



# HIGHLAND

## DISTRICT COUNCIL

1978 Ford Parkway • Saint Paul MN 55116 • 651.695.4005 • [HighlandDistrictCouncil.org](http://HighlandDistrictCouncil.org)

### Highland Park District Council Equity Plan 2019

The Highland District Council (HDC) serves the 24,744 (2017) people living in the Highland Park neighborhood. The Council's mission is to foster opportunities for the people who live, learn, work, and play in Highland Park to engage and connect with neighbors, businesses, and local government, and to help build a more vibrant, welcoming, and safe neighborhood.

**Community engagement** is the process by which community organizations and individuals build working relationships to apply a collective vision for the neighborhood's benefit.

**Equity** is a principle that is rooted in fairness and justice. In the context of this equity plan, "equity" is interpreted to refer to the fair and just delivery of district council representation services with an awareness of the racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, religious, sexual/gender identity and other protected classes in our community.

**Equitable community engagement** seeks to assure that all voices are heard. This includes the voices of typically disenfranchised and marginalized communities, as well as that of minorities and the powerless. The HDC seeks to do this by reducing barriers to participation and engaging residents in meaningful ways. The HDC seeks to provide residents with the means and information they require so they, along with HDC directors and members, can provide support and guidance to the council and the city in decision-making that impacts the livability and safety of our neighborhood.

### Our Values

**We are a neighborhood that welcomes all, where members feel safe and empowered to participate in decisions that impact them. We are Highland Together: Many Communities, One neighborhood. .**

**Community growth:** We will advocate for growth that positively impacts all community members. Such growth includes development of a variety of housing options to ensure all people interested in living in our community have the opportunity to do so.

**Transportation:** We will advocate for transportation modalities that make living in our neighborhood a reasonable possibility.

**Community Engagement:** We will host and promote a variety of activities designed to build a sense of community, welcome new residents, engage the whole community, promote relationship building, and build visibility for Highland Park and for the Highland District Council.

### Goals

1. **Hold open and welcoming board and committee meetings.**
  - Post dates and times for all board and committee meetings, emphasizing that meetings are open to the public. Post agenda and minutes online well in advance of meetings.



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- Use multiple avenues to reach a broader audience including: social media, newspapers (Villager), signs at the library, community center and other local businesses. Specific outreach ventures might include:
  - Pop-up meetings in non-traditional grid sites
  - Reach out to underrepresented members, especially when the Council is dealing with a subject of special interest to them
  - Assure council directors attend community-based events at which they typically do not appear (in other grids, for example)
  - Promote inter-grid activities and events
- Identify and provide specific community leaders, businesses, organizations, and apartment complexes with under-represented groups with relevant communications.
- Increase visibility and promote a welcoming environment for community members by posting signs directing visitors to the meeting room at the community center, greeting community members, and including a statement by the HDC president or committee chair welcoming residents at the beginning of meetings.
- Translation – Have computer or phone applications on hand which will allow translation for residents who do not speak English.
- If other services are required to make attendance possible and more inclusive, and such services can be made available given advance notice, every effort should be made to assure that they are available.

## **2. Increase active participation in the Highland District Council.**

- Identify organizations, especially volunteer groups such as churches, fraternal, and cultural groups who will promote awareness of HDC and promote involvement in its activities.
- Increase community member participation on committees. Committees can be stepping-stones to board involvement. More residents involved in committees will create a larger pool of potential leaders and board members. Include HDC committee community member participation in HDC volunteering for community events.
- Create recruitment plans for committees, including recruiting members from under-represented communities.
- Promote inclusion of district members on city commissions and committees.
- Consider amending bylaws and procedures which might hinder the active involvement of members of Highland Park, especially the active involvement of typically



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disenfranchised, marginalized, minority, and powerless communities. Seek amendment of such bylaws and procedures where necessary and appropriate.

**In all its operations, the Highland District Council will seek to assure:**

### **Transparency**

- Communicate clearly and honestly about what decisions have been made, giving as much advance notice as possible to members about changes, especially those which are going to affect them. This includes resolutions, goals, anticipated outcomes, roles and responsibilities, and identification of key decision-makers.
- Report the outcomes and process results of decisions and community engagement activities regularly and promptly.

### **Accountability**

- Start engagement early and seek to understand how communities wish to participate in decision-making processes and engagement activities.
- Respect participant time and investment by communicating how their involvement affects the outcome of decisions.
- Officially review and discuss the Highland District Council Equity Plan outcomes and actions annually with the full board and annually with the Community Engagement committee. Evaluate effectiveness and results and incorporate adjustments needed into the annual review of the work plan

### **Inclusion**

- Identify and remove barriers to participation in planning and decision-making for all unengaged groups and under-resourced communities wherever possible.

### **Equity**

- Ensure community participation reflects the racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, socio-economic experiences, religious, sexual/gender identity, and other protective classes and needs of those most impacted by inequities.

### **Transformation**

- Value communities as partners by committing to long-term relationships and ongoing dialogues. This effort should go beyond funding and project periods.
- Monitor the effectiveness of our engagement and partnerships and be open to continuous improvement based on evaluation results and stakeholder feedback.

### **Sustainability**



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- Ensure that this Highland District Council Equity Plan is maintained and promoted over time.
- Support a culture of mutual respect, learning, and development.
- Expand the strengths and assets of communities through training, data sharing, technical assistance, and other applicable resources.
- Build awareness of the organization.

Approved November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019

By the Highland District Council Board of Directors