



COMMON GROUND

CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACES AND ISSUES IN THE TWIN CITIES REGION | SUMMER 2012

HIRE MINNESOTA **From WORST to FIRST: HIRE Minnesota Sets Big Goals, Makes Big Strides**

How a Stadium Equity Plan Was Created: The Inside Story

After months of negotiations, the state of Minnesota, the city of Minneapolis and the Minnesota Vikings have come to an agreement that will result in a \$1 billion NFL stadium in downtown Minneapolis. When talk of a new Vikings stadium began in early 2012, HIRE Minnesota began listening with interest. Our coalition members had different opinions on whether the stadium

continued on page 10



Summit Academy OIC students attended a Minneapolis City Council meeting

New Goals, More Jobs!

This spring, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) announced a significant change that will mean more jobs for people of color on state projects. Instead of the previous goal of 11 percent, the state will now ask contractors to hire at least 32 percent people of color in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties and 22 percent in the rest of the region. This is an overdue change that reflects a commitment to ensuring our state's workforce reflects the reality of who lives in the Twin Cities region.

HIRE Minnesota played a major role in making this happen by working with MDHR and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) over the past few years to raise awareness of the critical importance of racial equity in employment. With MnDOT failing to meet its hiring goals year after year, we showed up and made sure the agency more than doubled the number of people of color working on state construction projects. The latest data released shows that statewide, the top 14 construction projects hired almost 12 percent people of color last year – a huge improvement over the 6 percent MNDOT was achieving just a few years ago. Then, when MDHR

continued on page 12

on the INSIDE



Equity Will Drive Growth in the Heart of the City
PAGE 3



Moving Forward Along Corridors of Opportunity
PAGE 4



Making Transit Meaningful in Brooklyn Park
PAGE 7

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 Minneapolis Urban League
 Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
 Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance
 New American Academy
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 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

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and by individual contributions from people like you.

From the Director's Desk

Land Use is a Racial Justice Issue

Years ago, when the Alliance and our partner organizations first started talking about land use as a economic, environmental and racial justice issue, not a lot of people were listening.



Times are changing. We now have the dual challenges of a lagging economy and a long list of racial disparities that are leaving too many of our neighbors behind. The Twin Cities region has topped several undesirable charts in terms of racial and ethnic achievement gaps in education, employment, health and housing. Nationally, we are leading on too many of the wrong indicators. Many local institutions are rightly concerned with this, and we've all seen a number of helpful reports that document the institutional practices and processes that produce disparate impacts in communities of color.

Now, public officials, philanthropic thinkers and business leaders are coming around to seeing that advancing equity and making our region economically competitive are two sides of the same coin. They are mutually reinforcing. It is clear that for the Twin Cities, land use is first and foremost a racial justice issue.

Advancing equity and making our region economically competitive are two sides of the same coin. They are mutually reinforcing.

Yet those of us interested in alleviating our region's racial disparities have to grapple with a public narrative that is trending away from the common good and toward the rights of the individual. At the same time, we face the real possibility of issue fatigue. We can't solve these problems overnight, and the more we raise these issues, the more we run the danger that the media, the public and policymakers will become tired of hearing about problems that many white people simply don't see themselves in -

problems that don't seem to offer easy or immediate solutions. We have to be mindful that how we talk about these issues, and how we frame our solutions, will need constant adjustment and strategic thinking.

Our collective task is to move the needle on tackling inequity, bringing light to a pathway that emphasizes growth, untapped human potential, new opportunity, prosperity and the chance for all people to attain economic and educational success. Our task as business leaders, citizens, advocates, funders, organizers, public officials and agency staff is to have honest conversations about these equity issues, openly weigh the real-life implications and forge a better way forward.

Russ Adams

Equity Will Drive Growth in the Heart of the City

In a recent opinion piece in the *Star Tribune*, 'No love for the heart of the city,' Steve Berg argues for increased density in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In comparison to other metropolitan areas around the nation, these cities have struggled to grow their populations and, subsequently, their tax bases. Berg argues that more density is the answer to this problem, saying, "Only density can bring the efficiency and vitality that the central cities need."

However, density is only one component of an effective regional growth model. Although density will help to spur population growth, it will not be sustainable unless we adopt a model where all people are able to participate in the local economy. This approach, an equitable approach, will ensure that those who have been traditionally left behind in our region are able to contribute to and benefit from the many resources the core cities offer.

The demographics in the Twin Cities are quickly changing. People of color and immigrants are projected to become the majority of our population by 2040. As these communities grow, the cultural and economic viability of the region becomes more intertwined with theirs. The prosperity of the Twin Cities region is tied to the prosperity of all of our residents.

Unfortunately, the Twin Cities have some of the worst racial disparities in our region. The unemployment rate for African American residents in the Twin Cities is more than three times that of whites. This employment divide not only affects our region's communities of color but it also hinders our overall economy from growing.

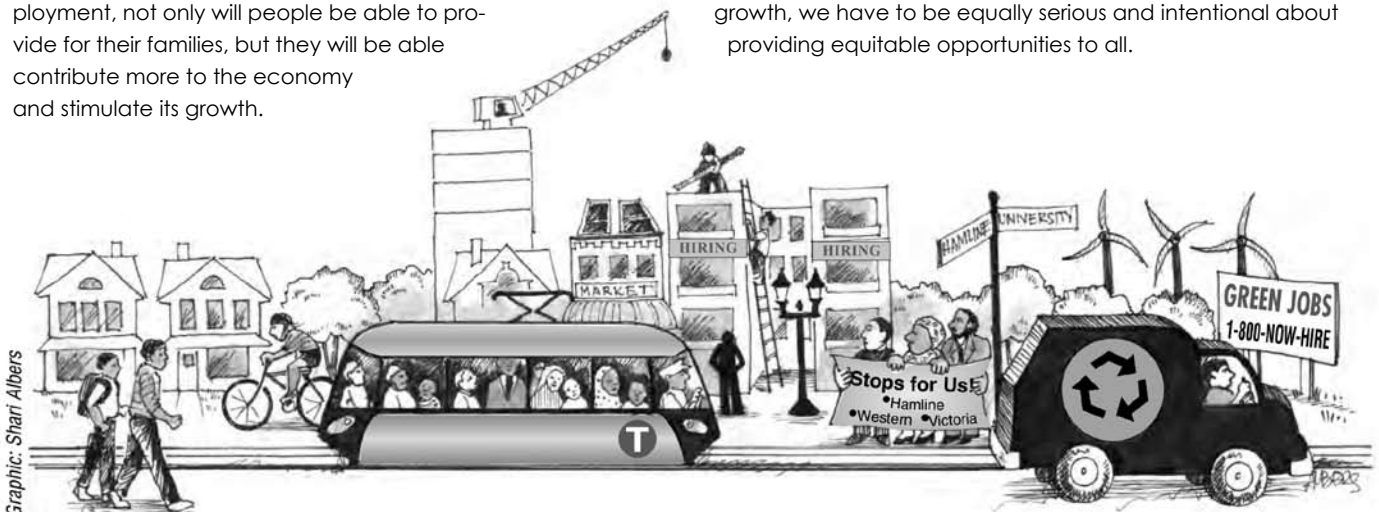
In order for the core cities to grow, there is growing agreement that we need to address the region's racial employment disparities. The Alliance and our partners in the HIRE Minnesota coalition have made it our mission to end racial employment disparities and to map an equitable way forward that includes family-sustaining jobs and new training opportunities for people of color. We are asking business leaders and policymakers to follow HIRE's lead in closing this gap. With steady employment, not only will people be able to provide for their families, but they will be able to contribute more to the economy and stimulate its growth.

We agree with Berg that the urban core will also grow as we provide transportation solutions that do not require dependence on an automobile. Importantly, increased transportation options do not just stimulate density. If done correctly, they can also provide a better network for people to connect to housing, employment, education and health care.

One way to start is by further connecting transportation investments to affordable housing. Although developers are already incentivized to locate affordable housing projects near transit, the planning of emerging transitways throughout the region presents an opportunity to do more. In addition to providing better connections, this will help ensure that as property values around these transitways rise, existing residents are not displaced and people of all income levels will have the opportunity to live where they want to live.

Urban growth also calls for more and better opportunities in health care and education, and options for the disabled and the elderly to access the essential services that they need. As these gaps are closed and disparities eliminated, those who have been affected the most will become the very catalyst we need to boost our local economies. People of color will start up more businesses. They will buy homes again. They will invest their time and money in local communities. And as these trends encourage strong and sustainable urban growth, the entire region will prosper.

It is clear that the core cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul cannot grow if we continue to neglect communities of color and immigrant communities. If we are truly serious about urban growth, we have to be equally serious and intentional about providing equitable opportunities to all.



Graphic: Shari Albers



Moving Forward: Equity Engagement and Systems Change Along Corridors of Opportunity

by Margaret Kaplan, Operations Director, Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing

The Corridors of Opportunity initiative is an effort to promote sustainable, vibrant, and healthy communities, using the Twin Cities' emerging transitway system as a development focus. The project places a strong emphasis on connecting investments in these transitway corridors with access to jobs, affordable housing and other essential services and opportunities for residents of all incomes and backgrounds. In a region with vast disparities for communities of color in employment, education, and health, access to opportunity presents a tremendous challenge, but also a challenge that people from across sectors have been willing to embrace.

The Metropolitan Council, the project lead, approached Nexus Community Partners, the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, and the Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing to develop a process for engaging and involving underrepresented constituencies in regional transit way planning. While the organizations had not worked together in the past, we shared common values about the importance of community voice and power in determining the future of neighborhoods and regions.

As the Community Engagement Team (CET), we have grounded our work in involving people from low-income communities, communities of color, people with disabilities, and immigrant communities in all aspects of planning and implementation along regional corridors. Every step of the process, from the work plan to the grant guidelines to the equitable development definition, has included extensive engagement of people and organiza-



Harrison Neighborhood Association Executive Director Larry Hiscock discusses community engagement with regional and federal transit officials.

tions along corridors. Additionally, we have created systems and structures of decision-making that are community-driven, including a community-based review committee for regranting, and a community-based steering committee for creating regional standards of community engagement.

We were intentional from the very outset of this process about bringing equity to the forefront in discussion about the future of regional development. We have honored and supported the knowledge and expertise of local communities, both in developing strategies for engagement and for determining plans for future development along transportation corridors. For example, we were deliberate in creating a regranting process that did not predetermine the issues or strategies that local communities used



PHOTO COURTESY OF ACER

Brooklyn Park residents leave for a bus tour of the future Bottineau Transitway

Corridors of Opportunity has created a willingness to begin to engage the community before the decisions are made, not only because it will lead to a stronger sense of investment and ownership, but also because it will lead to more equitable outcomes.



Nexus Community Partners Executive Director and CET member Repa Mekha and District Councils Collaborative leader Anne White address the Met Council.

for engagement, but instead valued relationships and community power in decision-making in order to determine community goals. The supported projects display a wide array of engagement strategies around a wide array of issues, and yet are all connected to corridor development.

The importance of creative tension in advancing equity cannot be overstated. Yes, it is possible to have consensus about a decision, but if there are not diverging viewpoints participating in a discussion, chances are that there are also constituents who are not yet engaged who also have vested interests in the outcome of a discussion. It is easier to have a group discuss an issue when everyone agrees, but that process is not likely to reveal the nuances of the issue, nor is it inclined to provide the richest discussion of potential challenges and opportunities. This level of creative tension can emerge both within individual communities as well as in regional discussions. Acknowledging that tensions will exist at the outset and creating a strategy to work within conflicts creates a richer and more inclusive process.

In thinking about authentic community engagement, it is important to think about it not just as a problem of communities and institutions as separate entities, but as a problem about the connections between the two. In other words, if communities become engaged in the abstract, but there is no parallel structure for institutions to become more adept at engagement, it may result in short-term successes, but not long-term systems change. Likewise, engagement for the sake of engagement without any hope of influencing outcomes is likely to be both fruitless and discour-

aging. In order to build capacity of both community-based organizations and institutions, it is critical to create bridges between community-based organizations and policymaking institutions.

Part of that is working toward creating shared meaning: communities need to learn about institutional process, while institutional players need to learn community engagement best practices. The expectation is that by building the capacity of both community-based organizations and government institutions, the work of the CET in the short term will translate to stronger connections between communities and government institutions in the longer term. One of the ways that this connection is beginning to manifest itself is in thinking about the process for creating the next regional development framework. The work of Corridors of Opportunity has created an atmosphere where there is a willingness to begin to engage the community before the decisions are made, not only because it will lead to a stronger sense of investment and ownership in the regional plan, but also because it will lead to stronger and more equitable outcomes.

This work, in connection to strong and willing partners within local government who see the need for strategic systems change, has created an environment where community engagement is valued and regional equity is a common goal.



Grassroots Leaders Define the Future of Community Engagement in Transit Planning

Community engagement is an essential ingredient in ensuring that our transitway investments work for the communities who will live with them. Many major transitway planning projects in the Twin Cities have a Community Advisory Committee (CAC), which are key to supporting the voice of the community. The CACs are community-led committees that advise policymakers throughout the process of planning new transitways, but they only serve an advisory function. Community members who invest a lot of time in the process are often left feeling like their effort didn't have much impact. Many community members who participated in the Central Corridor CAC, for example, felt their voice was minimized and disregarded in the planning process.

Community engagement challenges like this are now being examined as part of the Corridors of Opportunity initiative. Together with our partners in the Community Engagement Team, we are helping regional leaders develop new ways of engaging communities in decision-making along emerging transitways. These decisions are critically important for low-income communities and communities of color, because they are so often left out of planning for these projects – projects that will forever alter the way our communities and our region look and feel. Despite the importance of community engagement in transitway planning,



Community Engagement Steering Committee members Asad Aliweyd and Rick Cardenas address the Met Council about planning for a more equitable region.

many residents either don't know why it's important, don't know how to engage, or have tried to engage and have been disappointed in the result.

The CET gathered grassroots leaders from six different transitways to share their experiences, knowledge and strategies on how to leverage community benefits from these major infrastructure investments. These leaders formed the Community Engagement Steering Committee to ensure that underrepresented communities have a powerful voice in creating an equitable regional transit system. This committee is forming specific recommendations for improving community engagement in public decision-making about transitway development. They are asking, how is community engagement working now? Where is it working well? And where do we need to make changes to strengthen the role of community leaders in decision-making?

The steering committee's first set of recommendations focused on improving the CAC process as a means to strengthen the community voice in decision-making on transitway projects. The committee is also requesting that the Met Council form a working group of agency staff and grassroots leaders to create a regional community engagement plan. These initiatives could permanently alter the way that community engagement is done in our region.

The Community Engagement Steering Committee is open to grassroots communities along our planned transitways. If you have an interest in joining us in this important work, please contact Joan Vanhala at joan@metrostability.org.

LEARN ABOUT OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT GRANTS

The **Community Engagement Team** is recommending funding for organizing projects that engage underrepresented communities in decision-making and planning processes along our region's transit corridors. We just finished accepting applications for the second and final round of funding for these Corridors of Opportunity Outreach and Engagement grants.

As a way to model good community engagement, we created a community review committee, which will read all proposals, conduct site visits and make final recommendations to the Corridors of Opportunity Policy Board.

To learn more, and to read about the projects funded last year, please visit www.engagetc.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ACER

Making Transit Meaningful in Brooklyn Park

When Wynfred Russell first learned about the Bottineau Transitway project, he saw an opportunity for his community. This major future investment not only promised more transit options, but also potential economic opportunities for people living along the transitway. He envisioned new jobs, new housing and new connections that could change people's lives. Yet no one who represented his African community or other communities of color was involved in planning the project.

Wynfred knew that his vision would not be realized if the community did not play a role in planning the transitway, which will stretch from either Maple Grove or Brooklyn Park to downtown Minneapolis. But as the executive director of African, Career, Education and Resource (ACER), a non-profit organization working to end disparities facing people of African descent in Minnesota, he also knew he could do something about it. Wynfred worked with ACER's leadership to launch the Making Transit Meaningful project, which is raising awareness of the decisions being made about the Bottineau Transitway. The project's goal is to mobilize African immigrants, African Americans, and other communities of color to become active voices on transit issues.

ACER is one of 10 community groups that received funding from the Corridors of Opportunity Outreach and Engagement grants. These grants are made to organizations working along emerging transitways to involve underrepresented and marginalized communities in participation, decision-making and leadership around transit corridor planning. ACER has used these funds to host a bus tour of the future Bottineau Transitway, as well as a series of community forums to help community members develop a more comprehensive picture of how transit decisions affect their lives. ACER has also organized residents to attend public meetings about the transitway to provide their input on its alignment.

The project has already made a difference by allowing residents to see themselves as part of the transit planning process. ACER hopes that by engaging more residents on the front end of the project, people of color will be able to capitalize on employment and development opportunities that emerge along the developing transitway. If we're going to reduce racial disparities in the Twin Cities region, listening to the voice of the community is an important first step.



EquityNOW Twin Cities asks: Do you believe that racial and economic disparities can be eliminated in Minnesota?

More than 150 nonprofit and community leaders have come together to declare that by working together we can achieve equity in Minnesota. The group is known as EquityNow Twin Cities, and was formed initially as a delegation that traveled together to Detroit for PolicyLink's Equity Summit 2011. PolicyLink holds the Equity Summit every three years to bring together the nation's equity movement for shared learning. The Minnesota delegation, organized jointly by the Alliance, Nexus Community Partners and the Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing was by far the largest group that attended the conference.



The EquityNow Twin Cities Communications Group

The enthusiasm of people wishing to join our delegation inspired us to think bigger about what we could accomplish together. Rather than merely travel together and then go our separate ways, we asked the Minnesota delegates to commit to two pre-conference gatherings where we discussed what we wanted to get out of the conference, as well as one post-conference gathering where we explored possibilities for ongoing work together.

We started by talking with one another about what equity means. At the first gathering, Bill Lerman, a leader with Jewish Community Action, used a lesson from his school-teaching days to provide a visual image of equity. "Equality is making sure every kid has a pair of shoes," he said. "Equity is making sure every kid has a pair of shoes that fit."

Our early goal as a delegation was to reconcile the excellent work already taking place in the Twin Cities with the fact that our region still has some of the nation's worst racial disparities. With all of the resources we have access to, we asked, why are racial disparities still so prevalent in our region? And what do we want to learn in Detroit that could improve our work at home?

Veronica Burt, an organizer with Just Equity, said that these pre-conference gatherings were important for getting the Minnesota delegation on the same page. "I think it's been good to do some initial networking in the Twin Cities before doing larger national networking," she said. "It makes it all the more valuable when people are getting the same information at the same time and we're all growing in our awareness and our values and our learning."

Informed by these discussions, each delegate was able to set off for Detroit knowing what they hoped to learn. We spent our time at the conference connecting with one



One of the most striking things we have learned has been the value of joining together as equity advocates, supporting one another and forming a community of people who share the same values.

another, deepening our understanding of our shared equity work, and learning from powerful equity leaders of all ages, races and cultural backgrounds from around the country.

When we returned home, we shared what we learned and identified areas where there were energy and ideas for advancing equity in the Twin Cities. These conversations continue, and we are now expanding the group to include other equity leaders who did not attend the Equity Summit. But one of the most striking things we have learned through this process has been the value of joining together as equity advocates, supporting one another

and forming a community of people who share the same values, regardless of how the future of the work pans out.

"I tend to subconsciously feel like I'm out there doing my own thing," said Mike Temali of the Neighborhood Development Center. "Coming here...you get filled up with the sense of thousands of other people doing this work in so many ways. I'm not alone. I don't have to figure it out myself."

Danielle Mkali of the Main Street Project agreed. "If there are 2,500 of us in Detroit, it warms my soul to know that there must be millions holding it down nationwide," she said.

Providing one another with this sense of this connection, purpose and commitment has done a lot to advance equity. Each one of the leaders involved is committed to eliminating racial and economic disparities in our region. And we know that no single person or organization can do it alone. If you would like to join us, please contact Owen Duckworth at owen@metrostability.org or join our Facebook network at www.facebook.com/groups/equitynow-mn/.

Thank you to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative, the City of Minneapolis Neighborhood and Community Relations Department, the McKnight Foundation, the Minneapolis Foundation and the Saint Paul Foundation for providing scholarships to many of the delegates who attended Equity Summit 2011.

The View From Atlanta

Nathaniel Smith of Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE) stood in front of a room full of EquityNow Twin Cities leaders last month and stated, "Equity is not a tactic, it's a way of life."

Atlanta is working through many of the same issues as the Twin Cities are as PSE attempts to build, develop and move a coalition of people and organizations committed to equity work. Smith started his presentation with a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., based on the concept of the network of mutuality, which states that "whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." This mantra of shared destiny is the spiritual foundation of PSE and guides Smith's approach to working with close allies and opponents alike. For many people, the case to invest in communities that are the farthest behind must be based in an idea that there is something for all to gain from a more equitable model of economic growth. He explained how important it is to create a new narrative of shared prosperity based on love, which can challenge the existing national narrative of scarcity and fear.

Smith also shared details about PSE's approach to coalition-

building and management. He stated that any partnership's work must serve as a "mirror and a magnifier" for participating organizations and individuals to remain committed and involved. If the work properly serves as a mirror, people will see themselves and their work in the larger work of the coalition. A partnership that successfully serves as a magnifier highlights, strengthens and showcases the work that organizations are already doing as well.

Smith finished his presentation by refocusing on the spiritual mantra at the heart of PSE's mission: that the approach to moving an equity agenda effectively must come from a place of love and understanding of a shared destiny. He again used a powerful quote from Dr. King to explain, saying, "Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love."





Stadium, continued from page 1

The result of our work was a Stadium Equity Plan, a plan that will guide all investment decisions for the new stadium and could result in thousands of jobs for people of color in Minneapolis. That's a big deal in a town with the worst black-white employment disparities in the nation.

should be built, but we all shared one core value: that major public investments that create jobs need to benefit everyone in our state. As the debate unfolded, HIRE Minnesota noticed that there was lots of talk about job creation, but no talk about who would get those jobs. We set out to change that. The result of our work was a Stadium Equity Plan, a plan that will guide all investment decisions for the new stadium and could result in thousands of jobs for people of color in Minneapolis. That's a big deal in a town with the worst black-white employment disparities in the nation.

The debate continues about whether public funds should be used to subsidize private business in this way. Opinions will continue to diverge for some time as to whether this is lemonade from lemons, or a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down. Is it frosting on the cake, or lipstick on a pig? But there's one thing everyone agrees on. The Stadium Equity Plan is vitally important.

Here's how it happened.

HIRE Minnesota welcomed 2012 by setting an ambitious goal for our state: to bring Minnesota from worst to first in racial equity in employment. We set out to talk to public officials, business leaders and community members about the critical need for us all to work together to close Minnesota's employment gap. We wrote a piece published in the Downtown Journal that spelled out our stance: we must integrate strategies for reducing racial disparities into all of our development decision-making if we are ever to achieve employment equity in Minnesota.

Many leaders want to do something about disparities, but when big deals happen quickly, equity planning often gets left off the table. We wanted to make sure that didn't happen this time. As soon as the Minneapolis plan for the Vikings stadium was announced, HIRE Minnesota proactively contacted the Minneapolis City Council and Mayor R.T. Rybak, laying out key ideas we wanted to see in the city's Vikings stadium proposal. Council Members Cam Gordon, Robert Liligren, John Quincy, Kevin Reich, Diane Hofstede, Meg Tuthill, Elizabeth Glidden and Betsy Hodges each took us up on our invitation for dialogue. Although not all of these council members endorsed the stadium, they each sent a letter to the mayor and City Council President Barbara Johnson, outlining their support for our four key goals:

- **Increased hiring goals for construction jobs,**
- **hiring goals for the permanent jobs,**
- **reporting requirements from contractors and employers, and**
- **a permanent funding stream to train and place people of color into career paths.**

The city council held a public hearing on April 24, and HIRE Minnesota attended along with leaders from the Northside Community Response Team. Tanisha Flowers gave wonderful testimony on our behalf, which got the attention of everyone in the room. Tanisha told the city council that she is neither for nor against the stadium, but that she is for racial equity in employment. Tanisha described the unacceptable racial disparities facing people of color in the Twin Cities, and she told the city council that we need "a long-term commitment

to placing people in jobs with family-sustaining wages."

All the while, HIRE Minnesota kept our state legislators informed of what we were doing. So, on a parallel track, they ensured that the state legislation contained strong equity principles that would support our work and the work of the city. Sen. Linda Higgins and Rep. Bobby Joe Champion were instrumental in ensuring strong language in the legislation.

Sen. Higgins introduced a measure that forces the new stadium authority to contract with an agency to recruit, hire, and retain people of color on all jobs around the stadium. Rep. Champion, along with co-authors Reps. Mullery, Clark, and Moran, introduced the same measure in the House. The legislation laid the groundwork for what we were asking the city of Minneapolis to commit to if the city council chose to endorse the stadium deal.

After the legislation passed and was signed by Gov. Mark Dayton, HIRE Minnesota stepped up our efforts at City Hall. It became increasingly clear that the way to get the city to move forward was through a process called a staff direction, where the city council passes a motion to direct city staff to take a particular action. One of our strongest allies, Council Member Glidden, took it upon herself to write a staff direction that would require city staff to start developing a Stadium Equity Plan to meet hiring goals, to ensure people of color had access to the permanent jobs, and to prioritize workforce development funding in future budgets.

Council Member Quincy walked the halls to get more support, and Council Member Don Samuels introduced the motion. "After the people on the bench, we have people being trained and people who need to be trained," he said. "The best plan to end all gaps is a job."

In the end, every city council member and the mayor supported the action. Council Member Quincy, who played an

important role, described it as "an incredible step forward as we all recognize the importance of reducing disparities."

"The impetus was that February letter," he said. "We had differing views on the stadium but all agreed on one thing."

As the Mayor put it, "It's imperative that this project lift all workers in our community, especially those that have been left behind."



Summit Academy OIC students await a Minneapolis City Council hearing on the Vikings stadium.

As the motion passed unanimously, Council Vice President Lilligren called on his fellow council members to be as present as possible in moving this work forward, and noted that it's not enough just to set the goals. The real work, he said, is in meeting the goals.

The members and leaders involved in HIRE Minnesota played a key role in making equity one of the central pillars that the Vikings stadium will be built

upon. Council Member Hodges thanked us for our persistence in making this happen, and Council Member Glidden said that we drove the dialogue and that our leadership set the stage for this accomplishment.

We did this together. All of us, carrying all of our varying perspectives, came together to make this deal more equitable. That's a victory in and of itself, and it's an essential component of what needs to continue to happen moving forward. Moving Minneapolis from worst to first in hiring equity requires all of our energies, talents and perspectives. We'll be there every step of the way, and we hope you'll be there with us.

HIRE Minnesota is a coalition of organizations and activists working together to end employment disparities in Minnesota. We have set an ambitious goal: to bring our state from worst to first. We believe Minnesota can close the gap and lead the nation in racial equity in employment.



New Goals, continued from page 1

faced budget cuts that threatened its mission last year, we stepped in and helped preserve millions of dollars of funding for the agency.

The new values reflect a commitment on the part of the state of Minnesota to remedying our region's unacceptable racial employment disparities, a goal everyone in Minnesota should share. We recognize that setting a goal is only a first step toward achieving representational participation on state-funded projects, but it's an important first step. Experience shows that goals can matter, especially when there is a community of people planning for and supporting strong implementation efforts. The Central Corridor

LRT and Target Field projects are prime examples of how workforce goals can be met – and even exceeded – when all players are committed to achieving these goals. HIRE Minnesota is prepared to support the state, the unions, the contractors and the workforce trainers in achieving these long-term goals. It may not happen in the first year, but we know that by working together we can get there.

This is also important for the economic health of our region. To maintain our competitiveness, every employer in the Twin Cities must play a role in remedying our racial employment disparities. With these new goals, the state of Minnesota takes a welcome step toward putting all Minnesotans to work. HIRE Minnesota won't stop until we push Minnesota from worst to first in employment equity.



Race and Regionalism Series: *How Growth and Development Policies Shape Racial Disparities in the Twin Cities Region*

Throughout 2012, the Alliance will release a series of papers that explore a history of public policymaking that favored, either intentionally or as a byproduct of poor decision-making, the needs of white people over those of people of color and indigenous people in the Twin Cities.

Visit metrostability.org to read the first two papers in the series.

- **The G.I. Bill:** America's Largest Affirmative Action Program
- **The Harrison Neighborhood:** How a Community Becomes Marginalized

We hope that this series will not only prove to be a valuable resource to our partners, but will also serve as a tool to anchor equity more prominently in our region.



Save the Dates for Our Upcoming Organizer Roundtables!

Wednesday, July 18 - Taking Action Beyond Facebook and Twitter

Many of our organizations are building a base of Facebook fans and Twitter followers. As a result, we are fostering a sense of online engagement like never before. Join us to find out how local organizers with a strong online presence are inspiring their fans and followers to take action beyond social media.

Wednesday, August 15 - Facilitating Meetings that Work

We have all been in meetings that are ineffective, lack direction or are derailed by tension in the room. Join us to learn a few tips to help organizers and leaders steer the direction of our meetings and use that tension to move the conversation forward.

Wednesday, September 19 – Grassroots Transit Planning: Trusted Advocate Project

This summer, the District Council Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis launched its Trusted Advocate Project to support and enrich community engagement in Central Corridor planning. Join us to hear from DCC and some of these Trusted Advocates about their successes and challenges in helping to define how bus service will work in connection with the Central Corridor LRT.

Wednesday, October 17 – Corridors of Opportunity Community Engagement Team

The Community Engagement Team will provide an update on its progress midway through the Corridors of Opportunity Initiative. Join us to hear how grassroots leaders throughout the metro area have come together to recommend policy changes on community engagement and how underrepresented communities have been activated to participate in transitway planning.

You can find out more about these roundtables or register at www.metrostability.org.



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New Board Members Join the Alliance

George Garnett is the director of strategic development at Summit Academy OIC in North Minneapolis. He has a background in community and economic development. George has been an elected member of the Minneapolis library board, where he advocated for community libraries that were at risk of being shut down. He also sat on the Metropolitan Council in the 1990s. During his tenure there, he was most interested in the intersection of affordable housing and transportation, and played a role in planning for the Hiawatha LRT. At Summit Academy, he is engaged in fundraising, program development, public policy and advocacy.



Nancy Pomplun is the director of community building and organizing at Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA), one of the Alliance's newest member groups. Nancy has been passionately involved in changing systems that have kept communities of color, low-income communities and women marginalized. Before

joining AEDA, Nancy did HIV education outreach with at-risk adults and LGBT youth. In addition, she has organized on state-wide policy issues with Minnesota Community Action Partnership, supported parent-leadership development for Head Start, and organized extensively in Asian communities around health care access. At AEDA, Nancy works with Asian communities along the Central Corridor and the Bottineau Transitway to provide technical assistance and community development expertise.

The Alliance welcomes both George and Nancy to our board of directors! Thank you for the skills and expertise you bring to our organization.



Welcome, Owen!

Owen Duckworth joined the Alliance staff in May as a coalition organizer. He brings with him years of organizing experience, and a deep commitment to fighting racism in our region. Growing up in a biracial family in the segregated city of Milwaukee, Owen desired to understand race and space, culture, and politics early in his life. His curiosity led him to pursue a degree in political science at Macalester College. Since then, Owen has worked on the successful campaign for the 2006 Minnesota transportation amendment and also coordinated campaign work with the Sierra Club for the Obama campaign. Most recently, he was a community organizer for Transit for Livable Communities, where he worked with community members to advance a common goal of increased transportation access. The Alliance is pleased to have Owen as part of our team. You can welcome him at owen@metrostability.org.

The Alliance Welcomes New Member Groups

This spring, the Alliance added two new organizations to our membership: New American Academy and Asian Economic Development Association.

New American Academy (NAA) provides services and programs to new immigrants to ensure their adjustment, stability, growth and productivity as future citizens and leaders of their communities. Based in Eden Prairie, NAA works primarily with the Somali community. The organization offers a variety of youth and adult education opportunities, including tutoring in math and science, citizenship classes, job readiness training and health care awareness. With the help of a Corridors of Opportunity Outreach and Engagement grant, NAA has begun organizing to involve community members in Southwest LRT planning.

NAA's services are critical to immigrant communities in the Southwest Metro. Until fairly recently, the community in Eden Prairie has been fairly monocultural. However, in the last 14 years, the Somali population alone has grown from two people to more than 3,500. NAA has been working to ensure that people of color and immigrants are not left behind as the city makes development decisions about development opportunities like the Southwest LRT.



Asad Aliweyd speaks at a meeting with local and federal officials.



AEDA Executive Director Va-Megn Thoj with University Ave. small business owner Dung Nguyen. Photo courtesy of the Metropolitan Council.

ing that small businesses and communities of color along University Avenue will have access to the LRT and the many benefits it could bring to these neighborhoods.

Recently, AEDA also helped to establish Little Mekong, an Asian cultural district on University. Little Mekong strategically markets Asian businesses and cultural opportunities, helping to retain and strengthen them during the construction of the LRT.

Asian Economic Development Association is grassroots economic development organization with a special focus on small businesses in low-income Asian communities. AEDA's main constituency group is along the Central Corridor in St. Paul, but it also works with the Southeast Asian community in North Minneapolis along the Bottineau Transitway.

AEDA is working to ensure that businesses along these transitways are not displaced during LRT construction, and aspires to help the community take advantage of the potential benefits that these developments bring. This commitment prompted AEDA to partner with the Alliance and many other organizations in the Stops for Us Coalition, which fought to secure three missing LRT stops along the Central Corridor. That victory was a first step in ensuring



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