

Sylvie Guezeon, 2021 EDI Fellow for Minneapolis MN



Project Overview and Role:

Phillips Traffic Safety Improvements

In 2017 and 2018, the City analyzed 10 years of crash data for trends to inform future work. These car crashes cause injuries and even deaths. In the last 10 years, there have been more than 1,600 car crashes on these four high injury streets: 24th street, 26th street, 28th street and Chicago Avenue.

The project goal is to reduce speeding and car crashes in the Phillips neighborhood. By meeting these goals, the streets will be more comfortable for people walking, rolling or driving.

Phillips is a diverse and low-income neighborhood with

approximately 70% of BIPOC, foreign-born and multigenerational residents, who speak another language than English.

My role as the EDI Transportation Fellow was to engage those who have been traditionally marginalized in this type of project. I mainly targeted community-based organizations, neighborhood associations, schools, businesses organizations, and hospitals. I also assisted in creating a Transportation Engagement Framework.

What did you learn from the project?

I am new to the field of sustainability. There was a plethora of knowledge I was able to acquire from my position within the local government. The most important things would have to be:

1. Local Government needs to provide more financial (human, resources) support for ways to make engagement more enticing.
2. Importance for Government to patiently build relationships to create lasting trust among BIPOC.
3. Gain experience for public engagement with residents and community-based organizations.
4. Navigate a government Division and work closely with Government staff.

What was the impact of your work?

This project is part of the City of Minneapolis Vision Zero goal to prevent severe injuries and deaths from traffic crashes. It is a movement to reduce traffic-related deaths and major injuries to zero. In 2020, the City of Minneapolis adopted the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan to shape how the City will grow and change over the next two decades. Vision Zero is one of the high-level policies in the Transportation Section. For 2040, one of the City of Minneapolis' goals is to reach an equitable civic participation system that enfranchises everyone. To accomplish this task, I was charged with the development of the community engagement framework, working closely with staff, and being part of the necessary conversations to provide an equitable and inclusive policy guide.

Success markers for this project have been unconventional, and not always apparent. I created solid relationships with the Native American educators in the Phillips neighborhood.

Any links to project deliverables?

- <https://cityoflakes.maps.arcgis.com/apps/CrowdsourceReporter/index.html?appid=604c61a9d5fb4bfaaee5ee0089872a90>
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WVRNCST>
- <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/phillips/>