Westminster Inclusivity Board

Community Forum

Summary Report

WESTMINSTER

SUMMARY

The Westminster Inclusivity Board welcomed 30 residents to a community forum on Nov. 2, 2016. The purpose of the forum was to ask the community about their needs, ideas and vision for inclusivity in the community. Ideas generated at this forum will then go into their strategic planning process and inform the priorities of the Board.

Refreshments, childcare and Spanish interpretation was provided to attendees. Nearly 5,000 postcards were mailed to the surrounding community and the event was publicized throughout city communications and to Spanish media, community partners and via social media.

Thirty residents, ten Board members and four staff members were in attendance. After a welcome and brief presentations to welcome, explain the mandate and define terms, participants answered the following questions.

1) *"What does a welcoming community look like?"*
2) *"What is one barrier you see to Westminster becoming a welcoming/ inclusive community?"*
3) *"What would you like to see the Inclusivity Board accomplish?"*

The issues and ideas shared at this community meeting will be evaluated as part of the Inclusivity Board's strategic planning process.

Topics that were commonly talked about in the small groups include:

- Affordable housing
- Communication
- Culture and arts
- Public safety
- Traffic and transportation
- Language access and barriers
- Community engagement

The following notes provide a summary of the discussions at each group throughout the community meeting.

CONTACT

We invite your ideas and questions.

Contact Alexa Priddy, communication and outreach coordinator, at 303-658-2016 or apriddy@cityofwestminster.us.

QUESTION #1

What does a welcoming community look like?

Table 1:

- Access to (equal) resources that allows a sense of community and inclusion
- Well maintained community = welcoming but understands it goes deeper
- Neighborhoods that contain different races, age groups – allows for shared experiences
- RTD parking facility too hard for people with physical limitations to access

Table 2:

- Language availability - Staff that speaks the same language; public services
- Safety out in community - walkability
- Good relationship with authority (PD)
    - Language access needs
- Officers on bikes more or walking among community
    - HOA meetings with PD
- A little more visibility
- Communities need to meet cities halfway to make safe communities
- Diverse housing
- Businesses are reflective of the community - market areas
- Getting city resources out

Table 3:

- Clean and not full of trash
- Signage in other languages
- Maintain infrastructure – make better roads
- Safety
- Housing (affordability) - help to citizens (luxury housing going up)
- Affordable transportation – service more people
- Diversity in restaurants and stores.
- More transportation options to the new Downtown.
- Lighting
- Government must be capable/ approachable
- Celebrations for diverse cultures and festivals, i.e. St. Patrick's Day, Latino Festival
- More employment opportunities

Table 4:

- Good neighbors
- Respectful
- Diversity
- Approachable/inviting – create space (i.e. events/placemaking)
- People getting involved
- Getting info – knowing what is going on
- Welcoming "Welcome to West-minster" – gathering spaces, parks, trails, etc.
- Redevelopment should benefit all socio-economic levels

Table 5:

- Clean, proper lighting
- Where people look out for each other
- Safety/No homelessness
- Good roads
- Better support for schools
- High performing schools
- Bilingual/language access
- More info for people
- Better recycling
- Cultural events and arts
- More health options at school
- No drugs

Note: *These notes are summaries and were compiled during the event. This may not reflect every topic discussed and includes abbreviations and other shortened statements common with notetaking.*

QUESTION #2

What is the one barrier you see to Westminster becoming a welcoming/inclusive community?

Table 1:

- We are becoming too similar to Aurora with increased crime and violence, due to greed and bringing in more people to live in the city.
- Traffic issues and growth – Light rail/ train delays
- Lack of affordable housing – full range of different types of housing options
- Barriers in the hearts of some community members
- Language barriers – preventing parental and student involvement?
- North/South Westminster divide growing
- Affordable childcare

Table 2:

- Our community is spread out
  - Increase of pockets of communities
  - Geographic
  - Lack of affordability
  - Rental market is expensive
- Language barrier!
- Strip mall vs walkability
- Snow removal/bikes/wheelchairs
- South Westminster has less services
- Handicap access at train station
- Bus stop – benches and shelters
- Access to healthy foods
- Access to Rec Centers
- More parks
- Communications of what is available in the city

Table 3:

- Should have diverse board meetings, currently not held in other languages
- No knowledge about what is going on in Westminster
- Some citizens not on social media
- Flyers about events not at library
- Affordable housing (lack of)

Table 4:

- No reciprocation to outreach or friendly actions with neighbors
- Everyone lives in their own bubble
- Financial barriers
- Transportation
- Social gatherings for all residents, including older generation (not just events for kids/families)
- Lack of info/awareness of services
- Adequate opportunity find employment and affordable housing
- Personal vs electronic communications
- Walkability

Table 5:

- Language access – Info in various languages
- Staff is bilingual/bi-cultural
- English classes, not just conversational
- Training to staff about how to relate to other cultures
- Housing affordability and affordable city services
- Lower cost of rec centers
- More rec center classes in other languages

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QUESTION #3

What would you like to see the Inclusivity Board accomplish?

Table 1:

- More communication with community – newspapers, emails, newsletters
- Activities to enhance cultural engagement, regular community events/engagement pavilion at Westminster mall area that highlights a different culture or ethnic showcase, must be connected to the city
- Better understanding and/or better access to City Hall and city government
- City sports – intramural – tourism
- More Inclusivity Board forums open to the public
- Obtain feedback
- Increase cultural awareness among residents (i.e., Did you know we have a large Hmong community in Westminster?)
- Serve as a community voice

Table 2:

- Bus stops/shelters – collaborations with other cities
- PD out of their cars/bikes and in the community
- Survey of minority owned businesses
- Community events (yard sale)
- "Create community" – get out and around
- HOUSING! – multi-lingual contracts for renters
- Renter's Bill of Rights
- Longer crosswalk time
- Better communications

Table 3:

- Hold multi-cultural events
  - To learn about other people
  - Include religious communities
  - Include FOOD!!!
- Good amenities at festivals
- Access to health care that would be available to citizens
- Bring local companies to new Downtown

- Promote sporting events between different schools, i.e. Standley Lake and Westminster to encourage inclusion
- Combine activities for youth intercity and counties free of charge (collaboration between counties and cities) (Youth Advisory Board)

Table 4:

- Follow-up with community members after events (meetings on their ideas)
- Make the board BE the conduit, facilitators, communicators
- Senior lunches – senior center
- Be in the community, personally, i.e. at church, community dinners, events, etc.
- Resources for neighbors and others to share/help with computer stuff, rides, etc.

Table 5:

- Housing for homeless
- Find ways to better engage Latino community and outreach
- Hire more staff from diverse communities
- Translate city documents and website
- Limited time for requesting interpretation for Council meetings
- More advance notice for events

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MIND MAPPING

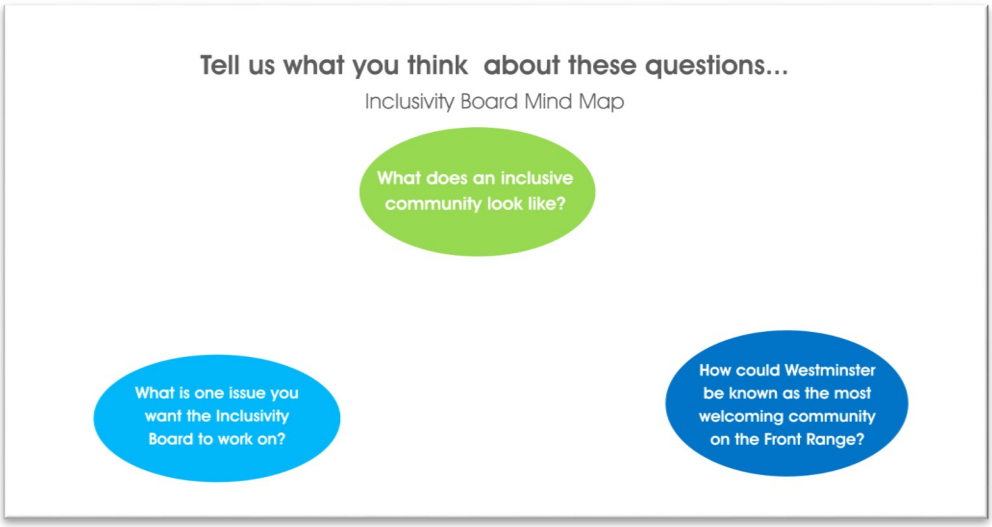
The Mind Mapping activity allowed participants to write responses to questions on a poster in the room to map their ideas for each topic. This information represents the ideas of only those people who took time to write on posters around the room.

What does an inclusive community look like?

- It is the way we explain the messages, a more explicit translation, when people don't understand they confuse actions and this often causes bigger problems.
- Fairness between the topics we covered. Fairness isn't getting the same thing, it is getting what you need to succeed.
- If people understand each other it's marvelous!!
- Community looking out for each other
- What it looked like on Halloween with people out and interacting.

How could Westminster be known as the most welcoming community in the Front Range?

- With new ways to know the community and the larger groups.
- Activities for children and adults
- To know that the community will live happily on a daily basis, not just surviving and wasting time
- Showcasing the multi-cultural aspect of the community
- Consider a global market/public market as part of the Downtown
- By organizing more meetings in which they/you could introduce yourselves to the "newcomers"
- (Advertise both online and welcome wagon style greeting for new residents.)

What is one issue you want the inclusivity board to work on?

- Better work plans, motivation for the community, and for them to better understand the needs of
- Westminster and its citizens.
- Cultural integration
- Homelessness
- Curbing smoking in multi-unit dwellings