MINNEAPOLIS youth coordinating board

Youth Master Plan

A strategic action plan by the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board

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Acknowledgements

The YCB would like to thank to our partners and friends who provided guidance and support in building the Youth Master Plan, including:

YCB Board

Jenny Arneson, Director of Education, Minneapolis Public Schools

Al Bangoura*, Superintendent, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Kimberly Caprini, Director of Education, Minneapolis Public Schools

Phillipe Cunningham, Council Member, City of Minneapolis

Irene Fernando, Commissioner, Hennepin County

Mike Freeman, County Attorney, Hennepin County

Londel French, Commissioner, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Jacob Frey, Mayor, City of Minneapolis

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Marion Greene**, Commissioner, Hennepin County

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Robin Smothers

External Consultants

Christa Anders

Kevin Anderson

Beth Elliot

Elizabeth Gaines

Patrick Haines

Joyce Johansson

Vickie LaCroix

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn

Devon Meade

Julie Ogunleye

Beth Zemsky

Thank you to staff at the following facilities for hosting ward meetings and community tables:

Bryant Square Recreation Center

Cedar Riverside Opportunity Center

CityWide Student Leaders

Edison High School

Firefighters' Hall and Museum

Folwell Park

Hennepin County Libraries—Minneapolis Central

Matthews Recreation Center

Minneapolis American Indian Center

Minneapolis Public Schools Community Education

Neighborhood & Community Relations Community Connections Conference

North Commons Recreation Center

Powderhorn Recreation Center

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreation Center

Roosevelt High School

Southwest High School

Whittier Recreation Center

Windom South Recreation Center

YouthLink

Introduction

The Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board

The Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (YCB) works with the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, and Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board to develop cross-jurisdictional goals, strategies, policies, and action for the well-being of Minneapolis children and young people. We believe our responsibility as an organization is to interrupt harmful systems, institutions, and forces from impacting youth who are most vulnerable to them. YCB engages young people, in part through YCB's Minneapolis Youth Congress (MYC), as well as community organizations, funders, community leaders, and the general public to realize our collective vision and goals for Minneapolis children and young people. Since its enactment by state legislation in 1985 and creation in 1986, the YCB has coordinated the efforts of its four major public agencies to promote the health, safety, education, and development of Minneapolis's children and young people.

There are 80,531 children and youth under age 18 in Minneapolis

The Youth Master Plan

The purpose of the Youth Master Plan is to rally stakeholders and policymakers around a common set of values and priorities to move the needle forward and make Minneapolis the best city for children and youth. Because youth voices are central to the Youth Master Plan, it is a chance for youth to be heard by local decisionmakers and help inform policy directions. The findings from the Youth Master Plan will guide the work that the YCB and its jurisdictional partners prioritize in the next five years, after which we will update the Youth Master Plan to ensure its relevance and reflect changes in our work.

The YCB last drafted a Youth Master Plan in 1987. As such, the city has no up-to-date strategic plan around issues that impact young people and those who care about them. This iteration of the Youth Master Plan is an effort to update the former plan and create a framework for future projects and policy and programmatic actions within the city.

This document is structured into five main parts. First is a statement of the YCB's organizational values. These values guide the work we do and significantly shape how we approach the Youth Master Plan. The next section overviews the methods we used to collect and analyze qualitative data from youth and youth stakeholders. The next two sections outline the results of the qualitative data we gathered, with the first part focused on our priorities and focus areas, or how we as an organization wish to prioritize our work, and then findings from youth ward meetings, which will help structure the recommendations for change we develop in the next year. Finally, there is a brief conclusion stating what the Youth Master Plan means for the YCB's work and next steps.

Forthcoming is the Youth Master Plan: Mobilizing for Change, the second part, which will include a complete status of youth and children data report, a comprehensive children's budget for each of our

four jurisdictions, and a set of local policy and practice recommendations. We chose to release the Youth Master Plan in pieces rather than all at once to give our jurisdictional partners and the community a chance to review and digest each section before we recommend taking action.

The Children and Youth of Minneapolis

There are 80,531 children and youth under age 18 in Minneapolis (2013-17 American Community Survey). About 6,442, or 8% of all children under 18 in Minneapolis were foreign born.

The median annual income for families with one or more child(ren) is $64,802. About 38%, or 30,602 children lived in a household that received some type of public assistance in the last 12 months. Twenty eight percent of children under 18 live in a household whose income is below the federal poverty line, which is $24,600 for a family of four. See a full chart of the federal poverty threshold here. Finally, about half of all children and youth lived in owner-occupied households, while half live in renter-occupied households.

Values

The values build the foundation for the Youth Master Plan. They name visions the YCB has for the young people of Minneapolis and are a starting point from which stakeholders generated priorities and recommendations. The values were developed by the YCB staff, and reviewed by our jurisdictional partners. Fundamental to the YCB is the fact that all children and youth are valued as individuals with inherent worth, and childhood itself is valued and celebrated. Children and youth are assets to our communities, and we value their authentic voices and leadership at all decision-making levels.

Figure 1: Percentage of children in Minneapolis by age group (2013-17 ACS Estimates)

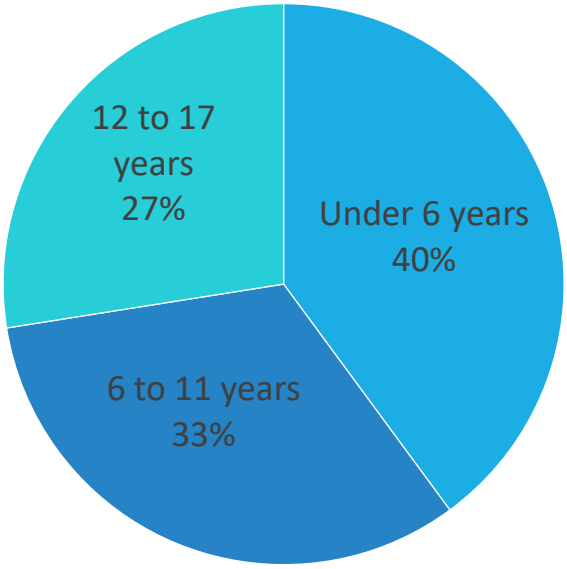


Figure 1 shows the percentage of the under 18 population broken down by age. Forty percent of all children, or about 32,132 children are under 6 years of age, 33%, or 26,253 children, are between 6 and 11, and 27%, or 22,146 children, are between 12 and 17 years old.

Valuing children means valuing the contexts in which they are embedded, as the environment that children and youth interact with significantly shapes their development. The web between individuals,

families, schools, communities, neighborhoods, and public institutions is varying and complex, and public and community efforts to promote child and youth development must support and strengthen each connection in this web to develop strong youth and communities. All community members have a stake in our children's future and must play a role in addressing issues relating to children and youth.

The YCB largely orients our work towards empowering adults to work and interact with youth because we recognize that society has concentrated decision-making power among adults, giving them significant influence on the communities and institutions with which young people interact. Thus, creating a youth-friendly city begins with creating youth-friendly, able adults. Our values guide us towards fulfilling our vision of creating a city where youth are supported by adults and public institutions that work to realize the hopes and aspirations youth have for their futures.

Equity and Justice

We recognize the meaningfulness of forces that exist in the lives of youth, including race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality, and all their intersections. We also acknowledge the disinvestment by those in power that has marginalized and oppressed communities on these grounds by public and private institutions. We challenge and confront hierarchies of identify-based power by addressing systemic barriers and advocating for liberation and systemic change.

Stability

Children and youth are better able to thrive when they are in safe, stable environments. Public jurisdictions must make every attempt to provide stable environments for young people, including safe and stable housing, adequate nutrition, safe neighborhoods and schools, connections to caring adults, and social and emotional supports. When reared in stable environments, children grow and thrive in directions that are personally fulfilling and enrich their communities. Because young people interact with all parts of a city, creating a safe and stable environment for children and youth requires every public system and citizen to prioritize the safety and stability of its youngest citizens and neighbors.

Figure 2: Geographic Distribution of Children and Youth (0-17) in Minneapolis

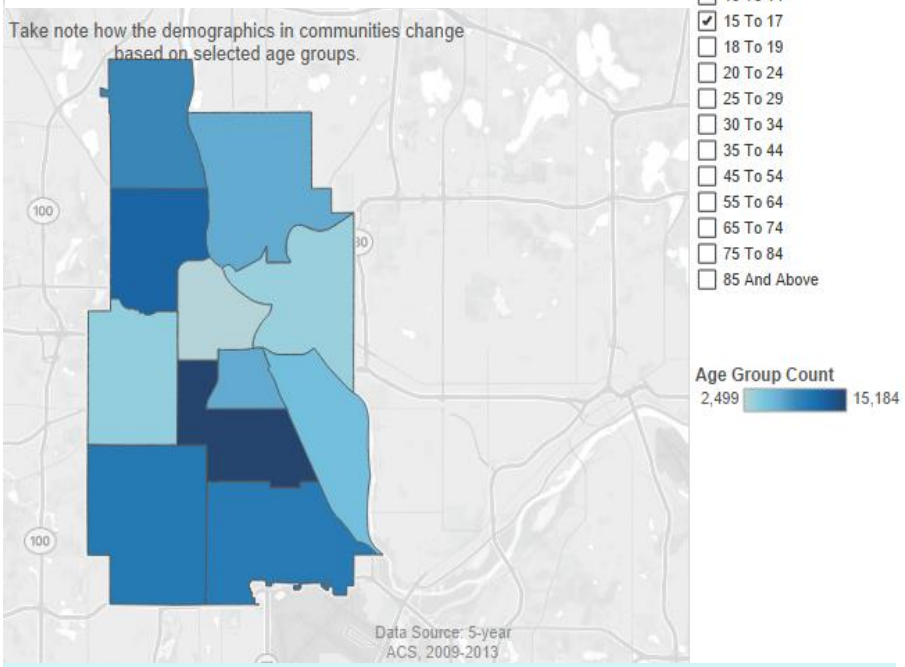


Figure 2: Areas in darker blue have a greater share of households with youth. The greatest concentrations of youth and children are on the Northside and near Powderhorn on the Southside. Data is from the 2009-13 American Community Survey 5-year estimates conducted by the Census Bureau. Though the YCB considers youth up to age 24, we excluded 18-24-year-olds in Figure 2, as those who temporarily reside at or near the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities skew the distribution of youth and children significantly to overrepresent the share of youth living near the university.

Healing and Resilience

We must support the mental and emotional health of children and youth through promoting healing and fostering resilience. When left untreated, mental and emotional health issues become a destabilizing force in the lives of children and youth. Trauma, a subset of mental health concerns, is especially destabilizing and is often rooted in systemic and intergenerational racism, poverty, and their intersections. Fostering resilience and healing in the face of mental and emotional health concerns builds stability and promotes racial and socioeconomic equity. Though youth and children are resilient by nature, we must provide them with the resources, community, and support necessary to fully actualize their resilience and promote healing.

Figure 3: Youth and children by race (2013-17 ACS Estimates)

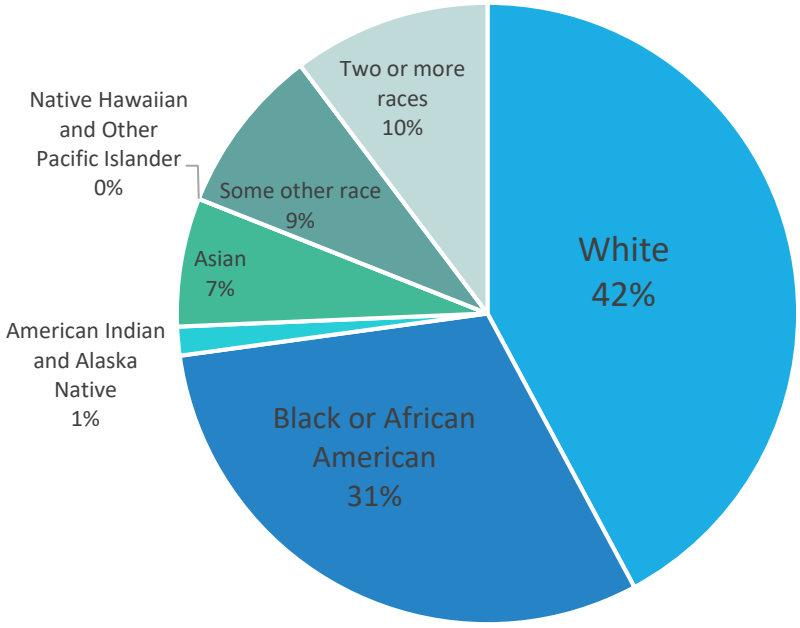


Figure 3 shows the racial makeup of youth and children under 18 in Minneapolis. Forty two percent, or 33,984 children, identify as White, 31%, or 24,723 children, identify as Black or African American, 10%, or 8,295 children identify as two or more races, 7%, or 5,396 children, identify as Asian, 1%, or 1,207 children, identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 9%, or 7,006 children, identify as some other race. The racial makeup of youth under 18 shows the racial diversification of Minneapolis, the share of youth of color is about 20 percentage points larger than the share of adults of color (American Community Survey, 2017).

Interjurisdictional Collaboration and Alignment

No program, intervention, or service can be successful without the support of the community and the institutions embedded within it. Public jurisdictions are accountable not only to the constituents whom they serve, but to each other as well. We encourage and support collaboration and alignment of strategies across jurisdictional lines to provide comprehensive programs, interventions, and services to children and youth that are not limited by bureaucratic infrastructure.

Methods

Youth Stakeholder Engagement

We engaged youth, youth work and early childhood professionals, our jurisdictional partners, families, and service providers (teachers, social workers, police officers, etc.) to develop our priorities. Stakeholders provided key words and phrases stating their future visions regarding youth and children in Minneapolis and identified issue areas they found significant to the wellbeing and healthy development of youth to develop the priorities through a variety of methods. YCB staff used a combination of interviews, online surveys, and comment cards at tablings to engage a diverse group of stakeholders to develop our priorities for the Youth Master Plan.

Figure 4: Youth and children by Hispanic or Latino Origin (2013-17 ACS Estimates)

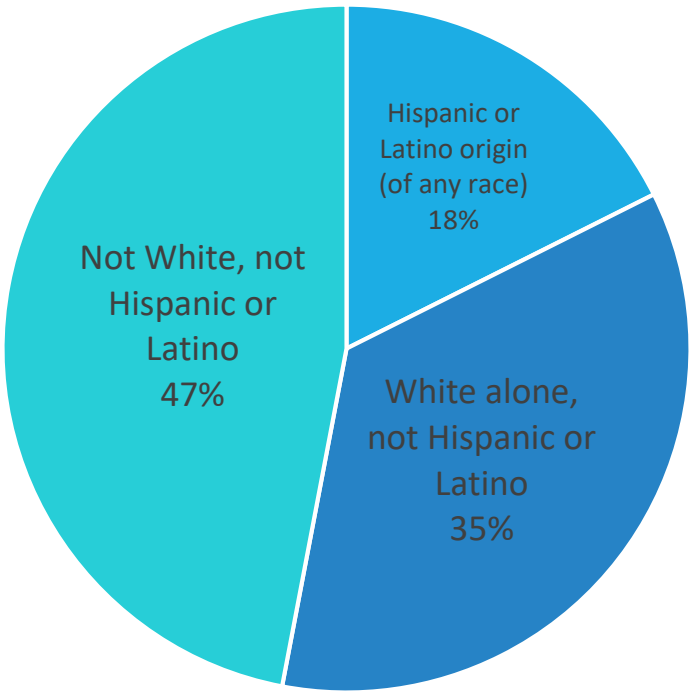


Figure 4 shows the percentages of youth and children under 18 of Hispanic or Latino origin. Eighteen percent of children, or 14,173 children identify as Hispanic or Latino regardless of race, 35%, or 28,508 children identify as White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, and 47%, or 37,850 children identify as neither White nor of Hispanic or Latino origin.

Interviews

We used interviews to seek depth of information from key stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with select individuals from each of the YCB's jurisdictional partners and with the heads of each of our jurisdictional partners (n=9). The non-head stakeholders we chose to interview were selected through an intentional process that considered the following questions:

1. Does this person occupy a critical position within their field (e.g. head of a department/program, connected to many different departments/programs, is well known and respected within their field, possesses power or social capital)?
2. Is the person knowledgeable in their field and able to provide thorough and thoughtful responses?
3. What assets does this person's voice bring in that we might miss in other engagement methods?

4. Is the voice of this person traditionally underrepresented?

The interviews were designed to be brief (about 15-30 minutes each). Most interviews were conducted by YCB staff; interviews with the heads of our jurisdictional partners were conducted by members of the Minneapolis Youth Congress. All interviews were semi-structured; a common set of questions were asked at each interview, while allowing for flexibility to ask follow-up and/or clarifying questions. See Appendix A for a full list of interview questions.

Photo 1 **By Gabe Spinks**

Surveys

Surveys were sent out en masse to youth stakeholders. Much like interviews, surveys asked for feedback about priorities, though the questions were designed to solicit much more limited responses than interviews. The YCB sent out surveys to individuals and organizations we have had contact with. Though the YCB has contacts in each stakeholder group, youth work professionals had greater representation among survey recipients. See Appendix B for a sample survey.

Tablings

The YCB set up tablings at two community conferences that used short, interactive engagement strategies to help build a vision for the Youth Master Plan. Tablings were primarily targeted towards families and youth work professionals because they were most attendees at the conferences. The tablings were designed to both inform stakeholders about the Youth Master Plan and to solicit feedback on priorities stakeholders would like to be addressed in the Youth Master Plan. The tables were hosted by both YCB staff and MYC members. Those working the tables informed stakeholders about the Youth Master Plan by talking to them and showing visual informational materials (e.g. posters, postcards, pop-up galleries of completed comment cards). After briefly informing stakeholders, those working tables employed creative engagement methods, including six-word stories in which participants were asked to write a story consisting of six words or fewer that describes their vision for youth in Minneapolis or what they would like to tell the mayor about youth. See Appendix C for a list of comment card prompts.

After all engagement methods for developing the priorities were completed, all responses were transcribed and analyzed by a small group of our jurisdictional partners to develop an outline and beginning direction for the priorities.

Youth Engagement

To develop beginning directions for our recommendations based on our priorities, we hosted youth-led and attended ward meetings that used consensus building workshops and focused conversations. The meetings were one and a half hours long in the evening and were hosted at public spaces that are accessible by public transportation such as park recreation centers, libraries, and schools. The meetings were facilitated by two MYC members, where they used facilitation techniques from the Youth as Facilitative Leaders/Technology of Participation (ToP) trainings to cut down on additional time and resources training MYC members and analyzing data. Throughout the youth engagement process, YCB staff attempted to make the meetings accessible to a diverse group of youth to ensure that our engagement process reflected our value of equity. As such, YCB staff were intentional about where we were hosting ward meetings, taking note of who was at each ward meeting, and adjusting our practices throughout to encourage participation from traditionally underrepresented communities of youth.

Due to low attendance at some ward meetings, we also solicited youth input through comment cards at youth community events. For consistency, we mirrored the comment cards prompts as closely as possible to the prompt that youth responded to at the ward meetings. Some of the comment card prompts were altered from the ward meeting prompt for clarity and concision. The prompts on the comment cards are "What I like about Minneapolis," "What should young people's experiences in Minneapolis look like?", and What I would change about Minneapolis." After all ward meetings were conducted, YCB staff and MYC members analyzed the responses to develop themes, which MYC members wrote up the sections for.

About 6,422, or 8%, of all children under 18 in Minneapolis were foreign born.

Priorities and Youth Voice

Youth Stakeholders

The priorities are derived from input from youth and other stakeholders, including youth work and early childhood professionals, our jurisdictional partners, families, and service providers (teachers, social workers, police officers, etc.). All stakeholders are involved at some point in the process, but we used different engagement strategies with different stakeholder groups due to accessibility and time constraints. We aimed to meet stakeholders where they are and to make involvement accessible and engaging, especially for traditionally underrepresented communities.

Stakeholders provided key words and phrases stating their future visions regarding youth and children in Minneapolis. They also identified the issue areas they found significant to the wellbeing and healthy development of youth to develop the priorities. The responses from youth and stakeholders were analyzed qualitatively, with the results informing the final priorities to be included in the Youth Master Plan.

Youth

We engaged youth through a series of youth-led and attended ward meetings, the findings of which are integrated into the priorities as sub-sections to highlight specific areas youth would like to see addressed in the next five years. The ward meeting findings are a major part of the Youth Master Plan as they will inform policy recommendations and are the only section driven primarily by youth voices. As such, we invested significant time and resources into hosting and analyzing findings from ward meetings. We held community ward meetings in 12 of Minneapolis's 13 city council wards, and an additional meeting at a community-based youth organization. Ward meetings were co-hosted with local elected officials, including City Council members, County Commissioners, and School Board Directors. Ward meetings were advertised with the YCB's jurisdictional and community-based partners to recruit youth to attend the meetings. Authentic engagement and responses will help develop youth-centered recommendations to put forward to the YCB's board.

Analysis

Youth Stakeholders

After collecting responses from our community outreach, we analyzed the responses with a small group of staff members within our jurisdictional partners, which ultimately yielded the priorities. The analysis session was attended by staff members from Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, and the City of Minneapolis and facilitated by a research expert with the City of Minneapolis Health Department. In the session, each person reviewed the responses individually to pull out important themes and trends within the data that they saw. The group then discussed their individual findings as a group and came up with detailed themes and subthemes to categorize the responses. The group repeated this process for each individual prompt for responses.

We then reviewed the themes from the group analysis with YCB staff members to verify alignment with our values and work that we do. This review yielded some re-categorization of themes that came out of the group analysis and filled in more details for the write up of priorities for the Youth Master Plan. After writing up a first draft of priorities, we reviewed them with key partners and elected officials from our jurisdictional partners.

Youth

At the ward meetings, attendees were asked to respond to the question "In five years, what should young people's experiences in Minneapolis look like?" Each participant individually responded to the question by writing on a piece of paper, and then sent up their responses for the group to collectively organize into clusters of similar responses and ultimately give a title to each cluster that adequately answered the question posed. The youth facilitators were all members of the Minneapolis Youth Congress (MYC) and utilized the Technology of Participation (ToP) facilitation method they receive training in every year.

The median annual income for families with one or more child(ren) is $64,802

Respondents

Youth Stakeholders

The community outreach to gather information on priorities resulted in a total of 112 responses from a variety of youth stakeholders. There were 68 respondents to the online survey, which was open for four weeks, and 44 completed comment cards collected between two community and youth work professional conferences. The largest group of respondents were youth work professionals (n=55), followed by service providers (n=23). All other stakeholder groups were represented in roughly equal numbers (n~5-8). The respondents overwhelmingly work with high school aged youth, age 13-18 (n=54). Those working with youth age 18-24 (n=29) and 5-12 (n=23) follow with roughly equal numbers. Those working with very young children, age 0-4, were underrepresented in our community outreach (n=5). See Appendix E for an in-depth discussion of respondent demographic information.

Youth

We engaged 125 youth across 13 different meetings in each City Council ward, plus an additional meeting at a community-based youth organization. The ward meetings were facilitated and attended by youth between the ages of 8 and 22.

There were ward meetings in 12 of 13 City Council Wards, and a meeting at a community-based organization that works with Native American youth, which is in Ward 6. Respondents were not asked to provide demographic information, and, as a result, all demographic information is approximate and should be used to bluntly assess large-scale trends in differences in responses by gender, race/ethnicity, and age. Demographic information was assessed and approximated by YCB staff at each meeting.

Overall, more boys (n=68) than girls (n=57) attended the meetings. Most of the attendees were between the ages of 13 and 18, though some meetings had attendees as young as about 8 years old and as old as 22. Most attendees were Black or East African, though other attendees were White, Latinx, and Native American. There were differences in gender, age, and race/ethnicity of attendees across wards. More detailed discussions of notable demographic differences across wards is included in the discussion of each theme below.

Comment Cards

Ward meetings were supplemented with comment cards filled out at community centers and youth events. Comment cards asked respondents to respond to one or more of the following prompts: “What I like about Minneapolis” “What I would change about Minneapolis” “What should young people’s experiences in Minneapolis look like?” A total of 194 comment cards were collected, though some participants completed multiple comment cards.

Limited demographic information was collected from comment card respondents, and so there are limited approximations of respondent demographic information, though we can provide some basic demographic information of event attendees. Comment card respondents were between the ages of 5 and 19. Respondents were diverse in terms of gender and race/ethnicity, though there are no approximations available for either. See Table 1 for demographic information by event we collected comment cards at.

Comment card responses were analyzed separately from ward meeting responses due to the difference in prompts and the lack of discussion among youth on their comment card responses. However,

comment cards for the most part reflected similar themes that came out of the ward meeting analysis. A brief discussion of the comment cards' relevance to each theme is discussed in the sections below.

Table 1: Youth Comment Card Demographic Information

	Bridges to Manhood	Girls' Symposium	Whittier Recreation Center	CityWide Leaders' Event	Community Education Leadership Day
Gender	Male	Female	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Age	Late elementary-young adult	Middle school	Late elementary	High school	Late elementary-high school
Race/Ethnicity	All BIPOC	Mostly BIPOC	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Comment cards filled out	22	25	54	27	57

Findings

The priorities are the buckets that our data indicators and subsequent projects and initiatives go into and significantly structure the Youth Master Plan. They were derived from stakeholder input regarding future visions, assets, and challenges youth and youth stakeholders see in Minneapolis and were analyzed and reviewed by YCB staff and our jurisdictional partners. Youth are likely to experience our priorities in several areas of their lives, including school, county systems, parks, recreational programming, and interacting with street-level bureaucrats, such as police and social workers. Our priorities cut across multiple domains because we realize that everything we do for youth must be a collaborative effort, and that youth must experience continuity across these areas. The priorities bring our values to life and articulate directions for change over the next five years.

Each priority identifies assets to draw upon and challenges organizations are likely to face in addressing it. Some assets and challenges show up in multiple priority areas, but are viewed through the lens of each priority they are sorted under. The assets and challenges situate each priority in context and provide a beginning look into forces that may catalyze or be a barrier to progress within each priority. For a deeper dive into each priority, see Appendix E for a description of relevant focus areas for each priority that are grounded in academic research. Each priority has a final section outlining youth voice and what we heard related to it in the youth ward meetings. See Appendix F for a discussion of ward meeting topics.

Youth Agency

Youth are active agents in shaping their futures through youth-adult partnerships that recognize and value youth ownership and leadership within their communities, which contributes to their positive and healthy development (Office of Adolescent Development, n.d.). Youth agency recognizes that youth contribute in the ways they are best able and that adults working in partnership with youth must make youth engagement accessible both physically and mentally.Youth must have a tangible ownership of physical spaces, welcoming environments, parks, organizations, and business opportunities. Youth must also either be at the table or, more preferably, leading the charge on policy making, civic engagement, and allocation of funds and resources. Youth civic participation predicts civic behaviors into adulthood (Barber, Mueller, & Ogata, 2013; Fendrich, 1993; Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007; Jennings, 2002; McAdam, 1988; Stewart, Settles, & Winter, 1998). Civic participation not only enriches youth today, it also prepares youth to be engaged adults in their communities and fulfill the obligations of democracy and government.

Photo 2 **By Chelsea Chingwe: Youth should have an impact in the community and feel confident to express their opinion.**

Youth agency over their spaces and futures are also an application of Paulo Freire's (1970) theory of *conscientizacao*, or critical consciousness, which "refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 35). Through this process, youth agency promotes liberation and healing, as these cannot take place when young people are oppressed by systems outside of their control, and occurs only when youth are actively shaping their presents and futures.

Assets

Youth are both intelligent and blunt when it comes to owning physical space and decisions. Youth bring in rich and diverse experiential knowledge that enriches physical space and decision making, and are unafraid to talk about their experiences matter-of-factly and advocate for necessary change. When given the opportunity to own their spaces and futures, youth may draw upon their own experiential knowledge to enrich their futures and their presents by renewing conversations with adults and talking about their futures bluntly.

Youth have passion and energy that drives them to both push and embrace change as owners and leaders. Youth are driven by their visions for the future and forcefully tackle initiatives that drive positive change in their communities. Youth are not simply the owners and leaders of the future; they hold the passion, energy, and dynamism to be owners and leaders of today.

Youth bring a fresh perspective to the table due to their diverse backgrounds, creative and new ideas, and optimism that enriches physical space and decision making. Creative, new, diverse, and optimistic ideas can drive change on issues that are mired by outdated ideas and practices. Additionally, youth

perspectives are generally open and inclusive, which is instrumental in creating welcoming spaces for youth and their communities.

Challenges

Adults are a challenge to youth ownership of space and their futures because they currently hold the keys to ownership and leadership and are often unwilling to share this power with young people. The lack of trust towards youth among adults instills a sense of paternalism in adults that drives their reluctance to share ownership over space and decision making.

Youth cannot own their spaces or futures when they are left out from society. Economic resources, social capital, and power are all held from youth, which disempowers youth and keeps them from owning their spaces and futures.

There is a lack of connection to the self among youth, which hinders self-fulfillment that is key to ownership. Challenges in the lives of youth, such as poor mental and emotional health, can disconnect youth from themselves and hinder their potential to own their spaces and futures.

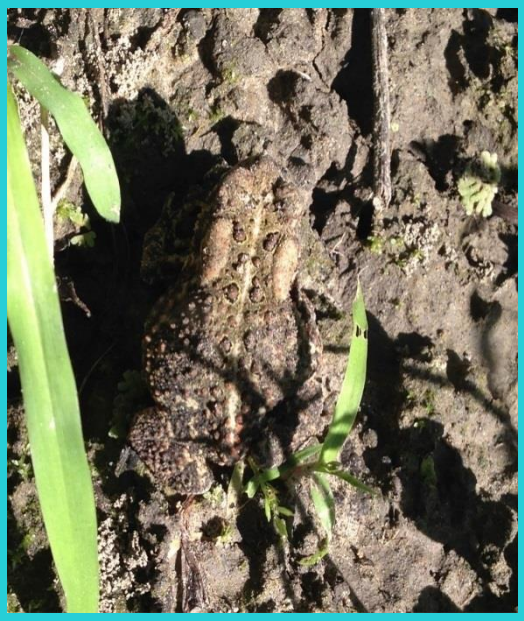


Photo 3 **By Leietta Rabb: Can you spot me? Hiding in plain sight.**

Youth Voice: Power of Knowledge

By Chelsea Chingwe, Minneapolis Youth Congress Contributor

This topic is generally about how ageism affects youth. Youth feel they don't have a say in what happens in the city even though it affects their own lives. This makes youth feel like their voices don't matter. Youth also talked about how ageism affects their interaction with police.

The ward meeting attendees talked about how they feel it is important that they work with adults together to make the city a better place for everyone. Youth need more platforms to speak up and protest about things they believe in. They talked about how they wish they had opportunities to talk to people in power. They wish they had platforms to share their perspectives and concerns directly instead of other parties doing it for them. The ward meeting attendees also added that working with politicians and people in power will make them feel more involved in City developments. They also felt that learning about Minneapolis's native history would make people have a sense of community, know the people around them, and develop empathy for each other.

Youth attendees feel that educational empathy is needed because teachers need to be more understanding when it comes to how much they expect students to do in a certain period of time. The youth, who were mostly high school students, felt like teachers need to take into consideration that students have other things on their plates that include sports, clubs, jobs, etc. The attendees also talked about how bullying should be addressed at schools. A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention (2018b) shows that youth that are bullied have an increased risk of depression, anxiety, insomnia and lower academic performance. The majority of people who talked about this topic reside or work in Southwest Minneapolis (Ward 13), are female, and are currently enrolled at a high school.

Another issue that was brought up at the ward meetings was the use of force with Metro Transit police. The attendees feel that the Transit police tend to unnecessarily escalate situations when there is a youth involved. They don't take time to listen to both sides of the story. Youth who had more experience and more to talk about this topic were youth of color and resided or worked in wards 3 and 13. Their experiences with police make them feel unsafe because they feel targeted. Youth also think that police should be trained to handle everyone regardless of their age, sexual orientation, racial or traditional background without discrimination.

As a ward meeting facilitator, one thing I identified is that youth feel like they are in a battle against adults who misuse their power and who think that youth are useless and up to no good. I strongly believe that it would be beneficial for people in power, including police, to make an effort to better their relationship with youth as it will improve how they are perceived by young people and they will have more perspectives and diversity when they make decisions for Minneapolis.

Culturally Responsive Approaches

Approaches to decision making, programming, organizations, institutions, and systems that impact youth must be culturally responsive, especially in terms of racial and ethnic culture and identity. Cultural responsiveness acknowledges that race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, and all their intersections are foundational to one's identity and honors their meaningfulness to the individual and community. Culturally responsive approaches are not necessarily culturally-specific, but provide space for authentic cultural expression by youth and their communities. Making space for diverse cultural expression is not a box to check or a single event; it is a complex, uncomfortable, ongoing challenge that those with social and/or political power, who are disproportionately white, male, able-bodied, and middle- to upper-class, must be willing to confront head on.

Photo 4 **By Pearl Fontaine**

We also acknowledge the -isms through which communities have been oppressed along cultural lines, such as racism and classism, and work to eliminate discrimination in all forms. Culturally sensitive approaches are an expansion of Gloria Ladson-Billings's (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, which is "an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (p. 483). Culturally sensitive approaches bolster achievement, social engagement, and promote healing among marginalized and historically marginalized communities and individuals.

Assets

Youth are knowledgeable on the cultures in which they live and are more likely to view diversity as an asset (Pew Research Center, 2018)[1]. Youth are experts on their own cultures and the culture of youth broadly, and adults must leverage this knowledge to learn from youth and inform decision making.

***Photo 5* By Alenna Bell: We give.**

In terms of race and ethnicity, youth are more diverse than adults in Minneapolis[2], which brings regular intercultural contact that helps breed intercultural understanding and reflection on one's own culture. Though welcoming diversity has historically been met with resistance, those who experience this adversity with a support network behind them gain strength and resilience. Institutions and public systems must draw on this strength to create stronger and more authentically diverse programs and systems.

Youth bring a fresh perspective to the table because of their diverse backgrounds and cultures. Considering youth perspectives can give systems and institutions guidance on how they might break from culturally biased, blind, or white-centric ways of operating and embrace culturally sensitive approaches.

Challenges

The cultural identities that are salient to youth are excluded from larger society in favor of white, middle-class cultural norms and expectations. As a result, resources, social capital, and power are concentrated within certain cultural groups that are not necessarily representative of the city.

In terms of race and ethnicity, youth in Minneapolis are more diverse than adults, which poses a challenge when adults are often in charge of decision making, programming, and institutions. The lack of intercultural understanding between adults and youth upholds culturally insensitive systems that further oppress and disenfranchise certain cultural groups.

Individuals and institutions that resist welcoming the diversity within Minneapolis prevent it from becoming a community asset. The rapid demographic and cultural changes in Minneapolis require flexibility and openness to change, especially within White communities.

Youth Voice: Identity

One of the themes youth discussed at the ward meetings was identity, which includes increasing racial diversity, equity, togetherness, and fostering a sense of community.

[1] 62% of those in Gen Z (born after 1996) say "increasing racial/ethnic diversity is good for society." In comparison, only 52% of those in Gen X (born between 1965-1980) and 48% of Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) agree with this statement.

[2] About 60% of all Minneapolis residents are white, while over 60% of Minneapolis residents under 20 are people of color (2010 Census).

Identity was a somewhat prevalent theme, with 56 responses comprising about 15% of all responses. This theme was most discussed at the meetings for Wards 6 and 8, though it was also mentioned at Wards 1, 5, 11, 13, and the Minneapolis American Indian Center, which is in Ward 6. The widespread geographic nature of the responses show that youth across the city would like futures that are more equitable and unified, and this is not bound by rage, age, or gender, as the youth at these ward meetings were diverse along these lines.

Identity is a broad theme that encompasses several topics that are all linked together by the common threads of community and equity. The identity theme seeks to ensure that youth are confident in their racial/ethnic identity, develop positive racial/ethnic identify, and are free from all forms of discrimination and gaps. The subtheme of racial diversity mostly came up in discussions of school staff, including teachers, and curriculum, showing that schools have not fully embraced and incorporated the diversity of the student body into their institutional practices. Youth called for "more Black teachers," "diversity in classrooms," and "More teachers of color." Youth also spoke to personal and structural discrimination, the need for empowerment and representation, and the wish to eliminate race-based performance gaps by advocating for "Youth Empowerment," "No Racism," and "empowerment to fight the system."

The comment cards also spoke to identity, as many responses about what young people should experience in Minneapolis were centered around equity and opportunity. This shows that, while youth generally feel supported by their communities, they still see room for the city to grow to be a truly equitably, inclusive, and unified city along the basis of cultural and racial/ethnic identity.

Photo 6 **By Pearl Fontaine: "Creating lasting advocacy for non-binary and transgender individuals will begin when Minneapolis recognizes there are more then just the two binary genders but having bathrooms without assigned genders would be a start." -Misha**

Gender and Sexuality Inclusivity

Programs, institutions, and systems must be intentional about welcoming gender and sexuality diversity among youth by providing welcoming spaces for authentic expression. Gender and sexuality inclusivity acknowledges the foundational nature of gender and sexuality to one's identity and the oppression that female-identifying, female-coded, nonbinary, and individuals in the LGBTQ community face. A study of gay and bisexual men found that the lack of laws and policies recognizing same-sex relationships and negative public opinion on LGBTQ folks are associated with higher levels of internalized homonegativity (Berg, Lemke, & Ross, 2017). Promoting gender and sexuality inclusivity at a systemic level is beneficial for the mental wellbeing and safety of LGBTQ youth.

Gender inclusivity also highlights the importance of creating safe and welcoming spaces for young female-identifying, female-coded, non-binary, and trans youth as the current sociopolitical and cultural climate threatens feelings of safety, including rollbacks on reproductive care (Guttmacher Institute, 2018a), lack of protections and justice regarding sexual assault and harassment (Stahl, Bjorhus, & Webster, 2018), and premature sexualization of female bodies (American Psychological Association, 2007). Feeling unsafe in public impacts young women's and girls' mental health and the choices one feels empowered to make (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Cobbina, Miller, & Brunson, 2008), and are especially salient for women and girls of color and low-income women and girls (Yoon, Stiller Funk, & Kropt, 2010).

Assets

Youth are knowledgeable on their lived experiences and facets of their identities related to gender and sexuality. Adults must leverage this knowledge to learn from youth and inform decision making processes.

The visibility of out LGBTQ youth and young women and girls living authentically and wielding social power creates a welcoming, empowering atmosphere for LGBTQ youth and women while enhancing the larger community. The act of being unapologetically visible promotes youths' rights to self-define and say who they are on their own terms.

Photo 7 **By Pearl Fontaine: Being raised in an environment where Mic Ruelas, a son of immigrants, soon-to-be first-generation college student, and aspiring therapist, can expresses himself through his studies and art, has made him into a leader against racism and modern discrimination.**

"Being Mexican and gay has made me want to fight and go against the Machismo culture that used to make me so scared." -Mic Ruelas

Gender and sexuality diversity can be a window into other kinds of oppression and foster understanding and empathy with others whose oppression does or does not mirror their own. For example, queer youth may have a better understanding of oppression than their straight peers, and can apply this understanding to better empathize with racial, ethnic, or religious diversity. Though this does not always happen, many who have experienced one form of oppression have a more tangible understanding of the dynamics of oppression, including the simultaneous relationship between oppressor and oppressed.

Challenges

The gender and sexual identities that are salient to youth are excluded from larger society in favor of heterosexual, cisgender, masculine norms and expectations. As a result, resources, social capital, and power are concentrated among heterosexual, cisgender men that are not representative of the city.

The invisibility and erasure of LGBTQ youth and young women and girls is detrimental to individual wellbeing and hinders community building. When LGBTQ youth and young women and girls are not seen for who they are or feel pressured to hide themselves, they are more likely to engage in risky behaviors.

The lack of understanding between adults and youth regarding gender and sexuality upholds oppressive systems of homophobia, transphobia, and sexism that further oppress and disenfranchise LGBTQ youth and women and girls.

Youth Voice: Sex Education

Overall, youth are not satisfied with the sex education they receive in school, as they discussed a lack of resources in class, the exclusion of LGBTQ+ voices and needs, and a focus on preventing harmful behaviors as opposed to promoting healthy behaviors. At ward meetings, youth called for reforms such as "understand[ing] consent + safe sex," "better sexual education resources," a decrease in sexually transmitted infections, and "inclusivity for LGBTQIA+ youth". Teaching consent in sex education helps young people understand relationship dynamics, individual autonomy, and ethics of how people relate to one another, empowering them to make healthy decisions relating to sex and relationships. Including LGBTQ+ topics within sex education ensures that all youth receive accurate and relevant information they can use to make the best decisions for themselves and fosters understanding and knowledge among all youth. There are several disparities in outcomes of sexual assault and harassment between male-identifying and female-identifying, nonbinary, LGBTQ+ youth, which are further exacerbated by racial and ethnic intersections (Centers for Disease Control, 2018a; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). There is evidence that consent-based sex education and LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education are becoming more popular, as 32 states and the District of Columbia introduced 79 sex education bills in 2019 alone, most of which touch on topics of consent, healthy relationships, and LGBTQ inclusivity (Guttmacher Institute, 2018b). Further, sex education that is inclusive to LGBTQ+ youth and centers consent is popular among youth. In addition to the youth at the ward meetings who discussed it, a survey by researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education found that 65% of young adults wished they learned about relationships in sex education (Tatter, 2018).

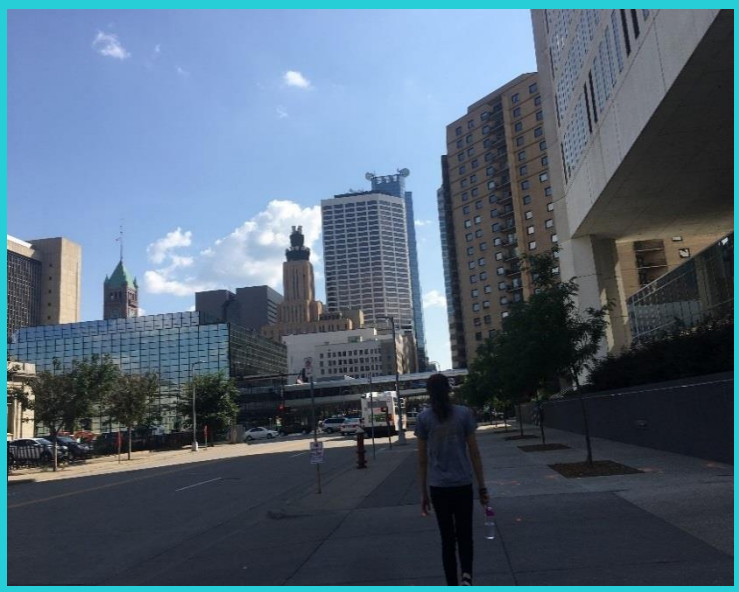


Photo 8 **By Gisell Ayala and Nayeli Hernandez: Young girls should feel safe while walking in the streets of Minneapolis.**

Youth Voice: Female Safety

Though part of a larger discussion around community safety, female safety, including trans youth, was specifically addressed by youth at the ward meetings. Female-identifying youth consistently brought up feeling unsafe, especially downtown and on public transit. Some expressed concern for sexual harassment directed towards young

females. The extent to which female youth feel safe in public highlights systemic sexism and violence against women. Street harassment is a distinct, widespread, easy to understand form of structural gender-based violence, and research shows that an overwhelming majority of women experience it (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Gallup, 2012; MacMillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000). Furthermore, trans women experience harassment, assault, and murder at much higher rates than their cisgender peers (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Breinding et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2011; James et al., 2016; Truman & Morgan, 2016). Increasing safety for female-identifying youth, especially in public spaces, requires a community-wide cultural change in how we view and treat females that is rooted in citizen-enforced accountability.

Social Connection

Young people must have supportive community, supportive relationships, and a say in building and contributing to their communities. While this includes peer-to-peer support, it also includes strong mentor, organizational, and intergenerational relationships. During adolescence, social relationships become increasingly important as young people seek out community and individual identities (Office of Adolescent Health, 2019). However, relationships with family members and other caring adults remain important (Moretti, 2004), which positions adults to encourage healthy "developmental relationships," in which adults expand possibilities, express care, share power, challenge growth, and provide support to young people (Search Institute, 2017). Developmental relationships encourage both intermediate outcomes including social-emotional skills, prosocial behaviors, and leadership skills, and long-term outcomes, including academic success, reduced high-risk behaviors, and civic engagement (Search Institute, 2017). To support youth building social connections, we must also support adults with whom they connect, including family members, teachers, youth work professionals, and communities to mitigate secondhand trauma they might experience and develop supportive, caring adults who are able and willing to support youth.

Photo 9 **By Zaira Perez**

Assets

Youth are relationship-oriented and value social connectedness, relationships, and community. Supportive youth-adult relationships and mentorships are critical for healthy development of young people. Together, we can draw on the natural human desire for relationships and community to build and maintain strong relationships and communities.

Challenges

There is a general negative societal attitude towards youth of color that is rooted in historical and ongoing racism and encumbers intergenerational relationships. These negative attitudes disproportionately stigmatize youth of color who are viewed as a nuisance. Those who view youth as

problems to the larger community and lack intercultural awareness to engage with racially and ethnically diverse youth are often reluctant to engage with youth, restricting any chance of social connection within communities.

Youth work professionals see a lack of connectedness among youth that stems from poor peer relationships, too much reliance on social media, and lack of connectedness to adults. It is difficult for youth to find meaningful connections to their peers and caring adults in a world that reflects the White, Western reverence of individualism and isolates the individual. Though engrained into the White American ethos, prioritizing the individual can be more damaging than it is helpful when seeking meaningful connections. Furthermore, the Western praise of the individual runs up against the collective nature of some non-Western cultures and undermines the benefits of collectivism.

Adults are not connected with youth because they fear interacting with and distrust youth, which likely comes out of a lack of intercultural understanding between a majority white adult population and a majority person-of-color youth population. This fear and distrust limits the extent to which youth have positive adult mentors and role models in their lives, which is problematic, as caring adult relationships are a significant developmental asset for young people.

Youth Voice: Unity

One of the topics youth discussed at the ward meetings was unity, which includes togetherness and fostering a sense of community.

Unity was a prevalent topic, with 56 responses comprising about 15% of all responses. This theme was most discussed at the meetings for Wards 6 and 8, though it was also mentioned at Wards 1, 5, 11, 13, and the Minneapolis American Indian Center, which is in Ward 6. The widespread geographic nature of the responses shows that youth across the city would like futures that are more unified, and this is not bound by rage, age, or gender, as the youth at these ward meetings were diverse along these lines.

Photo 10 **By Chelsea Chingwe: Knowing and interacting with the community members makes youth feel involved and safe.**

The unity topic seeks to ensure that youth have access to strong community ties and has two sub-topics: togetherness and community. The sub-topic of togetherness and overall positive feelings about the future spoke to developing a sense of confidence and knowing every young person has equal opportunities to pursue the live they want, evidenced by responses such as “accepting identities” and “opportunities—hope that I can get to anything (dream big)”. The second subtheme is sense of community, which includes support networks, building positive communities, and having a place to call home, such as “outreach programs to get better connected w/ people in the community.”

The comment cards also spoke to unity, mostly either in response to what young people's experiences in Minneapolis should look like, or what they like about Minneapolis. Most of the comment card responses regarding what they like about Minneapolis were related to the community and togetherness subtopics. This shows that, while youth generally feel supported by their communities, they still see room for the city to grow to be a truly equitably, inclusive, and unified city.

Supportive Systems

Photo 11 **By Chelsea Chingwe: Bullying destroys self-esteem and causes trauma. This makes it difficult for youth to feel empowered.**

We must advocate for more supportive systems that promote youth development and break down and reform systems that hinder youth development, such as the juvenile justice system and school discipline systems. Racial disparities in the school discipline and juvenile justice systems have been well documented since the 1970s (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; McCarthy and Hoge, 1987; Skiba, Peterson, and Williams, 1997; Thornton and Trent, 1988; Wu, Pink, Crain, and Moles, 1982), and have been shown to set students on "a journey through school that is increasingly punitive and isolating for its travelers—many of whom will be placed in restrictive special education programs, repeatedly suspended, held back in grade, and banished to alternative, 'outplacements' before finally dropping or getting 'pushed out' of school altogether" (Wald and Losen, 2003). Though referring specifically to the school-to-prison pipeline, Wald and Losen's (2003) claims evidence that harsh treatment within one public institution often spills over into other areas in their lives and is increasingly harmful to individuals penalized by systems and their larger communities (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013). Collaborating between systems and aligning strategies can help break down the walls that isolate systems and youth who engage with them.

Assets

The communities in which systems operate are rich with supportive, engaged, and willing people that those systems can draw upon for knowledge and support and to promote intra-community work. Working within communities and positioning community leaders and experts as systems members and leaders lends credibility, support, and cultural sensitivity to public systems.

There is a vast network of support for public systems, including community-based organizations, academic communities, and those who have interfaced with systems, that can share out best practices and knowledge on creating and sustaining supportive systems. Having a relationship with support networks both improves systemic efficacy and enhances its collective knowledge base.

Challenges

There is a general negative societal attitude towards youth that has become institutionalized in our public systems and institutions when those holding negative views are in power. The stigma around youth that

stems from viewing youth as a nuisance and detriment to society is disproportionately directed towards youth of color and becomes codified in punitive and disruptive systems that harm both youth and society as a whole.

Adults are a challenge in the lives of youth when they are responsible for creating and maintaining systems and institutions that harm youth. Adults in power exacerbate this challenge when they refuse to share power with youth and shut out youth and youth voice from decision making.

Preexisting systems both create and uphold disparities in income, race, and ethnicity, specifically within the education system. It is impossible for systems to support the wellbeing and healthy development of youth when we are resistant to challenging and reforming the racism and classism within public systems and institutions.

Youth Voice: School Improvements

By Gabe Spinks, Minneapolis Youth Congress Contributor

Youth aged 5-22 identified eight topics youth want to see changed within Minneapolis in the next 5 years in all 13 Ward meetings. At 28%, "School improvements" was the most common of the seven identified topics outranking "Accessible Necessities," "Community Improvements," and "Equity and Unity." However, "School Improvements" only made up 6% of the Comment Card Prompts.

Youth created subtopics within school improvements to specify the changes youth want to see in education within the next five years for Minneapolis. The top subtopics were Support Systems, Educational Improvements, and Better Education System.

Support systems, i.e., systems that support youth and students inside and outside of the classroom, was the most identified subtopic. Youth responded to this subtheme by requesting "more life based classes," and "more resources after high school [like] life coaches to help guide."

Educational improvements, i.e., improving specific systems that already exist in our education, was the next most identified subtopic. Youth responded to this subtheme by suggesting "free driver education," "racial inclusivity in all classes," "teach youth their rights," and "more environmental awareness (especially climate change)".

Better education system, i.e., creating or improving systems within education overall, was also discussed at the ward meetings. Youth responded to this subtopic by requesting "Free 4 year college," "Scholarship Opportunities," and "Better sexual education resources."

In Ward 1 the topic "School Improvements" was most prevalent (n=23), followed by Wards 12 and 10 (n=16), and Wards 5 and 6 (n=12). This topic is prevalent across geographically diverse areas of the city, and shows that youth dissatisfaction with the school system is not bound by geography, race, gender, or age.

Youth Voice: Community Improvements

Youth discussed their desires for improving the community and at the ward meetings, taking aim at both the built environment and accessing programming. Responses in the community improvements theme includes park and recreation activities, such as park facilities, community events, and athletic activities, the built environment, such as buildings, specific places they liked or disliked, public art, and their overall feelings towards Minneapolis.

Community improvements was somewhat of a prevalent theme, with 52 responses representing about 14% of all responses. This theme was most discussed in Wards 12 (n=14) and 4 (n=15), with youth at Wards 11 (n=6), 10 (n=6), the Minneapolis American Indian Center (n=6), and 9 (n=2) also touching on the topic. Geographically, most of these wards are on the South side of Minneapolis, except for Wards 4 and 3, which are in North and Northeast. The respondents at these meetings were mostly boys who are diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and age. Most of the meetings that discussed community improvements were held at recreation centers and respondents were youth who were hanging out there, which may explain some bias towards discussing park structures and programs.

The ideas encompassed by the community improvements are broad, though they all speak to developing community assets and making them more accessible to youth. One community improvement youth called for was parks and recreation programming. Youth want "more parks in the area" and "more activities for the youth to keep them out [sic] the streets," such as dance teams, gymnastics, and other free activities. Despite their calls for improved parks and recreation, youth also acknowledged that there already are a lot of parks where they feel comfortable and generally have good relationships with the parks staff. Youth at the ward meetings also mentioned more general areas for community improvements, which related both to the built environment and interacting with people and the city. In terms of the built environment, youth wished for more places to hang out with their friends and noted that there are no movie theaters on the North side. Youth at the Ward 12 meeting also expressed interest in expanding public art to make the city more aesthetically pleasing and culturally representative. While the bulk of the community improvements theme is aspirational, some youth expressed dissatisfaction with the city, stating that, it's boring, it should look "nothing like it is now" in five years, and that they don't see a future for themselves in Minneapolis. While responses like these are a minority, hearing youth dissatisfaction with the city signals that we must continue to put time and resources into making all youth feel safe and welcome in Minneapolis. Discussions on nontangible community improvements focused on safety and connecting with peers, neighbors, and cultural communities. These suggestions show that youth think about issues within a community-oriented context, and it is impossible to tease apart all of the intersections between safety, culture, power, and community.

Photo 12 **By Leietta Rabb: Without them what will happen to us?**

Youth Voice: Climate Literacy

One of the topics youth discussed at the ward meetings was environmentally friendly practices, or climate literacy, which includes public cleanliness and transportation. Climate literacy was the least discussed topic across all ward meetings, with only 15 responses, or 4% of all responses. Though not a prevalent topic, climate literacy spanned six different ward meetings, including Wards 12, 11, 5, 4, and 2. This shows that youth across the city are concerned about the environment and the impact that public services have on the environment. Climate literacy was a more prevalent topic in the comment cards, with 24 responses, or about 12% of overall responses. While some of these responses were in response to what they liked about Minneapolis, the majority were in response to what they would change about Minneapolis. The two principal subtopipcs within climate literacy was public cleanliness and transportation. Public cleanliness refers to clean streets and public spaces, with responses such as "No garbage on the

Photo 13 **By Pearl Fontaine: Climate change is one of the most prevalent issues facing the modern world. Minneapolis needs to help by placing encouraging less plastic, bottled water and using plastic (non-compostable) straws.**

YOUTH STORIES

By Ridwan Mohamed, *Minneapolis Youth Congress Contributor*

I asked around about cleanliness in Minnesota all together and my findings were quite astonishing. People said that for a big state with a lot of people, it's rather clean. Something my supervisor said was that when her family came here for a summer vacation from France they liked how well kept and clean our environment was. She said where she comes from there are nice parts and dirty parts, but our state is cleaner according to her. Another thing about Minnesota is the usage of transit rather than taking the car. Most civilians in the city of Minneapolis take the bus or light rail to get to their destination. The city has introduced other ways to get to places, like taking electric bikes and scooters. I live in Minneapolis and, from what I've observed, it's a very friendly place and there are a lot of things you can do. For example, on Wednesdays there are activities to do downtown; people usually play with jumbo games and they do yoga and sometime free music concerts.

floor" and "less trash." In terms of transportation, youth at the ward meetings were in favor of increasing the accessibility of public transportation, including eliminating cost, an increase in communal bikes and carpools, and more eco-friendly transportation. These responses show that, though youth agree with increased environmentally friendly practices, they see significant barriers to adopting these practices, which the public must address.

The comment card responses indicate that youth and children are overwhelmingly unsatisfied with the extent to which Minneapolis promotes environmentally friendly practices and would like to see this change. This reflects larger national trends in which youth are some of the fiercest advocates for addressing climate change, as their futures will be most impacted by rising temperatures, rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, and more severe natural disasters.

Photo 14 **By Chelsea Chingwe: Minimizing littering lessens land pollution and improves our living conditions.**

Developmental Needs

Children and youth must live in safe, stable environments in which their basic needs are met to grow and thrive in directions that are personally fulfilling and enrich their communities, as "instability across a host of areas is associated with a range of [negative] child outcomes, from cognitive skills, academic achievement, social competence and behavior" (Sandstrom and Huerta, 2013). Though well intended, public support programs may inadvertently destabilize families they seek to stabilize through administrative practices, means testing, reporting, and lack of sensitivity towards a family's instability (Sandstrom and Huerta, 2013). Meeting one's needs is not merely about survival, it also ensures opportunity for growth and advancement personally, socially, economically, and politically. Fulfilling needs is not just a children's issue; systems and institutions within Minneapolis must support the stability of young people by creating able adults who can provide stability to children and meet their basic needs, including safe and stable housing, adequate nutrition, safe neighborhoods and schools, access to economic opportunity and development, and socioemotional development.

Assets

Youth are resilient by nature, which allows them to navigate through temporary periods of instability. However, we cannot expect youth to constantly call upon their resilience to survive their daily lives.

Challenges

There are several financial barriers to stability, including financial insecurity, unattainable jobs, lack of financial safety nets, the prevalence of poverty, and a lack of resources for youth living in poverty. Most of these barriers result from disinvestment in working-class and poor communities, which tend to overwhelmingly be communities of color. Fiscal disinvestment is exacerbated by capitalist systems that put and keep wealth in the hands of adults and those who have historically benefited from these systems.

Youth experience instability as their basic needs such as housing, food, and water are not met, and youth are exposed to violent environments, unstable mental health and lack of consistent care, trauma, and intergenerational trauma. It is impossible to provide youth with stable environments when systems and institutions uphold a status quo of instability.

Historical racism, historical poverty, and the intergenerational trauma that results from them inform and perpetuate negative attitudes towards youth of color who experience instability. Negative attitudes towards vulnerable youth severely limits the action, change, and support necessary for youth to transition into stable environments.

Youth Voice: Accessible Necessities

By Pearl Fontaine, Minneapolis Youth Congress Contributor

Accessible Necessities includes the basic needs for youth in Minneapolis. A student explains, "I would want all kids to have a chance in life. I want all people to grow knowing everyone has equal opportunity and feeling positively about themselves." Opportunity in Minneapolis is the first subtopic, which includes the need for more jobs and community outreach programs. Economic stability is the second subtopic, which includes affordable housing and homelessness.

Photo 15 **By Leietta Rabb: Waiting for the slightest tug from a fish.**

Opportunity in Minneapolis

Opportunity in Minneapolis examines the need for more job opportunities for youth in North Minneapolis, because most students need to travel to at least Downtown Minneapolis for jobs. There is also a need for programs throughout the city and through Minneapolis Public Schools to provide real-work-life experience for middle and high schoolers. These programs would also teach basic work skills for the students. One student states, "more career goal courses in high school and middle schools, which offer more internships." Having more programs focused on youth internships will both help builds connections and better prepare those students for a real-work-life. Youth mention the lack of study help within middle and high schools, and having paid student tutors after schools will allow students to both make money and will provide help to the students struggling in schools.

Opportunity in Minneapolis also covers the need for more fine arts programs. This includes more funding for theater programs in Minneapolis Schools, which will allow students to focus on their performance opposed to hosting events to receive funding. More, free, open spaces for youth to practice their art within their community and having community-based programs for youth to create art within their communities. Programs through Minneapolis Public Schools such as Beacons provides students with activities after school. Having more programs like Beacons will allow students to spend more time expanding their talents.

Economic Stability

Economic stability includes the homeless population that Minneapolis still has. According to MN Homeless: Wilder Research (2015), there were roughly 3,700 total homeless citizens in Hennepin County; 37% were youth. Although this data is dated, youth homelessness has not gone anywhere. The need for communal housing, which focuses on healing and rehabilitation is necessary to eradicate homelessness within out youth. Providing homeless citizens with Go-To Cards and improving community outreach for homeless youth are all steps for lower youth homelessness in Minneapolis.

Youth Voice: Community Safety

By Pearl Fontaine, Minneapolis Youth Congress Contributor

Community safety addresses the lack of preventative resources for youth partaking in street violence, and the need for more jobs and community services for youth. Youth discuss the systemic fear of police intervention and explain why many feel unsafe in Downtown Minneapolis.

Youth Violence

Minneapolis's model for youth violence prevention, modeled after the Group Violence Intervention, is much praised on a national level. Minneapolis youth state that increasing the accessibility of jobs and other activities (e.g. free recreational sports, safer local parks, services for their communities) is critical in eliminating youth crime and violence, as seen in the Group Violence Intervention.

Having a Safe Environment

Youth have expressed their fears of being Downtown because "you always see drug deals" and citizens on drugs. Unfortunately, these citizens are typically homeless or in extreme poverty. The youth agree that producing and advocating for needs-based assistance programs are an instrumental step for eventually addressing the safety concerns as well as helping those who must resort to dealing drugs for income.

Police Brutality and Gun Violence (The Big Ones)

Issues surrounding police brutality within the United States are very widespread within our news right now. Police brutality is a long-lasting, systemic issue which oppresses and enforces fear within our communities, specifically our Black and African American communities. Recent officer-involved shootings in Minnesota such as on August 2, 2019 in North Minneapolis where two officers shot a Black man dead and the Philando Castile shooting in Falcon Heights on July 6, 2016 are just a couple examples of this violence. Youth addressed the commonality of being exposed to gun violence in their neighborhoods, focusing on the lasting fear it puts on the entire community. One youth states, "My uncle was just sitting in the front yard when he was shot." Other students nod and many explain their personal gun stories. This shows the necessity in introducing bills that will support universal background checks, as well as the desperation for law making focused on reform within the Minneapolis Police Academy. The reform would

be aimed to teach police officers to depend less on their weapons and how to deal with fears and stereotypes of Black citizens through less aggressive and racial profiling tactics. De-escalation should be the first means of resort instead of their weapon on hand.

Although Minneapolis is progressive, re-allocating funds to fund free programs to rehabilitate and end drug addiction for all citizens (homeless, undocumented and citizens in extreme poverty), improving the Group Violence Intervention and increase community activities for youth are all necessary in the future of youth safety and violence prevention. Police brutality and gun violence are huge issues facing the United States, and Minneapolis is no exception. The growing need for stricter gun laws and the redirection of Minneapolis Police Academy are all necessary for the improvement of Minneapolis' safety for all youth citizens. Addressing all these concerns will result in a safer community that meets the public safety needs of our youth today.

Photo 16 **By Chelsea Chingwe: Minneapolis is a diverse community. Police should be trained to deal with everyone. This makes people feel more safe and sure.**

Youth Voice: Public Health Necessities

By Pearl Fontaine, Minneapolis Youth Congress Contributor

Public health necessities address the lack of mental health advocacy and awareness, as well as the inaccessibility of affordable healthcare for all youth, specifically those who are homeless and undocumented. It also addresses the lack of services for youth dealing with substance dependency or living in a household with strong substance abuse issues.

Youth focus on the inaccessibility for affordable healthcare (dental, medical and mental) for all, including homeless and undocumented youth, and the need to re-allocate funds to support an improved public healthcare system. For undocumented citizens, both Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare need to support all women through pregnancy and re-ensure that all patients can receive full coverage. In 2018, 20% of citizens experiencing homelessness are still not receiving any healthcare (National Health Care for the Homeless Council, 2018). Hennepin County offers homeless healthcare services at shelters, drop-in centers and other community-based facilities, but increasing advertisement and enforcing re-habilitation programs are critical.

Youth covered the issues surrounding substance abuse, stating that resources for youth struggling personally, or dealing with the stresses of living in a household experiencing substance abuse, are obsolete to most of the community because of the lack of affordable treatment programs. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (2016) concludes that Indigenous Americans are five times more likely to overdose that White Americans, this shows the lack of services specifically for our Indigenous communities.

Services and advocacy for mental health have improved, but there is still bias towards those who have cognitive delays or mental health needs. Moreover, there exists a stigma for those who receive mental and emotional services; as one student states, “not experiencing cultural stigma for seeking chemical dependency help or mental help” is a sign of the necessity for implicating more coursework into pre-existing health and social studies classes. At the seven School Based-Clinics throughout the Minneapolis Public Schools, students seeking medical attention can receive care both for free and without consent from parents/guardians. Students seeking mental help from the School-Based Therapist still need consent from their parents/gradians, which prohibits many youths from the receiving help they need.

Addressing all these concerns will result in a healthier community that meets the public health needs of our youth today; improving access to free health services (dental, medical and mental), organizing free programs to rehabilitate and stop drug addiction for all citizens (homeless, undocumented and citizens in extreme poverty), and including more advocacy and services for a healthy mental practice within Minneapolis Public Schools curriculum are necessary actions to re-ensure all youth equal access to healthcare.

Photo 17 **By Zaira Perez**

Conclusion

The Youth Master Plan will allow the YCB to organize and prioritize which initiatives and projects we advance in the next five years. The Youth Master Plan was informed by the YCB’s organizational values and youth and community input. We engaged youth and youth stakeholders to develop our priorities and ward meeting findings, which will ultimately inform the policy recommendations we advance.

The priorities in the Youth Master Plan outline the areas that youth and youth stakeholders in Minneapolis see as essential to addressing to ensure the wellbeing and healthy development of youth. The priorities define the problems; they identify areas that pose challenges to the development of young people and thus require attention. The ward meeting findings begin to imagine what the solutions might look like. The findings from ward meetings represent what youth want for their communities and their futures in Minneapolis. Though the priorities and ward meeting findings do not line up perfectly, they intersect in important ways that the YCB will build on to promote collaborative strategies to address gaps in resources and services. In the next year, we will dive deeper into the ward meeting findings to put forward policy recommendations to each of our four jurisdictions and use to reorient the YCB to better address needs in the lives of youth. The YCB will also develop a status of youth data report and children’s budgets for each of our four jurisdictions to better inform our policy recommendations on relevant and recent data.

In total, the Youth Master Plan will serve as a framework for the YCB's initiatives and dictate which initiatives the organization brings to head over the next five years. The next step for the Youth Master Plan is to develop policy recommendations for our jurisdictional partners to advance our priorities and weave youth voice into formal decision making.

Appendix A: Values and Priorities Interview Questions

The following interview will ask you about your values and priorities for Minneapolis youth. The Youth Master Plan is a strategic framework that the YCB and its partner jurisdictions (city, county, parks, schools) will adopt. The Youth Master Plan aims to rally stakeholders and policymakers around a common set of values and goals to move the needle forward and make Minneapolis the best city for children and youth.

The first step in building the Youth Master Plan is to establish a set of common values and priorities from youth and those connected to youth. Values define who we are and binds us together; they guide our actions and do not change. Priorities are things that need to get done that can and do change.

What age group of youth do you primarily work with?

- 0-4
- 5-12
- 13-18
- 18 and older
- N/A—I am a youth (0-24)

If you could talk to Mayor Frey about your vision for Minneapolis youth, what would you say?

What assets do Minneapolis Youth bring to the table?

What are the top challenges facing youth in Minneapolis?

Think about the challenges you presented in the previous question. What barriers are preventing progress on these challenges?

Think about the challenges you presented in the previous question. What would help speed up progress on addressing these challenges?

Appendix B: Sample Survey

The following survey will ask you about your priorities for Minneapolis youth. The Youth Master Plan is a strategic framework that the YCB and its partner jurisdictions (city, county, parks, schools) will adopt in summer 2019. The Youth Master Plan aims to rally stakeholders and policymakers around a common set of values and goals to move the needle forward and make Minneapolis the best city for children and youth.

The first step in building the Youth Master Plan is to establish a set of common values and priorities among youth and those connected to youth. Values define who we are and binds us together; they guide our actions and do not change. Priorities are things that need to get done that can and do change.

If you would like us to follow up with you after this survey on next steps for the Youth Master Plan and the analyses and conclusions we draw based on the data you are providing today, please provide your contact information at the end of the survey. If you have any questions or comments on the Youth Master Plan, contact Mikayla Ferg at Mikayla.Ferg@minneapolismn.gov.

What age group of youth do you primarily work with?

- 0-4
- 5-12
- 13-18
- 18 and older
- N/A—I am a youth (0-24)

If you could talk to Mayor Frey about your vision for Minneapolis youth, what is one thing you would say?

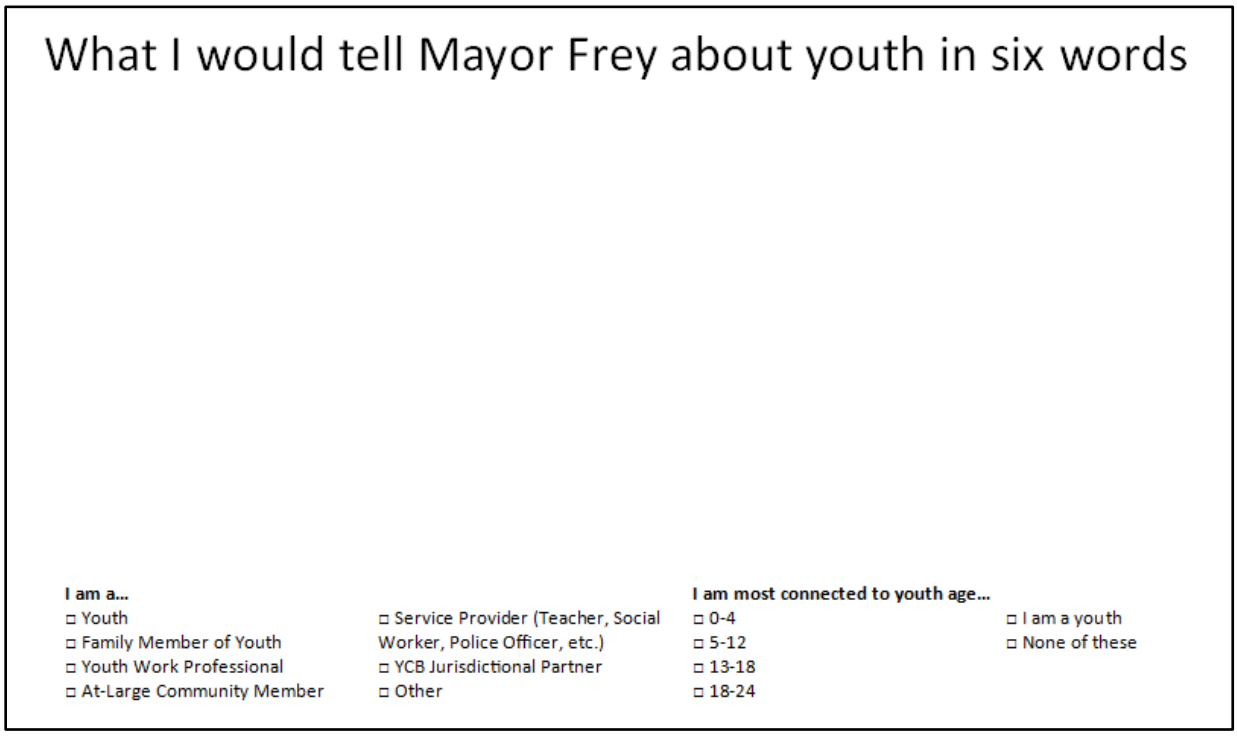
What is one asset that Minneapolis Youth bring to the table?

What is the top challenge facing youth in Minneapolis?

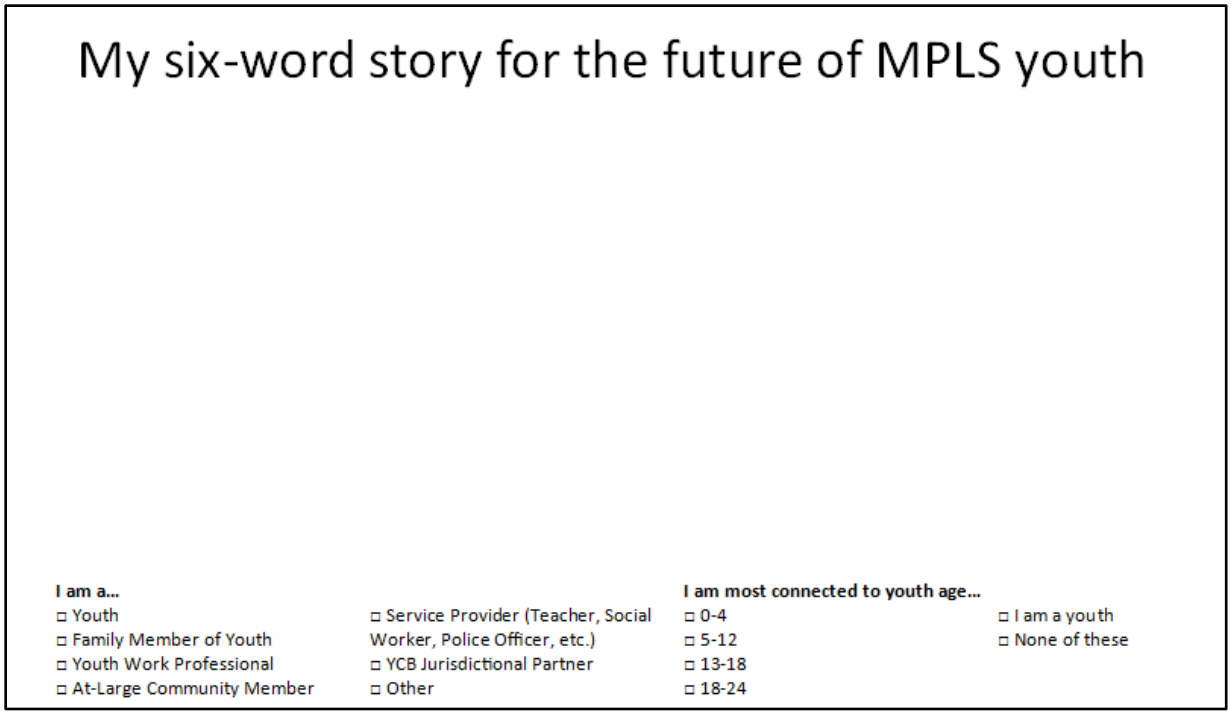
Think about the challenge you presented in the previous question. What is one barrier that is preventing progress on this challenge?

Think about the challenge you presented in the previous question. What is one thing that would speed up progress on addressing this challenge?

Appendix C: Comment Card Prompts



Comment card prompt 1: "What I would tell Mayor Frey about youth in six words" with check boxes for stakeholder group classification and age group of youth respondent is most connected with.



Comment card prompt 2: "My six word story for the future of MPLS youth" with check boxes for stakeholder group classification and age group of youth respondent is most connected with.

Appendix D: Respondent Demographic Information

Overall Participants

The community outreach to gather information on priorities resulted in a total of 112 responses from a variety of youth stakeholders. There were 68 respondents to the online survey, which was open for four weeks, and 44 completed comment cards collected between two community and youth work professional conferences. The only demographic information that the survey and comment cards asked for were which stakeholder group each respondent identified with and the age group of youth they worked with most. We collected this information to ensure that our community engagement reached our target audiences, and to ensure that each respondent had some relationship with youth. While most respondents chose only one of these, some respondents selected more than one stakeholder group or age group of youth.

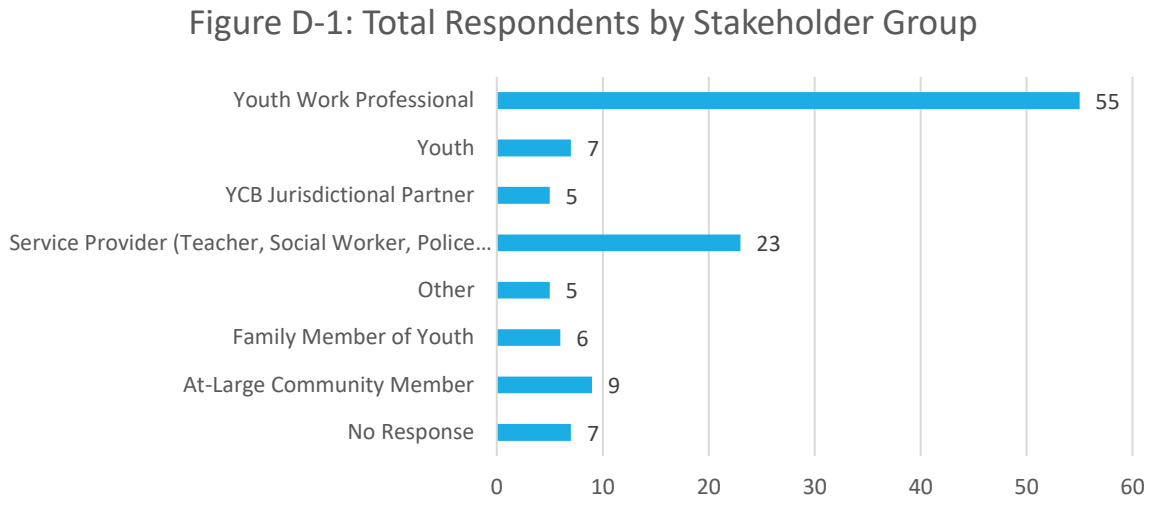


Figure D-1: Total Respondents by Stakeholder Group.

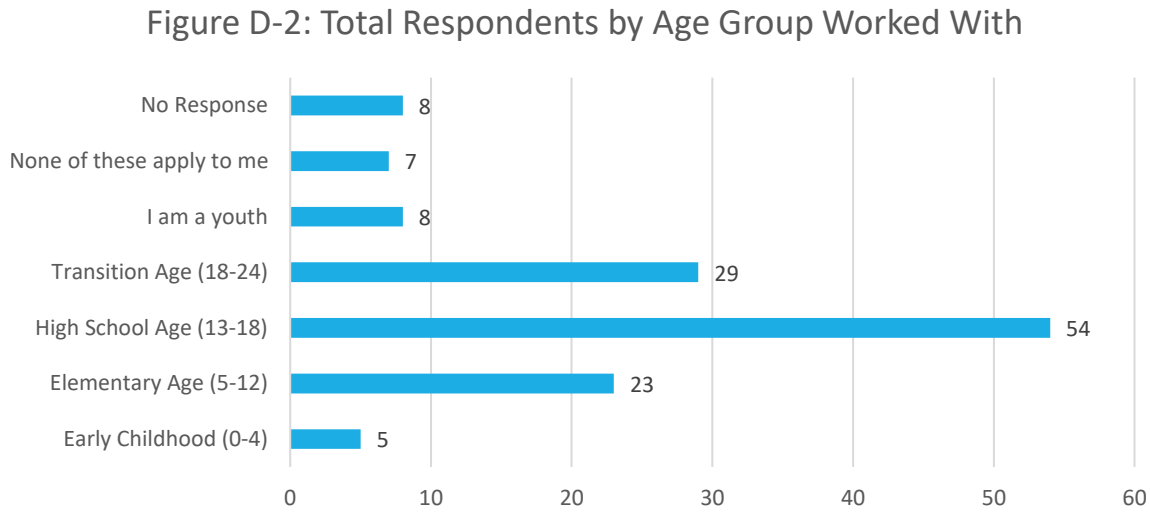


Figure D-2: Total Respondents by Age Group Worked With.

The largest group of respondents were youth work professionals (n=55), followed by service providers (n=23). All other stakeholder groups were represented in roughly equal numbers (n~5-8). The skew towards youth work professions is a result of collecting comment cards at a youth work professional conference, and sending surveys out to mostly youth work professionals. Though biased towards youth work professionals and service providers, we believe that this sample accurately reflects the body of professionals the YCB works with. Additionally, the survey respondents showed a greater skew towards youth work professionals than the comment cards did, though both had highest response rates from youth work professionals. We were most interested in hearing from those who are closest with youth, and, based on the results of the respondents, believe that we met this goal in our community outreach efforts to develop priorities.

The respondents overwhelmingly work with high school aged youth, age 13-18 (n=54). Those working with youth age 18-24 (n=29) and 5-12 (n=23) follow with roughly equal numbers. Those working with very young children, age 0-4, were underrepresented in our community outreach (n=5), which is a result of the busy schedules of parents of young children and a lack of coordination among early childhood entities.

Note that the number each designation in Figure E-1 and Figure E-2 do not necessarily add up to the total number of respondents as some individuals selected multiple designation for themselves.

Survey Respondents

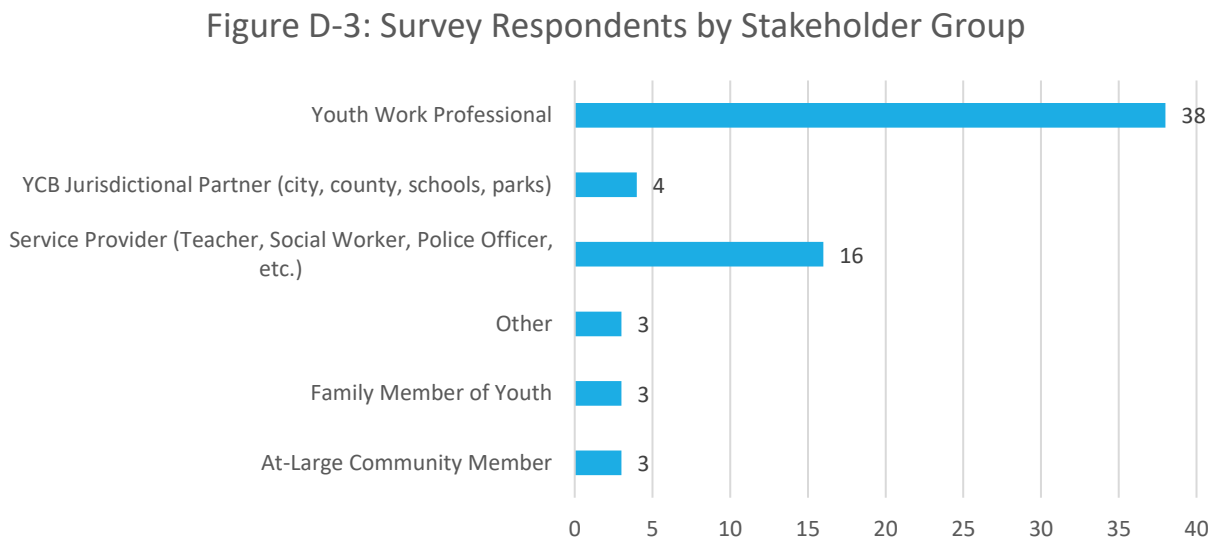


Figure D-3: Survey Respondents by Stakeholder Group.

Figure D-3 shows the sample of survey respondents by stakeholder group. Of the two engagement methods, there were more survey respondents (n=68). The survey respondents mostly reflect the total sample, with youth work professionals represented in the greatest number (n=38), followed by service providers (n=16). Notably different from the total results is the absence of stakeholders who self-identify as youth and no response. The absence of no response data is due to the online survey requiring each respondent to select their stakeholder group from a drop-down list. The absence of youth respondents is

due to a lack of distributing the survey to youth respondents. All other stakeholder groups are represented in almost equal numbers (n~3-4), as in the full sample.

Figure D-4: Comment Card Respondents by Stakeholder Group

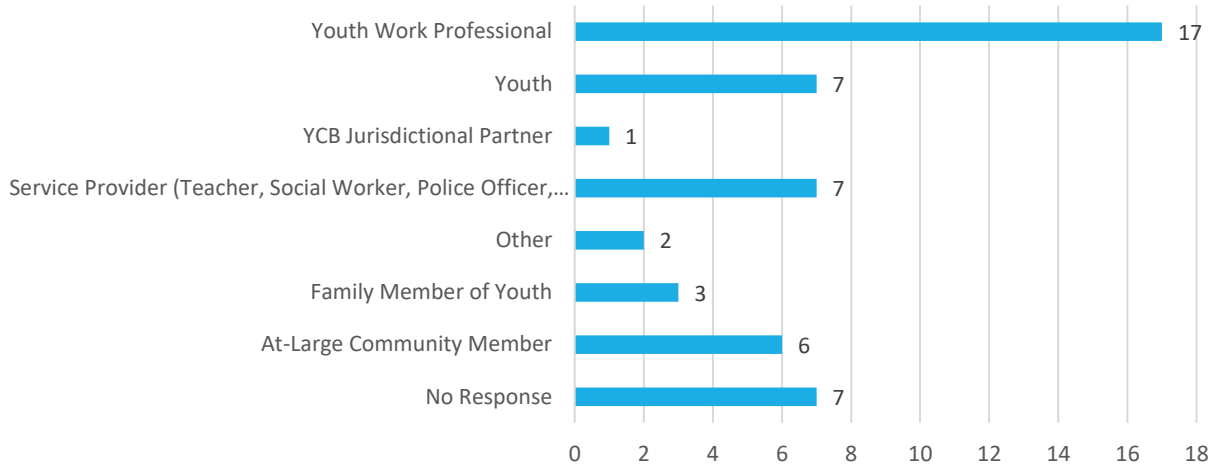


Figure D-4: Comment Card Respondents by Stakeholder Group

Figure D-4 shows the sample of comment card respondents by stakeholder group. Of the two engagement methods, comment cards had the fewest respondents (n=44). Much like the total respondents and survey respondents, youth work professionals were the most represented group (n=17). Unlike the survey respondents and total respondents, the comment card sample had proportionately fewer service providers (n=7), as the number of service providers was on par with the number of youth (n=7), at-large community members (n=6), and those who left this section blank (n=7). The comment cards were filled out by hand, and some respondents did not complete the section asking about stakeholder group and age group they worked with most. All the youth responses came from the comment cards.

Figure D-5: Survey Respondents by Age Group Worked With

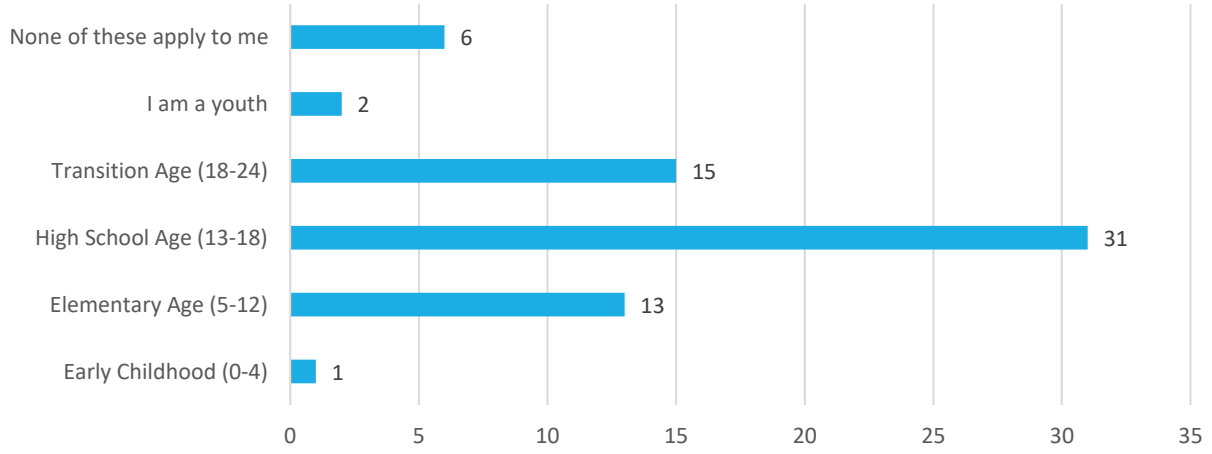


Figure D-5: Survey Respondents by Age Group Worked With

Figure D-5 shows the sample of survey respondents by age group of youth they primarily work with. The sample of survey respondents mirrors the overall sample, with a greater number of those who work with high school age youth (n=31), and roughly equal numbers of those working with elementary age (n=15) and transition age (n=13) age youth. Among the survey respondents, there are no "No response" individuals as there are in the overall sample because the online survey required a response to this question among the options above as a drop-down list.

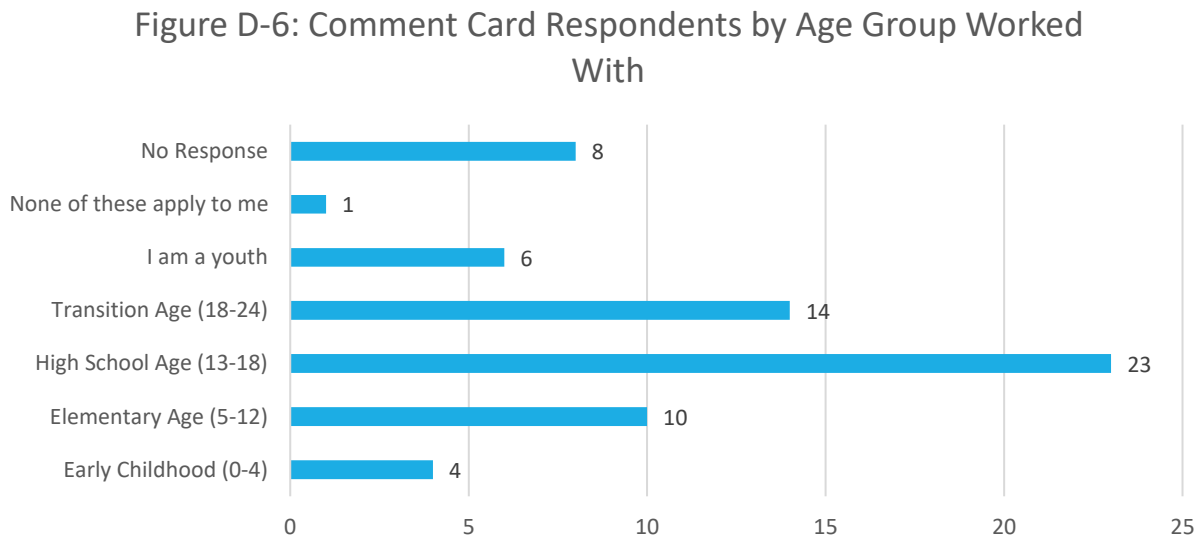


Figure D-6: Comment Card Respondents by Age Group Worked With

Figure D-6 shows comment card respondents by the age group of youth they primarily work with. The sample of comment card respondents largely reflects the total respondents, with a couple of key differentials. While comment card respondents also show a greater frequency of those working with high school age youth (n=23), there is a somewhat greater frequency of those working with transition age youth (n=14) than elementary age youth (n=10). The overall sample shows a relatively equivalent frequency of those working with transition age and elementary age youth, with a slightly greater frequency of transition age youth. There is also a greater frequency of youth represented among the comment card respondents in comparison to survey respondents, as almost all overall youth respondents were captured in the comment card sample. The comment cards were filled out by hand, and some respondents did not complete the section asking about the age group they worked with most, resulting in the No Response category (n=8).

Appendix E: Focus Areas

The focus areas are a deeper dive into each priority and highlight points that are critical to advancing each priority through actionable steps and initiatives. The focus areas are not an exhaustive list of elements within each priority. Rather, they are a list of critical points to address within each priority based on research, the nature of the YCB's work, and Minneapolis's local context. Focus areas are geared towards the root causes and determinants of undesirable outcomes associated with each of the priorities. By focusing our attention on determinants rather than outcomes, we are able to tap into community and systems assets and focus our work on the prevention of undesirable outcomes rather than intervene once they occur. Focus areas, along with youth voice from ward meeting findings, will help steer recommendations and data indicators over the next five years. The focus areas are informed by academic research and best practices in the field, developed by YCB staff, and reviewed by our jurisdictional partners.

YCB staff developed focus areas by synthesizing literature on each of the priorities once they were analyzed to identify critical points to address within each priority. The literature review was focused on digging deeper into each priority to develop sub-points within the scope of the YCB's and our jurisdictional partners' work. Literature was selected based on its relevance to each priority and its credibility. Focus areas were verified by YCB staff and our jurisdictional partners for accuracy and relevance.

Youth Agency

Youth leadership and decision making

Young people are empowered to be active agents in shaping their futures and communities when they have equitable access to genuine leadership and decision-making opportunities. Youth leadership and decision making are beneficial to youth and their communities alike, with positive outcomes such as problem-solving efficacy, empathy, improved academic and career outcomes, and social and interpersonal skills (Akiva, Cortina, & Smith, 2014; Anyon, Bender, Kenedy, & Dechants, 2018; World Youth Report 2003). Though youth aged 14 and older tend to have the most decision making and leadership opportunities, research shows that all children and youth benefit from these processes (Akiva et al., 2014). Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is one approach to youth leadership and decision making that has proved incredibly effective at promoting equity and disrupting adult-youth hierarchies of power (Ozer, Newlan, Douglas, & Hubbard, 2013). YPAR allows youth to research a topic of interest and take action informed by their research to improve their communities. Evaluations of YPAR programs show youth involved in them develop increased civic participation (Valorose, 2015; Watts & Flanagan, 2007), decision making and problem-solving skills, sense of purpose, and more positive attitudes towards education and school (Holden, Evans, Hinnant, & Messeri, 2005; Mitra, 2004; Ozer & Douglas, 2013; Wilson et al., 2007; Zimmerman, 2000). However, not all youth leadership and decision-making opportunities are created equal, as low-quality opportunities that are restrictive, adult-centered, and lack knowledge of youth development are ultimately harmful to young people. High quality leadership and decision-making opportunities include mutual respect between youth and adults, meaningful roles for youth, and shared decision making (Murdock, Patterson, & Gatmaitan, 2008).

Civic participation

Civic participation is a duty expected of every citizen that strengthens communities and diversifies representation in government. Youth civic participation predicts their civic behaviors into adulthood (Barber, Mueller, & Ogata, 2013; Fendrich, 1993; Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007; Jennings, 2002; McAdam, 1988; Stewart, Settles, & Winter, 1998), thus impacting long-term civic engagement outcomes. Youth volunteering is associated with improved adolescent cognitive ability (Rosenthal, Feiring, & Lewis, 2010), even if it is required for a class or afterschool program (Hart et al., 2007). There are gaps in access to and participation in civic life. Personality (Atkins, Hart, & Donnelly, 2005), neighborhood (Hart, Atkins, Markey, & Youniss, 2004), gender, educational capital, and race (Cruce & Moore, 2007) all influence the extent to which youth are civically engaged.

Mental flourishing

Young people are prepared to take agency over their lives and contribute to their communities when they have positive, healthy mental states and coping mechanisms. Youth mental wellbeing is a relatively new and severely understudied field among researchers, but is an incredibly salient issue to young people. When studied, it is usually in deficit-based terms, such as mental illness, which is not necessarily an indicator of mental flourishing. Mental flourishing is an individual, dynamic term that includes having fulfilling relationships, contributing to community, being resilient, having positive identity, social competency and integration, personal growth, empowerment, and educational engagement (Herman, Saxena, & Moodie, 2005; Reitzner, 2014). Eighty percent of youth nationwide are free of mental illness, yet only 40% of youth are flourishing (Keyes, 2006). Mental flourishing is a protective factor against substance abuse, delinquency, lifelong effects of childhood trauma, negative public health outcomes, and physical and mental illness (Herman et al., 2005; Howell, 2009; Huppert, 2004; Keyes, 2006; Keyes & Simoes, 2012; Masten 2010; Minnesota Department of Health, n.d.). Promoting mental flourishing also requires an equity lens, as intergenerational social, economic, and environmental inequities inhibit mental flourishing (MN Department of Health, n.d.).

Culturally Responsive Approaches

Individual discrimination

Racial-ethnic discrimination is detrimental to young people's physical and mental health, yet most youth of color routinely experience it (Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2008). Racial-ethnic discrimination is associated with heightened stress, (Pascoe & Richman, 2009), lower medication adherence (Cuffee et al., 2013), increases in chronic health conditions, heart disease, pain, and respiratory illnesses (Gee, Spencer, Chen, & Takeuchi, 2007), increased likelihood of daily tobacco use (Bennett et al., 2005), and use of risky coping mechanisms, such as problem drinking (Martin, Tuch, & roman, 2003). Increased stress alone is responsible for increases in cortisol, which is puts youth at risk for depression, schizophrenia, heart disease, and metabolic syndrome, (Björntorp & Rosmond, 1999; Nemeroff, 1996; Smith et al., 2005; Walker & Diforio, 1997). Racial and ethnic discrimination also impacts prenatal and perinatal outcomes, as half of Black mothers who experience discrimination have significantly increased odds of preterm deliveries and low birthweight, both of which can complicate the long-term health of children (Dole et al., 2003; Mustillo et al, 2004). Discrimination is especially harmful to self-esteem for youth under age 12 because they are still developing abstract reasoning skills required to understand societal racism (Seaton, 2009; Phinney and Ong, 2002; Proctor, Linley, & Malthy, 2008). One limitation of the research on racial-

ethnic discrimination is that, for the most part, it relies on a Black-White binary of race, which lacks generalizability of findings to other racial groups, various ethnic groups within Black and White racial categories, and those who are mixed race.

Cultural socialization

Cultural socialization is a dynamic process though which youth come to understand their race, ethnicity, and culture and how they relate to diverse others, making it a significant asset in youth's lives. Preparing youth for bias, promoting egalitarianism, self-worth messages, and silence about race-ethnicity are all forms of cultural socialization. Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor (2012) theorize that cultural socialization contributes to youth's self-concept and coping strategies, which determines how youth adjust to racial and ethnic discrimination. Most research shows that cultural socialization buffers against the deleterious effects of discrimination among youth of color by moderating the relationships between discrimination and self-esteem (Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2007), school self-esteem, school bonding (Dotterer, McHale, and Crouter, 2009). Further, an adherence to Afrocentric cultural values among Black adolescent girls were predictive of higher self-esteem and perceived social support (Constantine, Alleyne, Wallace, & Franklin-Jackson, 2006). However, focusing too much on racism among youth can intensify feelings of devaluation that come out of discriminatory experiences (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Stevenson et al., 1997).

Friend, family and neighbor care

Cultural socialization from an early age is important to developing racial-ethnic self-esteem and coping mechanisms against discrimination, and culturally sensitive forms of childcare are key to promoting these outcomes. People of color are more likely to rely on friend, family, and neighbor (FFN) care (Boushey & Wright, 2004; Mulligan, Brimhall, West, & Chapman, 2005; Snyder & Adelman, 2004; Susman-Stillman & Stout, 2009), and this gap widens as young children enter school and require before or afterschool care (Capizzano, Tout, & Adams, 2002; Mulligan et al., 2005; Snyder & Adelman, 2004). Though FFN care is an under researched topic, existing research shows that there's typically an ethnic match between FFN providers and the children they're caring for, suggesting at least an implicit focus on cultural development among young children (Fuller et al., 1996; Galinsky et al., 1994; Layzer & Goodson, 2006; Smith, 1991; Susman-Stillman & Banghart, 2008; Zinsser, 1991).

Gender and Sexuality Inclusivity

Individual discrimination

LGBTQ and female youth experience higher rates of discrimination than their straight, cisgender peers (Gower et al., 2018; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2002; Mays & Cochran, 2001; Wyss, 2004), which leads to worse mental health outcomes (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Mays & Cochran, 2001), worse economic outcomes (Lombardi et al., 2002), increased bully victimization (Gower et al., 2018), increases in risky behaviors (Eisenberg et al., 2017), and decreases in physical health (Fazeli, Hall, Kalton, & Carlos, 2016; Jacobs et al., 2014; Pavalko, Mossakowski, & Hamilton, 2003). There are also gendered differences in the effects of discrimination, as LGBTQ boys report higher levels of depressive symptoms than LGBTQ girls (Almeida et al., 2009; Gower et al., 2018). The process of coping with gender- and sexuality-based discrimination and violence in high school can be detrimental to bodily, emotional, and mental health, which may be the causal mechanism for some deleterious effects of discrimination,

such as low self-esteem, anxiety, rage, social withdrawal and depression, and self-destructive behaviors (Wyss, 2004). Furthermore, educational settings often reinforce homophobia, heterosexism, and sexism among young children (Duke & McCarthy, 2009), exacerbating the already negative effects of discrimination.

Gender- and sexuality-specific health care

Girls and LGBTQ youth have significant barriers to accessing health care services that are essential to their physical and mental health and their self-concept. LGBTQ youth are often unable to access appropriate and effective healthcare due to research and knowledge gaps among health providers. Most areas of LGBTQ health lack adequate research (Institute of Medicine, 2011) and medical professionals receive little LGBTQ-specific training (Lim & Bernstein, 2012). LGBTQ folks report high rates of teaching their health care providers about LGBTQ people to get appropriate care, and trans folks are more likely to have health providers ask unnecessary or invasive questions (Just Us, 2018). Knowledge gaps in the health care of LGBTQ youth translate into worse health outcomes, including lack of HIV screening and prevention and unknown long-term effects of hormone therapy (Centers for Disease Control, 2019; Den Heijer, Bakker, & Gooren, 2017). Young women and girls also have poor experiences accessing appropriate and effective health care. Women who experience pain are treated differently in healthcare settings than men, including decreased odds of being prescribed painkillers when reporting pain (Calderone, 1990; Fenton, 2016; Samulowitz, Gremyr, Eriksson, & Hensing, 2018) and waiting longer before receiving pain medication in an ER (Fassler, 2015). There are also knowledge gaps in health care and treatment for women as most conditions are studied on male physiology (Keisel, 2017; Nabel, 2000). Perhaps the most glaring neglect aspect of women's health is postpartum maternal care, which is critical to one's ability to be an able parent in the early stages of a child's life and can impact a child's health outcomes. Few national statistics and robust research exists on postpartum health care, and postpartum health care in its current state is too limited to meet the full health needs of new parents (Albers, 2000). The few studies that do exist are related to physical health following birth, such as breastfeeding, rather than psychosocial care (Cheng, Fowles, & Walker, 2006).

Perceptions of safety

The extent to which female youth and girls feel safe in public highlights systemic sexism and violence against women and is a common concern for female youth in Minneapolis. Perceptions of safety are most visceral and concrete in instances of stranger harassment in public spaces, which is why most research uses street harassment as a proxy for women's feelings of safety. An overwhelming majority of women have experienced some form of stranger harassment (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Gallup, 2012; MacMillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000), which can result in self-objectification, increased shame, and a restriction of movement/public exposure (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008). Cobbina, Miller, & Brunson (2008) corroborate this finding, but go farther to state that disorganized neighborhoods heighten female feelings of insecurity as ecological factors of these neighborhoods often result in more adult and adolescent men hanging out in groups in public spaces, which contributes to women feeling unsafe. Street harassment is a distinct, widespread, easy to understand form of structural gender-based violence, which is defined as "unequal access to the determinants of health (e.g., housing, good quality health care, unemployment, education), which then creates conditions where interpersonal violence can occur and shape gendered forms of violence that place women in vulnerable positions" (Montesanti, 2015, p. 2). Though research suggests increased policing as a remedy to street harassment, police presence can be a threat to others, which is contrary to the spirit of this focus area. We challenge our jurisdictions to make public spaces feel

safer for young women and girls through prioritizing the intersection of women's and youth rights and ensuring women are a part of formal decision making processes.

Social Connection

Adult relationships

Adult relationships, including parents, caregivers, and non-related caring adults, are important sources of care, consistency, and support among children and youth. Effective parenting and parental warmth are mediating factors in the face of instability (Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013), and promote protective cognitive factors (Cavanagh & Huston, 2006; Gershoff, Raver, Aber, & Lennon, 2007; Hair et al., 2005; Sarsour et al., 2010; Whittaker 2011). Mentoring and other caring adult relationships are also associated with child and youth well-being across the board (DuBois et al., 2011), including increased social emotional, (Darling, Hamilton, Toyokawa, & Matsuda, 2002; McDowell, Kim, O'Neil, & Parke, 2002), relationship (DuBois, Neville, Parra, & Pugh-Lilly, 2002; Karcher, 2005; Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000; Rhodes, Reddy, Roffman, & Grossman, 2005), and academic (Cadima, Leal, & Burchinal, 2010; Herrera et al., 2007; Pianta, 1999; Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall, 2003; Sánchez, Esparza, & Colón, 2008) skills, and reduced risky behaviors (Beier, Rosenfeld, Spitalny, Zanksy, & Bontempo, 2000; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010). Caring adult relationships are a critical protective factor for vulnerable youth (Ahrens, DuBois, Richardson, Fan, & Lozano, 2008; Greeson, Grinstein-Weiss, & Usher, 2010; Munson & McMillen, 2008; Rhodes, Haight, & Briggs, 1999; Shlafer, Poehlmann, Coffino, & Hanneman, 2009). However, the structure and quality of mentoring programs matters significantly for outcomes as the most impactful mentorships are long-term (DuBois & Rhodes, 2006; Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2011; Herrera et al., 2007; Karcher, 2005), structured relationships that are flexible and youth-centered (Langhout, Rhodes, and Osborne (2004).

Peer relationships

Peer relationships become salient as children transition into adolescence and enter a developmental period marked by increased social awareness, extended peer groups, and less time spent with their families (Hunter and Youniss, 1982; Larson 1999; Koenig and Abrams, 1999; Ostrov and Offer, 1978; Weiss 1973). Healthy peer relationships are associated with increased social emotional skills, new mindsets, school success, healthy lifestyles (Search Institute, 2017), broadened perspectives, life skills, self-confidence, and academic motivation. They reduce the risk of problem behaviors (Search Institute, 2016), and moderate the negative effects of bullying and hostile family environments (Davies, 1982; Schwartz et al., 2000; Gauze et al., 1996; Pettit et al., 2001). While peer relationships can be a positive and protective part of youths' lives, unhealthy relationships are detrimental to development and can encourage problem behaviors such as substance abuse, delinquency, antisocial behavior (Patterson, Dishion, & Yoerger, 2000), and depression (Rose, 2002).

Social capital

Social capital is a social determinant of health and can impact long-term outcomes for children and youth, and is defined as the strength of relationships and solidarity among community members, group access to resources, and a community's ability to create change and exercise informal social control (Kawachi & Berkman, 2000; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Many youth access social capital through their neighborhoods, cultural communities, religious institutions, and their families. Social capital is associated with better self-rated health, (Browning and Cagney, 2002) lower rates of neighborhood violence, (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997) and better access to health-enhancing resources like medical care,

healthy food options, and places to exercise (Matsaganis and Wilkin, 2015), and lower rates of violence and crime (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Social capital mediates other negative community factors, such as income inequality and mortality rates (Gilbert, Quinn, Goodman, Butler, & Wallace, 2013; Kawachi et al., 1997).

Supportive Systems

Structural discrimination

Structural discrimination is often a roadblock to stability in the lives of children and youth. Structural discrimination is defined in the literature as "macro-level conditions that constrain the opportunities, resources, and well-being of socially disadvantaged groups" (Link & Phelan, 2001) and are embedded into social, political, and economic structures and rules to maintain and perpetuate advantage and disadvantage. (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Jones, 2000; Link & Phelan, 2001; National Research Council 2004; Reskin 1998). It is incredibly difficult to live in a stable environment when structures were designed to disenfranchise and oppress people of color and institutions continue to uphold systems that constrain resources available among marginalized communities. Some forms of structural discrimination include residential segregation, educational segregation, and disparities in incarceration rates. Perceiving structural racism in any form is detrimental to one's physical and mental health (Bobo & Thompson, 2006; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Kessler et al., 1990; Lukachko et al., 2014; Seaton, 2009). Racial disparities in incarceration rates negatively impact families, as children of incarcerated parents are significantly more likely to be expelled or suspended from school (Johnson, 2009), have a reduced family income, and are more likely to be in foster care if their mother is incarcerated (Hagan, 1999; Phillips & Bloom, 1998). Further, increases in incarceration are not necessarily related to increases in crime, as incarceration rates correlated more strongly with the prevalence of policies that are harsh on crime than with actual crime (Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014). Residential segregation is a major cause of health disparities between African American and White youth and determines allocation of resources such as schools, health care, and employment, available to individuals, families, and communities (Bremner, 2002; Evans & Saegert, 2000; Landrine & Klonof, 2000; Massey & Fischer, 2006; McEwan, 2002; National Center for Health Statistics, 1994; Neighborhood Safety, 1999; Williams & Collins, 2001). Though residential segregation is mostly associated with negative outcomes, young people also develop resilience though facing opposition. In their study of college-age students, Massey and Fischer (2006) found that "Black and Latino students who come of age in minority-dominant environments exhibited higher levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-confidence than those growing up in integrated settings."

Staff development

Systems are made of people, and the people working within systems must be well-equipped to both interact with youth and engage youth as partners in their work. Professional development of youth work professionals and front-line staff improves outcomes for youth, including staying in positive programming for longer and improving program quality (Bouffard & Little, 2004; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; McLaughlin, 2000; Rosenthal & Vandell, 1996; Smith & Akiva, 2008; Tolman, Pittman, Yohalem, Thomases, & Trammel, 2002). However, youth work professionals and people in systems involving youth frequently experience a lack of support and workforce issues such as heavy workloads, long hours, high vulnerability to burnout, high turnover among employees of youth development (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003), low wages, inadequate benefits, youth work undervalued as a profession, and scarcity of intentional career paths

(Stone, Garza, & Borden, 2005). Systems staff must also include youth in their processes, which requires staff to empower youth to be involved in their treatment plan and in creating system-wide change, knock down the walls of professionalism, build partnerships with young people, encourage youth voice and ownership, and focus on youth needs (Matarese, McGinnis, & Mora, 2005).

Family friendly work policies

Family friendly work policies "make it possible for employees to more easily balance family and work, and to fulfill both their family and work obligations", and can include benefits such as flex time, parental and family leave, child care, and college scholarships (Community Toolbox, n.d.). Effective family friendly policies are a network of interconnected policies, as "no single policy or limited set of policies is likely to make much of a difference for employees grappling with such diverse family demands" (Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001). Parents with higher incomes, more education, and higher status jobs report greater access to these benefits than others (Schwartz, 1994), making the universalization of family friendly work policies an equity issue. Negative perceptions of organizational support and workplace culture around family friendly policies are also a barrier to accessing these policies (Lewis, 1997; Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001; Schwartz, 1994). Additionally, family friendly work policies are good for workplaces, as childcare subsidies and alternative work schedules have been found to reduce turnover and increase agency effectiveness (Lee & Hong, 2011).

Developmental needs

Economic wellbeing

Having enough money to provide basic needs, resources, and developmental opportunities to children and youth is paramount to healthy development and personal fulfillment, yet disparities in income continue to grow (MN Compass, 2017). Inequality in income is most prevalent among people of color as Minneapolis continues to have some of the worst racial inequities in the country (Jones, 2019). Childhood and adolescent poverty is associated with a range of negative outcomes, including decreased likelihood of upward mobility as an adult (Cramer, O'Brien, Cooper, & Luengo-Prado, 2009; Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010), lower likelihood of obtaining any postsecondary education (Kalil & Wightman, 2011), decreased cognitive abilities (Brooks-Gun, Duncan, & Maritato, 1997; Farah et al., 2006), and negative academic and psychosocial outcomes (Alaimo, Olson, & Frongillo, 2001). Furthermore, parental job loss, a contributing factor to economic instability, is associated with increases in child behavioral problems and grade retention (Stevens, Huff, & Schaller, 2011).

Residential and school mobility

When involuntary, residential instability is detrimental to the wellbeing of youth and adolescents, and is closely linked to school mobility. While "moving up" into a better neighborhood is often beneficial to children, being forced out of housing due to foreclosure, increased rent, or displacement due to gentrification has negative effects that disproportionately affect low-income families (Coulton et al, 2009; Crowley 2003). Some of the detriments of residential instability include increased infant mortality and health concerns (Culhane & Elo, 2001; Cutts et al., 2011), poor adolescent adjustment (Adam and Chase-Lansdale, 2002), behavioral problems (Rumbold et al, 2012), poorer parent-child relationships (Riina and Brooks-Gunn, 2016), decreased academic performance (Corwley, 2003; Pribesh and Downey, 1999; Simpson and Fowler, 1994; Wood et al., 1993), and lower long-term educational attainment (Astone &

McLanahan, 1994; Hagan, MacMillian, & Wheaton, 1996; Haveman, Wolfe, & Spaulding, 1991). In its most extreme form, residential instability results in youth homelessness, which disproportionately affects LGBTQ youth and youth of color. The detriments of youth homelessness are many, including mental illness, substance use, sexually transmitted infections, sexual exploitation, and physical victimization (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2019). The benefits of stable housing are clear; they include improved child health (Fogelman et al., 1989), fewer problem behavaiors (Boyle, 2002; Haurin et al., 2002), and greater academic achievement and completion (Aaronson, 2000. Conley, 2001; Green & White, 1997, Haurin et al., 2002).

Violence

Growing up in a violent environment is extremely harmful to children and adolescents, and impacts victims, witnesses, and those who hear about violent incidents (Jones-Webb & Wall, 2008). Though community violence typically occurs in areas that have limited access to other forms of stability, it is a unique destabilizing factor that puts youth and children in immediate danger for injury and death. As such, youth of color, youth experiencing homelessness or high mobility, low-income youth, and youth with a history of county system involvement are at greater risk of violent victimization (University of Minnesota, 2015). Children and youth exposed to violence experience behavioral problems, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Fowler, Tompsett, Craciszewski, Jacques-Tiura, & Baltes, 2009; Margolin, Vickerman, Oliver, & Gordis, 2010), increased signs of aggression (Guerra, Huesmann, & Spindler, 2003), and are more likely to perpetuate intimate partner violence later in life (Beyer, Wallis & Hamberger, 2013).

Childcare access

Stability of care is a developmental necessity for young children as they learn to form healthy attachments and know that they will be cared for. Though some transitions in care are normal and healthy, such as when a child enters school or transitions from infant care to toddler care, numerous or unnecessary transitions of care can increase distress and behavior problems (Cryer et al., 2005; Morrissey, 2009). Though most families strive for continuity of care, scarce social and economic resources, ever-changing working conditions, difficulty accessing subsidies, changes in provider availability, convenience, cost, and accessibility of transportation push families into changing childcare arrangements they may be otherwise satisfied with (Henly and Lyons, 2000; Sandstrom and Chaudry, 2012; Scott, London, & Hurst, 2005).

Appendix F: Ward Meeting Topics

After all ward meetings were completed, a small group of MYC members analyzed the cluster titles from the ward meetings to develop final themes for the ward meetings. The themes are **accessible necessities, community improvements, community safety, equity and unity, green, power of knowledge, public health necessities,** and **school improvements**. There was an additional miscellaneous category in which youth sorted responses that did not seem to fit into the other categories. The responses in the miscellaneous category are not further analyzed alongside the other ward meeting data.

Figure F-1: Ward meeting theme n-sizes

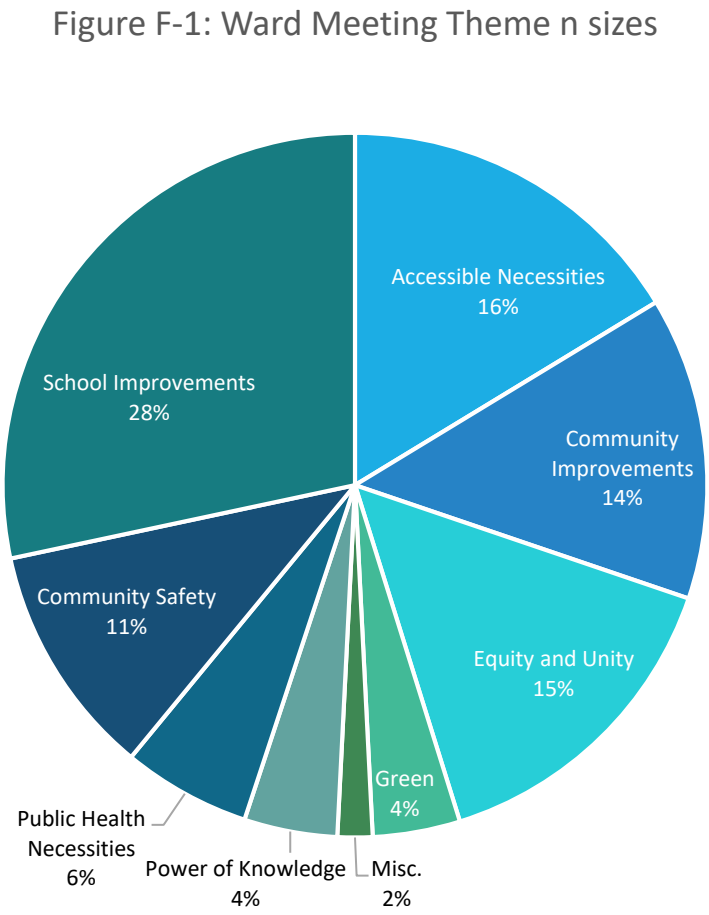


Figure F-1 shows the n sizes of all ward meeting responses. There were 374 total responses. School improvements accounted for the largest share of responses (28%, n=106), followed by accessible necessities (16%, n=61), equity and unity (15%, n=56), community improvements (14%, n=52), community safety (11%, n=40), public health necessities (6%, n=22), green (5%, n=18), and power of knowledge (4%, n=16). We expect that the prevalence of some of the themes, such as school improvements and community improvements, are skewed due to hosting the ward meetings primarily at recreation centers and schools.

Figure F-2: Ward meeting themes by ward

Figure F-2: Ward Meeting Themes by Ward

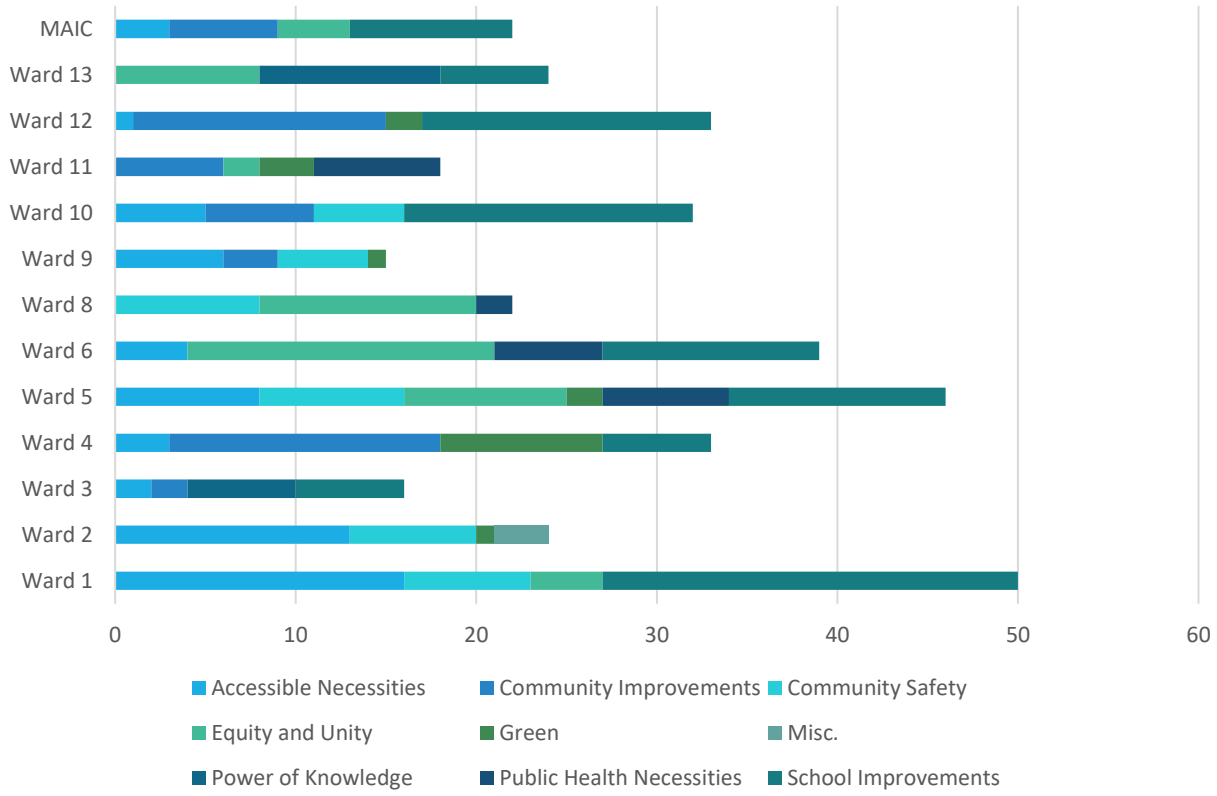


Figure F-2 shows the prevalence of each theme by city council ward or community-based organization. Accessible necessities was the most discussed theme at wards 2 (54% of responses, n=13) and 9 (40%, n=6), community improvements was the most discussed at ward 4 (45%, n=15), equity and unity was the most discussed at ward 6 (44%, n=17) and 8 (55%, n=12), power of knowledge was the most discussed at wards 3 (38%, n=6) and 13 (42%, n=10), public health necessities was the most discussed at ward 11 (39%, n=7), and school improvements was the most discussed at wards 1 (46%, n=23), 3 (38%, n=6), 5 (26%, n=12), 10 (50%, n=16), 12 (48%, n=16), and the Minneapolis American Indian Center (41%, n=9). Overall, themes were relatively evenly distributed, with a greater emphasis on school improvements across all wards. In fact, school improvements was the most discussed theme across all wards.

The geographic distribution of themes across wards confirms the validity of these themes among diverse groups of youth. The extent to which we can disaggregate data provided in the ward meetings by geography is limited due to small n-sizes and the fact that youth who attended the ward meetings did not necessarily reside in the ward in which the meeting was held. However, there are some broad insights we can glean with the limited demographic information we have on attendees. Overall, ward meetings in which girls were the majority tended to touch on more abstract themes and those relating to equity, fairness, and respect (i.e. equity and unity, power of knowledge), whereas themes at male-dominated meetings tended to be more concrete (i.e. community safety, accessible necessities). School improvements seemed to be a topic of concern across the board and cut across age, gender, race/ethnicity, and geography.

Overall, the findings from the ward meetings highlight areas youth across the city wish to see changed in the next five years. Topics are far ranging and deeply rooted in youth experiences in Minneapolis. One area of change is accessing necessities, which includes opening opportunities to all youth and increasing economic stability. Next is community improvements, which highlight the need to restructure the built environment to be more youth-friendly as well as increase afterschool programming to create more positive experiences for youth. Another topic to address is community safety, which is focused primarily on eradicating violence, including community violence, gun violence, and police brutality, though it also highlights safety concerns youth feel downtown. Youth also want to see a greater focus on equity and unity within the community, which includes increasing racial/ethnic diversity and equity as well as fostering strengthening community. Youth are also interested in adopting green, or environmentally friendly, practices such as keeping public spaces clean and increasing the accessibility of public transportation to address climate change. Another topic is increasing youth power and eliminating ageism, as many youths feel disempowered by youth who assert their power and do not take the time to listen to youth and take their concerns seriously. Finally, a majority of the youth we talked with would like to see school improvements, such as increasing school-based systems for support, making the curriculum more diverse and relevant to their experiences, and expanding opportunities to access resources like scholarships and sex education. Taken together, these eight themes show the gaps that youth see in the services and programs offered to them. In the next year, the YCB will dive deeper into the ward meeting findings to develop concrete recommendations for our jurisdictional partners as it is critical that policies and practices that impact youth are informed by youth voice.

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