities for youth development: “It isn't just dollars, it's the young people and the people who will become the leaders of tomorrow. How can we hope to be sustainable if we're not educating those people?... And gardens could bring in corporate fellows and their families and their children. And bring in neighborhood residents and their families and their children. It gives us a direction and goal in the community to really focus our creativity.”

Photo credit: Project Sweetie Pie

what can i do now?

- 1 Familiarize yourself with potential income and educational disparities in your area.
- 2 Examine where income generating opportunities lie and where they can be improved.
- 3 Challenge your perceptions and assumptions. Ask: “where are these assumptions stemming from?”

This disparity carried through in age and gender: the percentage of older adults (age 65 or above) living in poverty was nearly twice as high among Minnesota’s foreign-born (16.5%), compared to the state’s total population (8.3%) and 43% of female-headed foreign-born households lived in poverty (compared with 21.6% of all of the state’s female-headed households) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

The high rates of poverty may be related to the relatively recent arrival of many Minnesota immigrants as immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for a long time are less likely to be poor than recent immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). It should be noted that despite their higher poverty rates, Minnesota’s immigrants did not use a disproportionately large share of public health monetary allocations--immigrants accounted for approximately 7% of the population of Minnesota, and made up approximately 7% of enrollment in state public health programs (Alter, Sandberg, & Yunker, 2006).

Educational disparities: Educational disparities are one of the factors that account for the income disparities noted above. According to the American Psychological Association (2012), African American, Native American, Latino and Southeast Asian minority groups underperform academically compared to Whites and other Asian Americans. Examples include:

- The dropout rate for Latino students is nearly four times the rate of White students; the suspension and expulsion rate for African American students is three times the rate for White students; nearly 1 out of every 2 African American males was suspended, compared to 1 out of 3 Latino boys and 1 out of 5 White boys.
- The high school graduation rate for most ethnic and racial minority groups continues to stagnate at just over 60%. Attendance in higher education for Native American young adults is less than half of White students and within racial groups, males fare worse than females
- At four years of age, between 18.8% and 28.3% of Black, Latino, and Native American children—compared to between 36.8% and 49.4% of White and Asian children—are proficient in letter recognition.
- In math, 8% – 9% of fourth grade White and Asian children scored below basic proficiency levels, but 29% to 36% of Black, Latino, and Native American children scored below basic.



North High School (NHS) is part of the Minneapolis Public School System and its student body includes mostly African Americans. Ninety percent of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch (Minneapolis Public Schools Fact Sheet, 2011). Identified as a ‘dropout factory,’ partly because its senior class had 60% or fewer of the students who entered as freshmen (Zuckerbrod, 2007), NHS was phased to close by 2014 (Xiong, 2010). This news was met with emotional resistance from both students and members of the community, who pushed back to keep NHS open (Weber, 2010). Book and science exhibits that line the halls and classrooms instill in students a sense of achievement and aspirations for the future (Strickland & Hadjiyanni, 2013).

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Including spaces in the community that provide a grass-roots approach to nurturing future leaders and advocating for community needs.
- Creating school environments that nurture pride and accomplishment as well as promote learning.
- Providing spaces and services in the community where members come together to teach and learn about diverse histories and cultures.



Cultural Wellness Center

Atum Azzahir, the **Cultural Wellness Center's** Executive Director explains her work in the following way: "If I were to think about the work that I'm responsible for and do, it is so that people can speak for themselves. So that people are able to create the space where they have enough wisdom and knowledge and enough experience with solving their problems and coming up with solutions." The Cultural Wellness Center provides the space and services to learn about one's own culture, and to encourage visitors to think about culture as a resource to build capability and be involved.



Franklin Avenue, American Indian Cultural Corridor

Franklin Avenue is one of the main arteries that connects east and west Minneapolis. Being the site of the American Indian Cultural Corridor, Franklin Avenue was noted by Air France Magazine as the #6 reason to visit Minneapolis: "New York, LA and San Francisco have their Little Italy and their Chinatown but Minneapolis is the only place where you will find an American Indian Cultural Corridor" (Balavoine, 2013, p. 109). Plans by NACDI, the Native American Community Development Institute, to expand the intersection of Cedar and Franklin will include an American Indian owned hotel, a convention facility, restaurants, a cultural center and museum and performance center.



Hennepin County Library

The **Hennepin County Library** in downtown Minneapolis provides space for Conversation Circles — a program where adults can practice speaking English once a week for one to two hours. The library also offers English Language Learner classes and workforce and business development programs. The New American Center, which is "heavily used by Somali students," according to a Coordinating Librarian of Hennepin County Library, has also been successful in partnering volunteers with key users of the library.

Innovation-Driven Communities

Culturally Enriched Communities recognize that an open mind is crucial for innovation to flourish. This often implies exploring new ideas and new ways of doing things.

Herbert Simon (1969), in *The Sciences of the Artificial* has defined 'design' as the "transformation of existing conditions into preferred ones" (pg. 55). As a verb then, design is fascinating by the opportunities it presents for design professionals, planners, policy makers and advocates to make a difference and improve the lives of those whom they are meant to serve. Inherent in these dialogues is the understanding that a human-centered approach is taken, one in which people come first. To imagine the future, a preferred future, those who make decisions around the design and planning of cities and communities must be able to deconstruct the present, which implies an intellectual alertness to life around them—how do people live? What is important to them? And, what role can space and place play in supporting diverse lifeways?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

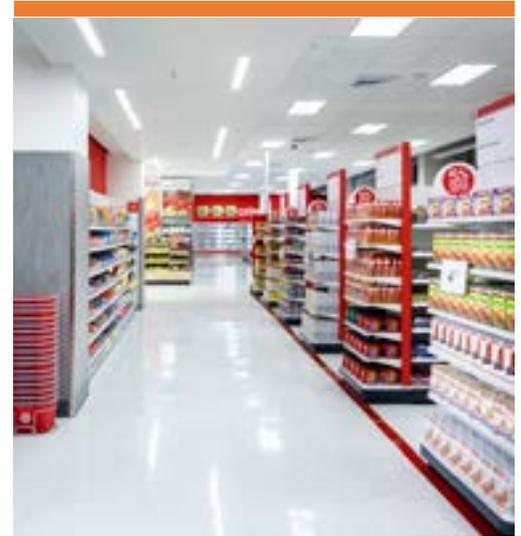
As Heidegger (1977), a German philosopher said:

"We can learn thinking only if we radically unlearn what thinking has been traditionally. To do that, we must at the same time come to know it" (p. 350).

Unlearning what has traditionally been done is an instrumental aspect of moving through the four steps that have been identified as needed to move toward Culturally Enriched Communities. Innovation and rethinking must accompany each step of the process. The implications of a lack of thinking are multiple – from buildings that experience maintenance concerns due to unforeseen types of uses to buildings and spaces that do not meet peoples' needs, impacting health and well-being. Much of planners' energy can go into balancing concepts with design solutions, technological innovations with historic preservation, the needs of the planet with economic and social sustainability as well as social justice.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Recognizing that families come in diverse forms and sizes and creating designs and policies that account for these.
- Supporting diverse needs in settings that range from homes to retail environments and hospitals.
- Supporting innovative home ownership models such as rent to own and contract for deed.
- Creating and allowing homes that are flexible and adaptable.



Target retail stores include wide aisles in order to accommodate large families and multiple carts, a common occurrence with the extended family structure of many new immigrant groups. At the same time, Target's signage relies on symbols rather than words to communicate information such as product placement, bathroom usage, and circulation options (Target, 2013).

what can i do now?

- 1 If you hear an unconventional idea, pause and reflect on potential merits.
- 2 Ask yourself: "Who may not be served or represented by this solution?"
- 3 Travel the globe and experience diverse ways of meaning-making.



African Development Center

The **African Development Center (ADC)** of Minnesota, in the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood, offers home purchasing services to the African immigrant and refugee community. Through partnership with nonprofit community developers and local government agencies, ADC has developed workshops and educational programs for the specific cultural needs of their clientele. Its dominant location, eye-capturing exterior, and adjacency to the Afro Deli & Coffee restaurant become a face for the changing demographics of the area.



Aeon
Photo credit: <http://www.aeonmn.org/properties/east-village/>

Aeon's mission is to create and sustain quality affordable homes that strengthen lives and communities. Managing 36 properties, Aeon serves more than 4,000 individuals. In the process, innovative solutions are developed to accommodate residents' ways of life. An example that does not impact cost is the open window between a cooking and social area. A veiled Muslim woman can hang a curtain to separate herself from male visitors so she can cook unveiled. When only family members are present, she can keep the window open for more interaction.



Pangea World Theater
Photo credit: Pangea World Theater

Pangea World Theater illuminates the human condition, celebrates cultural differences, and promotes human rights by creating and presenting international, multi-disciplinary theater. Through innovative performances, Pangea starts conversations around difficult and often challenging topics, such as race, gender, ethnicity, human rights, politics, and social justice.

Photo from: No Expiration Date: Aging and Sexuality, June 2015, directed by Dipankar Mukherjee and written by Meena Natarajan. The actors are Tinne Rosenmeier, Fawn Wilderson, Beverly Cottman and Lonnie McLaughlin.

Moving Forward

Moving forward with the Principles for Culturally Enriched Communities

Throughout history, humans have constructed their lives in conjunction with the built environment. As cities and buildings evolved and changed so did human lifeways--and vice versa. Culturally Enriched Communities translate that relationship into design and planning interventions that support the multiple ways by which people craft meaning in their lives--either by choice or circumstances. Culturally Enriched Communities bring together health providers, educators, policy makers, business owners, faith leaders, art directors, designers, planners, and community advocates to create spaces that optimize health and well-being, economic opportunities, productivity, learning, pleasure and personal growth, and community togetherness.

Preparing for a future in which all members of a community can thrive and prosper is instrumental to the creation of Culturally Enriched Communities. Health, income, and educational disparities can be lessened with design and planning efforts that account for diverse ways of living and challenge assumptions and stereotypes. A growing body of research indicates that the built environment, from flexible home interiors to versatile parks and museums to which everyone can relate can impact one's ability to get out of poverty, stabilize health, and contribute to the overall economic and cultural growth of a region.

The Principles and examples featured in this report should be seen as a beginning rather than an end. Cities and counties are encouraged to start their own assessment and evaluation of their cultural enrichment advantage and identify what works and what can be done to begin to support and embrace their growing diverse populations, one step at a time. The resources referred to in this booklet can also serve as directions for more information on how to use the built environment to position themselves to be more culturally enriched for the future.

Implementing the principles of Culturally Enriched Communities into workplaces, healthcare systems, educational environments and recreational spaces has profound benefits--from increased graduation rates to decreased violence and increased safety, healthier and more connected communities, more established businesses and retail environments. These benefits run across multiple sectors--economic development contributes to local governments through additional resources while citizens enjoy an improved and more livable environment. Everyone benefits when people are healthier and economically viable.



Somali Wedding Basket, Minneapolis Institute of Art

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