

Advisory Team Recommendations to City Council

Background

The Advisory Team met on May 12, June 9, and July 14, 2021 to brainstorm, discuss, and finalize recommendations to the City Council.

The team's recommendations focused on the following themes:

- Strengthening neighborhoods
- Improving government engagement with community
- Lifting up local leaders of diverse backgrounds

As our City's policy tool outlines, we identify the desired results first, then discuss policies and practices that will help lead to those results. (Visit the City's website to see the HEEAP Sheet policy tool.) To listen to that team discussion, please see the May 2021 meeting on the website page.

These are desired results the team discussed at the May meeting:

- Residents of Red Wing would view every neighborhood positively.
- Red Wing would have more neighborhood engagement among residents.
- Red Wing would be a community where people can listen openly and respectfully to each other.
- Red Wing would be a place that includes leaders from diverse backgrounds.
- Red Wing would be a place that has safe spaces for all youth to be themselves.

In June, team members reviewed and summarized what other community members said in a small survey. Many surveys included answers provided during one-on-one conversations with team members. (You can see that survey and the results on the website page under the June meeting.)

In June, team members discussed the survey results and their own input.

The team took into consideration the following criteria when rating recommendations:

- ❖ Effectiveness at reaching desired results
- ❖ Effort/Time required
- ❖ Cost
- ❖ Ability for City government to implement

** Recommendations highlighted in yellow on the following pages were rated as a higher priority from Advisory Team members.*

RECOMMENDATIONS: For 2021-2022

➤ Help Make Community Events More Welcoming to and Reflective of Diverse Residents

- Find ways that city government can have influence to improve Red Wing's current community-wide events by incorporating more diversity into the planning, programming, events, booths, activities, etc. so families of all backgrounds feel these festivals and events are also a place for them.
- Add specific criteria that organizations must meet in order to receive City funds toward events. For example, if an event receives \$5,000 for activities, the organization must show how it will add diversity through its planning, programming, promotions, etc.
- *Relates to City Strategic Plan #58: Support and advocate for more intergenerational and culturally diverse programming and learning experiences.*

➤ Create an African American Heritage Event and Cultural Heritage Event

- African American Heritage Event: This would be a new community-wide event that celebrates and shares African American culture in all different ways during a fun, daylong gathering.
- Cultural Heritage Event: This could be its own event or potentially woven into other current festivals. The focus is to celebrate the many cultures of Red Wing through food, music, games, history, art, and more.

One goal of these events is to share histories and engage in dialogue that will increase understanding of each other as human beings.

- *Relates to City Strategic Plan #58: Support and advocate for more intergenerational and culturally diverse programming and learning experiences.*

➤ Expand City Involvement in the School District's Flight Paths Program and Ignite's Learn to Earn program.

- Flight Paths is a school district program that connects high school students each semester with area businesses and organizations for an internship-like experience. Learn more here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w59_An2AZ4scwji5RNLsalN725KSAgXB/view
- The City does participate in this program but the City could expand its options by bringing more students into more departments and areas of City employment. The purpose is to show all students a wide range of career opportunities, and for students to learn how the community cares about them and their future.
- *Relates to City Strategic Plan #56: Develop mentor-apprenticeship programs that may attract and train talented students and young adults to work for city government. In addition, partner with the school*

district, our state college, and other community partners to support mentor-internship opportunities at the City of Red Wing.

➤ **Purchase Play Equipment and Place in Large Bins in Neighborhood Parks.**

-- The purpose is to provide free play equipment for children of all ages in city parks. Start with a pilot program in two to three parks; monitor & evaluate through 2021. Potentially add bins to more parks in 2022.

-- *Relates to City Strategic Plan Strategy #23: Increase support for facilities, spaces, and programming that encourage free or low-cost recreational opportunities in the outdoors.*

➤ **Continue Program of Police Officers Playing in Parks with Kids.**

-- The purpose is to strengthen community-police relationships. This program had very positive community feedback from when it started in 2020.

-- *Relates to City Strategic Plan Strategy #40: Maintain and improve our community policing framework that focuses on top-quality equity training, ensures practices are fair and consistent for everyone, and integrates police officers directly into the neighborhoods in which they serve.*

➤ **Utilize a Community Group to Help Inform the City's Engagement Practices**

-- Form a small group of about five residents of different backgrounds who would provide ideas, feedback, and guidance to the City's Community Engagement Facilitator (CEF). The CEF and community team would meet on a regular basis to discuss initiatives, outreach and engagement avenues, and evaluation of engagement efforts. The purpose is to improve the City's engagement methods to better reach all communities in Red Wing. The team would be paid from the CEF's current budget.

- *Relates to City Strategic Plan Strategy #60: Build stronger relationships with communities where trust has been broken or still needs strengthening; and Strategy #62: Continue to find ways for the public to give input into the decisions that affect them.*

RECOMMENDATIONS: For 2023

➤ **Create a "Lift Up Leaders" Program for Residents with Diverse Backgrounds**

-- The purpose is to help emerging leaders be ready to join boards, commissions, and other places of leadership in our community. A local program would need more research but could be similar to one in Northfield, MN called "Growing Local: Northfield Emerging Leaders Program." For details on the Northfield program, visit

<https://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/1323/Leadership-Program>

--The program could be done in partnership with other Red Wing entities. Funding could be through grants, local and state partnerships, and some City dollars.

- Relates to City Strategic Plan Strategy #66: Encourage more people of different ages and backgrounds to get involved with and participate in city government, especially as appointed and elected positions.

➤ **Help support a community Teen Center**

-- The purpose of a teen center is to have a place for youth and teens to be themselves and participate in things the youth themselves want to do. This could take place within a current space or organization or a vacant structure – either of which could be revamped for this purpose.

-- This initiative was the highest rated priority among the Advisory Team. Depending on the scope, partnerships, and funding, the timeline of this initiative is flexible. Support could start right away and continue through a community process.

- Relates to the City's vision statement under "How We'll Act" in the Strategic Plan: We will create and maintain strong partnerships, be responsive to residents, and foster an active, healthy community where everyone feels welcomed, connected, represented, and encouraged to shape Red Wing's future. (Multiple goals and strategies relate to this item from the 2040 Plan. However, there is not a specific City Government Strategic Plan strategy related to this item.)

➤ **Work with Community Partners to Implement a Public Graffiti Wall and potentially a Digital Mural.**

-- The purpose is to encourage full community involvement and participation in artwork that reflects all of Red Wing's voices. A public graffiti wall would encourage grass-roots participation in artistic expression and is viewed as a higher priority. A digital mural project would provide a place of consistently revolving artwork in a digital format where multiple artists and messages could be shared.

- Relates to City Strategic Plan #45: Support and encourage the creative use of indoor and outdoor spaces for artistic activities, projects, performances, and programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS: For 2024

➤ **Build a System of Neighborhood Mentors for Newcomers**

-- The purpose is to make Red Wing a more welcoming place for newcomers and build a sense of community and belonging. This potential program would pair new residents with someone in their neighborhood who is willing to be a type of welcome-mentor to the neighborhood and the community. For instance, mentors can help families with children navigate childcare options and/or get them connected with the schools. Mentors can help seniors or young adults get involved with available opportunities that meet their needs. Research needs to happen into how and who would run this program. If a nonprofit would organize the program, it's possible the City could provide support.

- Relates to City Strategic Plan Strategy #68: Research and discuss potential programs or practices revolving around building stronger neighborhoods.

➤ **Create a Neighborhood Grant Program**

-- The purpose of this item is for neighborhood residents to come together and get projects accomplished in their area (a trail, sidewalk, mural, safety improvement, garden, etc.) based on their own knowledge and wishes for their neighborhood. A program like this could start small and grow each year. Program development needs more discussion on how neighborhoods would connect, how the program would be funded and run, etc. Opportunities exist through a variety of grants and some City funding. *The Advisory Team is clear that before a program is put in place, there must be a way for low-income and non-organized neighborhoods to utilize these funds.*

- Relates to City Strategic Plan Strategy #68: Research and discuss potential programs or practices revolving around building stronger neighborhoods.

(One more page follows)

RECOMMENDATION FOR CITY GOVERNMENT THAT HAS A DIFFERENT FOCUS THAN THOSE BEING DISCUSSED AT THIS TIME:

- Provide better education, outreach, and resources in order to decrease drug overdoses.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RED WING COMMUNITY AT LARGE:

- Incorporate more STEAM Programming (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) throughout the community—not just schools but also in nonprofits, organizations, etc.
- Build better system for residents to get back into society locally after incarceration.
- Increase one-on-one mentorship opportunities in all areas – for adults and children and teens.
- Hold more family events like scavenger hunts and architecture hunts throughout the city and in different neighborhoods. These are events that are free, families can do on their own time, and are easily accessible.
- Create a series of neighborhood contests to spur ideas for fixing things up and being creative.
- Create an indoor park for families with young children – especially needed in winter.