

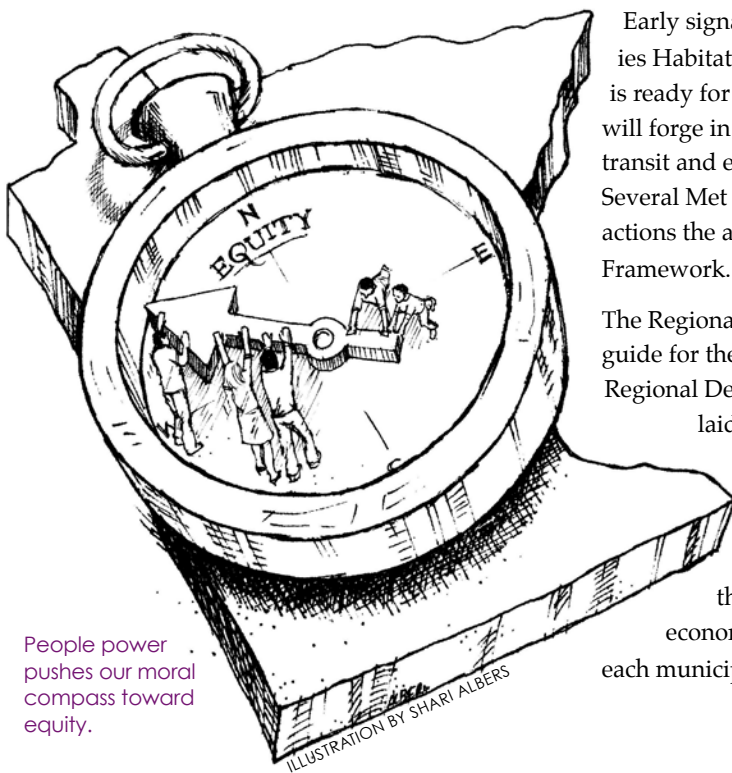


# COMMON GROUND

CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACES AND ISSUES IN THE TWIN CITIES REGION | FALL 2011

## New Met Council to Revamp Regional Vision

**A** new governor this year meant a new Metropolitan Council. Gov. Mark Dayton's 17 appointees to our regional planning body now have at least four years to map out the impact they would like to make on the Twin Cities region. It's a big job to plan the region's transportation, housing, parks and trails, and more, especially in a sluggish economy.



People power pushes our moral compass toward equity.

Early signals from the new Metropolitan Council, chaired by Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity CEO Susan Haigh, indicate that the council is ready for the challenge. Haigh has indicated that the Met Council will forge in new directions under her leadership, emphasizing housing, transit and economic development as the main priorities for the agency. Several Met Council members have also indicated that one of the first actions the agency will take will be to revamp the Regional Development Framework.

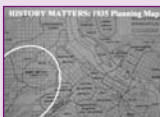
The Regional Development Framework is a comprehensive development guide for the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The existing version, 2030 Regional Development Framework, was passed in 2004. Its purpose, laid out in state statute, is to provide "policy statements, goals, standards, programs and maps prescribing guides for the orderly and economical development, public and private, of the metropolitan area." The plan doesn't just look at land use, transit planning and housing needs in isolation, though. Rather, it is meant to recognize the physical, social and economic needs of the Twin Cities, and provide a framework for each municipality in the region to meet our aggregate needs.

*continued on page 10*

### on the INSIDE



What is Corridors of Opportunity?  
**PAGE 4**



Harrison Neighborhood Association Making Strategic Gains  
**PAGE 7**



HIRE MN Works to End Employment Discrimination  
**PAGE 8**

**Alliance for Metropolitan Stability**

2525 E. Franklin Ave., Suite 200  
 Minneapolis, MN 55406  
 Phone: (612) 332-4471  
 Fax: (612) 338-2194  
[www.metrostability.org](http://www.metrostability.org)

*The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition of grassroots organizations that work together to advance racial, economic and environmental justice in economic growth and land development in the Twin Cities region.*

Russ Adams—Executive Director  
[russ@metrostability.org](mailto:russ@metrostability.org)

Ebony Adedayo—Programming Coordinator  
[ebony@metrostability.org](mailto:ebony@metrostability.org)

Tracy Babler—Development/Communications Director  
[tracy@metrostability.org](mailto:tracy@metrostability.org)

Maura Brown—Associate Director  
[maura@metrostability.org](mailto:maura@metrostability.org)

Joan Vanhala—Coalition Organizer  
[joan@metrostability.org](mailto:joan@metrostability.org)

Avi Viswanathan—HIRE Minnesota Coalition Organizer  
[avi@metrostability.org](mailto:avi@metrostability.org)

**MEMBERS**

All Parks Alliance for Change  
 African American Action Committee  
 Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation  
 Community Stabilization Project  
 District Councils Collaborative of St. Paul and Minneapolis  
 Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota  
 Envision Minnesota  
 The Family Partnership  
 Fresh Energy  
 Harrison Neighborhood Association  
 HOME Line  
 Jewish Community Action  
 League of Women Voters of Minnesota  
 Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers  
 Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing  
 Minneapolis Urban League  
 Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy  
 Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance  
 Native American Community Development Institute  
 Office for Social Justice, Catholic Charities  
 St. Paul Area Coalition for the Homeless  
 Sierra Club, North Star Chapter  
 Summit Academy OIC  
 Somali Action Alliance  
 Transit for Livable Communities  
 Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
 Women's Environmental Institute

The work of the Alliance is generously supported by the following **FUNDERS:**

**Ford Foundation**

**Headwaters Foundation for Justice**

**Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota**

**Minneapolis Foundation**

**Otto Bremer Foundation**

**McKnight Foundation**

**Northwest Area Foundation**

**REAMP**

**Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock**  
*and by individual contributions from people like you.*

*From the Director's Desk***Anchoring Equity in Corridors of Opportunity**

On the morning of June 28, an extraordinary gathering of public sector staff, community leaders, business people and nonprofit advocates came together to hear several national and local speakers discuss the complexities of refining growth policies using a racial and economic equity lens. The event, billed as Anchoring Equity to Achieve Sustainable Regional Development Outcomes, featured national experts such as John A. Powell of the Kirwan Institute and Angela Glover Blackwell of PolicyLink, as well as local scholar Nekima Levy-Pounds of the University of St. Thomas.

A diverse crowd of 280 people heard Ms. Glover Blackwell define equity as the “just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate and prosper. The work of equity is to create the conditions that allow all to reach their full potential.” The audience heard local and national data demonstrating that our region has some of the worst disparities in the nation in areas of health, housing, wealth creation, educational and employment opportunities just as most of our communities are becoming more diverse.

At a time when initiatives like the Corridors of Opportunity project are focusing on strategies to invest in our infrastructure and generate more jobs, our region is beginning to grapple more earnestly with how to do so equitably. How can we choose growth models that help everyone prosper? How can low-income people and people of color participate in public decision-making, but also directly benefit from these investments?

That's why it seemed like a positive sign when the Anchoring Equity event led a number of government staff members within the Corri-



PHOTO BY NEXUS COMMUNITY PARTNERS

More than 280 people came to discuss the prospects for regional equity in the Twin Cities. Video of the event can be found at <http://bit.ly/p80iJJ>.



PHOTO BY NEXUS COMMUNITY PARTNERS

*If you were convinced by the conversation that we just had here at the podium and you are now committed to making sure you lead with equity, if your focus is on this issue of transportation, then you need to step back and ask "What are the equity requirements? What is it that the communities need and what do the individuals need that are being left behind?" And in order to answer those questions, you're going to have to ask the people who are being left behind and who are at risk of being left behind to come in and guide that conversation...and then you have to ask, "And how do we use our investment in a light rail system to be able to achieve those things?" If you go at it that way you'll do just fine.... And the good news is, if you go about that way, everybody will be just fine. Not just the ones who are being left behind, but the entire region.*

—Angela Glover Blackwell, Founder and CEO of PolicyLink, speaking at the Anchoring Equity event hosted by the Alliance and partners

dors of Opportunity initiative to approach the Alliance and our Community Engagement Team (CET) partners for help with the goal of reaching consensus on a substantive definition of equitable development. They realized that if public agencies wanted to explore what it means to lead with an equity lens, the next step would be to forge a set of shared expectations about equity that could be communicated to the wide variety of public agencies participating in this work. As a result of these conversations, a working definition and principle statement were drafted with some input by community members. The draft language was passed by the Corridors of Opportunity's governing Policy Board – with the understanding that continued dialogue with local community members and agency staff would help inform on-the-ground efforts. Here's the language that was adopted:

**Equitable Development:** In order to achieve a goal of universal equitable development, we will use targeted strategies to address racial and economic disparities. Equitable development creates healthy, vibrant communities of opportunity where low-income people, people of color and people with disabilities participate in and benefit from systems, decisions and activities that shape their neighborhoods.

**Equitable Development's core principle:** The principle of equitable development is to ensure that everyone, regardless of race, economic status, ability or the neighborhood in which they live can participate in and has access to essential ingredients for environmental, economic, social, and cultural well-being, including living-wage jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, viable housing choices, public transportation, good schools, strong social networks, safe and walkable streets, services, parks and access to healthy food.

Although skeptics may rightly point out that this is still "just words," it is also the first time that local cities, our most populous counties and our region's planning agency have collectively

signaled that they want to get serious about linking growth and development policies with practices to achieve more equitable results for communities that have been left behind. And from my perspective, that's a necessary prerequisite for the rest of our work to be successful.

For a working model to emerge, our region needs to make the commitment to work closely with communities, connect up with public officials who have a role or influence in our growth policies, have honest conversations about community goals (even when it's hard) and find ways to engage in joint problem-solving. We have a chance to develop a new engagement model that fosters a vision of community revitalization that is shaped and defined by underrepresented communities. If we are successful, we will also discover this is a "superior growth model" and our entire region will be better off for it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ Adams".

Russ Adams

## Visit Us Online!

**facebook**

"LIKE" US ON FACEBOOK TO GET DAILY UPDATES FROM AROUND THE REGION

**twitter**

FOLLOW @METROSTABILITY FOR THE LATEST TWEETS ON REGIONAL ISSUES

**the link**

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THE LINK NEWSLETTER AT [WWW.METROSTABILITY.ORG](http://WWW.METROSTABILITY.ORG)





# Corridors of Opportunity and the Community Engagement Team

## What is Corridors of Opportunity?

Corridors of Opportunity is an initiative to promote sustainable, vibrant and healthy communities in the Twin Cities region, using the expansion of our system of transitways as a development focus. The project is funded by a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and \$16 million in grants and loans from the philanthropic Living Cities program.

Corridors of Opportunity funds projects in seven corridors within the system of existing and planned transitways in the region: Southwest LRT, Bottineau Transitway, Gateway Corridor, Cedar Avenue BRT, Central Corridor LRT, Hiawatha LRT and Northstar Commuter Rail.



PHOTO BY NEERAJ MEHTA

Members of the Grants Review Committee considered 43 grant proposals for community engagement funding. Ultimately, 9 proposals totaling more than \$350,000 were recommended for funding.

## What is the role of the Community Engagement Team?

The Corridors of Opportunity Community Engagement Team is led by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Nexus Community Partners and the Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing.

The purpose of the CET is to develop and support targeted strategies that engage underrepresented communities in planning, decision-making, and implementation processes

on and around transit-oriented corridors. Community engagement should focus not only on equitable process, but also on equitable outcomes for underrepresented communities.

## What is the Community Engagement Team Steering Committee?

The CET recently developed a steering committee of leaders from underrepresented communities along planned transitways, who will help us meet our goal to transform our region's community engagement strategies. Members who have attended early meetings have defined the committee's role as "to ensure underrepresented communities are a powerful voice in creating an equitable regional transit system. We will work with community stakeholders and policy makers to:

- Set regional standards for community engagement
- Ensure underrepresented communities can leverage community benefits
- Secure equitable development from public investments in our regional transitways, and
- Provide a space for grassroots groups to learn from and support each other.

## What are Outreach and Engagement Grants?

The CET will also be responsible for recommending \$750,000 in Outreach and Engagement grants to community groups to do grassroots organizing along transitways. The first round of grant requests were received on August 15. The CET developed a community review committee, made up of 14 residents who live or work along one of the seven eligible corridors. These reviewers independently scored each proposal, and jointly chose the top 14 proposals to receive site visits. Ultimately, the committee recommended funding for 9 proposals totaling \$356,786 to the Policy Board, which approved the grants on October 26. The Policy Board also asked the committee to identify a community group working along the Gateway Corridor to receive an additional grant of \$40,000. A second round of grant requests will be accepted in mid-2012.

You can find a list of the Grants Review Committee members and the grants they recommended to the Policy Board at <http://engagetc.org/grants/>.

## You know who the Alliance is, but how much do you know about our **Community Engagement Team** partners?

**Nexus Community Partners** is an organization committed to community building and community development in communities of color and immigrant communities in the Twin Cities. Nexus was chosen as part of the CET because of its unique dedication to supporting place-based community development organizations led by and for low-income people and people of color around the Twin Cities region. In short, Nexus knows how to support marginalized people in building power around their own vision for their communities.

Nexus's commitment to community engagement stems from real, on-the-ground experience. Staff build relationships with people in the neighborhoods they serve to increase residents' capacity to be actively involved in shaping opportunities in their communities.

Nexus supports targeted solutions that benefit communities of color in the Twin Cities. By investing in programs that advance entrepreneurship, home ownership and workforce development, Nexus supports people of color and immigrant communities in building assets and wealth where other programs may have overlooked their unique needs.

As part of the CET, Nexus aspires to contribute new ways of reaching and tapping marginalized communities of color and immigrant communities. They hope to help create new decision-making structures that exist beyond the three-year Corridors of Opportunity project by building bridges between public agencies and community-based organizations. Ultimately, Nexus' goal is to impact policies that will ensure our regional transitway development investment benefits historically disenfranchised populations.

### **The Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing**

(MCNO) is a program of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota. For 18 years, MCNO has worked to ensure that local groups and communities have access to the resources, training and skills necessary to take on local issues affecting their neighborhoods and families. Through training, technical assistance and support to organizations involved in grassroots, issue-based organizing, MCNO has helped neighborhood groups achieve many victories over the years, including starting immigrant business organizations, developing stronger policies for inspection of multi-family housing in Minneapolis and ensuring more equitable investment in parks for low-income neighborhoods.

MCNO believes that investing in communities that have typically been bypassed in the planning and development process will help ensure that transit development works for and benefits them. To accomplish this, MCNO invests in grassroots listening and organizing, knowing that informal ways of working with communities, especially those that are the hardest to reach, are often some of the most successful.

MCNO will consider itself successful at the end of the three-year partnership if they, along with other CET members, have been able to persuade decision-makers that investing time and resources in community-based organizations and grassroots decision-making is a critical component of planning our region's future.

CET members Margaret Kaplan of MCNO, Repa Mekha of Nexus, Joan Vanhala of the Alliance, Neeraj Mehta of Nexus and Russ Adams of the Alliance. Not pictured: Yia Yang of MCNO.





PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL LIEFA

The Minnesota delegation is meeting before, during and after the summit to increase our connections and put learning into practice.

## *CET organizes Minnesota delegation for Equity Summit 2011*

Every three years, the national policy organization PolicyLink holds a summit of people from around the country who are concerned about equity. Last held in 2008, the conference drew a nation-leading group of 60 delegates from Minnesota.

When the McKnight Foundation asked the CET to coordinate the delegation this time around, we were expecting a similarly sized group. Imagine our surprise when more than 150 people signed up to go to the conference as part of the Minnesota delegation.

Equity Summit 2011 is the fourth national PolicyLink summit, bringing together the nation's equity movement to advance a truly inclusive policy agenda. Urban, suburban and rural leaders from around the country will join together to create communities and regions that benefit everyone — particularly low-income people and communities of color. Advocates from nonprofit, public policy, philanthropic, business and academic sectors will share promising practices and policies that create healthier com-

munities and stronger, more sustainable regions. Participants will explore how issues like healthy food access, transportation options, housing access, jobs and education are crucial to America's future competitiveness and prosperity.

As a delegation, the Minnesota group will benefit from having a learning community to share summit experiences, navigate summit programming options and support networking. We'll join together before, during and after the summit to develop connections and relationships, understand each other's work, develop a shared analysis of strengths and weakness in the Twin Cities, and discuss what barriers are preventing us from achieving our goal for an equitable region.

Our experience at Equity Summit 2011 will be more than a conference — it will be chance to be strategic about what we want to learn, and then return to the Twin Cities ready to put that learning into practice.

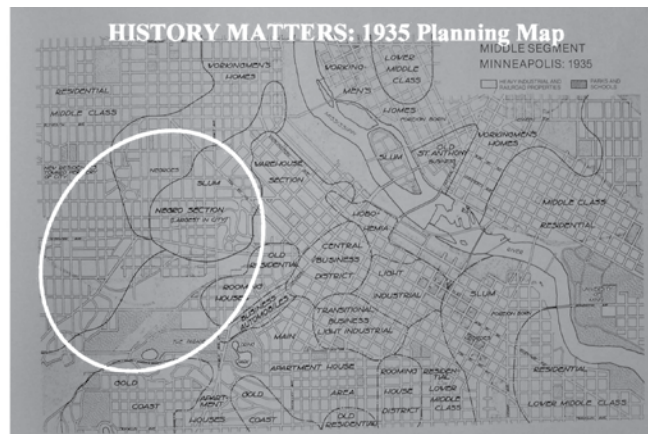


# Harrison Neighborhood Making Strategic Gains

**F**or the last 15 years, the Harrison Neighborhood Association (HNA) and community residents in north Minneapolis, have worked to overcome the historic disregard for and disinvestment in its community. A 1935 city of Minneapolis planning map designating Harrison as a “Negro slum” has very much shaped the long-term development of the neighborhood in terms of housing, schooling and political power.

Yet this is a community committed to self-defining who they are, rather than letting others do it for them. The neighborhood reclaimed some of its power by creating its own development plan for the Bassett Creek Valley, a major undeveloped property that holds boundless untapped opportunity for Harrison and Northside residents. The Bassett Creek Master Plan, developed by residents of both the Harrison and Bryn Mawr neighborhoods and endorsed by the city, lays out long-range plans to bring hundreds of units of affordable housing and thousands of jobs to the valley. However, recent city and county plans to place a diesel commuter train storage yard at Linden Yards could mean that Harrison would miss out on the development opportunities that it has worked so hard for.

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability has been working with HNA and other partners to ensure that the community’s voice and ideas are not left out as all of this development is planned. In 2010, HNA’s coalition was able to help keep the city of Minneapolis from selling a portion of the land to the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority – at least for now. Instead, the city council directed staff to explore joint development of the proposed storage yard location, with office development located above rail storage on a development platform.



This 1935 city of north Minneapolis planning map clearly designates the Harrison neighborhood as a Negro slum. The impact of those development decisions made decades ago still have an effect on North Minneapolis residents today.

For this development to work, there would need to be a \$45 million investment beyond the required public financing for the development. There are serious concerns about the findings of the city’s study. The study does indicate the structure is feasible, but the limitations of the site would result in the loss of a potential 800 jobs and 196 housing units. Additionally, the study does not address solutions to pollutions created by diesel train storage, nor does it provide a plan or how to fund the project. The phasing of construction and timing

of future commuter and high speed rail lines is incredibly important. The community may be home to an open-air diesel train storage facility for 20-30 years unless there is a perfect alignment of timing, funding, market and political will.

In June, HNA submitted a letter to the federal government raising concerns about the pending government decisions regarding the storage yard and the environmental justice impact to the Harrison neighborhood. The letter to the FTA has allowed the Har-

rison neighborhood to place its concerns on the radar of some of the most important federal agencies, and now HNA has their attention. These federal agencies want to know if there are adverse impacts caused by train storage, and how those impacts might be mitigated in a way that is fair to an environmental justice community such as Harrison. HNA also used the letter to formally present its thoughts and concerns to local government agencies that will be making critical land-use decisions.

Although it may seem like a lengthy and slow-moving process, being on top of all of these different steps in the complex LRT development process is what it takes for communities to have a say in the way transit development affects their lives. The Alliance is proud to be one of the organizations helping HNA ensure the voices of its community members are heard as these important developments happen in their neighborhood.

-Ebony Adedayo, Programming Coordinator



## HIRE Minnesota: What's next with MDHR?

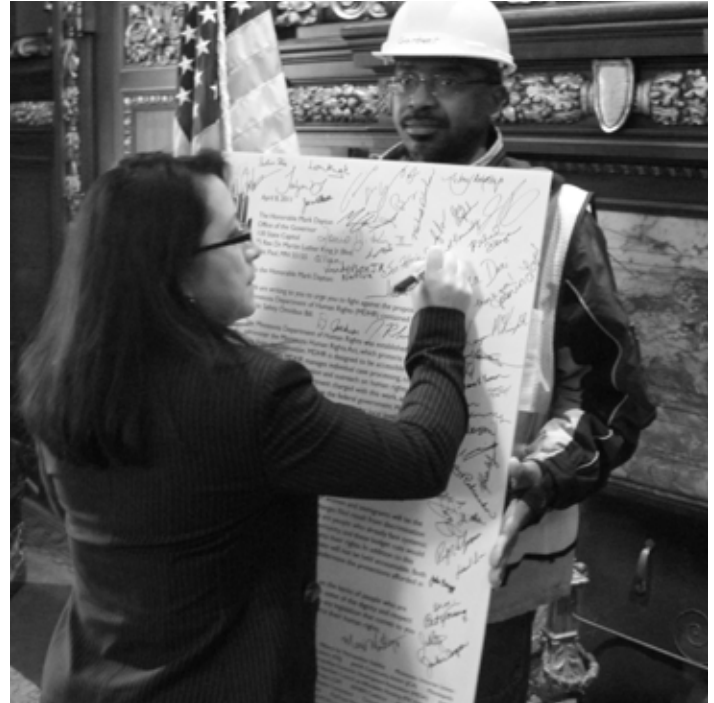
This past spring, the Minnesota State Legislature passed a bill cutting the budget of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) by 65 percent. MDHR is the only state agency that enforces hiring goals for people of color with state contractors. The agency also enforces the Minnesota Human Rights Act, which prevents discrimination against many Minnesotans in both public and private settings.

HIRE Minnesota recognized the importance of this department in ending disparities in Minnesota, so we led the charge to preserve it. We secured Gov. Mark Dayton's veto of this severe funding cut, and urged the governor to keep fighting until a final budget resolution was reached. In the end, thanks in large part to HIRE Minnesota's organizing and advocacy, MDHR was nearly fully funded, in line with the budgets all state agencies received.

*With new leadership and significant community attention, there is an important opportunity for MDHR to strengthen its work to end discrimination in Minnesota.*

So now what? One could argue that with racial disparities worse than they have ever been in Minnesota, MDHR was not exactly fulfilling its mission before the proposed cuts. We would agree. But we understand that with new leadership and significant community attention to these issues, there is an important opportunity for MDHR to strengthen its work to end discrimination in Minnesota.

HIRE Minnesota has started working with the governor's office and Commissioner of Human Rights Kevin Lindsey to expand the agency's role. At the Black



Sen. Patricia Torres Ray signs HIRE Minnesota's letter urging Gov. Mark Dayton to preserve MDHR funding.

Economic Summit in March, Gov. Dayton promised that he would have Commissioner Lindsey lead a study of diversity in state agencies. While this is still in its early stages, we are pleased that the commissioner has asked all cabinet-level agencies to report to him about their agencies' efforts and plans for workplace diversity. The governor and commissioner have both indicated that they would like to see more work done to increase diversity and end disparities in our state. This is a significant shift in the message that state agencies are receiving. HIRE Minnesota will continue to play a role in ensuring we move from good intentions and statements to actions that provide real benefits to our state's people of color.

For instance, HIRE Minnesota has started working more with MDHR on their enforcement of hiring and contracting goals for women and people of color on both MnDOT and Central Corridor LRT construction projects. In both of these areas, MDHR works with other agencies (MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council, respectively) to monitor the compliance of contractors. This can lead



*HIRE Minnesota is working with MDHR to encourage them to step up their own enforcement and bring real consequences to contractors that are not performing.*

to confusion as to who has authority over what part of the oversight. As we continue to see unacceptable results on both MnDOT and CCLRT construction, HIRE Minnesota is working with MDHR to clarify roles and to encourage them to step up their own enforcement and bring real consequences to contractors that are not performing.

The agency is already making strides. Charges of discrimination filed with MDHR in the first six months of 2011 increased 20 percent over the number of charges filed in the second half of 2010. Despite the increased caseload, MDHR has reduced the average time it takes to resolve a case by more than 25 days.

Throughout the time we have been working with MDHR, we have seen them engage with community respectfully and responsively. We will continue to work with the department so that we can reach Commissioner Lindsey's, the governor's and HIRE Minnesota's common goal of ending employment disparities in Minnesota.

*-Avi Viswanathan, HIRE Minnesota Coalition Organizer*

## Central Corridor Update

Over the past few months, HIRE Minnesota has seen a decline in the percentage of people of color being hired on Central Corridor LRT construction. As of the September reports, both the Minneapolis and Saint Paul construction crews are below the 18 percent hiring goal for people of color. HIRE Minnesota has serious concerns about the trend in hiring, and we are beginning to increase pressure on the contractors and the governing state agencies to ensure that people of color and women are hired to work on this \$1 billion infrastructure project.



Women and people of color are fighting alongside HIRE Minnesota for a fair shot at Central Corridor LRT jobs.

HIRE Minnesota is not just monitoring the situation, we are actively working to put more women and people of color on the job. We worked with the Metropolitan Council to establish contractor workforce projections and regular reporting to the public, so that we can all be aware of progress made by contractors each month. Requiring projections before construction has allowed us to compare the monthly reports with where contractors said they would be. This forces contractors to analyze what went wrong and what they need to do to fix the situation.

The good news is that some contractors are responding to our pressure. When confronted with the fact that their hiring was below projections, Ames McCrossan (the partnership of firms building the Minneapolis portion of the line) announced they will have their underachieving subcontractors develop action plans to increase their hiring of people of color. HIRE Minnesota has requested to see these action plans so that we can hold them accountable to these as well.

Not all the news is bad news on the Central Corridor. To date, contractors have exceeded their goals to hire 6 percent women for the project. And hiring of people of color, while below goal, is still twice the percentage MnDOT achieved on its metro-area projects last year. HIRE Minnesota is proud of the work we have done to this point, and we will continue to use these tools and engage the public as we push for people of color and women to get their fair share of Central Corridor construction jobs.

## *New Met Council to Revamp Regional Vision continued from page 1*

"I think of the framework as the regional comp plan," says John Bailey of Envision Minnesota, referring to the comprehensive development plans each regional city must submit to the Met Council every 10 years. "It should help create the form and function of the region. Done well, it will utilize the latest Census data, demographic trends and consumer preferences to plan for a region where more residents will want to live, work and play in the central cities and older suburbs."

The emphasis on social and economic needs will be important this time around, because many people in our region are less

concerned about land use patterns and more worried about the economy and the number of people, particularly people of color, who are jobless and living in poverty. Many advocates who watch the Met Council are hopeful that a new Regional Development Framework could lead the Twin Cities in a new direction by providing some innovative strategies to address these problems at a regional level.

"The trick is to rejigger the system plans and funding formulas to ensure development happens in an equitable and fair way," Bailey says.

Focusing on housing and economic development may seem like an impossible task as economic uncertainty has caused development to slow to a crawl. But development will start again, especially as new transitways are planned throughout the region, and the council could play an important role in directing how that happens. One priority from an equity perspective would be to redirect housing and economic development to the core cities and older suburbs, where the brunt of the foreclosure crisis was felt. New housing and other development in these areas could spur a natural cycle of reinvestment, returning a sense of vibrancy to areas of our region that are struggling the most.

Beyond economic development, there is also the opportunity for the Met Council to include workforce development and equitable hiring goals in the new development framework. Among the most marked disparities in our region, the unemployment level for people of color in the Twin Cities is as high as three times that of white people. That needs to change, and Alliance Executive Director Russ Adams says the Met Council could do something about it.

"There is a growing seriousness about equity from public sector leaders in our region," he says. "The Met Council has an opportunity to lay the groundwork for how cities and counties coordinate with workforce trainers to ensure women and people of color have access to jobs building our regional infrastructure. If you're going to say economic development is a priority, workforce development has to be in the Regional Development Framework and we have to find creative ways to make it work."

To make that happen, the Met Council and other governmental agencies need to get out of the rut of looking at transportation, housing and the environment independently and set out a vision that relates the parts to the whole. That's what has happened at the federal level, with the Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities bringing together the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to align investments and plan across issues rather than in narrow silos. In addition to setting cross-issue goals in the plan, the Met Council could coordinate with state agencies that have a major impact on regional development, to help ensure we're all working toward shared goals.

### Questions to ask for Equitable Development Policymaking



- **Fiscal equity:** Will the use of public funds reduce racial disparities rather than increasing them or neglecting to consider them?



- **Transportation equity:** Will transit access (or lack thereof) differentially impact people of different racial and economic statuses?



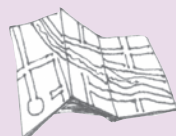
- **Housing equity:** Will the use of public funds for housing development differentially impact people of various racial and economic backgrounds?



- **Employment equity:** Are jobs created and retained as part of a strategy to reduce poverty across different racial and ethnic lines?



- **Environmental equity:** Are environmental hazards distributed unevenly across residents based on race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status?



- **Zoning and planning equity:** Are zoning and planning policies adversely impacting people differently based on socioeconomic, ethnic or racial status?

Public funds are hard to come by right now, so one of the most important outcomes of the Regional Development Plan will be how it directs regional expenditures for things like transportation investments.

*"If you're going to say economic development is a priority, workforce development has to be in the Regional Development Framework and we have to find creative ways to make it work."*

*-Russ Adams,  
Alliance Executive Director*

"The way to really influence growth and development in the Twin Cities is to shift the money, not just the plans," says Dave Van Hattum of Transit for Livable Communities. Van Hattum says the Met Council should use the Regional Development Framework to identify the priority areas for development and then use the money to do things that support those places. For example, it could prioritize rehabilitating an aging

urban corridor slated for redevelopment, improving bike and pedestrian connections to transit centers, or subsidizing affordable housing in a location that has good transit access. In addition, the Transportation Advisory Board, which provides a regional process for selecting and funding federally-supported transportation projects, could be directed to allocate more funds to transit and less to roads. Transportation projects are often planned years, even decades out, so changes of that magnitude could truly be the legacy of the new Met Council.

Placing economic development, livability and equity at the core of regional development planning makes sense, especially in a time where a double-dip recession is threatening our national economic outlook. It would also reaffirm the Twin Cities as one of the leaders in innovative, forward-thinking and equitable regional policymaking. The Met Council members have a major opportunity in front of them with the Regional Development Framework. If done right, it should receive the support it needs from cities, counties, legislators and, most importantly, the residents who will rely most on its success.

*-Tracy Babler,  
Development and Communications Director*

## Northside Transportation Network Holds Community Transit Workshop

Northside Transportation Network (NTN) was organized in 2009 to ensure an "authentic, transparent, accountable community process with the ultimate goal of leveraging community benefits for north Minneapolis." Specifically, the group is hoping to play a role in planning how the proposed Bottineau LRT would serve north Minneapolis.

Two alignments are being considered for the transitway. On one alignment the train would travel on Penn Avenue from Olson Memorial Highway to West Broadway Avenue with three stations in north Minneapolis. The other alignment being considered would travel on Olson Memorial Highway to the Burlington National Santa Fe rail corridor, with two stations in north Minneapolis. The Bottineau Policy Advisory Board is waiting to hear from the north Minneapolis community on which alignment they prefer.

The group of community leaders, residents and organizational representatives that make up NTN organized a three-day open house and transit workshop in September to increase community knowledge and understanding about the impacts and the opportunities of the Bottineau Transitway.



Organized by the Northside Transportation Network, this workshop was led by Geoff Maas of the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. Geoff and MCEA provided detailed maps for the north Minneapolis community.

Designed as a "drop in" workshop, the flexibility of the schedule allowed NTN to reach its goal to provide clear, concise, useful and meaningful data about the proposed Bottineau Transitway to more than 150 north Minneapolis residents and businesses who attended. During this time, 118 surveys were collected to gather useful data about north Minneapolis residents' and business' present transit use and anticipated transit needs. Surveys continue to be collected online.

A final report of concise, accessible information that summarizes the community's concerns and needs gathered at the workshop

will be compiled to help leverage north Minneapolis's alignment preference and strengthen community members' influence on upcoming land use planning processes and civic decision-making.

Some excellent questions and comments were fielded and collected, and the residents who attended reported back that they felt better informed about the process, timeline and spatial arrangement of the potential LRT alignments. NTN also heard that folks who attended felt they were not only better informed, but refreshed by the fact that someone was listening to them and taking their concerns to heart.

*-Joan Vanhala, Coalition Organizer*





2525 E. Franklin Ave.,  
Suite 200  
Minneapolis, MN 55406  
Phone: (612) 332-4471  
Fax: (612) 338-2194  
[www.metrostability.org](http://www.metrostability.org)  
**Address Service Requested**

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Twin Cities, MN  
Permit No. 31860

## ORGANIZER ROUNDTABLE

### ***Storytelling as an Organizing Strategy***

On August 24, more than 50 people gathered for the Alliance's Organizer Roundtable *Storytelling as an Organizing Strategy* at the Merriam Park Library. Organizers from around the region shared how they use storytelling in their work to motivate people to take action and create social change.

Speakers **Kimberly Nightingale** of **St. Paul Almanac**, **Mary Turck** of **Twin Cities Daily Planet** and **journalist and community activist Mel Reeves** all emphasized that it is important to tell the stories that are not being told in the mainstream media. They also emphasized the need for organizers to encourage people to tell their own stories. The speakers shared that when people tell their own stories, it can evoke change in the larger community as well as in the life of the storyteller. Because our brains are structured for narrative, storytelling is an easy way to communicate truths that people often have a hard time hearing.

Storytelling is an essential component of an organizing strategy in communities that have been impacted by regional disinvestment. Stories of these communities often go untold or are mistold. It is up to organizers to tell them, and, even more importantly, to empower others to tell them for themselves. To read more about roundtable, go to <http://bit.ly/q1JPsr>.

