

# **From Ripples To Waves:**

Exploring Ripple Effects of the Bloomington Leadership Program

## **Humphrey School Capstone Report**

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**Subject Keywords:** Ripple Effects Mapping, Qualitative Analysis, Program Evaluation, Evaluation Metrics, Civic Participation, Community Engagement, City Programming, Leadership Program, Equity and Inclusion, Community Capitals Framework, Impact Analysis, Comparative Case Studies, City of Bloomington, Strategic Plan, National Community Survey, Resilient Communities Project.

**Abstract:**

This project utilized Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) as a qualitative evaluation method to assess the Bloomington Leadership Program (BLP) in Bloomington, Minnesota. Bloomington sought to document and measure the impacts of their strategic plan, *Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.* (BTT), the main objectives of which are to create a more welcoming, healthy, and economically equitable community. In utilizing REM, four main themes of the BLP emerged: (1) strengthening community involvement, (2) deepening engagement with local government, (3) energizing new leaders, and (4) gaining knowledge. Applying the community capitals and BTT framework, we found the BLP significantly builds human and social capital for the City and contributes toward their goal of creating a more welcoming community. A geographical participation map was also created to visualize where BLP alumni were making impacts across Bloomington. We recommend that the BLP aim to bolster programming to increase impacts in the least prominent community capital categories (financial, built, and natural). Additionally, we recommend that the City of Bloomington utilize REM as an evaluation metric for other city-led participatory programs in their effort to measure the impacts of their strategic plan.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>COMMUNITY SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1. Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.....	9
1.3. Bloomington Background.....	10
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>18</b>
2.1. Civic Participation.....	18
2.2. Equity and Inclusion in City Programming.....	20
2.3. Ripple Effects Mapping.....	24
2.4. The Community Capitals Framework.....	26
2.5. Comparative Case Studies.....	28
<b>3. METHODS</b> .....	<b>31</b>
3.1. Ripple Effects Mapping.....	31
3.2. Observational Study.....	32
3.3. Worksheets.....	34
3.4. Make Your Mark! Activity.....	35
3.5. Dual Survey Method.....	36
3.6. Coding the Map.....	36
<b>4. FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>37</b>
4.1. Ripple Effects Mapping Themes.....	37
4.2. Community Capitals.....	42
4.3. BTT Objectives.....	43
4.4. Geographic Findings.....	43
<b>5. DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>45</b>
5.1. Analysis of Findings.....	45
5.2. Key Takeaways:.....	47
<b>6. RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>48</b>
6.1. Bloomington Leadership Program.....	48
6.2. City of Bloomington.....	51
<b>REFERENCE LIST</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>57</b>
Appendix A: Annotated Bibliography.....	57
Appendix B: National Community Survey Visualizations.....	65
Appendix C: Comparative Case Studies.....	68
Appendix D: Bloomington Leadership Program Alumni Event Resources.....	76
Appendix E: Ripple Effects Mapping Event Resources.....	80

# FROM RIPPLES TO WAVES

## EXPLORING RIPPLE EFFECTS OF THE BLOOMINGTON LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

University of Minnesota Humphrey School Graduate Capstone & Resilient Communities Project

### PROJECT

The City of Bloomington created and adopted the *Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. (BTT)* strategic plan with the goal of establishing:

- A welcoming community
- A healthy community
- A community with equitable economic growth

Our project and opportunity is to provide a program evaluation framework to assess the intended and unintended impacts of City programming, and determine how those impacts meet or do not meet the goals of the BTT.

The program chosen for evaluation was the Bloomington Leadership Program (BLP), which aims to promote civic engagement, develop leadership skills, and increase understanding of local government

To assess the BLP, we utilized Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) to visualize the "ripples" made in the community as a result of participating in the program.

### FINDINGS

#### Themes

After analyzing REM data, the following themes emerged of the Bloomington Leadership Program:

Strengthening Community Involvement

Deepening Engagement with Local Government

Energizing New Leaders

Gaining Knowledge

"I really found my sense of connection & community within Bloomington. The primary reason I joined BLP was to figure out what the city had to offer and meet my neighbors. I have made many great friends & connected with this city on a whole new level."

-REM Participant

Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. Strategic Goal Progress

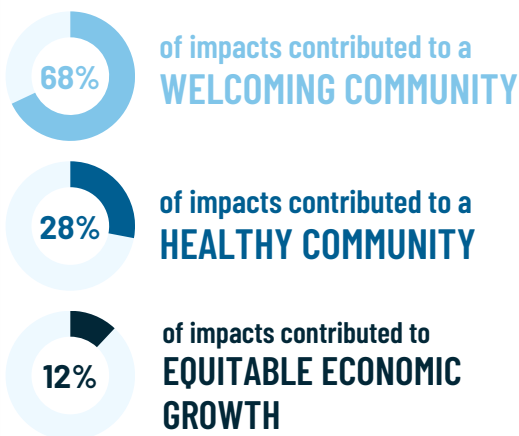


Figure 1. Percentage of 143 impacts that match BTT goals

#### Geographic Impacts

Self-reported data of impacts made across Bloomington which were examined by ward.

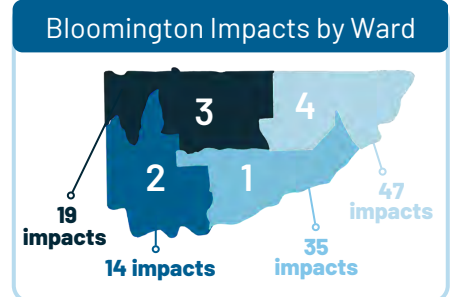


Figure 2. Geographical impacts by ward

#### Impacts by Location

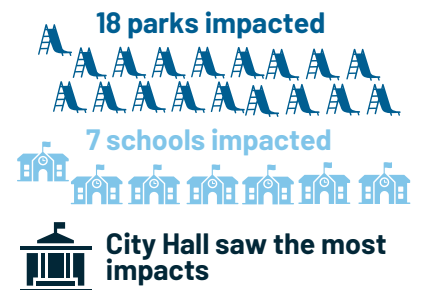


Figure 3. Notable impact locations

#### Takeaways

REM is an effective, efficient, & robust method to measure city programs

The BLP builds human & social capital for the city

The BLP increases civic participation

The BLP helps the City meet its BTT goals



# FROM RIPPLES TO WAVES

## EXPLORING RIPPLE EFFECTS OF THE BLOOMINGTON LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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University of Minnesota Graduate Capstone by  
Rachel Benson, Ruby DeBellis,  
Annika Johnson, and Jason Paschall

A Resilient Communities Project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | **2023**

# Challenge

In 2022, the City of Bloomington created and adopted the Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. (BTT) strategic plan, the mission of which is to “cultivate an enduring and remarkable community where people want to be.” The first strategic objective of the BTT, to be met by 2030, states, “Our community members will feel connected to their neighbors, welcomed, and valued by the community as a whole.” (Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together., 2022)

The city does not currently have measures or indices in place to determine how they are to meet the stated BTT objectives. **Our project and opportunity is to provide a program evaluation framework to assess the intended and unintended impacts of City programming, and determine how those impacts meet or do not meet the goals of the BTT.**

The program chosen for evaluation, determined by our partners in the Community Outreach and Engagement Division (COED), was the **Bloomington Leadership Program (BLP)**. The program is a city run, 9-week course that aims to promote civic engagement, develop leadership skills, and increase understanding of local government.

# Method

In order to determine best practices of program evaluation, the capstone team first reached out to several city-run civic participation and leadership programs from across the country. In comparing these case studies, we found that across the board cities fail to robustly measure the impacts of their programming. After consulting with our partners at COED, it was suggested to us to look at **Ripple Effects Mapping (REM)** as a method to measure BLP impacts.

REM is an innovative and collaborative qualitative program evaluation method that brings participants and stakeholders together to visually map the intended and unintended effects of a program using the Community Capitals (financial, social, cultural, natural, built, human and political) Framework or CCF. **The purpose of this method is to visualize the “ripples” a program has made in the community.** We then used the qualitative data to analyze how the BLP met the City’s BTT objectives of being a welcoming community, a healthy community and a community with equitable economic growth.



# Process

## Ripple Effects Mapping Event

We scheduled a two-hour event for 15 alums of BLP alumni (“Blippers”) to share their achievements and successes both large and small in civic engagement and community leadership. REM has three major steps:



Figure 1. Ripple Effects Mapping Steps

## Participatory Geographic Mapping

Additionally, we wanted to gain an understanding of where impacts of BLP were taking place within Bloomington. A large physical map of Bloomington was printed, and each participant placed a uniquely-colored sticker on the location(s) where they made an impact, enabling direct follow-up and clarification if necessary.

## Follow-up Surveys

Further, we followed-up with a dual survey method, allowing participants who were in attendance to share more of their own impacts, as well as offering alums who did not get to participate at the event an opportunity to respond to the questions that were posed. This resulted in seven additional participants, whose impacts were added to the mind map.

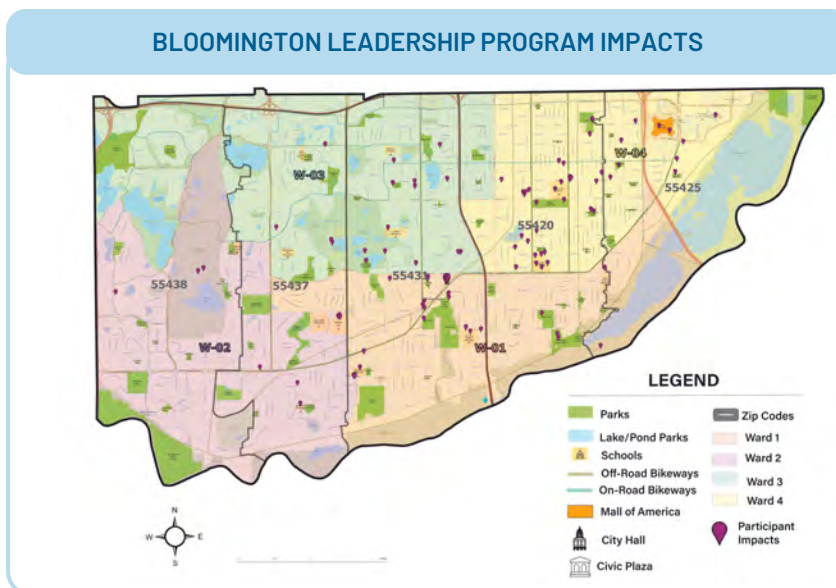
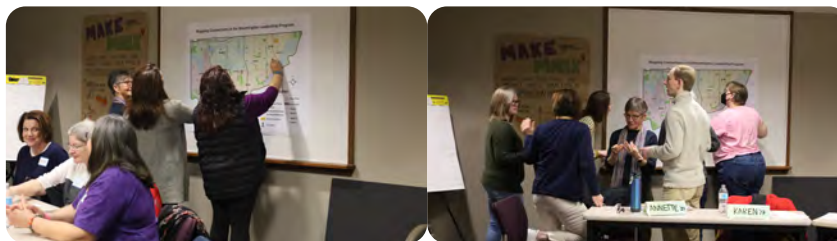


Figure 2. Make Your Mark! map with participant impacts mapped



Figures 3 & 4. Participants placing stickers on the locations of their impacts on the Make Your Mark! map



# Findings

## Impact Themes

After analyzing the data from the mind map, the following themes emerged:



## Coding Impacts

We coded the qualitative data exported from the X-Mind map using the Community Capitals Framework and BTT objectives. The coding was binary whereas the stated impact does not fit capital or objective (0), or the stated impact does fit capital or objective (1). Impacts could be coded under multiple capitals and strategic goals. Exactly 143 data points were coded with the following results:

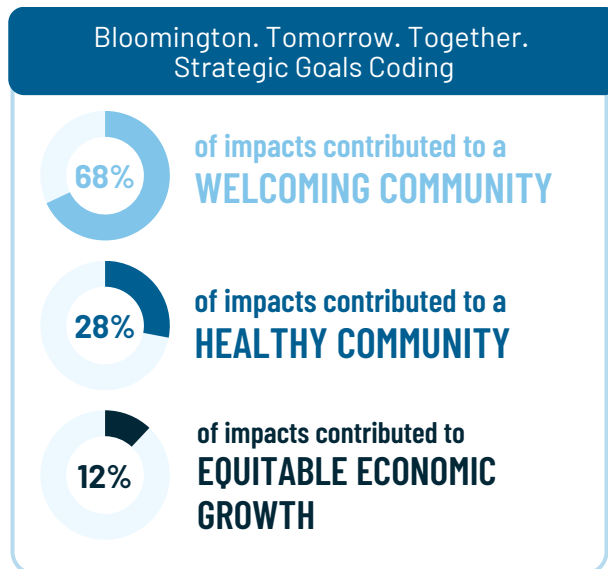


Figure 5. Percentage of 143 impacts that match BTT goals

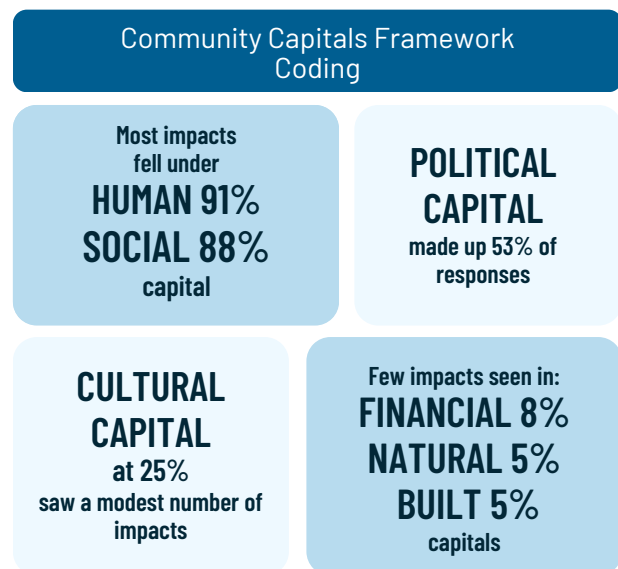


Figure 6. Pertinent data from CCF coding

These results follow a pattern indicated in our literature review that social capital and the quality of relationships among its citizens are the cornerstone of the community's well-being and cohesion (Block, 2009). Furthermore, the positive accumulation of capitals encourages the growth of more capitals, known as the "spiraling up" effect, contributing to a well-rounded community (Flora, 2006).

## Geographic Impacts

For our geographic impact analysis, we used the self-reported data of the participation map. The map gathered 115 impacts across Bloomington, which were examined by ward.

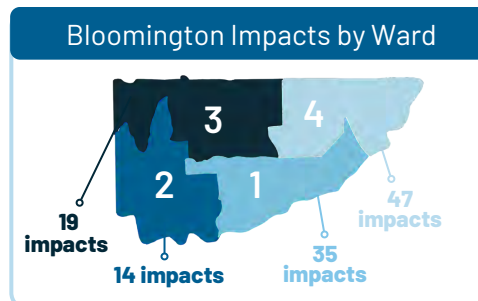


Figure 7. Number of geographical impacts by ward

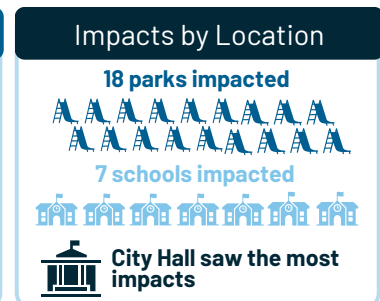


Figure 8. Notable impact locations



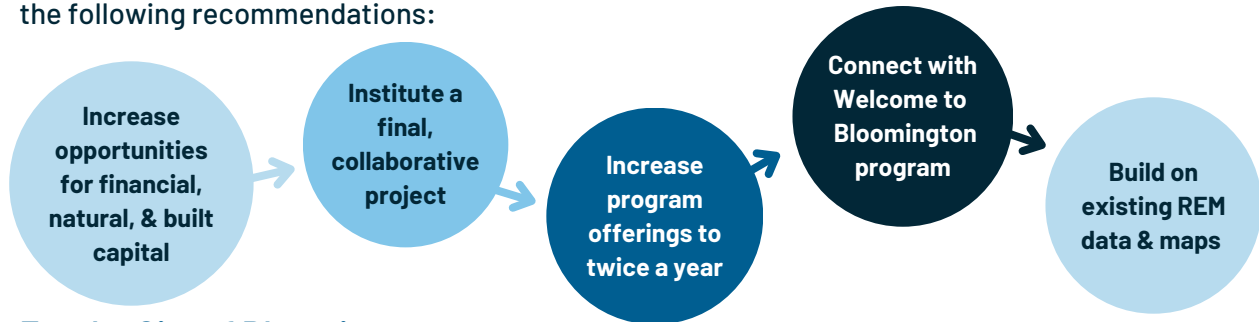
# Key Takeaways

- 1 Ripple Effects Mapping is an **effective, efficient, adaptable and robust** method to measure other city participatory programs or collaborations to community building and the Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.
- 2 **Human and social capital** play pivotal roles in harnessing citizen participation which is the bedrock of a healthy democracy. The Bloomington Leadership Program builds, fosters, and creates meaningful human and social capital for Bloomington.
- 3 The **Bloomington Leadership Program increases civic participation** by Strengthening Community Involvement, Deepening Engagement with Local Government, Energizing New Leaders and Gaining Knowledge.
- 4 A greater number of Bloomington Leadership Program impacts are occurring in the wards that had lower scores in questions on sense of community in the 2022 National Community Survey.
- 5 The BLP contributes significantly to the **Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. strategic goal of community members feeling connected to their neighbors, welcomed, and valued by the community as whole.**

# Recommendations

## For the Bloomington Leadership Program

Based on our research, we recommend that the Bloomington Leadership Program implement the following recommendations:



## For the City of Bloomington

Based on our research, we recommend that the Bloomington implement the following recommendations:

Utilize REM in Evaluating...	Utilize Future Capstone Groups	Guarantee Future Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Services</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• Parks &amp; Recreation</li> <li>• Police &amp; Fire Departments</li> <li>• Public Works</li> <li>• Administration &amp; Finance</li> <li>• Commissions &amp; Boards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using REM to asses another program</li> <li>• Identifying a new evaluation method that targets BTT objectives 2 and 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train staff on REM</li> <li>• Hire a full-time program evaluator</li> <li>• Outsource program evaluation to a third-party contractor</li> </ul>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.

In 2022, the City of Bloomington, Minnesota, launched a new strategic plan, *Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.* (BTT). The plan outlines three strategic objectives to be achieved by 2030:



Our community members will feel connected to their neighbors, welcomed, and valued by the community as a whole.



The City of Bloomington will achieve significant improvement in the indices measuring the community's environmental and individual health.



The City of Bloomington will achieve significant improvement in indices measuring equitable economic growth.

In the creation of the BTT, the city collaborated with residents to establish the mission, strategic objectives, and strategies of the plan. The plan states that “our mission is to cultivate an enduring and remarkable community where people want to be” (*Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.*, p.1, 2022). The strategies used to support this mission include supporting neighborhood identity, placemaking, addressing issues of injustice for historically marginalized communities, and creating gathering spaces that are inclusive and celebratory of Bloomington’s diversity.

## 1.2. Bloomington Leadership Program

This 2023 University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Policy Capstone project, in conjunction with Resilient Communities Project (RCP) and the City of Bloomington, had the opportunity to evaluate a city program and implement measures that gauge its effectiveness in civic engagement while mapping where impacts are occurring most throughout the city. Using a qualitative research method, Ripple Effects Mapping (REM), we analyzed how a current city program open to Bloomington residents meets both the Community Capitals Framework and the goals of the BTT. Once our project scope was decided, all parties agreed that the *Bloomington Leadership Program (BLP or “BLiP”)* would be a good program to evaluate based on suspected impacts.

An evaluation of this program will act as a starting point—a framework that the city can use to guide the evaluation of other city programs. Using REM, we hope to provide a mechanism and method for the City of Bloomington to assess and evaluate the intended and unintended impacts of citywide programming and how they may or may not meet the goals of the City’s strategic plan.

Offered once a year with its first cohort beginning in 2017, the BLP offers a nine-week course for “[p]assionate and committed residents interested in improving the Bloomington community” (Bloomington Leadership Program, 2022). The BLP is now housed within the Community Outreach and Engagement Division (COED), established in 2019. With the creation of COED, the City of Bloomington sought to increase community engagement efforts and build stronger relationships with residents who had



*Figure 1. BLP alumni at Dinner & DICE gathering.*

*Photo by Amanda Crombie*

historically been excluded from local decision-making, particularly BIPOC and low-income groups. BLP fits nicely into the scope of COED as the program is designed to build knowledge and confidence among residents and to increase civic participation. The program acceptance rate is highly competitive for the 20 yearly cohort slots. Applicants must be Bloomington residents over 18 who can commit to attending 90% of program sessions. Sessions range from “Government 101,” to facility tours, to “networking and building relationships with City and local non-profit staff and elected officials.” (Bloomington Leadership Program, 2022) Program goals include promoting civic engagement and developing leaders in the Bloomington community. The city’s boards and commissions are almost entirely made up of volunteer residents, which requires an active pool of residents who have an increased knowledge about the city. The BLP is one pathway towards creating informed citizens that support the day-to-day work of healthy functioning local governance.

### **1.3. Bloomington Background**

The Bloomington Leadership Program aligns most with the first objective of the Bloomington Together Tomorrow (BTT) strategic plan: to foster a sense of community among residents by

ensuring that they feel connected to their neighbors, welcomed, and valued by the community as a whole by 2030.

To better understand the BLP's role in meeting objective one, it is crucial to identify who the community members of Bloomington are, where they are, and how their makeup has evolved over time. Understanding the demographics and the distribution of different groups within the community will aid in gaining a more accurate representation of the effectiveness of the BLP. Additionally, the BLP's impact may vary across different groups of community members. To appreciate the effectiveness of any city program, it is necessary to understand the broader narrative of the city.

### 1.3.1. Population Growth

Bloomington has undergone significant population changes over the past two centuries. From its early days as a small settlement of just a few hundred people, the city has grown to become a major suburban center in the Twin Cities area, with a population of over 89,000 people as of 2021 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

The mid-20th century population growth in Bloomington was tied to several historical events. The construction of major highways like Interstate 494 and the expansion of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport are two examples of projects that made the area more accessible as well as attractive to businesses and residents (Cavanaugh, 2006, p.73). Additionally, the 1950s saw a significant population boom in Bloomington, which was a result of "white flight" from urban areas. During this period, many white families left Minneapolis, seeking higher property values and distance from "inner" cities. Bloomington and other nearby suburbs experienced rapid population growth as a result (Frey, 1979, p.425). This growth was largely driven by white families, and the demographics throughout the Twin Cities shifted significantly. As a result, between 1950 and 1960, the population in Bloomington grew from 9,900 to 50,500 (City of Bloomington).

### 1.3.2. Racial Demographic Change

Since the 1970s, the rate of population growth has slowed, but Bloomington has continued to grow and develop as a major suburban center in the Twin Cities area. In recent years, immigration has played a large role in the population changes in Bloomington. There has been an increase in the number of immigrants from countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, and Mexico, drawn to the area for job opportunities, affordable housing, transit connections, and the presence of multicultural communities (City of Bloomington).





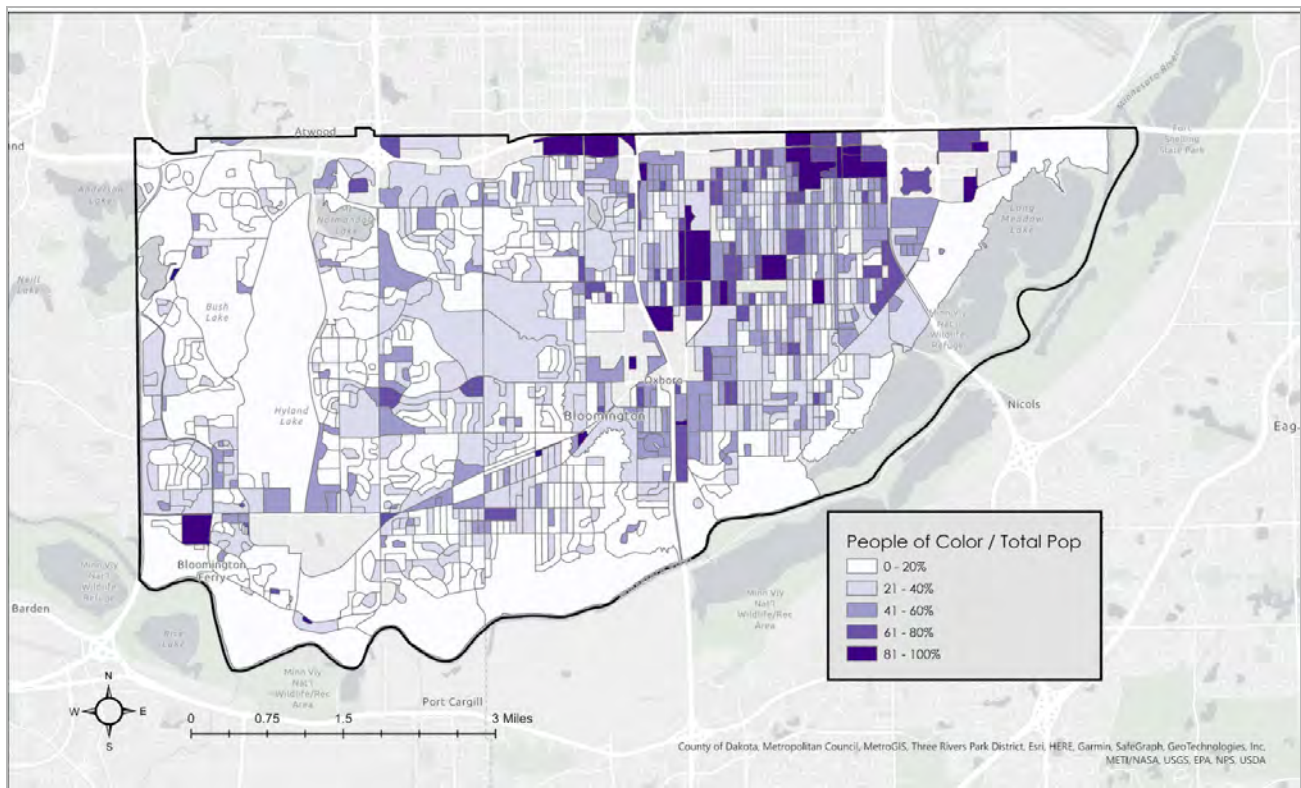


Figure 3. People of Color by Census Block (2020)  
 Race data: U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). 2020: DEC Redistricting |Data (PL 94-171)  
[\[https://data.census.gov/table?t=Race+and+Ethnicity&q=050XX00US27053\\$1000000&y=2020&tid=DECENNIAL\\_PL2020.P2\]](https://data.census.gov/table?t=Race+and+Ethnicity&q=050XX00US27053$1000000&y=2020&tid=DECENNIAL_PL2020.P2).

The increase in the population of residents of color impacted the four wards differently. Wards 1 and 2 saw the greatest change in diversity, with the number of census blocks that were 100% white cut in half over the decade. Ward 4 had the most people of color in 2010 and, throughout the 2010s, the population of people of color increased at the highest rate of all four wards.

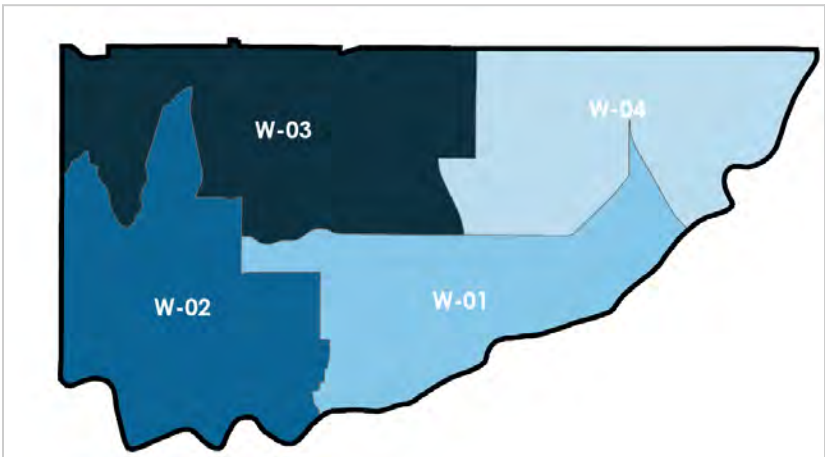


Figure 4. Bloomington Ward Districts

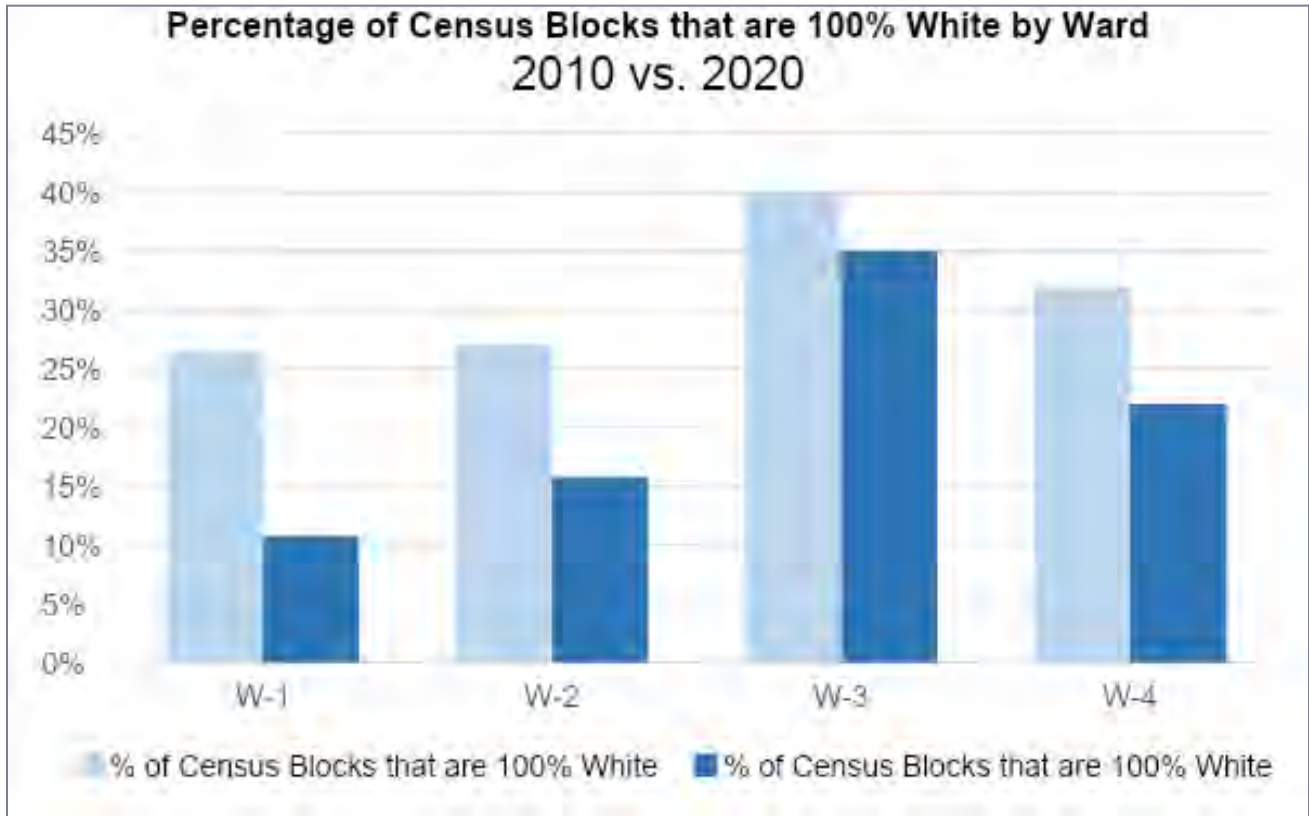


Figure 5. Percentage of Census Blocks that are 100% White by Ward

2010 Race data: U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). 2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

[[https://data.census.gov/table?t=Race+and+Ethnicity&g=050XX00US27053\\$1000000&y=2010](https://data.census.gov/table?t=Race+and+Ethnicity&g=050XX00US27053$1000000&y=2010)].

2020 Race data: U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). 2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

[[https://data.census.gov/table?t=Race+and+Ethnicity&g=050XX00US27053\\$1000000&y=2020&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P2](https://data.census.gov/table?t=Race+and+Ethnicity&g=050XX00US27053$1000000&y=2020&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P2)].

### 1.3.3. Housing Tenure

Another factor we examined was the proportion of owner-occupied housing versus renter-occupied housing in the city. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of renters in the city decreased by around 3,000 households. The four wards saw remarkably little difference in tenure over these two decades. Ward 1 did increase its proportion of renter-occupied housing, but wards 2 and 3 stayed about the same. Ward 4 has the highest proportion of renter-occupied households, but even their share of renter households has gone down between 2000 and 2020.



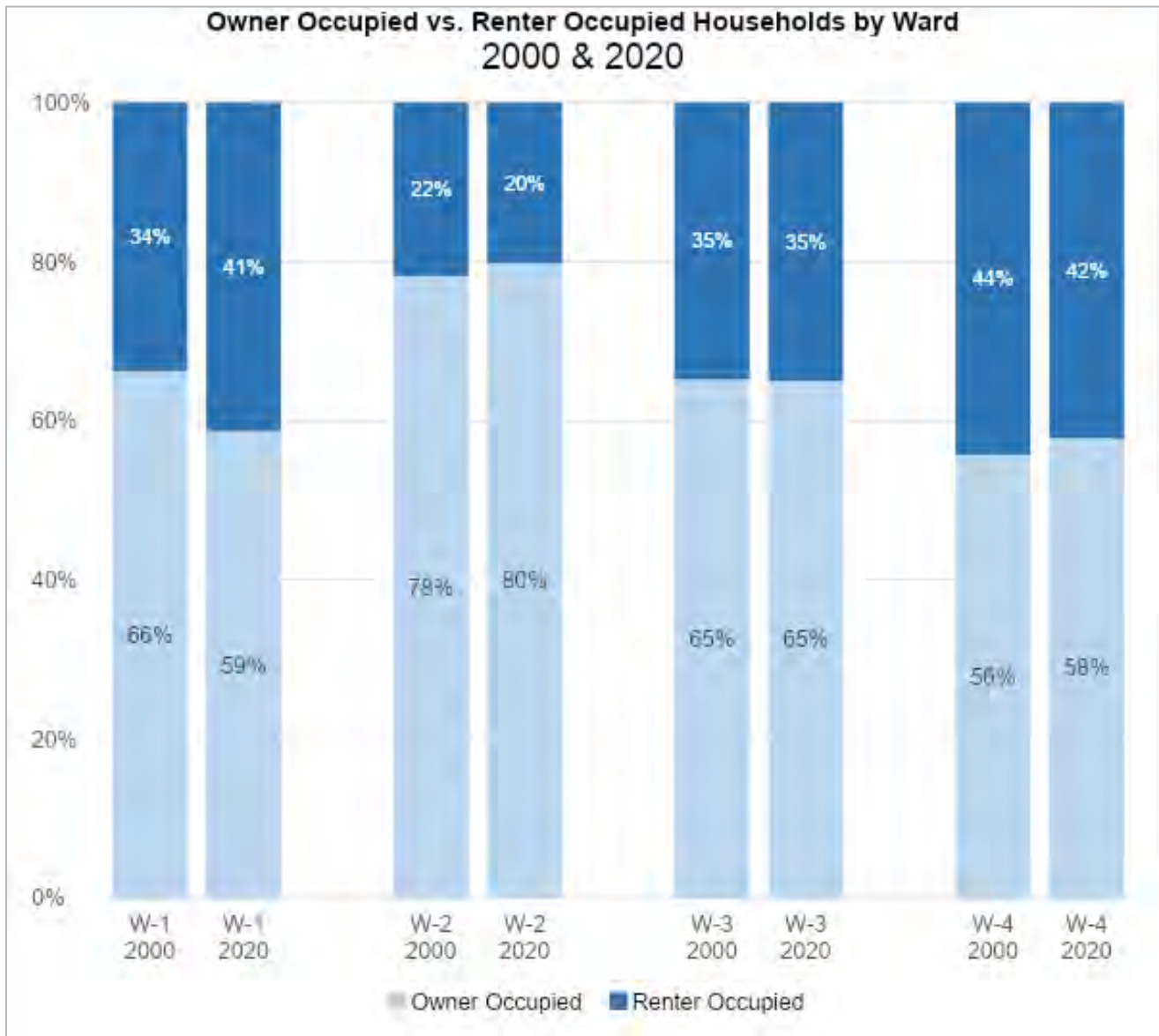


Figure 6. Owner Occupied vs. Renter Occupied Households by Ward

2000 Housing Tenure data: U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). 2000: DEC Summary File 1

[\[https://data.census.gov/table?t=Owner/Renter+\(Tenure\)&g=050XX00US27053\\$1500000&y=2000\]](https://data.census.gov/table?t=Owner/Renter+(Tenure)&g=050XX00US27053$1500000&y=2000).

2020 Housing Tenure data: U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables

[\[https://data.census.gov/table?t=Owner/Renter+\(Tenure\)&g=050XX00US27053\\$1500000&y=2020\]](https://data.census.gov/table?t=Owner/Renter+(Tenure)&g=050XX00US27053$1500000&y=2020).

#### 1.3.4. National Community Survey

Race and household tenure are only two of the many datasets that start to tell the story of Bloomington. Historically, American cities have included white property owners in policy/planning decision-making, often intentionally excluding residents of color and/or

tenants from participatory processes. While many of these cities—Bloomington included—are making efforts to reverse racist practices in government, the impacts of exclusion persist. Creating a “welcoming community” includes acting with intentionality to cater to the needs of Bloomington’s diverse community members.

The National Community Survey provides additional context to Bloomington’s story. The survey reports on the “livability” of a city, using indicators related to economy, mobility, natural environment, inclusivity and engagement, and others. Bloomington shared the 2021 and 2022 results of the survey.

The quadrant below displays the results of these indicators in terms of how important they are to residents who took the survey, and whether residents perceive the indicators to be of higher or lower quality (National Resource Center, 2022).

Figure 7 demonstrates that safety, economy, utilities, and natural environment are the top four priorities for the population as a whole. Community design, mobility, education, arts and culture, and inclusivity and engagement are the least important of the 10 indicators measured in the survey. Notably inclusivity and engagement scored the lowest in quality while also being ranked as one of the lesser important categories

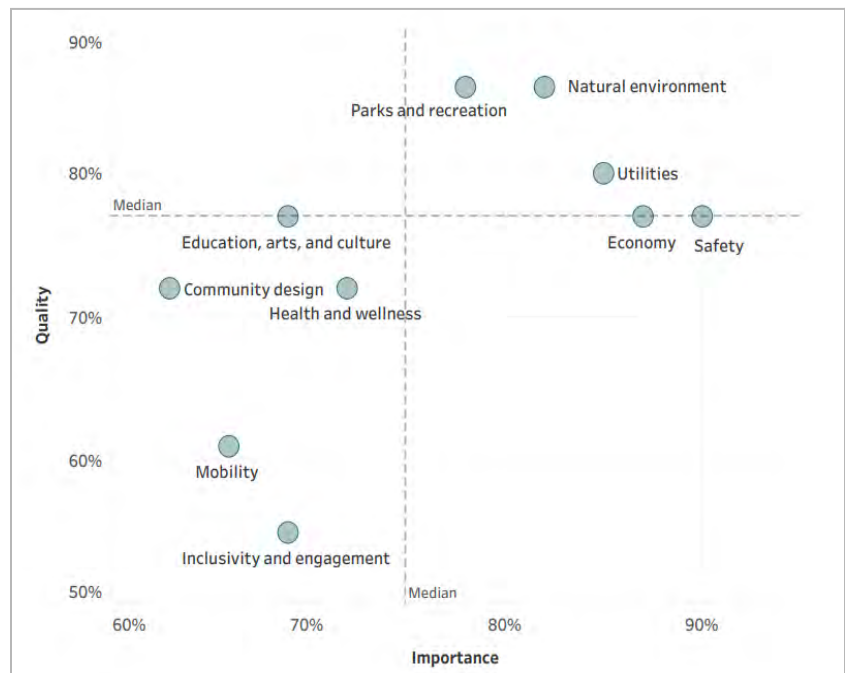


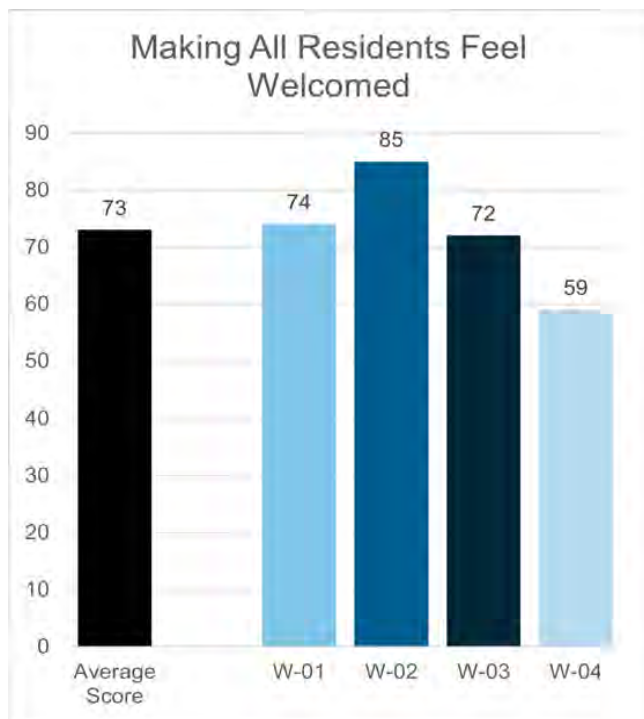
Figure 7. NCS Indicators by Perceived Importance and Quality (2022)

National Resource Center. (2022). Bloomington, MN: Report of Results 2022. National Community Survey, 9. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomingtonmn.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/NCS-Report-Bloomington-2022.pdf>

The NCS data can also be broken down by average score, race, sex, district, age, income, and length of residency. A few of these survey items are directly related to BTT Objective 1:

- Making All Residents Feel Welcomed
- Resident Connection and Engagement with their Community
- Sense of Community
- Attracting People from Diverse Backgrounds
- Valuing/Respecting People from Diverse Backgrounds
- Welcoming Resident Involvement
- Opportunities to Volunteer
- Opportunities to Participate in Community Matters
- Volunteered your Time to a Group/Activity
  - Campaigned or advocated for a local issue, cause or candidate

Ward 4 and BIPOC-identifying residents scored below average for every survey item. Ward 4 has the highest concentrations of renter-occupied households and residents of color—particularly Black residents. The score for “Making All Residents Feel Welcomed” went from 77 in 2021 to 58 in 2022 for BIPOC survey takers, while the score went from 71 in 2021 to 59 in 2022 for Ward 4 residents. The NCS determines that a 5-point difference from year-to-year is statistically significant, meaning that BIPOC and Ward 4 residents had a significantly lower perception that “All Residents Feel Welcomed” in 2022 than they did in



2021. The average score for all populations still decreased by 7 points, but the score for white-identified survey takers only decreased by 2 points. In Ward 2, residents actually increased their score in this indicator by 7 points, from 78 to 85. Ward 2 has the fewest renter-occupied households.

The NCS is a valuable resource for measuring the BTT, and it is important because it reveals disparities in quality of life among the diverse populations of the city. Still, there are limitations with NCS data. In 2022, only 17% of residents took the survey. The data cannot be broken down by immigration or refugee status, households where English is not the primary

Figure 8. Making All Residents Feel Welcomed Survey Results by Ward\*

National Resource Center. (2022). Bloomington, MN: Report of Results 2022. Polco, 29. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomingtonmn.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/NCS-Report-Bloomington-2022.pdf>.

\*the remaining 9 BTT objective 1-related survey items can be found in the Appendix

spoken language, tenure, disability, or other identifiers that may play a role in quality of life results. Furthermore, the survey does not allow the user to provide feedback about what actions are necessary to improve scores.

While the NCS scores provide a baseline, there is an opportunity to create a more nuanced assessment of the city's role in achieving its BTT goals.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Civic Participation**

*Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.* was implemented to provide a community consensus for a thriving vision of Bloomington's future. The plan's mission "to cultivate an enduring and remarkable community where people want to be" (Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. 2023, p.1), and its strategic goal of making "community members...feel connected to their neighbors, welcomed, and valued by the community as a whole," are important when looking at civic participation.

The purpose of this synopsis of literature review is to provide academic context to citizen engagement and participation as both necessary for a healthy democracy and creating a "connected, welcomed and valued community". Citizen participation and civic engagement can be key to achieving the first strategic objective of the BTT plan as well as directly addressing how the City can measure objectives in Strategy Two, a plan of action outlined in the BTT. Specifically, the literature review of civic participation will look more closely at the benefits of identifying and removing barriers to participation and having community members that are increasingly motivated to actively contribute—both stated objectives of Strategy Two.

Paraphrasing the author Peter Block from his book *Community: The Structure of Belonging*: Citizens are increasingly confronted with the fragmentation of community but can work to create a different future by committing to a deeper sense of community and connectedness that cares for the whole (2006). Social capital and the quality of relationships among citizens are the cornerstone of a community's well being and cohesion (Block, 2006). Social capital in this context plays a pivotal role in harnessing citizen participation, the bedrock of a healthy democracy.

Citizens have a central role in governance. Governance is distinct from government, in that it is a citizen-centered political but nonpartisan process of negotiating diverse interests and

views to solve public problems and create public value (Boyte, 2005). As an activity, governance seeks to share power in decision making, encourage citizen autonomy and independence, and provide a process for developing the common good through civic engagement (Boyte, 2005). Barriers to citizen participation in governance must be identified and removed to ensure a connected and welcoming community.

A connected and welcoming community is woven through the social fabric of that community. In Lisa Bingham and Tina Nabatchi's *The New Governance: Practices and Processes for Stakeholder and Citizen Participation in the Work of Government*, citizens can and must play an important role in public policy and decision making. Citizens have the right to decide what is important to them and how they can best achieve their objectives. To accomplish this, the authors argue that local governments should work with citizens in quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial new governance processes (Bingham et al., 2005). Furthermore, the authors posit that "new governance processes promote increased collaboration among government, business, civil society, and citizens; enhance democratic decision making; and foster decisional legitimacy, consensus, citizen engagement, public dialogue, reasoned debate, higher decision quality, and fairness among an active and informed citizenry" (Bingham et al., 2005, p. 554). They contend that these processes promote individual liberty while maintaining accountability and "orient citizenry toward the collective good" (Bingham et al., 2005, p. 554).

The collective good is also addressed in the research in *The Premise and Promise of Citizenship and Civil Society for Renewing Democracies and Empowering Sustainable Communities*, by Stephen Ainger and Cornelia Flora. They contend that the relationship between citizen participation and citizenship is enriched by citizens being active in governance and politics, to serve the "good of the wider community" (Ainger et al., 2001, p.497). Furthermore, local citizens *must* be actively involved in governance to become empowered in a civil society. This citizen empowerment should place emphasis on inclusion and equal citizenship rights for all, especially for groups that may suffer exclusion in the public sphere (Ainger et al., 2001). The motivation of citizens to actively participate and contribute to governance forms the thread in weaving the social fabric of the community.

Of paramount importance to BTT Objective 1 and the City's Second Strategy, is recognizing the unequal participation of citizens and their demands on local government. The Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy was charged to review and assess the health and functionality of U.S. democracy in a time of rising inequality. They surveyed three important, interlinked areas of concern—citizen participation, government responsiveness, and patterns and consequences of public policy making—finding that the voices of American citizens are

raised and heard unequally (Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004). In order to address inequities in citizen participation, a responsive government is imperative to encourage greater citizen engagement which, in turn, promotes a healthy democracy (Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004). People are more likely to get involved when they have faith that the government can and will address the needs and values of their community (Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004). Citizen participation breathes life into a healthy democracy, and local government has an important role to provide opportunities for civic engagement while welcoming all voices—not just those of the privileged few.

The Bloomington Leadership Program is an excellent case study in looking at how local municipalities can better serve their residents by providing the skills and empowerment necessary to effectively engage with local governance. The BLP goals include promoting civic engagement and developing leaders in the Bloomington community. Relying on volunteer residents to be part of the formation of the City’s Boards and Commissions (city governance), BLP is a pathway to providing informed citizens a means to take on the day-to-day work of a healthy functioning local government. A community’s well-being is related to the quality and cohesiveness of the relationships that exist among its citizens, or *social capital* (Block, 2009). BLP builds, fosters, and creates social capital for Bloomington. Social capital is about valuing and acting on interdependence and a sense of belonging that is necessary to create a community. BTT Objective 1 is closely aligned with the value of social capital, “where each citizen has the experience of being connected to those around them and knows that their safety and success are dependent on the success of all others” (Block, 2009, p. 146).

## **2.2. Equity and Inclusion in City Programming**

Since this study is an evaluation based in a city increasing in racial, ethnic, cultural, and age diversity, it is necessary to use a lens of equity and inclusion to dissect evaluative practice. The BTT’s first strategic objective is to create a connected, welcoming community. To properly evaluate the city’s success with this goal, the city’s evaluation must be culturally competent and sensitive to the varied perspectives and life experiences among Bloomington residents. An assessment of the BLP—or any city program that strives to realize a “connected and welcoming community” among residents—must capture these nuances.

### 2.2.1. Cultural Competence in Evaluation

Historically, program evaluative approaches have centered around Western democratic tradition, specifically white middle-to- upper-class experiences and standards. Further, they

are static and do not account for contextual changes that may occur over time. In *Snapshots and Personal Reflections of One African American Evaluator*, Stafford Hood argues that evaluations would benefit from more dynamic and flexible assessments that value qualitative data as highly, or more highly than quantitative data (Hood, 2004).

The "objectives oriented" approach that popularized evaluation frameworks in the 1960s measure predefined outcomes, thereby evaluating the extent to which a program has achieved its desired outcomes. These predefined outcomes are heavily biased by the evaluative team that creates these standards. A one-size fits all evaluation curriculum neglects the social and cultural nuances in programs that may benefit stakeholders who have traditionally been disenfranchised. An "objectives oriented" evaluation strategy only focuses on pre-established program intents, and may miss unanticipated influences of a program (Hood, 2004, p. 24). Hood suggests that this approach may be indicative of white supremacy culture, asserting:

It is my continuing belief that few evaluative approaches of the past (or for that matter the present) have seriously considered race, culture, poverty, or cultural context as anything more than 'error variance.' I remain firm in my conviction that program evaluation approaches can and should be more culturally responsive if we are to fully understand the effectiveness, benefits, and outcomes of programs designed to serve our less-powerful stakeholders (Hood, 2004, p. 22).

Soon after Hood published his critique of traditional evaluation processes, the American Evaluation Association (AEA) created a task force in 2005 to better understand cultural competence in evaluation within the United States. They published their findings in 2011. They found that it is impossible for evaluations to be "culture free," stating that "those who engage in evaluation do so from perspectives that reflect their values, their ways of viewing the world, and their culture" (AEA, 2011, p.3). The AEA's subsequent recommendations are discussed below.

First, they expressed that for any given evaluation, the collective evaluative team should demonstrate cultural competence by ensuring recognition, accurate interpretation, and respect for diversity. The AEA defines "cultural competence" using four core concepts: culture is central to the political, economic, and social systems that exist, as well as individuals' identities; cultural competence is not a fixed trait, and the ability to work effectively with one community does not necessarily translate to competence in another; self-examination of one's



own identity and life experiences is necessary to identify how these factors influence or restrict their ability to conduct evaluations; and culture has implications for all phases of evaluation, from staffing to development, to communication and implementation of evaluation results (AEA, 2011, p.3-4).

Second, the AEA recommended three ethical practices related to cultural competence. Evaluative approaches should be appropriate to their cultural context; for example, verbal consents can be used in communities with oral traditions, high levels of concerns about privacy, or low levels of literacy. Findings from the evaluation process should be accessible to all stakeholders, including forms of communication beyond written texts and with languages other than English. Evaluators should also consider unintended consequences when reporting findings. In some contexts, participants may be proud of their accomplishments and may want their names attached to their stories; in other cases, the identification of participants may infringe on the rights of people who have not given informed consent (AEA, 2011, p. 4).

Third, the AEA recommended validity in evaluation—that is, making sure the evaluation “got it right” (AEA, 2011, p. 5). This can be demonstrated when evaluators accurately and respectfully depict the life experiences and perspectives of program participants in their evaluations. Trust is central to validity, and evaluators should go out of their way to establish relationships that support trustworthy communication among all participants. In many cases, an evaluator may need to draw upon culturally relevant or specific theory in the design of their evaluation and interpretation of their findings (AEA, 2011, p. 5).

Other essential practices recommended by the AEA include acknowledging the complexity of cultural identity, recognizing power dynamics, recognizing and eliminating bias in language, and employing culturally appropriate methods (AEA, 2011, p. 7-9).

In line with the AEA's recommendations, Hood argues that a responsive evaluation that collaborates with the subjects allows for the greatest understanding. This responsive evaluation relies heavily on interviews and observations to find perceived value or worth from multiple stakeholders' perspectives (Hood, 2004, p. 25). Even more than cultural competence, Hood advocates for including social justice in evaluation. This means that the interests of all individuals and groups in a society are served, but special emphasis is placed on ensuring that the interests of less powerful stakeholders are adequately addressed. Hood takes inspiration from Ernest House, who pointed out that “a state of methodological grace” does not exist in evaluation; not all relevant interests are included in the planning and negotiation deliberations that determine policies and programs, typically excluding the less powerful and

the poor (Hood, 2004, p.28). House views a social justice evaluative approach as a “mechanism for evening out class barriers, instilling in persons a secure sense of self-worth, and empowering them to participate fully in the democratic process” (Hood, 2004, p.28).

To promote equity and inclusion in evaluation, it is recommended to use a responsive evaluation approach that involves collaboration with subjects through interviews and observations, which can help ensure that the interests of less powerful stakeholders are addressed. Ripple Effects Mapping is an evaluation method that captures these values and aligns with the recommendations of Stafford Hood and the AEA. In this study, the capstone group is the evaluation team. In applying REM, it is important that we follow AEA guidelines to create a culturally competent environment.

### 2.2.2. Equity in Qualitative Assessments

This study focuses on qualitative evaluative practices that the City of Bloomington can use to assess the BTT. While the evaluative piece is central to this study, there are other implications for equity and inclusion in city programming to support the BTT.

The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) is a national network of governments working to advance racial equity across their jurisdictions. They support jurisdictions at the forefront of racial equity work, increase engagement and resources for jurisdictions that are just beginning their racial equity work, and provide a network of local and regional collaborations focused on achieving racial equity. The City of Bloomington became a Core Member of GARE in 2017, committing the city to racial equity by ensuring that “residents will be authentically engaged in their civic processes, their workforce will be more reflective of the community, and Bloomington will sustain itself as a welcoming, vibrant, stable, healthy, safe, and desirable place to live, play and do business” (GARE 2017). This commitment is directly tied to the objectives of the BTT, and thereby encompasses all city programming within Bloomington.

As a peer-to-peer professional network, GARE publishes racial equity programming that has been successfully implemented in American cities. In 2015, they published a Racial Equity Toolkit that combined the takeaways from multiple case studies throughout the nation. The Racial Equity Tool asks six sets of questions:

1. Proposal: What is the policy, program, practice, or budget decision under consideration? What are the desired results and outcomes?
2. Data: What's the data? What does the data tell us?
3. Community engagement: How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?
4. Analysis and strategies: Who will benefit from or be burdened by your proposal? What are the strategies for advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?
5. Implementation: What is your plan for implementation?
6. Accountability and communication: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?

The third set of questions is central to this study, and to any qualitative assessment Bloomington might conduct to evaluate its progress in the BTT. The city should be able to answer: Who are the most affected community members who are concerned with, or have experience related to this program? How has the city involved these community members in the development or operations of this program? What has the engagement process told the city about the burdens or benefits to different groups? What has the engagement process shown the city about the factors that produce or perpetuate racial inequity related to this program? (Brooks and Nelson, 2016, p.10).

Additionally, the Toolkit provides suggestions for engagement processes. Smaller groups that feed into a larger process often lead to more transparent feedback. Each program may have its own small group that meets and summarizes their own recommendations. When conducting large group meetings, a variety of modes of collecting input ensures that everyone participating may provide feedback to their level of comfortability. Splitting into small group discussions, using written comments for collection, including a “one-on-one” interview, and using surveys for anonymity help to ensure that everyone has a chance to share. Furthermore, having experienced advocates/outreach and engagement liaisons at engagement events are crucial to building trust, particularly for participants who are underrepresented in public processes or are hesitant to share certain information (Brooks and Nelson, 2016, p. 9).

### **2.3. Ripple Effects Mapping**

Evaluating changes in communities due to programming can be challenging, yet measuring program impacts is critical for continued support and investment (Kollack et al., 2012). In our effort to determine whether the qualitative evaluation method of Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) could be an effective measure of how city programming meets their strategic goals, we

reviewed *A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping*, discussed the technique with the editor of the guide, Dr. Scott Chazdon and examined four final reports where REM was used as the primary evaluation method. The decision to use REM would depend upon its utility to our program evaluation by 1) accurately documenting BLP impacts across the city, 2) providing measurement of BTT objectives where none existed, and 3) strengthening program impact evaluation techniques. For an in-depth description of the REM process, see Methods.

The purpose of REM is to look at how a program has made a difference in the community and to use that information to think about what can be learned from that work, as well as how a community can use and evaluate that information going forward (Chazdon et al., 2017). Importantly, REM is community based in its analysis, highly participatory through stakeholder perspective and visually compelling with mind mapping. Used in this way, REM aligns with the capstone's research objective of providing a program evaluation framework to assess the intended and unintended impacts of the BLP and determine how those impacts meet or do not meet the goals of the BTT.

The adaptable nature of the REM method to document program results was an attractive feature that helped convince the capstone team of its viability. Ripple Effects Mapping showed promise in the variety of programs it was used to evaluate impacts; from Rural Health and Safety Education grants, programming in public schools, and arts based leadership programs to neighborhood district councils and military child care programs.. Additionally, REM is adaptable to various contexts such as single community, multi-community, coalition and system-level changes (Chazdon et al., 2017). The flexible nature of REM in regard to programs and context means the City could use this method both internally by department and externally by participatory program to measure BTT goals.

In reviewing case studies of why REM was used to conduct program evaluations, common reasons included, “the desire to document program impact in a way that involved multiple perspectives and participants, an interest in generating enthusiasm and energy for continued work, and a desire to help participants connect their efforts with those of others” (Chazdon et al., 2017, p.36). The capstone group viewed the engaging and group participatory nature of REM as having tremendous potential to yield benefits and collect data in a short timeframe. The group facilitated interviews of participants allowed for “respectful attention to context” while generating “high-quality” evaluation data (Kollack et al., 2012, p.2). Given the community context of the BLP, it makes sense to use a method that analyzes impacts respective of Community Capitals Framework (CCF). REM's primary data analysis method is to code its data to social, human, cultural, political, natural, built, and financial capitals. See

Community Capitals Framework Literature Review for in-depth description of each capital. Because REM is adaptable, the capstone group could also code for the BTT objectives of a welcoming, healthy and economically equitable community. Moreover, the mind map diagramming component of REM (a form of radiant thinking that refers to the brain's associative thought processes beginning from a central point and forming “rays” among integrated concepts), is an ideal tool for brainstorming and organizing (Kollack et al., 2012). The mind map component separates REM from other qualitative impact analysis methods such as Outcome Harvesting and Most Significant Change (Chazdon et al., 2017). The visualization of collective effort is beneficial for evaluating the impacts of a program like the BLP.

The capstone group ultimately chose REM based on its adaptability, efficiency, and effectiveness in impact analysis. First, REM allowed for a community context to data analysis including the ability to provide a measure to the BTT. Second, group interviews of REM participants gave access to multiple perspectives in a short amount of time. Lastly, the adaptability of REM in a variety of contexts makes it well-suited to evaluate the BLP.

## **2.4. The Community Capitals Framework**

The Community Capitals Framework (CCF) is an evaluative structure used to measure community development assets (Emery & Flora, 2006). It serves as a universal evaluation tool in this study, used in addition to the 3 strategic goals formulated in the Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. strategic plan. The framework consists of seven community capitals: financial, social, cultural, natural, built, human, and political.

### 2.4.1. The Seven Community Capitals



#### *Natural Capital*

The natural resources used and cared for by the community. One can foster natural capital by cleaning up their local park, planting a tree, aiding in prairie restoration, or anything else that improves access to natural spaces. (Emery & Flora, 2006).



#### *Cultural Capital*

One of the more complicated capitals to define, cultural capital is the celebration and consideration of language, values, traditions, and heritage. It impacts the way the people within the community observe the world around them as well as how they are heard within the

community. (Emery & Flora, 2006). Lionel Beaulieu, of Purdue University, further defines cultural capital as the “fabric of community life,” expanding the definition to include music, art, industry, clothing, and more (2014, p.2).



### *Human Capital*

Human capital is based on resources and skills of the people in the community. The resources need not be available within the community since this capital focuses on the knowledge of said resources. Anything that increases the community’s body of knowledge and known skills will increase human capital. Community education courses, skills workshops, leadership programs, and colleges are all examples of assets that increase human capital (Emery & Flora, 2006; Beaulieu, 2014).



### *Social Capital*

Refers to the interactions between people and organizations within the community. Activities that increase interconnectedness and the ties between community members increase social capital (Emery & Flora, 2006). For example, National Night Out, community events like parades, networking events, and Mommy & Me playgroups (Beaulieu, 2014).



### *Political Capital*

This is the access to resources and power in the community. It also refers to the ability for a community member to share their opinions and engage in activities that improve their community. This can include being close to people in power (e.g. the mayor) and having clear channels to engage in meaningful ways to their government (Emery & Flora, 2006).



### *Financial Capital*

Refers to access to any financial resources available to the community that can be used to improve capacity-building. This also includes anything that may have the opportunity to accumulate wealth that will be used for community improvement (Emery & Flora, 2006). For example, community foundations, grants, local loan programs, taxes, local banks (Beaulieu, 2014).



### *Built Capital*

Any human-created structure that aids in the development of the other capitals is what is known as built capital (Emery & Flora, 2006). Roadways, infrastructure in local parks, transit

stations, and community centers are all examples of built capital (Beaulieu, 2014).

Each capital is an essential part of a comprehensive community development plan. A comprehensive plan will ideally build assets in each of the capital areas. Smaller plans and programs may target specific capitals or a smaller subset of the whole to fill in gaps of assets in certain areas.

### 2.4.2 Spiraling Up

Spiraling up is a process that occurs when capital assets accumulate. The theory is based on the Cumulative Causation theory formulated by Gunnar Myrdal in 1957. Emery & Flora adapted this model to the CCF, which shows an increase of capital assets in response to the increase of other types of capital assets (2006). In their research, Emery & Flora studied a County-based leadership program. The program aimed to “increase skills, create awareness of leadership opportunities, and expand... understanding of the County” (2006). Throughout

the program, including the design, implementation, and in the wake of the impacts of the program, the researchers noticed first the increase in the county’s social and human capital, and subsequently the growth of financial capital, cultural capital, and political capital (Emery & Flora, 2006).

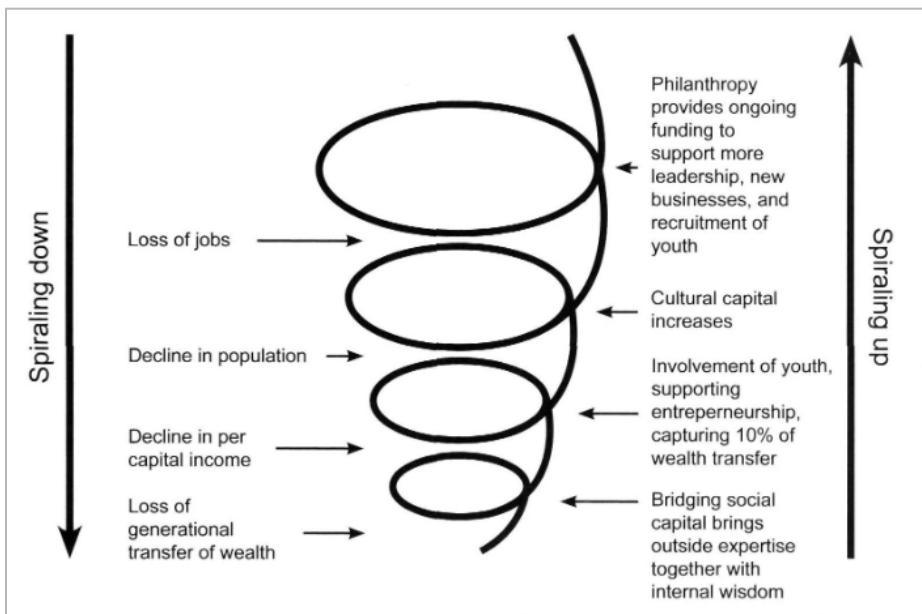


Figure 9. Spiraling Up Graphic from Emery & Flora 2006, p.22

Emery, M., & Flora, C. (2006). Spiraling-Up: Mapping Community Transformation with Community Capitals Framework. *Community Development*, 37(1), 22.

### 2.5. Comparative Case Studies

The capstone team started its research by looking at similar leadership courses from across the country. The team sought to glean a best practices model by interviewing program administrators running civic programs with the same focus as the BLP. The capstone group



narrowed down an initial list of 31 leadership programs by determining whether the program was managed by the city, run by the Chamber of Commerce, or administered through a private entity. In this initial research, we found that leadership programs can vary in scope and expense. Chamber of Commerce leadership programs focus on building relationships with area entrepreneurs and businesses, and are closely tied to the capitalist structures and context of the area. These programs are sometimes free to applicants and sometimes there is a fee for tuition. The leadership programs run by private entities were geared toward working professionals and were tuition based, ranging from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars to participate. Information gained from the websites of these leadership programs showed that tuition was used (in part) for overnight retreats, catered food, and speaker fees, among other expenses. Looking for “apples to apples” comparison to the BLP, the capstone team was only interested in following up with free, city managed civic and leadership programs.

Once a particular program made it through the initial criteria, we contacted program administrators through email inquiry and phone call follow-up. Each program was asked the following questions:

- What is the focus of the program? (Mission)
- How do you define leadership/civic engagement?
- What are the goals of the program and how do you ensure that you are meeting them?
- What is your application process like? What kind of people apply? How many applicants do you get and how many are able to participate? What is your selection criteria?
- What is the format of your program? How often do you meet?
- Do you have evaluation metrics?
- What are the success/impacts of the program?
- How do you know your program is working?
- What are some ways participants have contributed to the community after participating in the program?

The first five sets of questions were asked to determine if it was similar in scope with the BLP. Each program we included as a case study was similar in focus, with emphasis on civic participation and community leadership gained through access to the inner workings of local government. The next four questions got to the heart of our research: impact evaluation and methods of measurement. All of the administrators we were able to talk to were very generous with their time, frank with their insights and excited about our study.

See Appendix C for complete case study responses.

We found that city civic engagement and leadership programs do not have consistent or robust measures in place to determine the impacts of their respective programs. Surveys are only able to tell a small part of the story. Alumni gatherings can be insightful about what impacts are being made within a community, but impacts are rarely recorded and measured. Through conversation with our partners at Bloomington COED and RCP, it was suggested that we look at Ripple Effects Mapping as a potential method to measure BLP impacts. This innovative qualitative method can be effective in participatory program evaluation.

Program Name	Location of Program & City Population	Frequency of Program Offering	End of Course Participant Survey	Hosts Voluntary Post-Program Meetings	Comprehensive Impact Evaluation Strategy
Bloomington Leadership Program	Bloomington, Minnesota 89K	Once / year 9 weeks 2 hrs per week	✓	✓	
Neighborhood Leadership Academy	Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 181K	Twice / year 5 weeks 2 hrs per week			*
Charlotte Civic Leadership Academy	Charlotte, North Carolina 879K	Twice / year 13 classes Meets 1-3 times a week 2-4 hrs per class		✓	
City Government Academy	Eden Prairie, Minnesota 63K	Once / year Six weeks 3 hrs per week	✓		
Neighborhood Leadership Institute	Dayton, Ohio 137K	Once / year 10 weeks, 13 classes 2.5-3 hrs per class	✓	✓	

Table 1. Case Study Evaluation

\*Impact evaluation based on community project impacts only

### 3. METHODS

#### 3.1. Ripple Effects Mapping

Our primary source of evaluation data came from a method known as Ripple Effects Mapping (REM). REM “is a group participatory evaluation method that engages program and community stakeholders to map the chain of intended and unintended effects from a program or complex collaboration.” (Chazdon et al., 2017, p.2) This collaborative and innovative approach to community outcomes measurement is a useful method for program impact analysis. REM employs four core elements:



Figure 10. Core elements of Ripple Effects Mapping (Chazdon et al., 2017)

REM employs seven indicators of a community’s *capital*: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built capitals. This framework originated as a way to study how using assets in one capital could build assets in others.

Participatory evaluation strategies integrate program stakeholders actively in the evaluation process. During REM sessions, participants are asked to conduct one-on-one interviews that connect to a variety of topics: successes or achievements, deepened or new relationships, and unexpected or surprising developments that resulted from the program or from relationships built during the program. Through this interactive group interviewing and reflection, REM helps illustrate both the nature and the extent of program impacts. The REM facilitator and participants then work together to identify program effects, or ripples, that are visualized through mind mapping. Mind mapping makes it possible to capture causally-linked chains of effects in a visually stimulating way.

Working as a group, this process provides an important opportunity for the participants to reflect on the effects of the program, as well as how the effects are connected with one another. Those participating in REM can gain a deeper understanding of the program as well as learn how to collect and reflect on qualitative data.

To assess the impacts of the BLP, we held a Ripple Effects Mapping event on Thursday, March 23, 2023 from 6:00-8:00 PM at Bloomington Fire Station #1. Alumni were given the opportunity to sign up to receive more information about our REM event during our Observational Study, and those who provided their contact information were given first priority to register for the event. BLP alumni were invited via email to participate, giving those with first priority six weeks to register, and the rest of the alumni 4 weeks. Registration was done through the use of Google Forms. REM is recommended for groups of 12 to 20, and we had 15 participants sign up and attend the event.

When participants arrived, they received a packet containing a name tag and placard, interview worksheet, photo release form, and a set of unique colored stickers for the Make Your Mark! map. Food was also provided for participants and they were encouraged to eat and mingle as participants filtered in.

One-on-one interview partners were paired up so that no two participants were from the same BLP cohort year. Interview worksheets were provided to assist with the data collection process.

Besides REM, we incorporated four additional elements into our methodology.

### **3.2. Observational Study**

Prior to the REM event, we conducted an observation of a BLP alumni event. This enabled us to observe and record people's behavior, actions and interactions, while meeting participants to gain trust and build rapport for our future REM event (Hennink et al., 2011). Using observation was particularly useful in giving us an introduction to the study, and providing social context of the participants who would later be invited to take part in the REM event. We were invited to attend the alumni event by Amanda Crombie, the director of the BLP, on the condition that we were not just observers but participant-observers in the evening's activities.

The two-hour BLP alumni event took place in a conference room at Bloomington Civic Plaza on February 9th, 2023 beginning at 6 PM. The first floor conference room was spacious and set with five large round tables seating four to six alums per table. Dinner was served at the front of the room with grab-and-go style Panera sandwiches. As BLP alumni arrived, they were warmly greeted by Amanda and Emily, the administrators of the program. Participants mostly sat with members of their BLP cohort, catching up with their former cohort mates. We (Annika, Rachel and Jason) each sat at separate tables allowing us to observe from multiple

perspectives. After dinner and before the programming began, we were introduced to the group as graduate students interested in evaluating the BLP. We explained that we were in attendance to observe and participate with the group, and briefly discussed our research project while inviting them to the REM event that would be happening in March.

Before the activities started, Amanda and Emily led a land acknowledgement, setting a tone of reflection and grace. The evening continued with Amanda asking everyone to write down a success or achievement in civic participation or community leadership since being in the BLP, then post the responses to a large wall in the front of the room. She then asked people to stand and share what they wrote and/or what they got out of the Bloomington Leadership Program.



Figure 11. Responses to what participants got out of the Bloomington Leadership Program

The programming for the evening was modeled through DICE: Designing Intentional Connection and Engagement. DICE involves various fun and interactive activities to explore teambuilding and rapport, while offering a format for further connection with (in this case) other BLP alums. DICE is a technique, as stated by Amanda, “to learn tools to help us build connections.” Before we began, the group was asked to agree to the following rules for the evening: “Lean in”, “Be curious”, “Stay engaged” and “Step up, step back”. The activities were all based on rolling two large inflatable dice. The number of the roll determined the activity. Groups, based on the table in which we were seated, completed the activity against one another in friendly competition.

The first activity was “Reverse Charades”. One person holds a card (which they can not see) while the rest of the group (teammates) pantomime the text. The goal was to get as many right in a given time constraint. The activity elicited lots of laughter, encouragement, clapping and excitement. Next was “Telephone Charades”. The room was divided into two large teams in separate single-file lines facing unidirectionally forward. The person at the back of the line received the clue (activity) to pantomime once to the person in front of them, and “pass” the

charade forward to the front. No team was successful in solving the activity (watering plants), but the activity was fun and elicited laughter. The next roll of the dice landed to “Living Room Discussion”. This activity made four areas within the room available for discussion. Four participants each offered one topic for a corner of the room, while remaining participants could move throughout the room joining in the discussion. The four topics were Books, Bloomington Waterpark, Super Bowl, and Best Kept Secrets of Bloomington. People were very engaged in the discussions, and there was not a lot of topic hopping. The last DICE activity was “Being Picasso”. Everyone had a partner seated next to them and the task was to draw their partner without looking down at the paper and without lifting the pen. The program concluded with a reflection about expectations. The group was posed with the question, “What are the expectations you have in events and coming into community with your fellow BLP alums?” Reflections were shared as a group and written on a large poster paper.

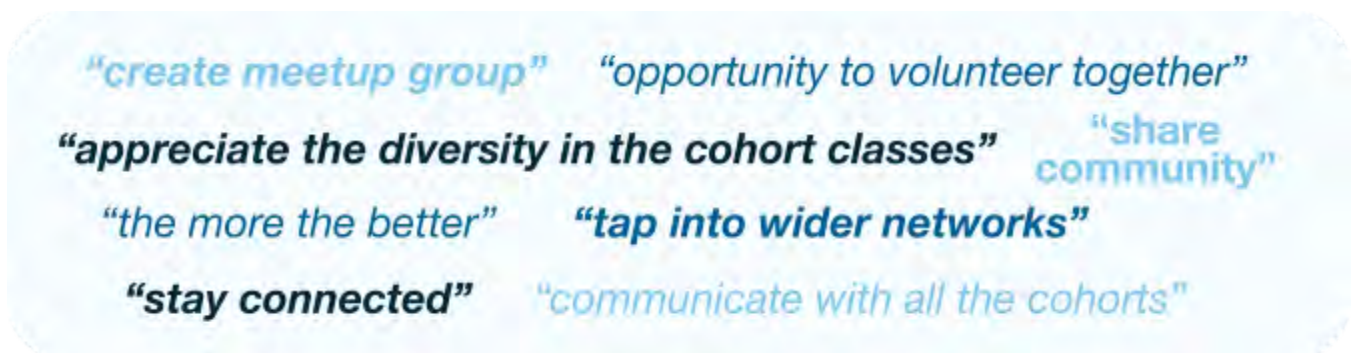


Figure 12. What are the expectations you have in events and coming into community with your fellow BLP alums? Quotes of participant reflections

We finished the evening with an energizing Tik Tok dance, of which we were asked to mimic the dancer in the video. We ended with a group photo. Some people stayed to catch up with one another as others called it a night.

Notes from the observation can be found in Appendix D.

### 3.3. Worksheets

We made the decision to supplement the appreciative inquiry portion of REM with worksheets. Each worksheet contained three questions that the pair would ask each other in their one-on-one interview, along with space for notes. This worksheet can be found in Appendix E.

The questions on the worksheets were as follows:

- What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had because of your involvement with the BLP?
- What unexpected things have happened as a result of your involvement with the program?
- What connections--new and/or deepened--have you made because of your time in the BLP?

Using worksheets allowed us to gather more information than time might allow for at the event. The worksheets also allowed us to follow up with participants as needed to gain clarification.

### 3.4. Make Your Mark! Activity

The city requested that we incorporate a geographic element into our findings. We knew from demographic data that different areas of Bloomington are composed of diverse community members with differing qualities of life. For example, a white family of four living in a single-family home in Ward 2, might experience Bloomington differently than an intergenerational immigrant family of eight in an affordable housing complex in Ward 4. The NCS data showed that different wards experience quality of life in varying ways, with Ward 4 often ranking below the average result for the city.

The mind map from Ripple Effects Mapping does not take into account these geographic disparities. We wanted to know if the impacts from the Bloomington Leadership Program equitably benefit all parts of the city. Our assumption was that, in line with the NCS data, the impacts of the BLP were proportionately benefitting the areas of the city with households that were whiter, owner-occupied, and younger.



*Figure 13. Photo of participants adding stickers to the Make Your Mark! Map by Amanda Crombie*

We presented a 4' by 3' map (Appendix E.7.) at the REM event, created using ArcGIS Pro. Each participant was given their own uniquely colored set of stickers. We asked that they place their stickers on the map to represent the locations of their impacts. We encouraged them to mark small and large impacts—anything from a consciousness-raising conversation



with a neighbor, to volunteering at an elementary school, to the location of a small business they started.

This activity was titled “Make Your Mark!”. We verbally introduced this activity at the beginning of the event, and added a description of the activity on the worksheets that participants used for their paired interviews. The participants were encouraged to keep locations of their impacts in the back of their mind throughout the event. Participants used the break time to mark the map. They also marked the map after the event was complete.

### **3.5. Dual Survey Method**

We supplemented the REM event with a dual survey method to ensure that every opportunity was given to BLP participants to share their impacts with us.

We used Google Forms to create and distribute two surveys. Both surveys were anonymized. The first survey was titled *REM Participant Feedback Survey*. This survey was distributed to the 15 BLP participants that engaged in the REM event. The first portion of this survey asked for feedback about the REM event. Feedback results can be found in Appendix E.9.

The second portion of the survey allowed participants to add any impacts they made that may not have been shared at the event due to time constraints. The three appreciative inquiry interview questions were included again to refresh participants’ memories. We also included an opportunity for participants to add any additional locations of their impacts using Google Interactive Maps. They were further given the option to simply write addresses, intersections, or landmarks to reference a location of impact. 13 of the 15 REM participants completed the survey.

The second survey was titled *BLP Alumni Impact Survey*. This survey was distributed to all BLP alumni who did not participate in the REM event. In this survey, the three appreciative inquiry questions were presented separately with a long-answer form field. This survey also included the Make Your Mark! activity, with an opportunity for alumni to either write down locations of impact, or use Google Interactive Maps to drop a pin on locations of impact. Seven alumni completed the survey.

### **3.6. Coding the Map**

In addition to identifying four key themes from the REM event, we coded the data using the Community Capitals Framework and BTT objectives. The responses from the mind map were

pasted in Excel, and coded using a binary method whereas the stated impact does not fit capital or objective (0) and the stated impact does fit capital or objective (1) (Figure 9). There were 143 responses recorded. We then used Excel formulas to determine what percentage of impacts aligned with each community capital and BTT objective.

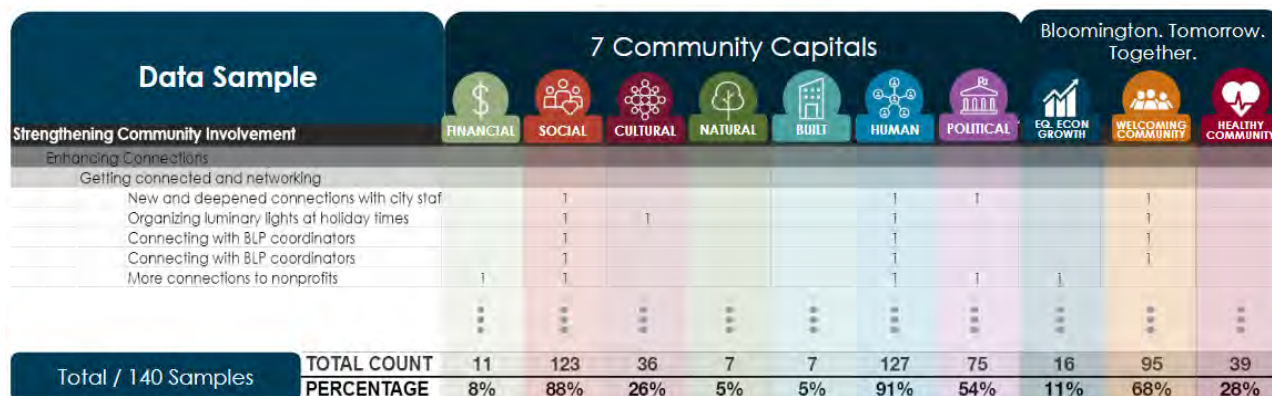


Figure 14. Graphic example of coding process using both Community Capitals Framework and BTT strategic goals

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Ripple Effects Mapping Themes

As the participants shared their interviews, their responses were mapped using X-Mind software, and projected in real time in the front of the room. Participant responses were then organized by themes and in some cases further expanded upon. The BLP REM participants agreed upon the following themes and sub-themes to organize the ripple map. This section of the report summarizes the responses about each theme and provides some illustrative quotes from participants. Images of the four ripple map themes are included in Appendix E of this report



Figure 15. Graphic example of coding process using both Community Capitals Framework and BTT strategic goals

#### 4.1.1. Strengthening Community Involvement

The dominant theme of the REM session was strengthening community involvement. This is not surprising, given that a goal of the BLP is to improve community engagement. There were several sub-themes about building community relationships, as many participants described connecting and networking while engaging with people in the community and within City Hall. For several members, the program afforded them the opportunity to meet a diverse group of Bloomington residents and gain better cultural understanding of their neighbors, while improving their worldview.

Participants described increased community participation after completing the BLP course, with a deeper focus on civic engagement. People talked about becoming more

**"I really found my sense of connection & community within Bloomington. The primary reason I joined BLP was to figure out what the city had to offer and meet my neighbors. I have made many great friends & connected with this city on a whole new level"**

-REM Participant

civically engaged and civically minded, offering examples from connecting Latino families to Bloomington Public Health for COVID vaccinations, to helping the City of Bloomington promote the census.

"This is a great program - as a resident, you often hear people complaining about the city - the choices made, money spent, etc. This **program shows you the complexities of the city workings & gives you much confidence in the abilities & passion of our city staff.** Empathy for the work of our city partners"

-REM Participant

Some of the BLP alumni discussed how the program was empowering residents to educate the community. One participant writes a monthly column for the Sun Current, a local newspaper, while another develops monthly programming for the League of Women Voters around topics of social justice, climate change and democracy.

Members of the group also highlighted their involvement in supporting early childhood development in the community. One participant noted that they initiated a Family Friends and Neighbors Childcare program in their community. Another stated that they met with the school superintendent quarterly to "agitate" for change.

"Now, when a neighbor complains about something, I have a **better lens** to think about what they are saying and even **correct them with better info, give them a resource** to give feedback (rather than just complain) or **reassure them that the city is working hard and does care.** I also feel more empowered about the **channels available to get involved,** give feedback, voice concerns, if I felt I had a question or concern"

-REM Participant

#### 4.1.2. Deepening Engagement with Local Government

Another dominant theme revolved around the empowerment the program gave to individuals to deepen their involvement with their local government. Many participants discussed how BLP's curriculum provided opportunities to familiarize them with city operations and gave them the confidence to engage with city officials. While in the program, BLP participants met the police and fire chiefs and connected with City Council and city commissions. In their interviews, some alumni discussed becoming more familiar and comfortable with reaching out to various city departments, including Parks and Recreation, Bloomington Public Health, Police and Fire Departments, and the Mayor's office.

The BLP can be an effective pathway for residents to become informed citizens that are confident to volunteer and participate on city commissions and committees. Some participants talked about getting involved with the BTT strategic planning process by joining the BTT design committee and presenting the committee's vision to the City Council. Others shared their contributions to the Business Budget, Charter, Creative

Placemaking, Park and Project Commissions. Still others worked on the city committee exploring the bidding process for hosting the 2027 World Expo. It is significant to note that the BLP is not open to residents who are already active on city commissions and committees, meaning the accomplishments listed here were made by residents choosing to deepen their civic engagement after completing the program.

A related sub-theme noted by participants was attending and sometimes presenting to the City Council. One participant noted that they presented to the City Council about the BLP, and another shared that the BLP provided the confidence they needed to raise questions to the Council on the behalf of other community members.

#### 4.1.3. Gaining Knowledge

Many of the participants discussed the positive effects of gaining a better understanding of how the City of Bloomington operates. The BLP offers its participants to peek behind the curtain of city government, allowing residents to demystify how the City works. One participant noted that the program helped them learn more about the City and community, increasing their knowledge of the City structures and organizations.

For several alumni of the program, they stated that in gaining institutional knowledge, they were better equipped to understand both local and state

"I have a **deep appreciation for what city staff does to ensure this city functions properly.** Their level of drive and commitment is greatly un-appreciated and under recognized. I also recognize how much work needs to be done to ensure that **Bloomington continues to be a remarkable community and will continue to do what I can to support my neighbors and city.**"

-REM Participant

"When I better understand the system **I want to learn more about the city, the state & the country to better teach & advocate** for our **Latin community.**"

-REM Participant



governments. The BLP exposed participants to a wide variety of institutional processes, from constructing the city budget, to sustainability efforts, to water treatment and public safety.

#### 4.1.4. Energizing New Leaders

In the initial interview “pair and share”, and later during the expanded mapping process, many participants responded that the value of the BLP came from the empowerment and confidence they found within themselves to be more effective leaders in the community. Some members discussed how the program gave them a sense of ownership in civic participation, showing them how to be more intentional with engagement in local government. Several participants shared that while the program pushed them out of their comfort zone, they gained the self-assurance to jump into civic engagement by approaching life with more curiosity. More than one BLP alum commented about gaining confidence to achieve and believe in themselves by “finding their voice.” These skills then led some participants to be able to advocate for other community members and connect them to city services.

“I gained confidence to quit my job to **become a campaign manager for a State Representative seat which we flipped and won!**”

-REM Participant

The BLP alumni communicated that they improved their leadership skills while enrolled in the program, finding that some would bring lessons from the BLP into their daily

“I felt **confident to take on a board leadership role** with a local civic nonprofit organization to promote voter engagement & education!”

-REM Participant

personal and professional lives. One participant said that they became more effective, focused and skilled as a leader after completion of the program. Another discussed that they gained the ability to be a better listener while also asking better questions.

A few of the participants talked about how they harnessed their leadership potential into initiating programs throughout the community. One participant talked about how they started a Latino leadership group to advocate on behalf of the Latino community in Bloomington. They also

articulated how the BLP helped them understand what it means to be both a Latino community leader and an American leader. Another alum discussed co-founding a community solidarity group between their Muslim and non-Muslim neighbors regularly gathering as one

community since 2017. And yet another example was found when a participant shared that after starting a volunteer initiative within their community, it proved successful enough to turn into a non-profit program.

“[The program] helped me deepen my sense of volunteerism and I felt more connected to the city. As a result of the BLP, I joined the Board of the Bloomington Community Foundation.”  
-REM Participant

The themes of the map offer a grounded way to explore participant, group and community impacts of the Bloomington Leadership Program. Illustrating the effects of the BLP through participant responses is a way to create strong public support and validate the impacts of the program. Another way to quantify the impacts of the BLP was by coding the map to the Community Capitals Framework and the strategic objectives of the BTT. This approach applies a pre-existing and relevant conceptual framework to the data collected and mapped in our session.

### 4.2 Community Capitals

In addition to the themes that emerged from the mind map, the coding done in Excel showed that the BLP significantly increases human and social capital for the City of Bloomington. Out of 143 reported effects, 130 (91%) contributed to human capital, and 126 (88%) contributed to social capital (Figure 12).

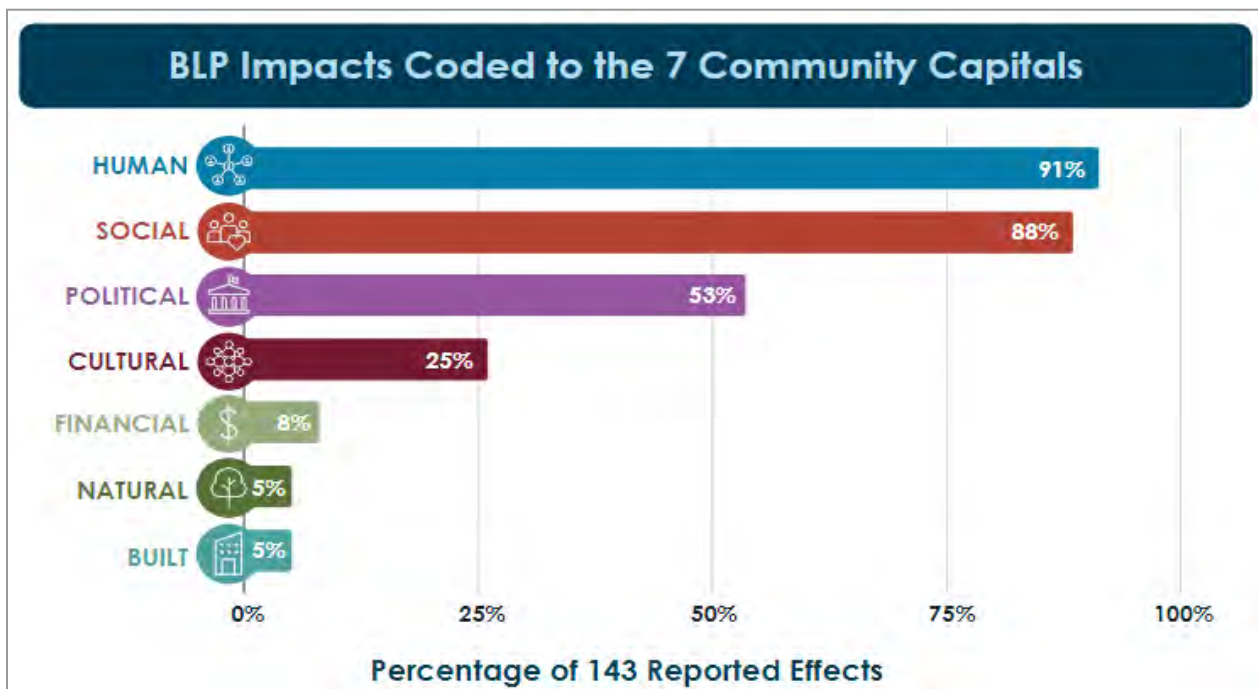


Figure 16. Graph of BLP impacts coded to the Community Capitals Framework

### 4.3 BTT Objectives

The three BTT objectives of creating a welcoming, healthy, and economically equitable community were also used as an additional coding framework. Out of the 143 reported effects, 97 (68%) contributed to fostering a welcoming community (Figure 17). Additionally, 40 (28%) of the impacts supported a healthy community, and 17 (12%) contributed to a community with equitable economic growth.

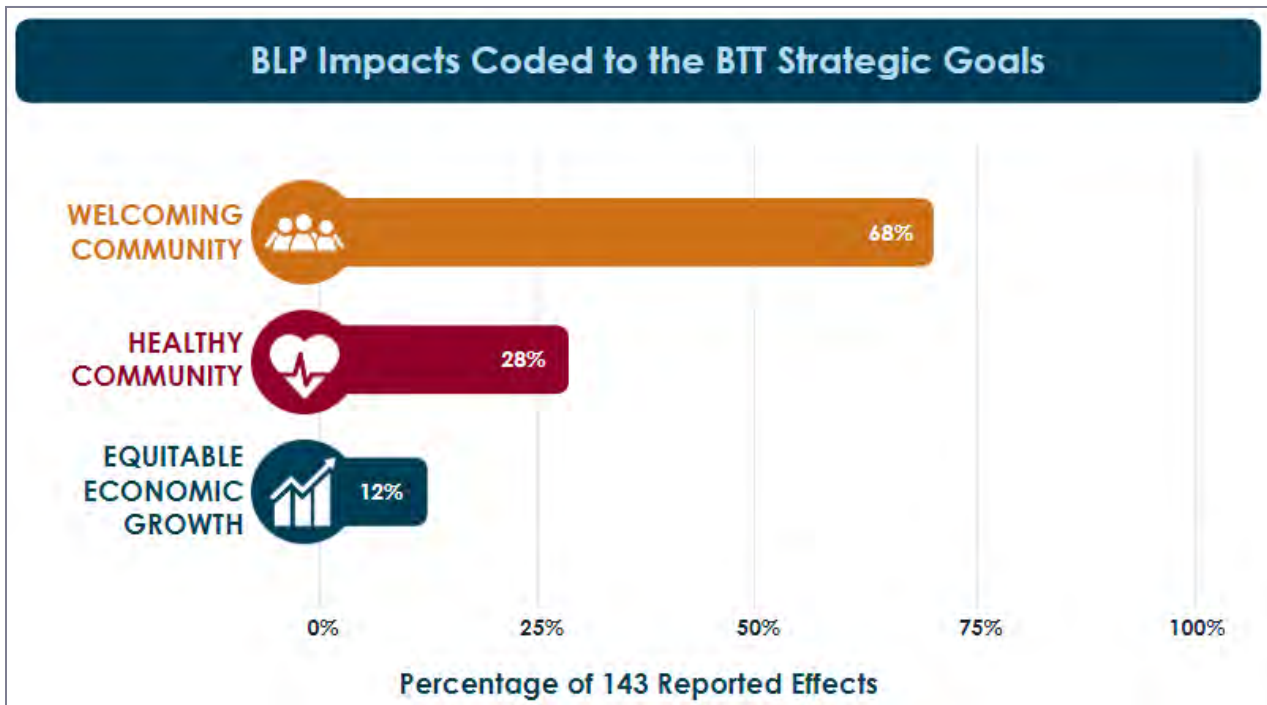
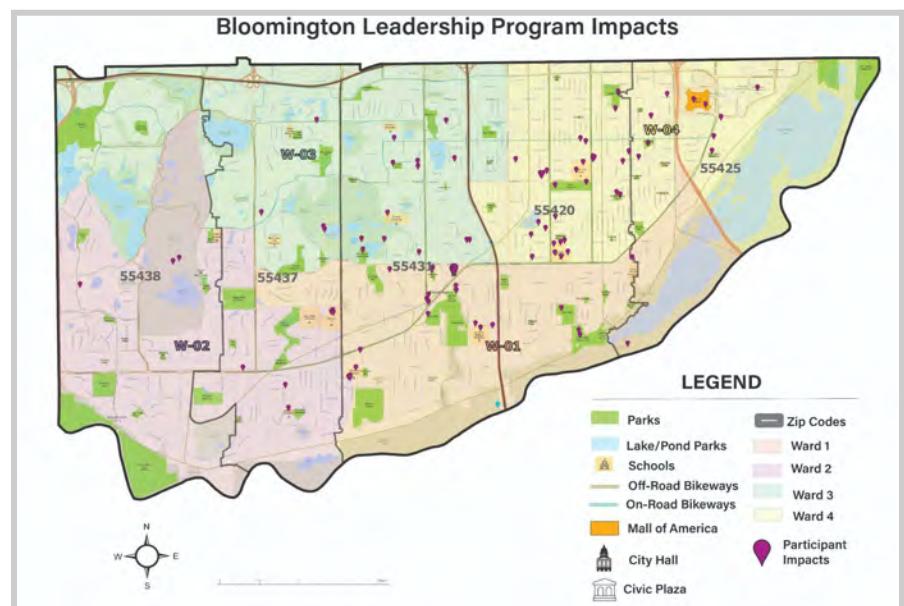


Figure 17. Graph of BLP impacts coded to the Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. Strategic goals

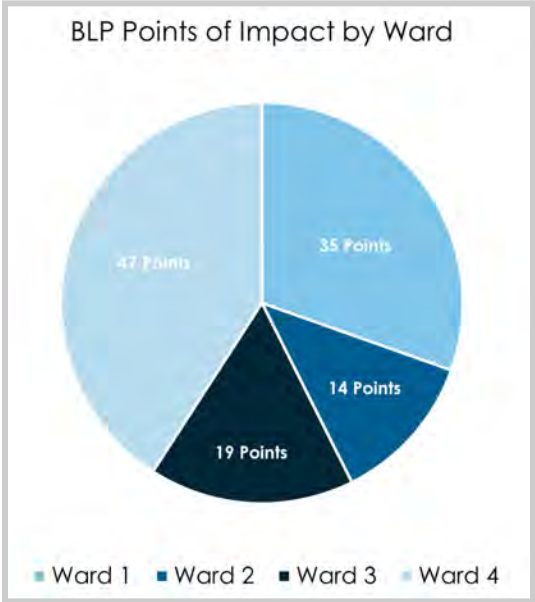
### 4.4 Geographic Findings

The study’s geographic findings include a participation map, BLP impacts by ward, and a heat map of impact distribution across Bloomington.

Figure 18. Geographic Participation Map







A heat map allows us to better visualize the density of BLP impacts in various areas of the city. The heat map shows that BLP impacts were most dense at City Hall and in Ward 4. Areas surrounding schools throughout the city also had a substantial density of impacts; seven schools were impacted by BLP actions. Additionally, eighteen parks were impacted. While natural capital may not have scored as highly in the mind map coding, the pair of geographic maps show that Parks and Recreation do in fact get attention from the BLP.

Figure 19. BLP geographic impacts by ward

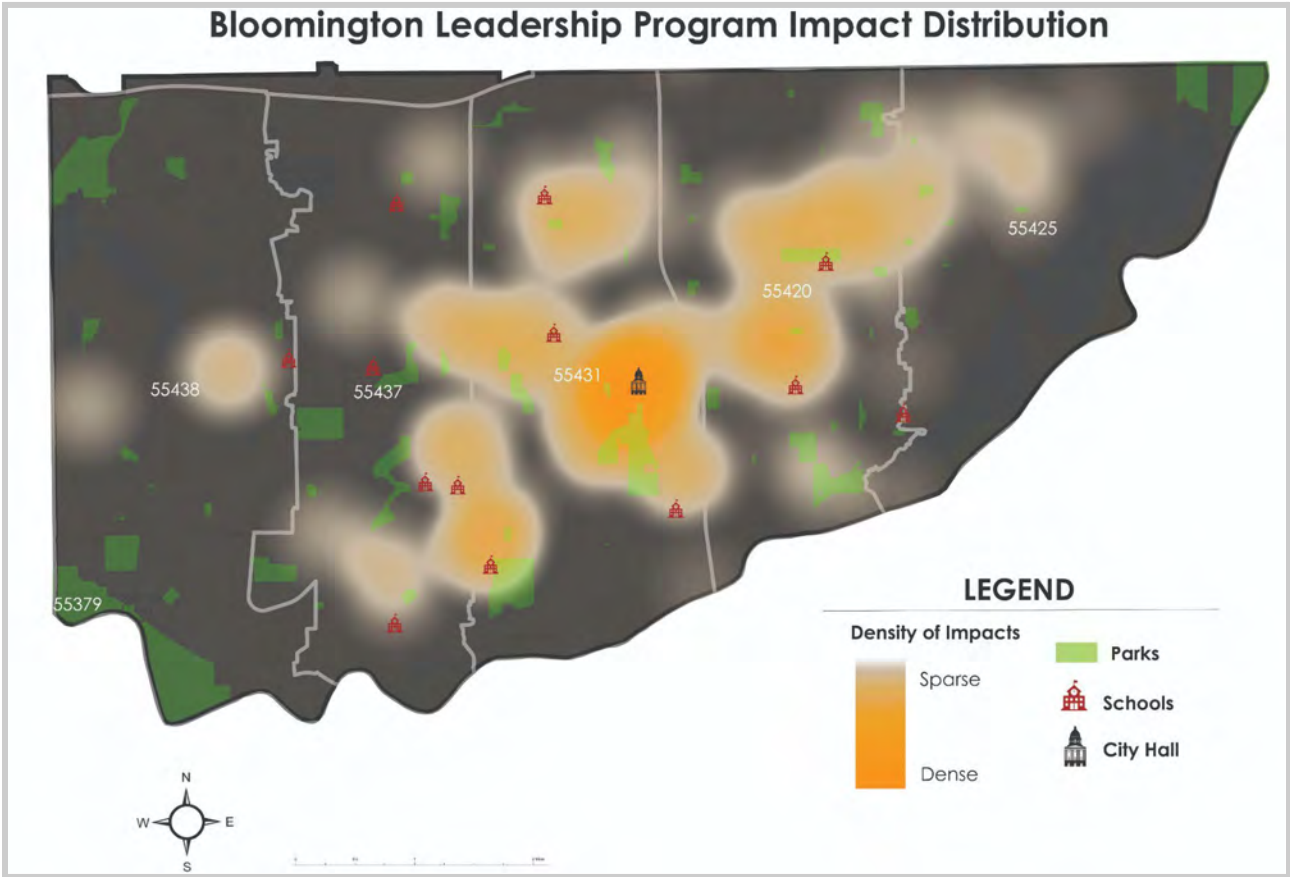


Figure 20. BLP geographic impacts distribution heat map

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Analysis of Findings

In this section we will summarize and analyze our findings for each of our results, as well as key takeaways and limitations to our study.

#### 5.1.1 REM Themes

The themes generated through the REM session resulted in good news for both the BLP and the City of Bloomington. Through intentional and focused curricula and energetic leadership, the BLP meets their program objectives of promoting civic engagement, increasing understanding of local government, and developing community leadership skills. Bloomington residents who go through this program are contributing to the social fabric of their community. The main themes fleshed out in the session qualitatively confirm success of the BLP while providing a significant boost to civic engagement for the City of Bloomington.

The BLP **STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**. Participants described increased community participation after completing the BLP course with a deepened sense of civic engagement. Social scientists invested in studying civic engagement champion the role citizens can play in solving public problems and creating public value (Boyte, 2005). Programs like the BLP offer the structure for a diverse group of people to come together with the common goal of making Bloomington a great place to live.

The BLP is successful in meeting its program objective of increasing understanding of local government. This accomplishment is confirmed by one of the session's most dominant themes, **DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT**. Deepening engagement with local government can take many forms, but it starts with the confidence and the empowerment of the citizen to not only understand the structures of governance, but also their ability to take part. The community benefits from, and is enriched by, the relationship between the empowerment and motivation of citizens to be active in governance at the local level (Ainger et al., 2001).

By being exposed to a wide array of institutional government practices in a safe and comfortable learning environment, the BLP cohort alumni discussed their capacity in **GAINING KNOWLEDGE** by discovering the inner workings of city governance. A deeper understanding of how government functions is a building block to strengthening community

involvement. . The BLP gives its participants an opportunity to learn about Bloomington government, leading to wider and better civic engagement.

As the program name implies, the Bloomington Leadership Program is **ENERGIZING NEW LEADERS**. The BLP is effective in offering the leadership and curriculum necessary to cultivate and motivate community members to lead throughout Bloomington. BLP alumni discussed how the program helped them harness their potential to initiate community programs, volunteer and join in Bloomington governance. The BLP had its first alumnus appointed to an open City Council seat in January 2023, which is a testament to the type of pathway the BLP provides in community leadership.

The themes that were organized as a result of the REM session demonstrated the effectiveness and community value of the Bloomington Leadership Program. Measuring success in this way begins to tell the story of BLP, but only partially. Understanding how the program fits in context with the CCF and the BTT will give a more complete narrative of the reach of this program throughout Bloomington.

### 5.1.2 Community Capitals

As mentioned in section 4.2, Figure 16 shows that out of 143 reported effects, 130 (91%) contributed to human capital, and 126 (88%) contributed to social capital. This finding is consistent with the literature for the impact of civic participation programs (Block, 2009). Political capital (53%) was also well represented, which is also to be expected from a civic participation program that emphasizes an increased understanding of local government. Cultural capital (25%), which is the celebration and consideration of language, values, traditions, and heritage, is moderately represented, and could be bolstered by an increase in participant diversity. Financial, natural, and built capital each had the least associated impacts, at 8%, 5%, and 5%, respectively.

### 5.1.3 BTT Objectives

In section 4.3, Figure 17 shows that out of the 143 reported effects, 97 (68%) contributed to fostering a welcoming community, 40 (28%) of the impacts supported a healthy community, and 17 (12%) contributed to a community with equitable economic growth. Objective 1 of the BTT states, “Our community members will feel connected to their neighbors, welcomed, and valued by the community as a whole.” (Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together., 2023, p.1) The REM process confirmed that the BLP successfully contributes to the City’s goal in meeting

objective 1. Though objectives 2 and 3 did not garner as many impacts, the BLP still helps contribute to a healthy and economically equitable society.

#### 5.1.4 Geographic Findings

The Make Your Mark! activity allowed us to visualize BLP impacts geographically (Figure 18). The Background section of this report discusses the importance of breaking down data geographically in order to tell the full story of a community. Given that the highest concentrations of people of color and renters are in the northeast and eastern sides of the City, as well as the results of NCS quality of life data in Ward 4, we recognized that the City should concentrate their efforts in these areas to equitably meet the three BTT objectives.

We suspected that the BLP would impact the western parts of the city the most, given the trend that we saw in NCS data. We hypothesized that Ward 2, with the highest proportion of owner-occupied households and highest NCS scores, and Ward 3, with the highest proportion of white residents, would benefit the most from BLP impacts. We assumed this because community engagement processes typically benefit white and affluent property owners at a higher rate than low-income or BIPOC community members, regardless of the level of intention that is put in the process to reverse this pattern.

Our assumption was incorrect. The impacts from the Bloomington Leadership Program are distributed widely throughout the city, but are especially concentrated in Wards 1 and 4—the eastern wards. Geographically, we can see that the BLP is equitably meeting BTT objective 1, since it is disproportionately benefitting the wards and areas of the city that need the most attention as shown by NCS data.

#### **5.2. Key Takeaways:**

- REM is an effective, efficient, adaptable and robust method to measure other city participatory programs or collaborations involved in community building and the BTT.
- Human and Social capital play pivotal roles in harnessing citizen participation, which is the bedrock of a healthy democracy. The BLP builds, fosters, and creates meaningful human and social capital for Bloomington.
- The BLP increases civic participation in Bloomington by **Strengthening Community Involvement**, **Deepening Engagement with Local Government**, **Energizing New Leaders** and **Gaining Institutional Knowledge**.
- A greater number of BLP impacts are occurring in wards that scored lower in sense of community in the 2022 NCS data.

- The BLP contributes significantly to the BTT strategic goal for community members to feel connected to their neighbors, welcomed, and valued by the community as whole.

### **5.3 Limitations**

As is the case with all research methods, there are limitations to our study. First is self-selection bias of the REM event participants. Participants who volunteer or self-select to participate in a study may have different characteristics or motivations compared to those who do not volunteer. This has the potential to influence the outcomes being studied. Because analysis is limited to the data that has been reported, there may be additional data that remains unrepresented and unaccounted for.

Additionally, the presence of an observer, including a program coordinator, can potentially influence the behavior of both the researchers and the participants. Researchers may alter their behavior or data collection methods, consciously or unconsciously, in response to being observed. Similarly, participants may change their responses or behavior due to the observer's presence, leading to a bias in the data.

Qualitative research relies heavily on the subjective interpretation and judgment of the researchers. The subjective nature of qualitative data collection and analysis can also introduce bias, and affect the reliability and validity of the findings.

The final limitation is time constraints due to a set deadline at the end of the semester. We had a little under 14 weeks to narrow down the scope of our project to focus on the BLP, plan the REM event, execute the pilot, and analyze and report our findings. As our REM event was on March 23rd, and we presented to the City of Bloomington on May 1st, all of the data analysis, presentation creation, and presentation logistics happened in just over five weeks.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

To build off our findings, we have recommendations for both the Bloomington Leadership Program and the City of Bloomington.

### **6.1. Bloomington Leadership Program**

The findings of our study suggest that the Bloomington Leadership Program is already successful in meeting its mission to promote civic engagement, increase understanding of local government, and develop leadership skills among Bloomington residents. However,

there are opportunities for the BLP to strengthen its ability to meet BTT objectives 2 and 3. Additionally, our case studies provided strategies that may boost BLP’s ability to exceed its mission.

6.1.1. Bolster Content Related to Low-Impact Community Capitals

Bolstering Financial, Natural, and Built Capitals would allow the BLP to better meet the strategic plan’s goals to create equitable economic growth (BTT obj. 3) and improve health indices throughout the city (BTT obj 2). Objective 2 is connected to Natural Capital and objective 3 relies on Financial Capital; both objectives are connected to Built Capital. The BLP may increase its support of these capitals by incorporating curriculum into the program that supports participants’ ability to engage with them. Our curriculum recommendations are listed below.

Bolster Financial, Natural, and Built Capital		
Financial	Natural	Built
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase curriculum in Nonprofit Management</li> <li>• Invite Speakers from the Bloomington Economic Development Authority (EDA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate new partnerships with city and state-wide environmentally-focused agencies, such as the DNR</li> <li>• Increase Environmental Sustainability and Environmental Health curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bolster partnership with Public Works</li> <li>• Increase Community Development and Planning curriculum</li> </ul>

*Table 2. Capitals for Bloomington Leadership Program to focus on and potential pathways to doing so*

In addition to strengthening the three capitals, the BLP might consider using REM on a consistent basis to build on the results of this study—around every 3-5 years. We found that the Make Your Mark! activity helped bring an equity lens to the evaluation, and recommend that geographic participatory mapping be used with REM to evaluate BLP. We further recommend that BLP distribute both an evaluative feedback survey and an evaluative impact survey at the end of the program. Members’ participation in these measures should become an expectation of the program.

Each of the following suggestions were gleaned from our case studies. Detailed case study write-ups are found in Appendix C.

#### 6.1.2. Offer BLP Twice Per Year

Running the program twice per year requires more staff capacity and funding, but it may decrease barriers to participation. Applying for the BLP program is a competitive process, and attendance requirements may be difficult for applicants to accommodate at certain times of year. The Neighborhood Leadership Institute (Dayton, OH) requires 100% attendance and conducts an interview with every applicant to ensure their ability to make every session. Often, applicants would apply for the program, only to realize that they would be unable to attend a session. Had the program been run twice per year, perhaps those applicants would have been able to participate in the next round. Doubling the program's frequency would both double the number of participants making impacts to better the city, and make the BLP a more accessible program. It would also allow for programs to take place on different days and at different times, increasing access to those who may have scheduling conflicts with only one time slot available.

#### 6.1.3. Institute a Final Community Project

Based on the programs of the Neighborhood Leadership Academy (Fort Lauderdale, FL) and the Neighborhood Leadership Institute (Dayton, OH), we recommend that the BLP add a final local community project to its curriculum. At the beginning of the curriculum, pre-assigned groups of 4 or 5 participants would decide upon a shared interest and provide a deliverable to the City. A deliverable may look like an event, service, or product that benefits Bloomington residents. Participants would be encouraged to gather outside of BLP sessions to connect and discuss their project. Community projects would increase cohort interconnectedness, encourage skills building, and provide a service to the City.

#### 6.1.4. Connect to Welcome to Bloomington

The Neighborhood Leadership Institute (Dayton, OH) has made efforts to connect to Welcome Dayton—a city and community initiative that supports a welcoming environment for immigrants of the Dayton Community. Bloomington is in the process of creating a similar initiative—the Welcome to Bloomington program—which is set to launch in January of 2024. The program is meant to link new residents to community resources, city programs and services, and to one another. The BLP might consider connecting with the Welcome to Bloomington program via intentional outreach efforts. Examples include distributing the



program flier to an email list, presenting at Welcome to Bloomington events, and marketing volunteer opportunities for both groups to connect. In Dayton, several new residents that connected to Welcome Dayton went on to participate in the National Leadership Institute. This has resulted in more immigrant representation in city services and leadership roles. A similar action in Bloomington would strengthen BTT objective 1.



Figure 21. Summary of recommendations for the Bloomington Leadership Program

## 6.2. City of Bloomington

### 6.2.1. Utilize Ripple Effects Mapping for Bloomington Programming

To better assess how city-led programming is contributing to the goals of the BTT, we recommend that the City utilize REM to evaluate the following programs

Programs to Assess with REM		
Community Services	Parks and Recreation	Community Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bloomington Leadership Program</li> <li>• Opioid Stakeholder Task Force</li> <li>• Volunteer Management</li> <li>• Welcome Meals</li> <li>• Students in Government Day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Sports and Leagues</li> <li>• Recreational Facilities (Dwan, BIG, Creekside)</li> <li>• Farmers Market</li> <li>• Arts in the Park</li> <li>• Adaptive Programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rental Housing Collaborative (Affordable Housing Resources)</li> <li>• Small Business Development Center</li> <li>• Creative Placemaking Projects</li> </ul>

Table Continues on next page



Police Department	Fire Department	Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Citizens Academy</li> <li>● Block Captains</li> <li>● Community Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coffee with a Cop</li> <li>○ Bingo with a Cop</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Multicultural Advisory Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School Outreach Programming</li> <li>● Renter Fire Prevention Engagement</li> <li>● Smoke + CO Alarm Detector Community Outreach</li> <li>● Splash Community Pop-Up Events / Fire Hydrant Flush</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Welcome to Bloomington Design Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Neighborhood</li> <li>○ Events</li> <li>○ Resource Events</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Language Access Plan</li> </ul>
Public Works	Finance	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No Mow May</li> <li>● Bloomington Stewards</li> <li>● Organic Waste Recycling</li> <li>● Sustainability Programming – Green Step Cities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Purchasing – Diverse Supplier Initiative</li> <li>● City Budget Engagement Events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advisory Boards and Commissions</li> <li>● Sick + Safe Leave Policy</li> <li>● Just Deeds Project</li> </ul>

*Table 3. Recommended programs to assess with Ripple Effects Mapping*

As REM is best suited to evaluate participatory programs, we believe the programs listed above would benefit from the utilization of REM.

#### 6.2.2. Use Future Capstone Groups to Continue the Work

Additionally, we recommend that the city of Bloomington utilizes future capstone groups. One option is to have them use REM to assess one of the programs listed above. Another option would be to have that capstone group focus on pilot testing another program evaluation metric that would be better suited for programs not listed in the table above. For example, a gap analysis could be performed on certain programs, or perhaps attention could be given to a more quantitative-focused method that would be beneficial to certain programs. Because REM was chosen to best assess BTT objective 1, future capstone projects may also choose to focus on creating an evaluation metric for programs that target the other two BTT goals (health community and/or community with equitable economic growth).

#### 6.2.2. Prioritize Future Evaluations in City Budget

Lastly, we recommend that the city budget for future evaluation efforts. There are several options in this regard. One option is to consider hiring for a full-time program evaluation position to standardize and oversee evaluation efforts across the city. Another option would

be to outsource program evaluation to a third-party contractor who specializes in this work. The City may also consider training current staff on REM evaluation techniques, in addition to creating a committee or commission to oversee evaluation and progress towards achieving the objectives of the BTT strategic plan.



Figure 21. Summary of recommendations for the City of Bloomington

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Annotated Bibliography

### A.1. Civic Participation

Ainger, S. and Flora, C. (2001). The premise and promise of citizenship and civil society for renewing democracies and empowering sustainable communities. *Sociological Inquiry*, 71(4), 493-507. DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-682X.2001.tb01129.x

This article seeks to answer questions about citizen empowerment, participation, and inclusion by studying the mix of the state, civil society, market sectors, and the formation of partnerships to sustain rural communities and reduce poverty within Clinton Era Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities. This research is applicable and can be expanded to urban centers as well. The authors posit for “partnerships” between marginalized citizens and local elected officials as an organizational structure for community development to promote social inclusion and sustain community development. Citizen empowerment should place emphasis on inclusion and equal citizenship rights for all, especially for groups who may suffer exclusion in the public sphere. With a focus on the right to participate in governance issues as well as in other domains in the public sphere, citizens are “de-commodified” making participation in local government more inclusive. The researchers have found that “bottom-up” grassroots approach to genuine, “authentic” empowerment is quite meaningful to community health. The relationship between citizen participation and citizenship can be extended by contending that citizens active in governance and politics serve the “good of the wider community.”

Bingham, LB. and Nabatchi, T. (2005). The new governance: practices and processes for stakeholder and citizen participation in the work of government. *Public Administration Review*, 65(5), 547-558.

Citizens can and must play an important role in public policy and decision making. Citizens have the right to decide what is important to them and how they can best achieve their objectives. Existing quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial new governance processes provide ways to engage individual citizens, the public, and organized stakeholders in the work of government. Public administration practitioners and scholars must re-engage the public in governance, recognize the special duty they have to citizens, and move research and teaching agendas in a direction that supports these new governance processes to address the fundamental imperatives of democracy. New governance involves not simply tools but also practices and processes for people to participate in the work of government. The researchers argue that public managers ought to facilitate greater citizen engagement in the work of government with forms of deliberation and dialogue among groups of stakeholders or citizens such as deliberative democracy, e-democracy, public

conversations, participatory budgeting, citizen juries, study circles, collaborative policy making, focus groups, roundtables and town meetings among others.

**Bloch-Schulman, S. & Jovanovic, S. (2010). Who's afraid of politics? On the need to teach political engagement. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 14(1), 83–100.**

In the republican tradition politics is understood as collective responsibility-taking and is about the relationship not between the ruler and the ruled but between citizens. This research is primarily concerned with civic education in the classroom on college campuses. There is a need to show students that politics is not only related to elections and the voting booth, but also in the classroom, in the community, and in everyday life. Imparting a civic minded approach to teaching provides a rich avenue to explore dimensions of freedom, responsibility, and communal well-being. The Greeks affirmed the citizen as someone who deliberated with others to make decisions for the common good. Understood this way, democracy is a way of being, a way of living with others. Students (and citizens in general) need to know and feel their place in the community, rather than to only see themselves as consumers within a society led by experts. To do so, they need to understand the interdependent roles of government bodies, organized citizens, and business enterprises, where they fit in community and move to participate with a civic mindset.

**Block, P. (2008). *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.**

The overarching premise of this work is acknowledging that society is increasingly fragmented but citizen participation can begin addressing the making of communities whole. The author contends communities are built from the assets and gifts of their citizens, not from citizens' needs and deficiencies. Block's theory of change is that lasting positive change in social collectives is irrevocably bound up with a search for freedom built through social capital. The author believes choosing our freedom is also the source of our willingness to choose to be accountable, providing insight that this freedom is what creates accountability to the community. Thus, a community's well-being is related to the quality and cohesiveness of the relationships that exist among its citizens.

**Boyte, H. C. (2009). Repairing the breach. Cultural organizing and the politics of knowledge. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement*, 1, 1–20**

Community is center in the ability to evaluate expert knowledge. If we want to develop communities' capacities to solve problems and to generate a larger vision of a good society, we have to get beyond arrogant experts and aggrieved communities. If we are to build communities' civic agency – capacities to work across differences to meet our common challenges – we need to democratize the politics of civic knowledge. This requires learning from effective community leaders and organizing the idea of “schools for public life,” where ordinary people develop skills, habits, and confidence of citizenship. The capacities for civic politics and civic professionalism have to be learned in practice.

Boyte, H. (2005). Reframing democracy: governance, civic agency, and politics. *Public Administration Review*, 65(5), 536-544. DOI:[10.1111/J.1540-6210.2005.00481.X](https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1540-6210.2005.00481.X)

This article sets out to make the distinction between government and governance. Government in a democratic society is a crucial instrument but not the only location for democracy's work. Governance in these terms is a political but nonpartisan process of negotiating diverse interests and views to solve public problems and create public value. Governance is citizen centered, productive, and pluralist. As an activity, governance seeks to share power in decision making, encourage citizen autonomy and independence, and provide a process for developing the common good through civic engagement. Democratic governance looks to frame public wealth as goods that all share responsibility for sustaining, meaning citizens are democracy's co-creators. Bringing nonpartisan democratic politics back into public affairs through citizen engagement and participation can improve governance as well as the officials work within government.

**Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy. (2004). American democracy in an age of rising inequality. American Political Science Association**

The Task Force was charged to review and assess the health and functioning of U.S. democracy in a time of rising inequality. They surveyed three important, interlinked areas of concern --citizen participation, government responsiveness, and patterns of public policy-making and their consequences -- finding the voices of American citizens are raised and heard unequally. The privileged participate more than others and are increasingly well organized to press their demands on government. Public officials, in turn, are much more responsive to the privileged and affluent than to average citizens. Unequal political voices matter because those who are advantaged convey very different messages to government officials than do average citizens or those who are the least well off. The risk is that rising economic inequality will solidify long standing disparities in political voice and influence, and perhaps exacerbate such disparities.

## **A.2. Equity and Inclusion in City Programming**

**American Evaluation Association. (2011). Public Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation. Retrieved from [www.eval.org](http://www.eval.org).**

The American Evaluation Association taskforce on cultural competence in evaluation published their findings in 2011, which includes recommendations for evaluators to ensure recognition, accurate interpretation, and respect for diversity. Evaluators should demonstrate cultural competence, self-examine their own backgrounds, and understand that cultural competence is fluid. Evaluations cannot be "culture free," as evaluators' perspectives reflect their values, ways of viewing the world, and culture. The AEA discusses the ethics of cultural competence, including using appropriate approaches, making findings accessible to all stakeholders, and considering unintended consequences when reporting findings.



Brooks, Lisa and Nelson, Julie (2016). Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity. Government Alliance on Race & Equity. Retrieved from [https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial\\_Equity\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf).

GARE, a national network of government organizations dedicated to advancing racial equity, has published a toolkit to help cities integrate equity into their programming. The toolkit is comprised of six sets of questions, with a focus on community engagement. It recommends using smaller groups that can provide feedback to a larger process, using multiple methods for gathering input, and having trusted advocates and engagement liaisons to build trust with underrepresented participants. Of particular importance is the third set of questions in the toolkit, which asks about the most affected community members, their involvement in program development and operations, feedback about benefits and burdens, and factors perpetuating racial inequity.

Hood, S. (2004). A journey to understand the role of culture in program evaluation: Snapshots and personal reflections of one African American evaluator. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2004(102), 21-37.

Current program evaluative approaches are biased towards Western democratic traditions and do not consider cultural context or the needs of less powerful stakeholders. Stafford Hood argues that evaluations need to be more dynamic, with more emphasis on qualitative data, to fully understand program effectiveness. A responsive evaluation that collaborates with the subjects evaluated allows for the most understanding, with a focus on social justice and multicultural validity as central dimensions of validity. To achieve this, program evaluators need to prioritize interviews and observations from multiple perspectives to capture the program's perceived value or worth.

### A.3. Ripple Effects Mapping

Chazdon, S., Emery, M., and Hansen, D. (2017). *A field guide to ripple effects mapping*. University of Minnesota. [www.z.umn.edu/REMbook](http://www.z.umn.edu/REMbook)

Ripple Effects Mapping “is a group participatory evaluation method that engages program and community stakeholders to map the chain of intended and unintended effects from a program or complex collaboration.” This collaborative and innovative approach to community outcomes measurement is a useful method for program impact analysis at a time when community-based programs more than ever need to document the impacts of their activities. REM employs four core elements: (1) appreciative inquiry, (2) a participatory approach, (3) interactive group interviewing and reflection, and (4) “radiant thinking” or “mind mapping”. These participatory evaluation strategies integrate program stakeholders actively in the evaluation process. During REM sessions, participants are asked to conduct one-on-one interviews about their successes or achievements that have resulted from a program, deepened or new relationships, identifying ripples or new opportunities that have emerged from those relationships, and unexpected or surprising developments that may

have resulted by the program or by relationships built during the program. Through this interactive group interviewing and reflection, REM helps generate knowledge regarding both the kind and extent of program impact. The REM facilitator and participants then work together to identify program effects, or ripples, that are visualized through mind mapping. Mind mapping makes it possible to capture causally-linked chains of effects in a visually and stimulating way. The purpose of the REM activity is to look at how a program has made a difference in the community and to use that information to think about what can be learned from our work together, as well as how can a community use and evaluate that information going forward.

**Chazdon, S. (2021). *Ripple effects of StoryArk in the Stillwater area public schools*. Unpublished report.**

This report documents the findings of a REM session with StoryArk, a non-profit arts organization through Stillwater Area Public Schools that helps students in middle and high school initiate creative teams in which they tell their stories using a variety of formats. Students and staff found seven overarching themes: Building impactful relationships, Cultivating voice, pride and empowerment, Creating an accepting space for self-expression, Learning about through learning among, Learning life skills through experiences, Unleashing creativity through a student-initiated process, and Failing forward, learning from challenges.

**Chazdon, S. (2020). *Ripple effects of the Rural Health and Safety Education (RHSE) grant cultural responses to healing trauma, fighting opioids, and unlocking the potential of Native American youth*. Unpublished report.**

This report outlines the process and findings from a REM evaluation of the RHSE grant. Program staff invited parents, youth participants, program instructors, staff, and other community members to participate in the evaluation. The RHSE project engaged youth in a culture-based, community-level prevention program. The project connected Fond du Lac Band members and surrounding communities to regional resources, social networks, and Ojibwe culture through multi-generational design. The themes that emerged from the session were Strengthening a sense of community, Learning and applying healthy coping skills, Planting seeds of hopefulness, Gaining confidence and positive leadership skills and Reclaiming our culture and creating a sense of well-being.

**Emarita, B., Chazdon, S. (2016). *Community and creative leadership institute impact study*. Unpublished report.**

This study assesses the impact of Intermedia Arts', a multidisciplinary, multicultural arts organization, Creative Community Leadership Institute (CCLI). CCLI was on the cutting edge of an emerging field that combines arts, culture and community development. Based on the fundamental belief that the future health of communities demands innovative, cross-sector leadership at every level, the intent of the program is to build networks of capable, innovative, cross-sector leaders and partners who can effect change in complex

environments through arts and cultural strategies. Ripple Effects Mapping was just one of several methods CCLI used in understanding program impacts. Four key themes emerged from the REM session with cohort participants in which the program; Promoted deep connections which generated new forms of collaboration, Deepened commitment to racial equity work, Strengthened leadership skills for community building and, Generated personal and professional growth.

**Frostman, C. L., Foell, A. (2014). *Adapting the community capitals framework: An evaluation resource guide for the Saint Paul district councils*. Unpublished report.**

Using a REM mapping session based on the Community Capitals Framework (CCF), the Saint Paul District Councils completed a REM session that assessed their current evaluation landscape and explored ways to better demonstrate their impact on their communities. The Saint Paul District Councils represent a diverse group of neighborhoods, yet all are tasked by the City with the mission of fostering participation and communication, while ensuring the inclusion of all community members. The CCF and impact mapping were used to identify key areas for evaluation and potential indicators. This REM session produced a visual representation of their work.

**Kollock, D. H., Flage, L., Chazdon, S., Paine, N., & Higgins, L. (2012). Ripple effect mapping: A "radiant" way to capture program impacts. *Journal of Extension*, 50(5), Article 33**

<https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol50/iss5/33/>

This introductory primer offers a quick yet insightful look at Ripple Effects Mapping, a participatory group process designed to document the results within complex, real-life settings. The method uses elements of Appreciative Inquiry, mind mapping, and qualitative data analysis to engage program participants and other community stakeholders to reflect upon and visually map the intended and unintended changes produced by programming. The result is not only a powerful technique to document impacts, but a way to engage and re-energize program participants.

#### **A.4. The Seven Community Capitals**

**Emery, M., & Flora, C. (2006). Spiraling-Up: Mapping Community Transformation with Community Capitals Framework. *Community Development*, 37(1), 19–35.**

The Community Capitals Framework (CCF) is a structure used to evaluate impacts from a “systems perspective.” It dissects development efforts into seven parts, known as community capitals, which come together to offer a comprehensive picture of community development. These seven are described in detail below.

This reading then goes on to explain the impact of the Cumulative Causation theory formulated by Gunnar Myrdal in 1957. In combination with the Community Capitals Framework, the Cumulative Causation theory explains that when capitals are built upon and improvements in these areas are attained, they increase the likelihood that the area will see an increase in assets in the future. Within the framework, it is known as Spiraling Up.

The opposite is also true. If a community disinvests in specific assets, it is likely that a Spiraling Down event will occur, which sees the decrease in assets in a community . Finally, Emery & Flora provide an example of a County based leadership group. Similar to the Bloomington Leadership Program, the program aimed to “increase skills, create awareness of leadership opportunities, and expand... understanding of the County.” In the evaluation of the program, the team saw that the creation and implementation of the program fostered a significant increase in social capital and human capital in addition to investments in financial capital, cultural capital, and political capital.

**Mueller, D., Hoard, S., Roemer, K., Sanders, C., & Rijkhoff, S. A. M. (2020). Quantifying the community capitals framework: Strategic application of the community assets and attributes model. *Community Development*, 51(5), 535–555.**

This source outlines a possible extension and quantitative analysis of four of the Community Capitals, human, cultural, social, and political, which they deem the social assets. The model is called the Community Assets and Attributes Model or CAAM. While the model is not applicable to our research, it may serve as a possibility to extend the qualitative attributes of the Community Capitals Framework into a quantitative data collection tool to compare Bloomington’s community development assets to local examples.

**Flora, C.B., Emery, M., Fey, S., & Bregendahl, C. (2005). Community capitals: A tool for evaluating strategic interventions and projects. Ames IA.: North Central Regional Center for Rural Development**

This is a summary of the Community Capitals Framework that further delves into the pattern of impact of the implementation of the capital assets. Impact pattern analysis occurs in three general steps: define pre-existing conditions, action/intervention occurs, measure results of the action/intervention. This can be used for the implementation of future projects at the City of Bloomington, as pre-existing conditions must be measured prior to the full impact analysis. While we did conduct an impact analysis, our study would be bolstered by being able to see the exact conditions of Bloomington’s capital assets prior to the Bloomington Leadership Program. A complete picture would likely take years of analysis.

**Beaulieu, L. (n.d.). Promoting Community Vitality & Sustainability: The Community Capitals Framework. Retrieved May 12, 2023, from <https://cdextlibrary.org/resource-library/promoting-community-vitality-sustainability-the-community-capitals-framework/>**

This article consists of a summary of the community capitals, expanded definitions of the capitals, as well as some guidance on how to approach increasing community assets. Our definitions were mostly based on this source, as they provided more in-depth research on each capital and additional examples which helped us code some of our more difficult to place data. Specifically, the definition of cultural capital was adopted from this reading. It

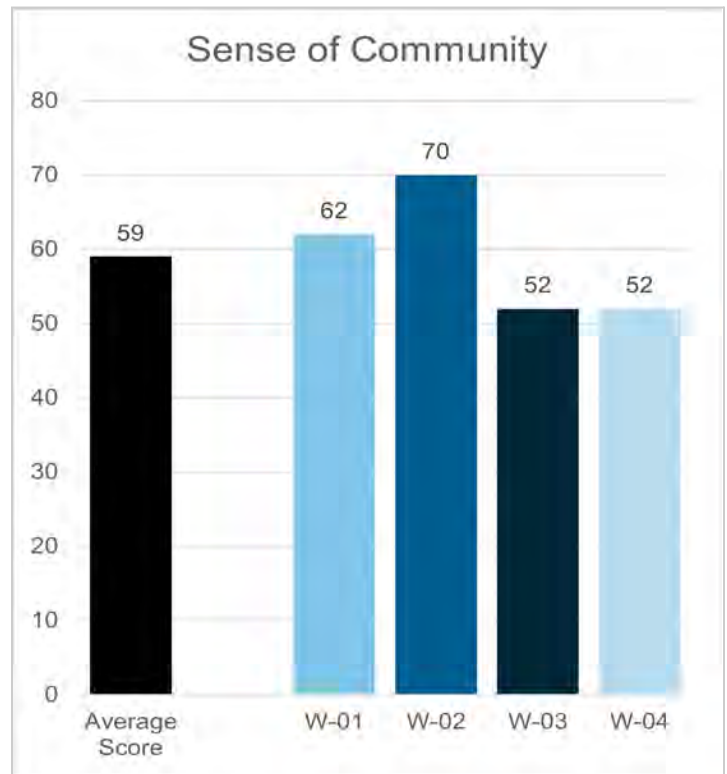
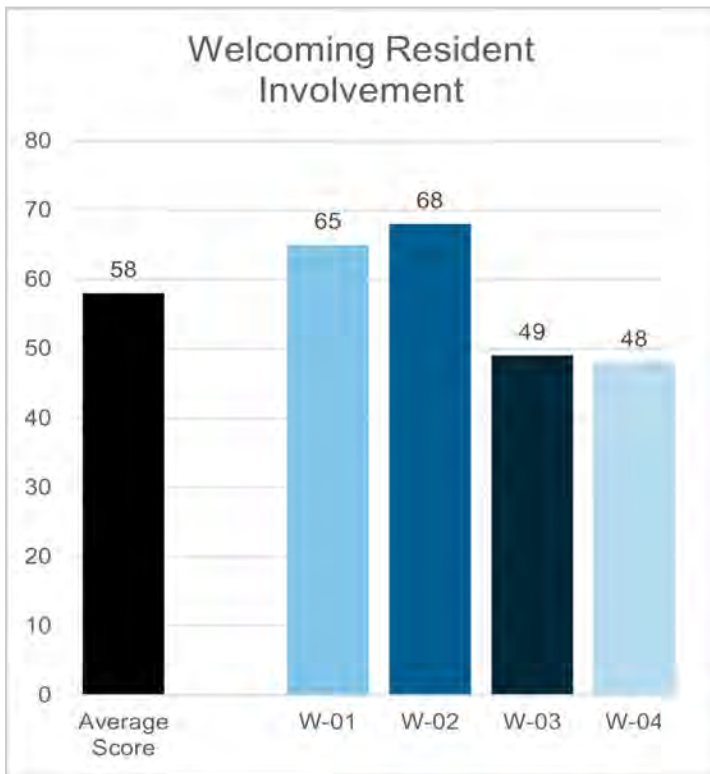
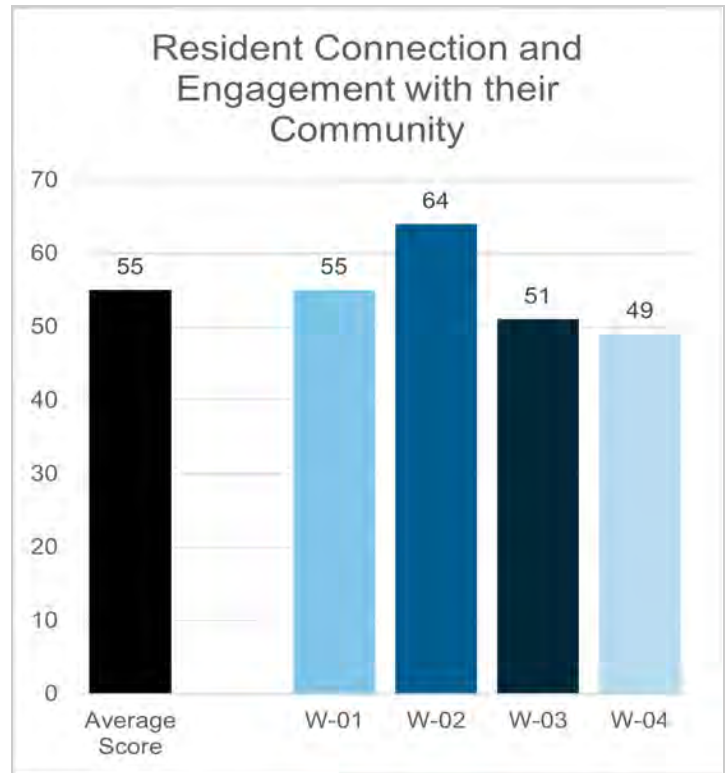
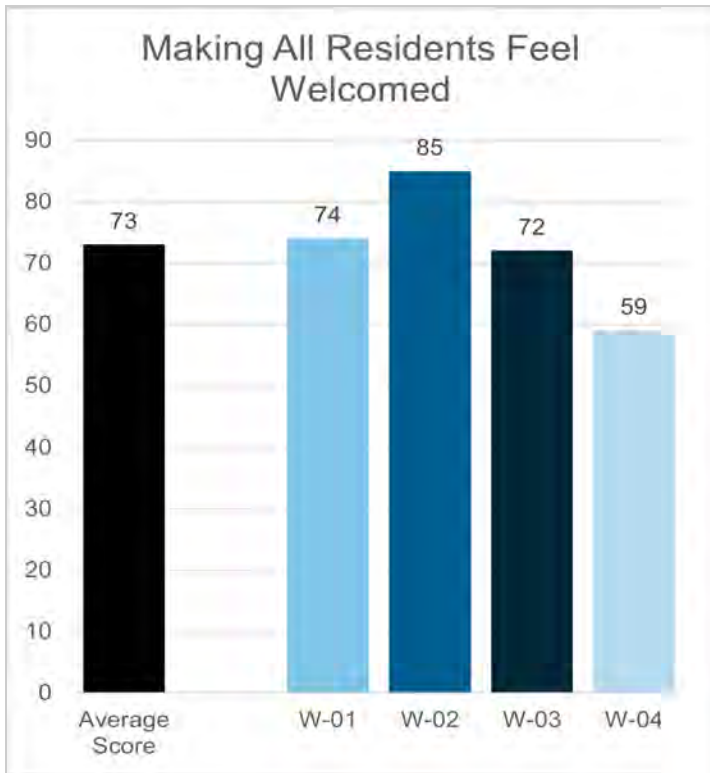
expands the definition to the “fabric of community life” encompassing language, symbols, gestures, beliefs, values, and resources. Examples include, clothing, music, industry, art, language, customs, events, materials, museums, and more.

### A.5. Impact Analysis

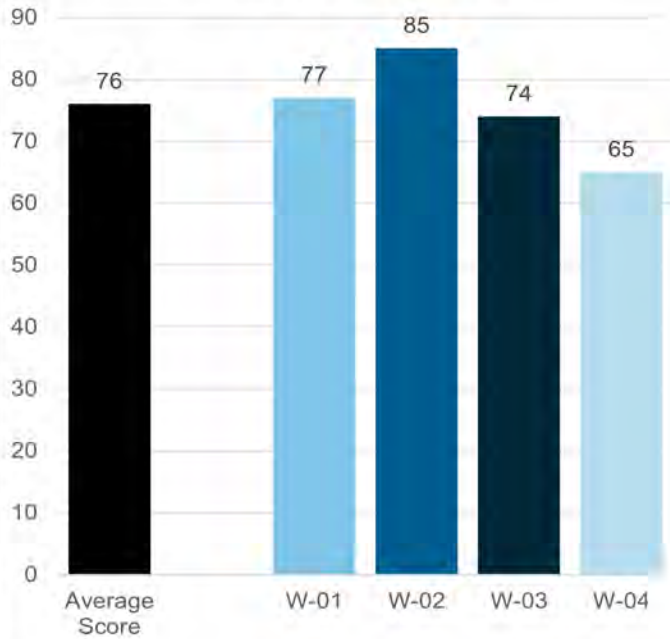
Mohr, L. (1995). *Impact Analysis for Program Evaluation (2nd Edition)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Impact analysis determines the extent to which one set of directed human activities affects the state of some objects or phenomena, and also determines *why* the effects are as large or small as they turned out to be. The book provides a comprehensive guide to the methods and techniques used to evaluate the impact of social programs, with a focus on rigorous research design and measurement. It covers various impact analysis methods such as experimental and quasi-experimental designs, regression analysis, and cost-benefit analysis. The author emphasizes the importance of considering the context and environment in which programs are implemented, as well as the ethical considerations and the role of stakeholders in the evaluation process. While other forms of program evaluation may focus on different aspects of a program such as its inputs, processes, outputs, or outcomes, impact analysis specifically aims to measure the program's impact on the target population or desired outcomes.

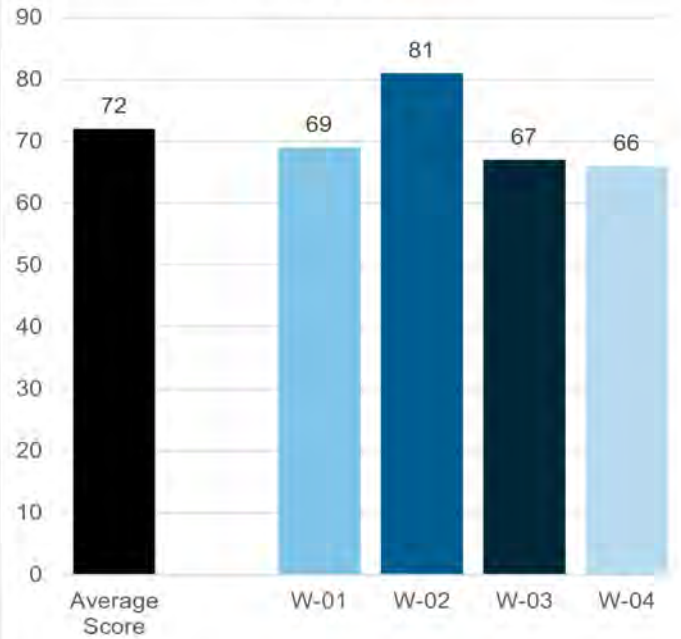
## Appendix B: National Community Survey Visualizations



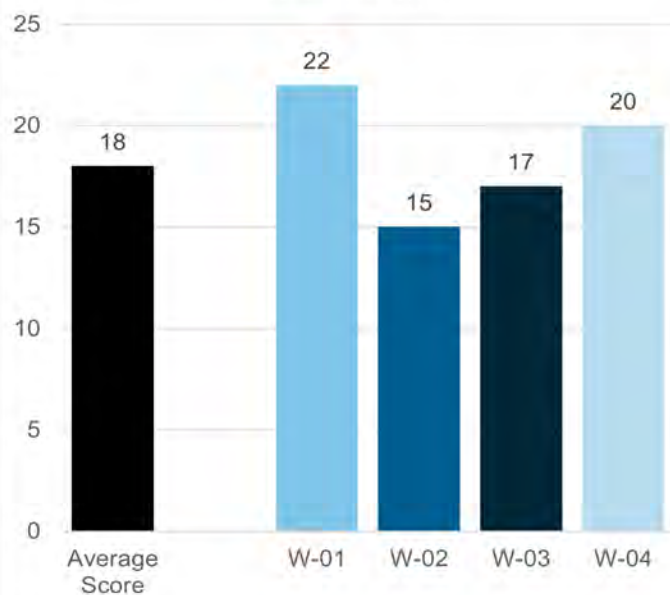
### Valuing/Respecting People from Diverse Backgrounds



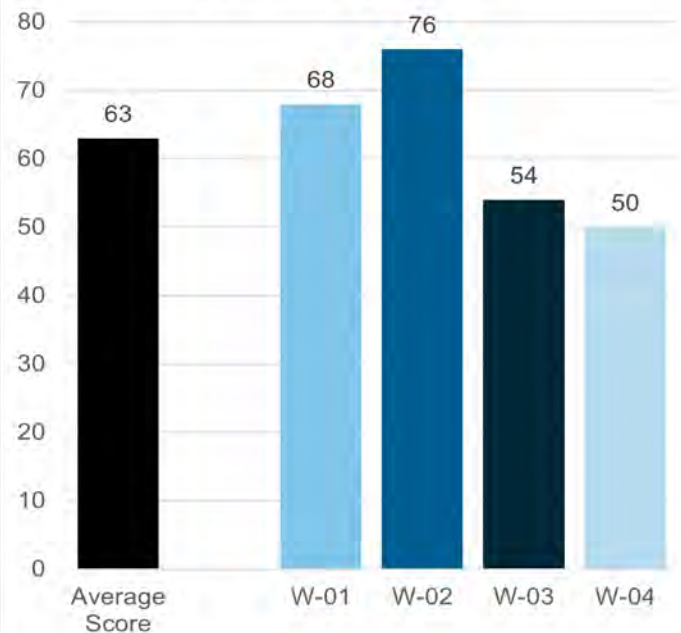
### Attracting People from Diverse Backgrounds



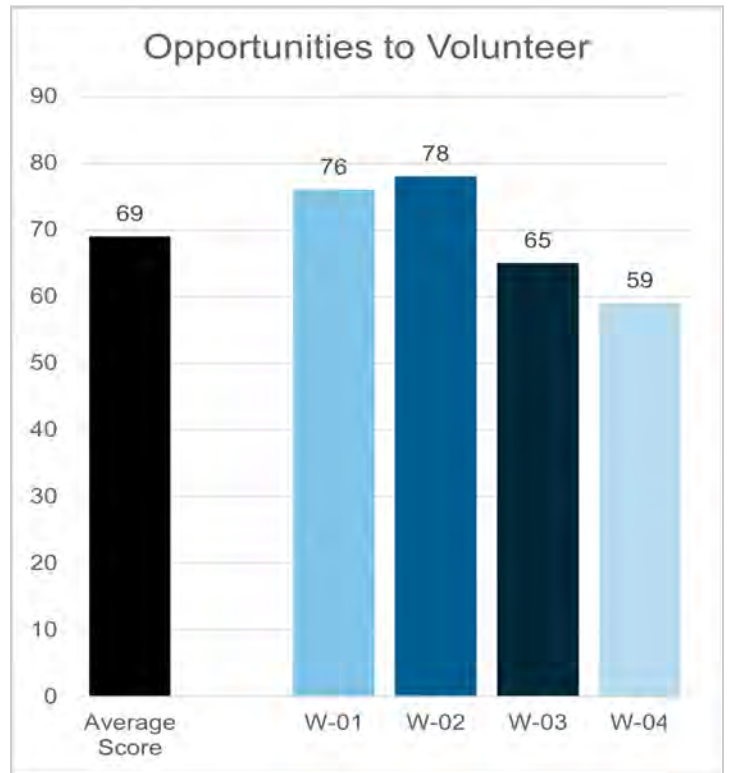
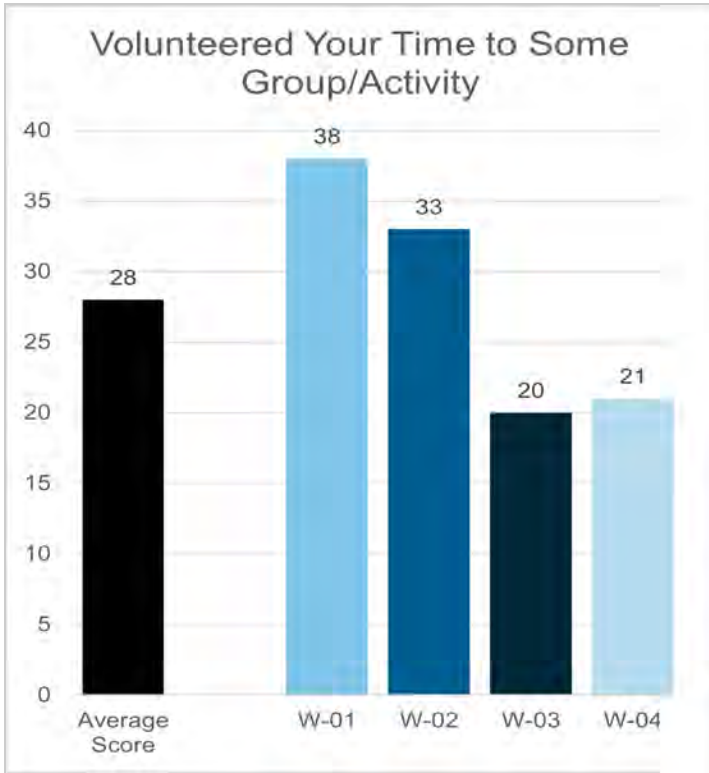
### Campaigned or Advocated for a Local Issue, Cause, or Candidate



### Opportunities to Participate in Community Matters







Figures B.1. through B.10. Collection of graphs showing National Community Survey data split by ward. National Community Survey 2022 Data was provided by the City of Bloomington in partnership with the National Resource Center.

- B.1. Making All Residents Feel Welcomed
- B.2. Resident Connection and Engagement with their Community
- B.3. Welcoming Resident Involvement
- B.4. Sense of Community
- B.5. Attracting People from Diverse Backgrounds
- B.6. Valuing/Respecting People from Diverse Backgrounds
- B.7. Campaigned or advocated for a local issue, cause, or candidate
- B.8. Opportunities to Participate in Community Matters
- B.9. Volunteered your time to some group/activity
- B.10. Opportunities to volunteer

## Appendix C: Comparative Case Studies

For additional information about our case study method, see section 2.4 in the report. Below you will find tables containing the summaries of our notes from meeting with program staff from each of the case studies. Each study includes the location of the program, the population of that location, the focus of the program, the structure of the program, the participant selection criteria and process, the program’s goals, any evaluation metrics used by the program, known impacts of the program, as well as if they have conducted a comprehensive analysis of the program’s impacts.

### C.1. Bloomington Leadership Program Case Study

Bloomington Leadership Program	
Location	Bloomington, MN
Population	89,000
Focus	Wanting to learn and develop leadership skills to better your neighborhood, faith community, schools, city, etc. Interested in networking and building relationships with City and local non-profit staff and elected officials.
Structure	Nine week course for Passionate and committed residents interested in improving the Bloomington community. Each week, the program meets once for 2 hours. BLP is held once per year, typically in the fall.
Participant Selection Criteria	This program is competitive. About 20 slots for over 50 applicants. Former participants help evaluate the new cohorts. Distribution of zip code is considered in the selection process.
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote civic engagement and develop leaders in the Bloomington community.</li> <li>• Break down barriers and increase understanding of local government.</li> </ul>
Evaluation Metrics	End of cohort survey

Impacts of Program	“Commitment to the program and to each other making connections within the program”-Amanda
Comprehensive Impact Analysis Conducted?	None, prior to REM study

Table C.1. Bloomington Leadership Program Case Study (Bloomington Leadership Program, 2022)

## C.2. Neighborhood Leadership Academy Case Study

Neighborhood Leadership Academy	
Location	Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Population	181,000
Focus	Builds community by educating neighbors about various city functions and equips them with leadership skills to become effective neighborhood leaders. Topics include: city structure, climate resiliency, budgeting and innovations, ethics and technology, public safety, emergency management, community engagement, and Fort Lauderdale’s future.
Structure	<p>The program runs for 5 weeks, meeting every Wednesday from 6-8p and is conducted every Spring and Fall. The course is divided into 5 sections, in which each features different departments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Session 1   welcome &amp; city structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provides background on how the city functions</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Session 2   presentation from the department of sustainability &amp; presentation on code compliance</li> <li>● Session 3   management &amp; budget</li> <li>● Session 4   fire department and department of public safety</li> <li>● Session 5   community building &amp; office of neighbor support community outreach</li> </ul>
Participant Selection Criteria	<p>20-25 participants are selected each year by the Neighborhood Leadership Academy. Participants must be at least 18 years of age, be a resident of the City of Fort Lauderdale, be willing to commit to all five workshops from 6pm to 8:00 pm, and be able to participate in a class community project, with a minimum commitment of 5 hours.</p> <p>Participants are further selected to distribute the spread of geographic representation. The NLA ensures at least 5 participants come from each</p>

	of their four districts. The focus on representation and diversity is focused on geographic representation.
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote leadership within the community</li> <li>• Participants will know how to access information about the community</li> <li>• Teach 20 people how to find the resources which spreads awareness</li> <li>• Invigorate leadership</li> </ul>
Evaluation Metrics	The NLA measures impacts via how many spots they can fill prior to the sign-up deadline, as well as by the success of the community project.
Impacts of Program	<p>Mostly focused on the group community project, which is selected by the academy's cohort</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering with a nonprofit giving access to showers for those experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Packing and donating hygiene kits</li> <li>• Providing a week-long series mentoring to highschool students on finance and real world knowledge</li> <li>• Block party program (hosted a block party)</li> </ul>
Comprehensive Impact Analysis Conducted?	While not comprehensive of all impacts that could be coming from the academy, the NLA does conduct an impact analysis of their community project.

Table C.2. Neighborhood Leadership Academy Case Study (L. McCoy, personal communication, March 23, 2023)

### C.3. Neighborhood Leadership Institute Case Study

Neighborhood Leadership Institute	
Location	Dayton, Ohio
Population	137,571
Focus	To broaden participants' understanding of the community; To expand the pool of skilled neighborhood leaders; To encourage and assist the

	<p>establishment of networks among neighborhoods and their leaders; and To enhance the ability of neighborhoods to resolve problems on their own or in cooperation with other neighborhoods and/or institutions.</p>
<p>Structure</p>	<p>The program is 13 sessions over 10 weeks, with the duration of each session at 2.5 - 3 hours. No virtual sessions are included - a two-year break was taken over the pandemic. This the 40th year of the leadership program (the 38th program). Each session explores a different part of the city, whether it be learning about the Dayton's government functions, or going on a field trip</p> <p>There are two additional aspects to the program.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A group project. On their own time, participants must meet with a small group (assigned) on some sort of project. Examples of group projects include arranging an academic/career fair targeting youth, creating an NLI program for teenagers, completing a beautification project for a neighborhood, and creating a bike tour of Dayton that still happens annually.</li> <li>2. A point system. Participants must accumulate points by completing different activities and turning in their work via a summary. There is a minimum number of points required to graduate (~180). Activities range from 5 to 25 points each, including a visit to the art institute, attending a city council meeting, participating in a police ride along, touring a water treatment facility, and touring city hall, among others.</li> </ol> <p>Skill-building is also central to the program since it's a safe space to get feedback. For example, each participant must complete a 3 minute public-speaking exercise at one of the sessions (to emulate a city commission public hearing).</p>
<p>Participant Selection Criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Program is free and open to non-residents, though residents are prioritized. A quarter of participants live outside the city but have a connection to the city (i.e. works for regional government).</li> <li>● Participants must attend every class. If an applicant has a conflict on one of the dates, they will not be selected to participate.</li> <li>● Generally there are 25-35 applications. Every applicant completes a 30 minute interview and provides a letter of recommendation. Generally every applicant that applies and commits to attending every session is selected.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community engagement staff have been intentionally reaching out to the immigrant community. Last year, 3-4 participated from the Welcome Dayton program. This year's program will have 4 African immigrants participating.</li> </ul>
Goals	<p>To increase public participation a step beyond "traditional engagement" by encouraging participants to take what they learn from NLI and put it into practice. This includes actively engaging in local governance by taking on a city leadership role, such as becoming a Land Use Board member.</p>
Evaluation Metrics	<p>There is room for improvement in terms of evaluating NCI alum impact. However, there are tools in place to evaluate the quality of the NCI program as cohorts participate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation survey for every class session</li> <li>General evaluation survey at end of program</li> </ul> <p>There is additionally a 501(c) Alumni Association that is led by graduates (not the city). The pandemic put a halt to it, but it does exist and could be used to further post-program evaluation.</p>
Impacts of Program	<p>Some specific impacts stood out, while others were more general.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One participant, a Mexican immigrant, was still learning English while in the NCI. Today he works for Welcome Dayton, appointed by city commissioners, and uses his tech skills to help other immigrants. He also initiated other city building opportunities, gained confidence, and became more involved in community activities outside of his day job.</li> <li>Participants have become school board members, BZA, Land Use Committee, and Trustee Commission members. They have coordinated events, become presidents of neighborhood associations, rehabbed homes, and fundraised for playground equipment that the Public Works budget did not cover.</li> </ul> <p>"In general, they have skills to participate in city programming, city decision making, and giving back to their community." - Mike</p>

Comprehensive Impact Analysis Conducted?	No.
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Table C.3. Neighborhood Leadership Institute Case Study (J. Horwitz and M. Squire, personal communication, March 28, 2023)

#### C.4. Charlotte Civic Leadership Academy Case Study

<b>Charlotte Civic Leadership Academy</b>	
Location	Charlotte, North Carolina
Population	879,000
Focus	<p>The CLA provides participants the opportunity to grow in their leadership style, learn to analyze issues using data, connect with decision makers and other Charlotte leaders, and gain useful tools to make a difference in their communities. The program emphasizes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Engagement</li> <li>● Leadership</li> <li>● Civic Involvement</li> <li>● Quality of Life platform</li> </ul>
Structure	<p>The CLA meets 1 to 3 times per week for a total of 13 classes. Classes take place on evenings or Saturdays, and range from 2 to 4 hours on average. Five of the thirteen sessions are held virtually. The program is held twice a year; once in the spring, and once in the fall.</p>
Participant Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participation exclusive to residents of Charlotte, NC.</li> <li>● Applicants can include young people (16 and older), established neighborhood leaders, home owners, renters, residents with no leadership experience, business owners, non-profit workers, new arrivals, native Charlotteans, and everyone in between.</li> <li>● Up to 42 applicants are selected, six from each City Council district area. Selection is based on the application content, with a focus on selecting applicants who reflect the rich diversity of the community and who demonstrate a willingness to engage as leaders in Charlotte.</li> <li>● Selection is competitive, with 100 to 200 applicants in most cycles. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to be as thoughtful, innovative, and engaging as possible in their applications.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection committee is comprised of city staff and CLA alumni.</li> </ul>
Goals	Grow in their leadership, analyze issues using data, connect with decision makers and other Charlotte leaders, and make a difference in their communities.
Evaluation Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal survey asking alumni what they are involved with after participating in the program, and if they are more engaged than they were before.</li> <li>• Convenes CLA graduates in voluntary, bi-annual meetings to give updates about programs and projects of the City and help the City problem solve, where applicable.</li> </ul>
Impacts of Program	<p>Leadership, equity and opportunity, and accessible government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council Member (one CLA graduate ran for and was elected to City Council)</li> <li>• Membership on Council-appointed boards and commissions</li> <li>• Increased involvement in neighborhood associations, community initiatives and public participation processes</li> </ul>
Comprehensive Impact Analysis Conducted?	No.

Table C.4. Charlotte Civic Leadership Academy Case Study (C. Woods, personal communication, April 5, 2023)

### C.5. City Government Academy Case Study

City Government Academy	
Location	Eden Prairie, Minnesota
Population	63K
Focus	The purpose of the six week City Government Academy is to improve citizens' understanding of municipal government while developing citizens' understanding of their role in government. CGA looks to develop more interest in serving the City – be it through part-time employment, volunteer work, being an election judge, or serving on a City board or commission.

Structure	Six-week program offering Eden Prairie residents a behind-the-scenes look at how their City operates. Each of the six 3 hour sessions covers a City Department: Administration; Fire; Public Works; Community Development; Parks & Recreation; and Police. Leaders within each department provide a wide variety of information by means of informative presentations, interactive activities, facility tours and bus tours around the city.
Participant Selection Criteria	Number of applications varies year to year—this year CGA received over 40 applications. 25 participants are selected via a lottery system.
Goals	<p>Citizens’ academies are a series of professionally led sessions designed to familiarize citizens with the City of Eden Prairie’s municipal government and the services it provides. It is a cumulative, educational and engaging experience that gives participants insight in the City’s governmental process. Goals of the program are to increase engagement; improve civic capacity; increase trust; and shape council decisions by citizens. In defining leadership through civic engagement the CGA sees itself as “...a deliberative process through which groups of citizens, representative of their communities, learn, express their points of view, and discover common ground to influence government decision-making” – adapted from Carolyn Lukensmeyer, “Bringing Citizens’ Voices to the Table; A Guide for Public Managers” 2012.</p> <p>This results in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educated and Engaged Public – improved civic capacity; increased community attachment</li> <li>● Decisions Shaped by Citizens – increased civility; increased trust in government</li> <li>● Better Decision Making – policies and programs that hold up over time; reduced costs, gridlock, and power of special interests</li> </ul>
Evaluation Metrics	Participants complete surveys at the end of each session which has shown tremendous positive feedback.
Impacts of Program	Graduates of the program have gone on to become valued members of City Advisory Commissions, some becoming their Commission’s Chair or Vice Chair. Alumni have gotten involved in elections by serving as Election Judges.

Comprehensive Impact Analysis Conducted?	No
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Table C.4. City Government Academy Case Study (K. Engelen, personal communication, April 6, 2023)

## Appendix D: Bloomington Leadership Program Alumni Event Resources

To read more about the specifics of the team’s attendance to the BLP alumni event, see section 3.1. Observation Study. In this section, we have added the notes taken at the event when we were first introduced to the participants of the BLP.



Figure D.1. Annika's notes from BLP Alumni Event

19 Participant "thought the BLP was the best thing she has ever done"  
Director of Board of Bloomington  
Census  
Adviser League of Women Voters

19 Part. - connection to Bloomington  
part of Budget Advisory Committee - city finance  
Newly appointed City Council Member  
BTT care planning team  
start objectives for strategic plan  
(1st time residents were asked to participate)

19 Part. Connect local business, Mug shots, no Cariboo - bolster local economy  
Nat'l Night Out - coordinator

21 Part - Bloomington Veterans Memorial - meet contacts w/ players in city  
Co-Vice President man of BVM. - connect w/ City Council + prayer  
Black Captain - very important

17 Help win learn about about how city govt works - wanted better links to transportation  
- Bloomington to county - meeting people in Health Care to QBP  
(city)

Figure D.2. Jason's Notes from BLP Alumni Event

22 Part. - Stay at home dad - involve around kids + family / school  
Bloomington Early learners + Council - get to meet w/ Superintendent quarterly  
"agitate" for change - want to continue work advocacy  
supporting families w/ young kids

Designing Intentional Connection Engagement - Gather connect

Lead Acknowledgment before commencement of the meeting - led by A + E  
"Are You Present?"

Learn tools to help us build connections

Group Agreement -  
Learn In  
Be Curious  
Stay Engaged  
Step Up, Step Back

Figure D.3. Jason's Notes from BLP Alumni Event



Activities based on rolling the DICE - Heads Up.  
 tables compete against each other - reverse chavadas -  
 one person builds card and rest of team sets out  
 - fun, pantomime of stretching - laughter, encouragement  
 team was very coordinated - clapping / excitement  
  
 Telephone Chavadas - two teams in a line one person does chavadas and tags the  
 next person down the line - no one was successful - very funny / lots of  
 laughter  
  
 Living Room Discussion - about other people, topic, nurse around  
 Books, Cuckoo park, Super Bowl, Best kept secrets of Bloomsbury  
 Being Picasso - drawing partner w/out looking at paper & w/out lifting the pen.

Figure D.4. Jason's Notes from BLP Alumni Event

Reflection - expectations - What are the expectations <sup>Major</sup> commitments to the  
 you have in events and <sup>alumni</sup> group  
 coming into community  
  
 "the more the better" - sharing community - staying connected  
 "see each cohort's yearbooks - master yearbook"  
 "opportunity to volunteer together" - "clean up local parks" - "tap into wider networks"  
 "Staff or council to use leadership group on society board."  
 "people are waiting for stuff to do" - "create meet up groups"  
 "appreciate diversity in the cohort classes"  
 "fun!"  
 "communicate with all of the cohorts"  
 "we need someone to organise a newsletter, other volunteer opportunity - "A & E do not  
 want to lead it" - "use value of it so led by you!"

Figure D.5. Jason's Notes from BLP Alumni Event

Forecast - creative planning

"Don't you feel it too?" - performers based on you can do individually & together

"dance - & comfortable go with yourself - interesting, getting out of comfort zone.

another member knew the person & advocated for the community building.

Farmers Market → Wednesday Concerts - meet up in community

"What are you interested in?" - White Board writing down thoughts  
facilitated by A + E

Conversation people offering ideas - freely & casually

Energizer - TikTok - dance  
! everyone

Group Pictures -

Figure D.6. Jason's Notes from BLP Alumni Event

# Appendix E: Ripple Effects Mapping Event Resources

During the event, many visual resources were used to map, code, and guide participants. These include our X.Mind Map, which is provided in full and in zoomed in sections, as well as table format, the worksheet designed for the Ripple Effects Mapping Event, the flyer for our event, and signs put up around the room to guide participants

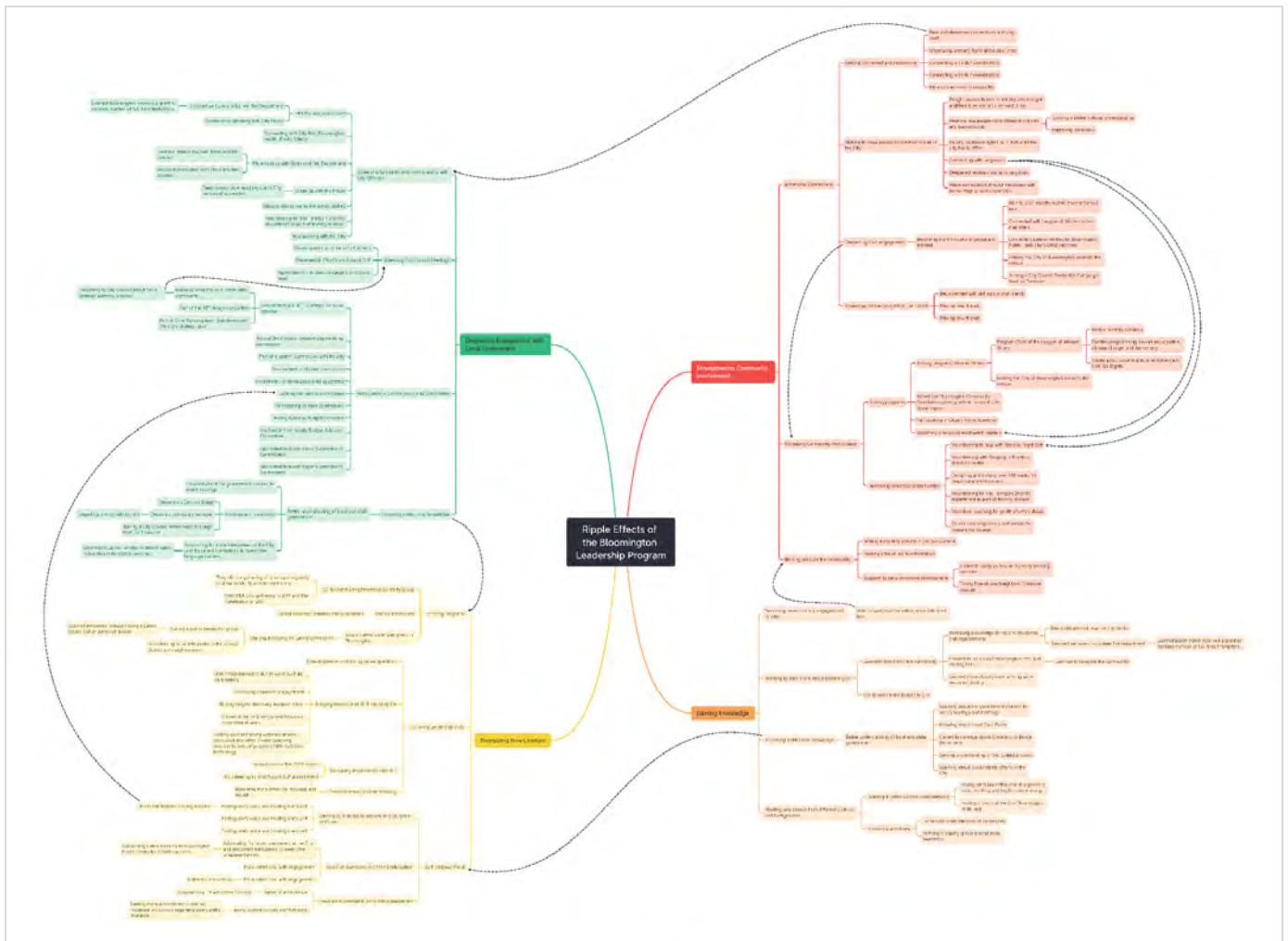


Figure E.1. X.Mind Mind Map - Full Map



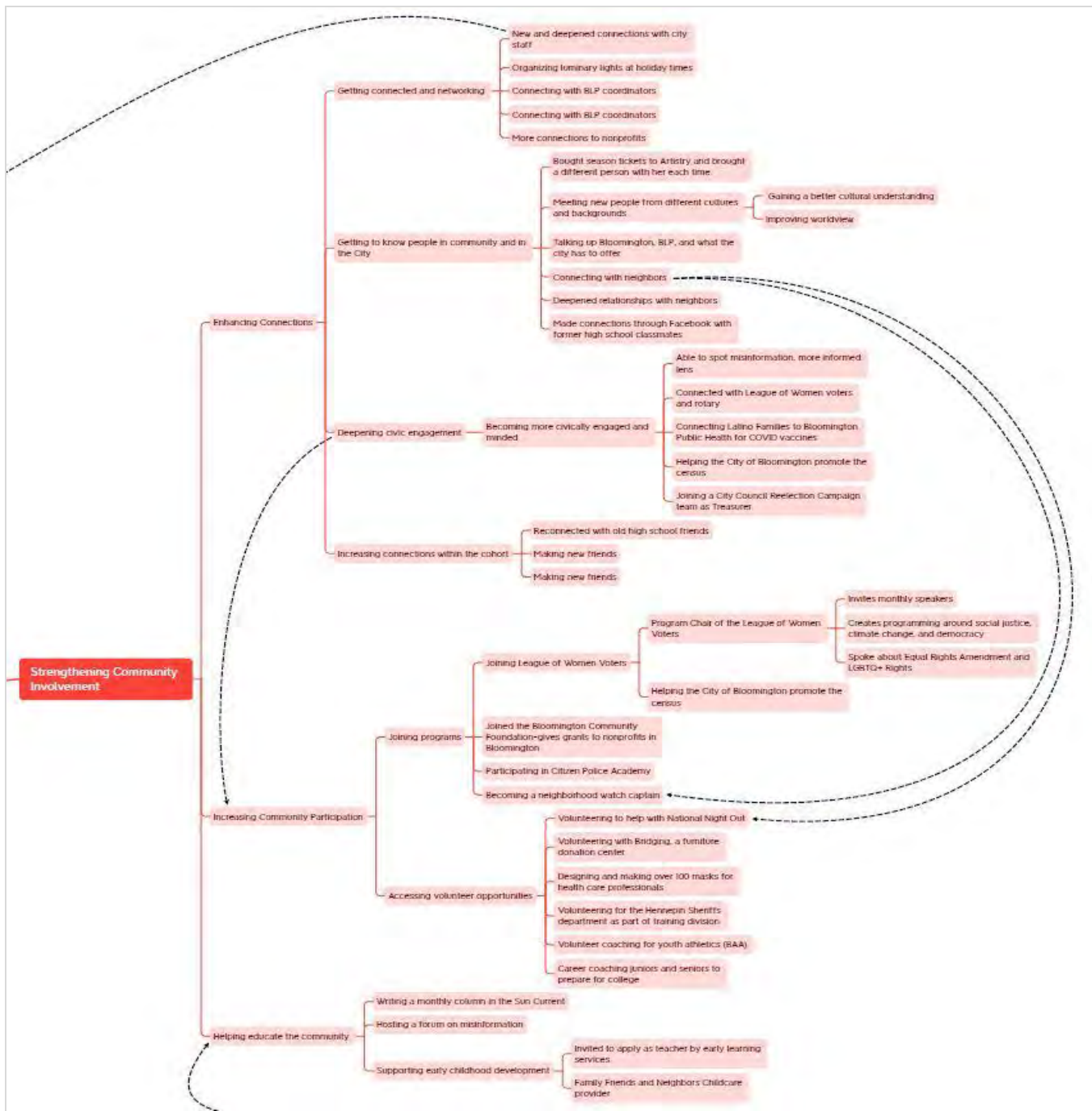


Figure E.2. Strengthening Community Involvement - Mind Map

## Strengthening Community Involvement

### Enhancing Connections

#### Getting connected and networking

- New and deepened connections with city staff
- Organizing luminary lights at holiday times
- Connecting with BLP coordinators
- Connecting with BLP coordinators
- More connections to nonprofits

#### Getting to know people in community and in the City

- Bought season tickets to Artistry and brought a different person with her each time.
- Meeting new people from different cultures and backgrounds
  - Gaining a better cultural understanding
  - Improving worldview
- Talking up Bloomington, BLP, and what the city has to offer
- Connecting with neighbors
- Deepened relationships with neighbors
- Made connections through Facebook with former high school classmates

#### Deepening civic engagement

- Becoming more civically engaged and minded
  - Able to spot misinformation, more informed lens
  - Connected with League of Women voters and rotary
  - Connecting Latino Families to Bloomington Public Health for COVID vaccines
  - Helping the City of Bloomington promote the census
  - Joining a City Council Reelection Campaign team as Treasurer

#### Increasing connections within the cohort

- Reconnected with old high school friends
- Making new friends
- Making new friends

### Increasing Community Participation

#### Joining programs

- Joining League of Women Voters
  - Program Chair of the League of Women Voters
    - Invites monthly speakers
    - Creates programming around social justice, climate change, and democracy
    - Spoke about Equal Rights Amendment and LGBTQ+ Rights
  - Helping the City of Bloomington promote the census
- Joined the Bloomington Community Foundation-gives grants to nonprofits in Bloomington
- Participating in Citizen Police Academy
- Becoming a neighborhood watch captain

#### Accessing volunteer opportunities

- Volunteering to help with National Night Out
- Volunteering with Bridging, a furniture donation center
- Designing and making over 100 masks for health care professionals
- Volunteering for the Hennepin Sheriff's department as part of training division
- Volunteer coaching for youth athletics (BAA)
- Career coaching juniors and seniors to prepare for college

### Helping educate the community

- Writing a monthly column in the Sun Current

	Hosting a forum on misinformation
	Supporting early childhood development
	Invited to apply as a teacher by early learning services.
	Family Friends and Neighbors Childcare provider

Table E.3. Strengthening Community Involvement - Raw Data

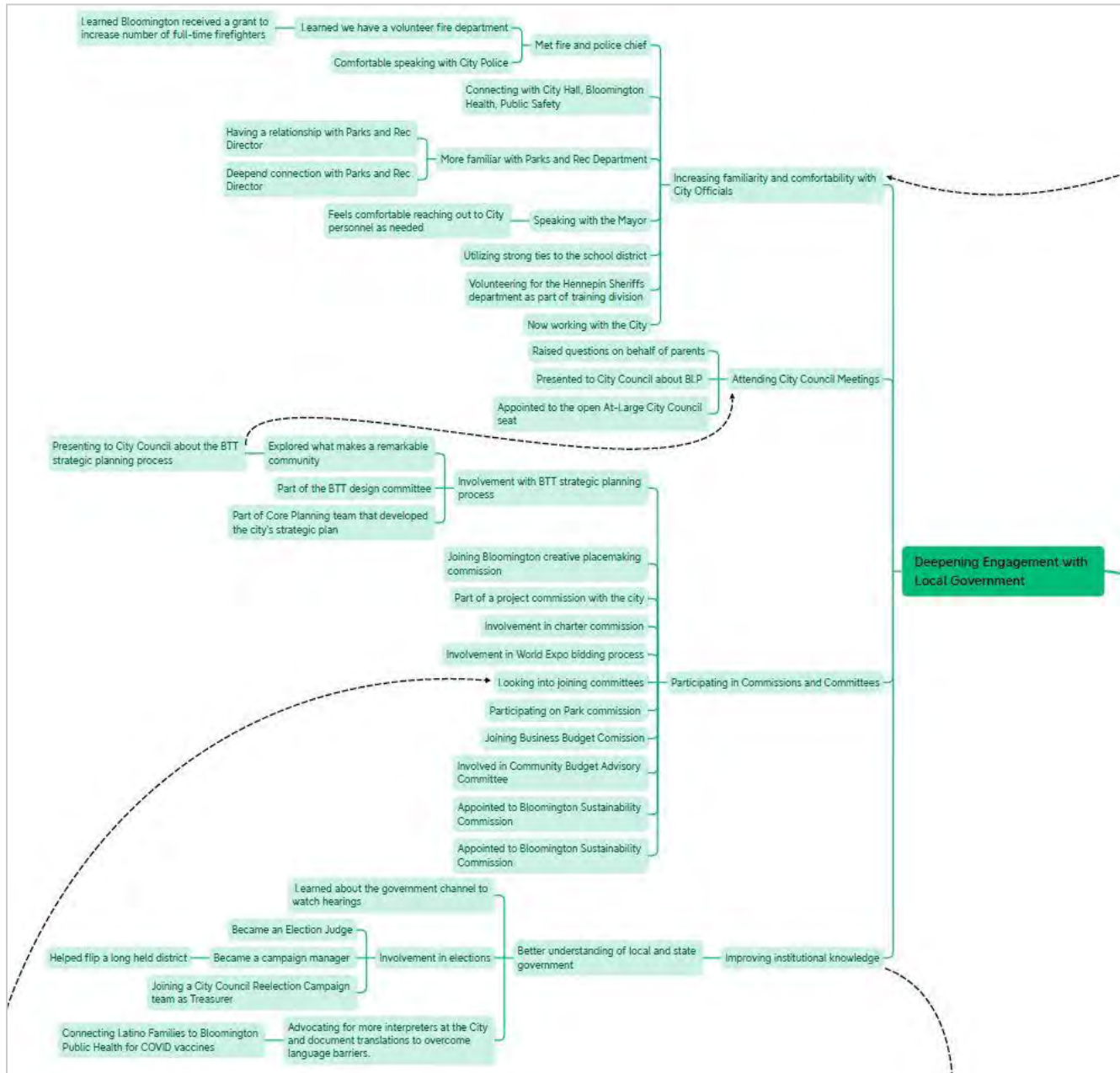


Figure E.4. Deepening Engagement with Local Government - Mind Map

Deepening Engagement with Local Government		
Increasing familiarity and comfortability with City Officials		
		Met fire and police chief
		Learned we have a volunteer fire department
		Learned Bloomington received a grant to increase number of full-time firefighters
		Comfortable speaking with City Police
		Connecting with City Hall, Bloomington Health, Public Safety
		More familiar with Parks and Rec Department
		Having a relationship with Parks and Rec Director
		Deepened connection with Parks and Rec Director
		Speaking with the Mayor
		Feeling comfortable reaching out to City personnel as needed
		Utilizing strong ties to the school district
		Volunteering for the Hennepin Sheriffs department as part of training division
		Now working with the City
Attending City Council Meetings		
		Raised questions on behalf of parents
		Presented to City Council about BLP
		Appointed to the open At-Large City Council seat
Participating in Commissions and Committees		
		Involvement with BTT strategic planning process
		Explored what makes a remarkable community
		Presenting to City Council about the BTT strategic planning process
		Part of the BTT design committee
		Part of Core Planning team that developed the city's strategic plan
		Joining Bloomington creative placemaking commission
		Part of a project commission with the city
		Involvement in charter commission
		Involvement in World Expo bidding process
		Looking into joining committees
		Participating on Park commission
		Joining Business Budget Commission
		Involved in Community Budget Advisory Committee
		Appointed to Bloomington Sustainability Commission
		Appointed to Bloomington Sustainability Commission
Improving institutional knowledge		
		Better understanding of local and state government
		Learned about the government channel to watch hearings
		Involvement in elections
		Became an Election Judge
		Became a campaign manager
		Helped flip a long held district
		Joining a City Council Reelection Campaign team as Treasurer
		Advocating for more interpreters at the City and document translations to overcome language barriers.
		Connecting Latino Families to Bloomington Public Health for COVID vaccines

Table E.5. Deepening Engagement with Local Government - Raw Data

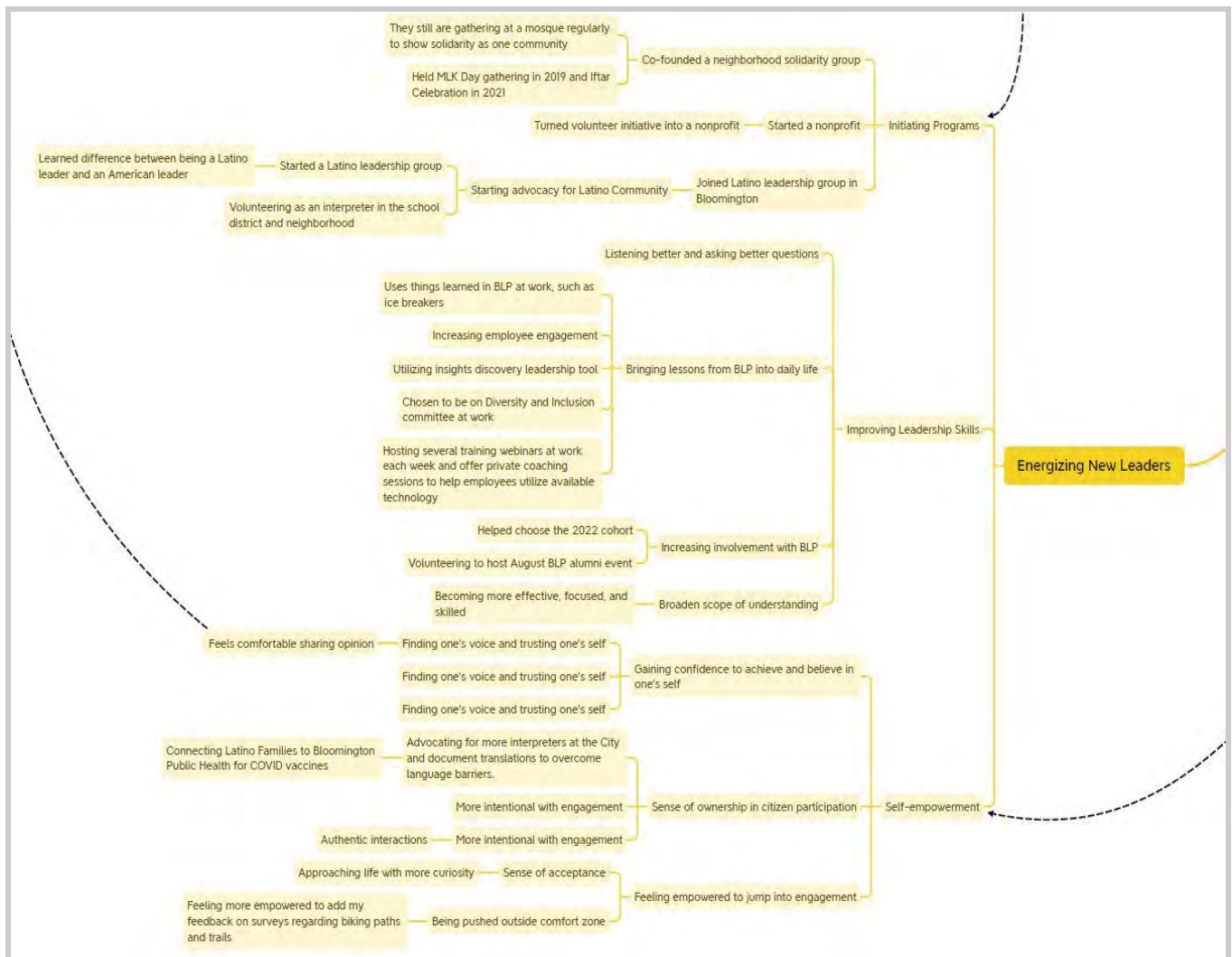


Figure E.6. Energizing New Leaders Mind Map

Energizing New Leaders	
Initiating Programs	
	Co-founded a neighborhood solidarity group
	Continue gathering at a mosque regularly to show solidarity as one community
	Held MLK Day gathering
	Held Iftar Celebration
	Started a nonprofit
	Turned volunteer initiative into a nonprofit
	Joined Latino leadership group in Bloomington
	Starting advocacy for Latino Community
	Started a Latino leadership group
	Learned difference between being a Latino leader and an American leader
	Volunteering as an interpreter in the school district and neighborhood



Improving Leadership Skills	
	Listening better and asking better questions
	Bringing lessons from BLP into daily life
	Uses things learned in BLP at work, such as ice breakers
	Increasing employee engagement
	Utilizing insights discovery leadership tool
	Chosen to be on Diversity and Inclusion committee at work
	Hosting several training webinars at work each week and offer private coaching sessions to help employees utilize available technology
	Increasing involvement with BLP
	Helped choose the 2022 cohort
	Volunteering to host August BLP alumni event
	Broaden scope of understanding
	Becoming more effective, focused, and skilled
Self-empowerment	
	Gaining confidence to achieve and believe in one's self
	Finding one's voice and trusting one's self
	Feels comfortable sharing opinion
	Finding one's voice and trusting one's self
	Finding one's voice and trusting one's self
	Sense of ownership in citizen participation
	Advocating for more interpreters at the City and document translations to overcome language barriers.
	Connecting Latino Families to Bloomington Public Health for COVID vaccines
	More intentional with engagement
	More intentional with engagement
	Authentic interactions
	Feeling empowered to jump into engagement
	Sense of acceptance
	Approaching life with more curiosity
	Being pushed outside comfort zone
	Feeling more empowered to add my feedback on surveys regarding biking paths and trails

Table E.7. Energizing New Leaders - Raw Data

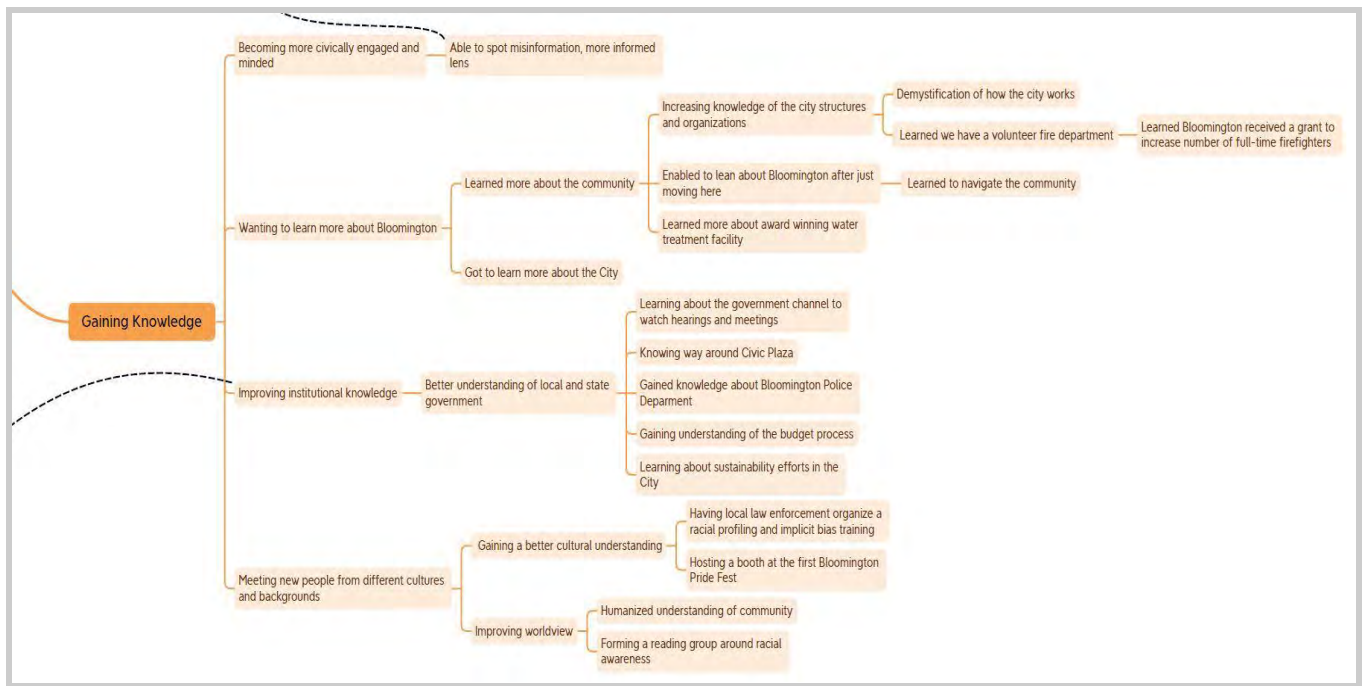


Figure E.8. Gaining Knowledge - Mind Map

Gaining Knowledge	
Becoming more civically engaged and minded	
	Able to spot misinformation, more informed lens
Wanting to learn more about Bloomington	
	Learned more about the community
	Increasing knowledge of the city structures and organizations
	Demystification of how the city works
	Learned we have a volunteer fire department
	Learned Bloomington received a grant to increase number of full-time firefighters
	Enabled to learn about Bloomington after just moving here
	Learned to navigate the community
	Learned more about award winning water treatment facility
	Got to learn more about the City
Improving institutional knowledge	
	Better understanding of local and state government
	Learning about the government channel to watch hearings and meetings
	Knowing way around Civic Plaza
	Gained knowledge about Bloomington Police Department
	Gaining understanding of the budget process
	Learning about sustainability efforts in the City
Meeting new people from different cultures and backgrounds	
	Gaining a better cultural understanding
	Having local law enforcement organize a racial profiling and implicit bias training



	Hosting a booth at the first Bloomington Pride Fest
	Improving worldview
	Humanized understanding of community
	Forming a reading group around racial awareness

Table E.9. Gaining Knowledge - Raw Data



Figure E.10. Make Your Mark! Instructional sign at REM Event



Figure E.11. Make Your Mark! Instructional sign at REM Event

## Mapping Connections in the Bloomington Leadership Program

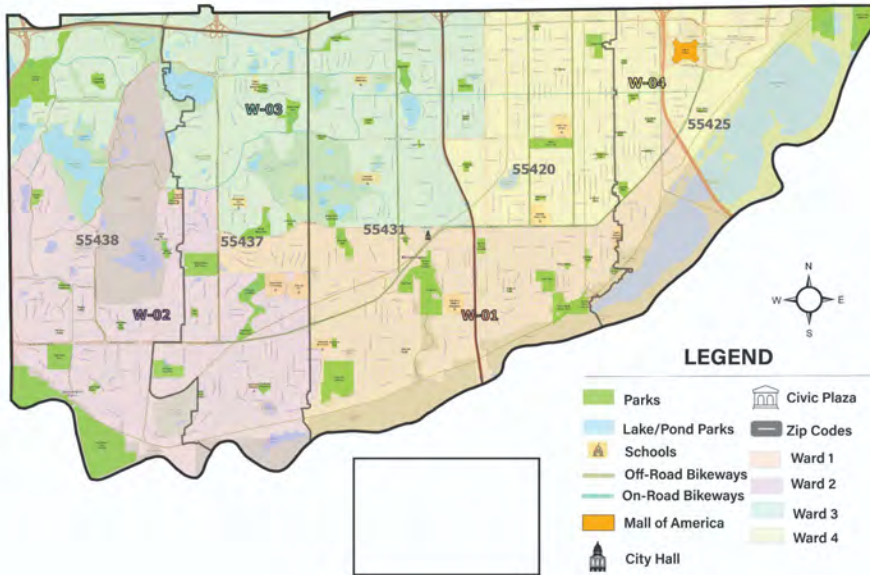


Figure E.12. Geographic Participation Map without participant data

### RIPPLE EFFECT MAPPING

Bloomington Leadership Program | March 23rd 2023

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview your partner, write notes about their answers, and be prepared to share about your partner with the large group! Please write legibly, as we will be collecting these worksheets after the event. As you move through answering the questions, consider the locations of your impacts. We will be mapping them later!

1. What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had because of your involvement in BLP?
2. What unexpected things have happened as a result of your involvement with the program?

Bloomington Leadership Program: One-to-one interviews

### RIPPLE EFFECT MAPPING

Bloomington Leadership Program | March 23rd 2023

3. What connections —new and/or deepened— have you made because of your time in BLP?

#### MAKE YOUR MARK<sup>®</sup>

*Where have you made an impact?*  
Have you advocated at city hall, volunteered at church, or organized an event in your neighborhood? Map it!

Use your stickers during the break to show where you have made an impact on our map and Make Your Mark!

WINDYBORN  
WGA

Bloomington Leadership Program: One-to-one interviews

Figure E.13. & E.14. REM Worksheets, front and back



Figure E.15. REM Participant Feedback Survey Results