

CapitolRiver Council:

Mapping the Future to Everyone's Downtown

Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Molly Hayes, Jon Olson, Amy Schmidt & Tracy Shimek

Advised by Dr. Kevin Gerdes & Dr. Angie Fertig

August 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction and Acknowledgements	1
II.	Research Methodology	3
III.	Research Findings and Discussion.....	4
IV.	Recommendations	10
V.	Limitations and Areas for Future Study Recommendations	15
VI.	Conclusion Recommendations.....	16

APPENDICES

A.	References	A-1
B.	Literature Review.....	B-1
C.	Interview Protocol and Consent Form	C-1
D.	Survey Information	D-1
E.	District Council Comparative Study	E-1
F.	SWOT Analysis	F-1
G.	Presentation Handout: CapitolRiver Council: Mapping the Future to “Everyone’s Downtown”	G-1
H.	Presentation Power Point Slides (delivered to the CapitolRiver Council Board of Directors, July 31, 2018): CapitolRiver Council: Mapping the Future to “Everyone’s Downtown”	H-1
I.	Research Team Biographical Information	I-1

I. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction

The CapitolRiver Council—District 17 (“CRC”) is part of the neighborhood District Council System in the City of Saint Paul. The CRC is the official “citizen participation organization” (I-23¹) for Downtown Saint Paul and the State Capitol area, and acts in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Council on urban planning and community building efforts as part of a shared vision to support sustainable, safe, healthy, and vibrant neighborhoods (CapitolRiver Council webpage 2018). It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation which seeks to serve as the voice for residents, businesses, property owners, employees, and visitors to Saint Paul (CapitolRiver Council webpage 2018). The CRC Board of Directors is comprised of these stakeholders and utilizes five committees in accomplishing its work (CapitolRiver Council webpage 2018). Its Board meetings and committee meetings are open to anyone with an interest in issues concerning District 17.

In April 2018, the CRC’s Executive Director engaged four students from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota to support the work of the CRC executive director and board. The research team is comprised of Molly Hayes, Jon Olson, Amy Schmidt, and Tracy Shimek, who are all mid-career professionals with expertise spanning sectors including military/national security, diplomacy, law, municipal government, and private industry. The research team has a grounding in qualitative and quantitative research methods, policy analysis, program implementation, and leadership. (See [Appendix I](#) for additional biographical information.)

The research team initiated this study after discussions with the CRC’s Executive Director and Board Chair in April 2018. The focus for this study included assessing the CRC’s board governance, mission and priorities, and public engagement in order to provide a set of recommendations to assist the CRC in maximizing its ability to better serve Downtown stakeholders. The team then undertook an in-depth literature review to assess relevant information regarding the CRC, the Saint Paul District Council system, future planning for the City of Saint Paul, and academic research on nonprofit board governance and community engagement practices.

This research question served as a guide to focus the team’s study:

How can the CapitolRiver Council most effectively deploy its limited resources to maximize their influence and stakeholder engagement in the political and planning processes of Downtown Saint Paul?

This question guided the research team’s approach to producing an analysis of the CRC’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, with key findings emerging in three prominent areas:

¹ The research team conducted qualitative interviews with key CRC stakeholders and current and former board members. Interview sources are indicated in the text by “I” (for interview) followed by the interview number, in order to preserve anonymity of participants.

- (1) Internal Functions of the CRC
- (2) Navigation of the Downtown Ecosystem
- (3) Livability issues in Downtown Saint Paul

Based on the key findings in these three areas, the research team developed an informed and actionable set of recommendations for the CRC Board of Directors' consideration. Recommendations are aimed at guiding the CRC's efforts to prioritize their engagement and advocacy activities and improve organizational functions, all while deploying limited resources to exert the maximum amount of influence in Downtown Saint Paul.

The research team presented its findings and recommendations to the CRC's Board of Directors and Executive Director on July 31, 2018. The team's final product is strengthened by the Board's insights and thoughtful questions.

Acknowledgments

The research team would like to thank the CRC and Saint Paul stakeholders who gave generously of their time and insights in support of our work.

We are also grateful to CRC Executive Director Jon Fure and CRC's 2017-18 Board Chair Tom Erickson for their enthusiastic support and open access to information, and to Dr. Kevin Gerdes and Dr. Angie Fertig for their wisdom and guidance.

This report would not have been possible without all of you!

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Guided by an initial review of academic literature and City documents ([Appendix B](#)), the research team members conducted a series of 35 qualitative interviews ([Appendix C](#)), seven observation sessions of City meetings and meetings of other Saint Paul District Councils, a survey with 59 respondents ([Appendix D](#)), and a comparative analysis with three other Saint Paul District Councils ([Appendix E](#)).

A. Literature Review

The research team conducted an initial review of academic literature and City documents to provide a grounding for further research and final recommendations. The literature review included an examination of the history of neighborhood councils in the United States; a synopsis of Saint Paul's initial draft of its 2040 Comprehensive Plan; and a summary of academic and nonprofit literature findings regarding board governance and utilizing stakeholder engagement to create influence. (See [Appendix B](#).)

B. Interviews

The team carried out semi-structured in-person qualitative interviews with 35 CRC stakeholders who are familiar with the CRC, the District Council system, or both. Interviews were voluntary and conducted with the understanding that the subjects would be anonymous and unidentifiable. (See [Appendix C](#).)

C. Observations

Research team members observed a CRC Board meeting; CRC Development Review Committee meetings; a private meeting between CRC Staff and the Saint Paul Councilmember for Ward 2; a public meeting facilitated by staff from City of Saint Paul's Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) on the draft Comprehensive Plan 2040; the CRC Annual Meeting; a public hearing of the City Council concerning the district council system; and one meeting of the other District Council boards included in the comparative study.

D. Survey

A survey assessing qualitative and quantitative indicators was sent to all email addresses on the CRC's email distribution of 1,172 contacts. The survey was available to respondents for 23 days. Fifty-nine people responded. (See [Appendix D](#).)

E. District Council Comparative Study

Community stakeholders familiar with Saint Paul's district council system identified three District Councils perceived to be high-functioning in the areas of stakeholder engagement, fiscal management, and board leadership: 1) Union Park; 2) Macalester-Groveland; and 3) Highland Park. Research team members met with Executive Directors and Board Chairs of these three Councils, and observed one board meeting, to gather data for a limited comparative analysis.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Even prior to the formal creation of the District Council system in 1975-76 (Resolution 266179, Oct. 10, 1975), the City of Saint Paul had a long history of community engagement going back to the 1960s (Coland, et al., 2006). In an early study of neighborhood councils across the country, Saint Paul's District Council system was identified as "one of the most coherent and comprehensive of any city we have seen" (Berry, Portney, & Thomson 1993) (See Literature Review, [Appendix B](#)). Although the research team found that some of the functions and powers of the district councils have evolved since the 1993 study, the core responsibility of community engagement has not changed.

The research team found that the CRC has evolved in concert with the overall district council system, which has resulted in a wide spectrum of opinions among CRC stakeholders about the CRC's performance. As is reflected in Figure 1 below, 27% of survey respondents rated their satisfaction with the CRC at an 8 or higher, and 51% rated their satisfaction between 4 and 7. Only 22% rated their satisfaction at a 3 or lower. A satisfaction level of 7, followed closely by a satisfaction level of 8, received the most votes. While these numbers are not all negative, the data suggests room for improvement.

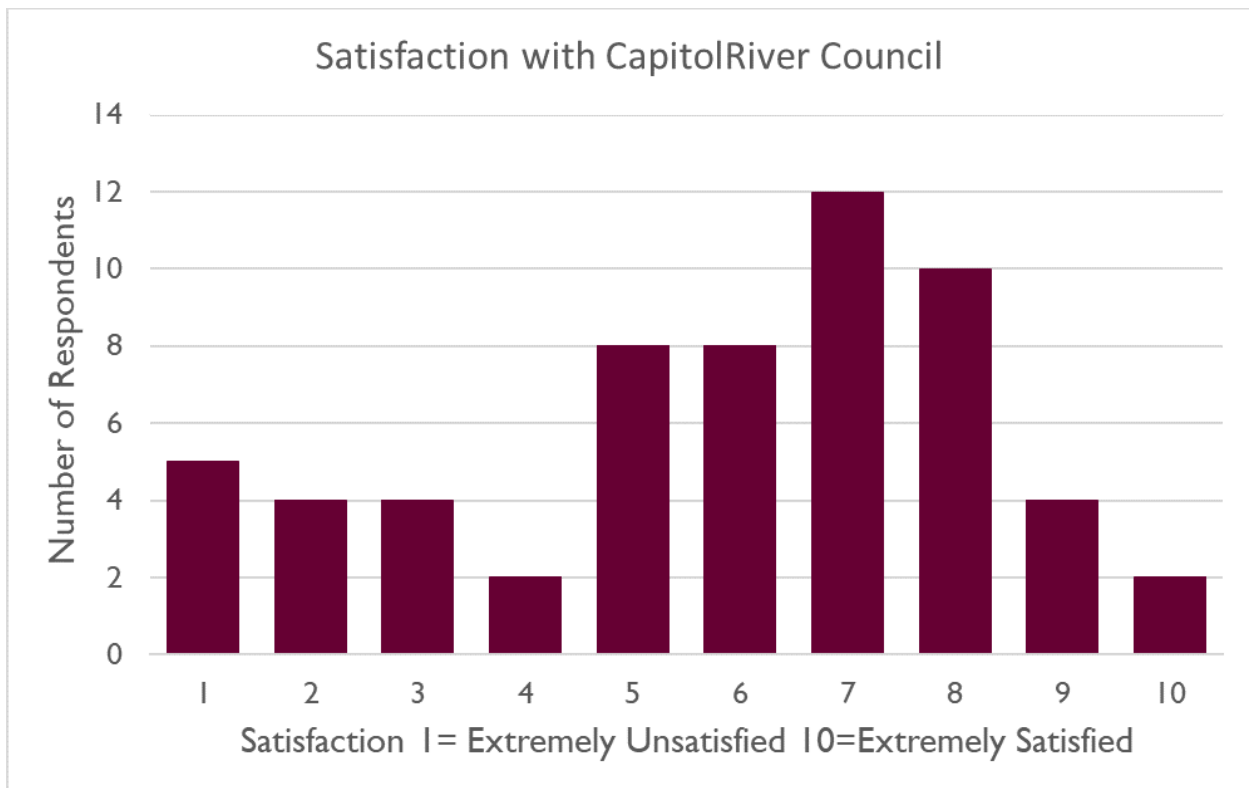


Figure 1

On the whole, from multiple sources of data, the research team found that stakeholders have enthusiasm and passion for Downtown Saint Paul and want to see it thrive. Stakeholders want the area to reach its full potential as "everyone's downtown" for not only Downtown's direct

stakeholders but all residents and visitors of the City of Saint Paul. The key findings emerging from this study fell into three broad areas of consideration: 1) Internal Functions of the CRC; 2) Navigation of the Downtown Ecosystem; and 3) Livability issues in Downtown Saint Paul.

A. Internal Functions of the CRC.

1. Mixed support of work related to bylaws.

The research team found that the CRC has made positive strides in its internal functioning through finalizing a long-awaited update to the CRC bylaws, policies, and procedures. Multiple respondents² expressed satisfaction with the CRC's efforts to improve internal functions through updates to the CRC's bylaws over the past eighteen months and considered the updates to be a major achievement. One respondent noted that, "getting governance under control, and getting a functional board, making bylaws that work... it's huge, and in the last year, CRC has become dramatically more functional as a result of getting a board in place that really cares about the organization of Downtown" (I-31³). At the same time, some respondents expressed concern that the bylaws discussions "took up the oxygen" (I-13), overwhelmed discussion of other important issues, and shifted some fiscal responsibilities to the Board without sufficient training (I-3, 7, 9, 12, and 14).

2. Satisfaction with CRC Staff.

The research team found that respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the CRC's staff, including the performance of its executive director and engagement program manager. The executive director is considered "a real asset" who "regularly communicates in an efficient manner" (I-19). The engagement program manager provided a "good boost" for community outreach (I-7) and made one respondent "want to get more involved" (I-25).

3. Board of Directors has strengths and room for improvements.

The data showed that the Board of Directors is viewed as increasingly effective and representative, yet still struggles in some areas of governance. For example, among strengths, one respondent noted that when board members disagree, they can be "civil and somehow reach consensus among that group of diverse people with different perspectives" (I-26). Respondents were complimentary of recent recruitment efforts, indicating that the newest slate of Board candidates was a "good cross-section of individuals who seem to have [the] common denominator being, how do we make this downtown, this district, all it can be?" (I-28).

At the same time, the research team found several areas of internal board functioning with room for improvement.

- **Onboarding:** There is a need to improve onboarding for members, including an in-depth introduction to the CRC's charter and bylaws to help them quickly get their bearings and

² "Respondents" are CRC stakeholders who were interviewed, observed, or surveyed throughout the course of this project.

³ Respondents are numbered, rather than named, to preserve anonymity.

understand the expectations of the position (I-6, I-7, I-8, I-9, I-23). Observations of a CRC Board meeting also revealed that some board members felt frustrated that it took them a long time into their term before they really felt like they understood what was happening with the board and the organization. This hindered their ability to fully participate and contribute in a meaningful way.

- **Succession planning:** CRC functioning could be enhanced by effectively mentoring and developing leadership, from the committee level up to the board, to sustain board effectiveness while facilitating the exodus of key leaders (I-8, I-19).

4. Unclear vision and priorities.

Despite enthusiasm for the CRC, the CRC's mission and priorities were unclear to a number of respondents. While there was general consensus that the CRC's vision "should be to generate involvement from constituents to make Saint Paul a wonderful place to live and work," there is a sense that the CRC's mission statement lacks clarity about how it should achieve its mission (I-6). The following quotations are representative of many respondents' sense of an unclear mission and priorities for the CRC:

- "I don't think people really understand what the core mission is and what the purpose is." (I-22)
- "If I were to ask, what are the top three things you're hoping to accomplish in the city, Downtown, for residents, or for the Downtown community this year, I don't know that they would be able to tell me those." (I-31)
- "Articulating a list of needs has some value, but I think the greater value would be prioritizing that list of needs... and that's a harder task." (I-24)

5. Who is the CRC's core constituency?

Respondents had a multitude of perspectives regarding the CRC's role and orientation toward its constituencies (the residents, businesses, and workers of Downtown). On one hand, some respondents asserted that "Everyone who owns property and everyone who owns or manages a business within the property boundaries, they all should be included" in the CRC's functions (I-19), and noted that "when you start pushing people away, becom[e] exclusive, you hurt your credibility, you hurt your strengths, and that's what we need to avoid doing" (I-20). On the other hand, others stated that the CRC's "strengths are representing residents of Saint Paul and if that's all their mission is, then they probably do that just fine (I-22). One respondent, when asked about the CRC's constituencies, noted,

"If they decide that they want to be the residential representation of Downtown, then I think there's a lot of strength in that, but they have to be smarter about organizing if that's what they're going to be. I'd rather have a mixed board where you have strong commercial and residential [representation]... The more you're all around the same table, the more you learn from each other and the better decisions we make" (I-23).

At the same time, there was general consensus in the data that residents are a fundamental CRC constituency and that resident engagement should be a top priority. Because they are still a small,

but growing group, Downtown residents generally are not represented in the Downtown landscape. The data showed that the CRC is “a voice of Downtown residents,” and this “is an area in which CRC can really shine” (I-23, 31).

In addition to a perceived lack of organizational vision and priorities, it is unclear which Downtown group constitutes the CRC’s core constituency, leading to a perception, even among the CRC’s own board and committee members, that the CRC has little influence on policy developments in Downtown Saint Paul. This finding underscores the need for the CRC to refine its board and governance structure with an emphasis on organizing and engagement (I-30, I-7).

B. Navigation of the Downtown Ecosystem

Downtown Saint Paul has a culture and identity that is unique among other district councils in Saint Paul. The “ecosystem” includes a mix of a growing number of residents; large and small businesses; City, County, and State government offices; restaurant and entertainment venues; and parks and greenspace. All of these different interests coexist to create a downtown neighborhood that is “one of the most dynamic in the city” with opportunities for “high-profile projects” and “a lot of new excitement and energy” stemming from newer residents (I-24). It is in this ecosystem that the CRC has unique strengths, as well as opportunities for improvement.

1. Official role as advisory council to the Mayor and City Council.

When the City of Saint Paul established its district council system (Resolution 266179, Oct. 10, 1975), the CRC was created as the official voice of Downtown. Through the changes that have occurred in Downtown since that time, the CRC maintains strength through this mandate from the City to engage the community on matters of concern and on official City functions in Downtown, and to serve as the vehicle that conveys the community’s concerns to the City. Respondents indicated that the CRC’s strength comes in part through its ability to weigh in on development decisions through the City Council directly. The Saint Paul District Councils are “set up specifically as planning councils to engage residents on issues related to land use planning,” and the CRC must be consulted by the City Council on issues including sound variances, housing, and development (I-30). The data underscored that the CRC “assure[s] [it]self a seat at the table through [its] formal authority” (I-31) and that “inherently gives them formal standing for city decisions and processes—a built-in strength” (I-24).

2. Strength of Board connections and engagement with stakeholders across Downtown Saint Paul.

The research team’s data shows that members of the CRC board are enmeshed in all constituencies in Downtown, which is a strength that is unique to the CRC. Members of the CRC board are residents, business and property owners and managers, property owners, workers, and representatives that serve visitors as well. In this context, respondents noted that the CRC is uniquely placed to “creat[e] a sense of community among residents” by developing “Downtown as a neighborhood” (I-31). The CRC’s geography “is a neighborhood, but it’s also everybody’s downtown—so what does it mean to run an engagement process when the universe of users is as large as this one is?” (I-24).

According to Schneider's examination of nonprofits and civil society community, as discussed further in the Literature Review ([Appendix B](#)), community-based organizations often foster 1) civic engagement and 2) social capital (Schneider, 2008). Schneider defines "civic engagement" as action that enhances the common good of a "wider population or defined community" and "social capital" as inwardly facing relationship-building focusing on the betterment of that network (Schneider, 2008). There is some indication in the data that the CRC is making a strategic effort to build social capital by using the CRC's stakeholder network across multiple organizations as in institutionalized practice of the CRC (Provan, Veazie, Staten & Teufel-Shone, 2005). For example, the CRC's Annual Meeting on June 27, 2018, featured remarks from City Councilmember Noecker and Joe Spencer, the executive director of new Saint Paul Downtown Alliance. By including them in the annual meeting, the board had the opportunity to strengthen the CRC's relationships with a key elected official and a potential nonprofit partner.

The research team found evidence of this building of social capital with a wider population during its observations of the CRC Development Review Committee, which included robust conversation among attendees from Downtown businesses, residents, City staff, Saint Paul Public Schools, and others, about issues affecting Downtown.

The evidence indicated that CRC has made strategic use of appointed seats filled by representatives with aligned priorities. For example, at a time that work related to Pedro Park was identified as a board priority, a leader of the Friends of Pedro Park was appointed to the CRC board, which supported the board's engagement on that issue. In addition, in 2018, board members were appointed from the Saint Paul Arts Collective, the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, the Saint Paul Central Library, and the M. These organizations each serve a specific need in Downtown, and can be a partner with the CRC on important issues in Downtown where the organizations' constituents and the CRC's constituents overlap. Further, these appointments strengthen the network of the CRC, allowing them to build "a winning coalition around proposal development" to support their priorities in the policy landscape of Downtown (Bryson, 2004).

3. Mixed impressions of stakeholder engagement.

Despite its strength as the official voice of Downtown to the Mayor and City Council, survey data and stakeholder interviews indicated a range of perceptions as to the efficacy of CRC's stakeholder engagement. Representative comments among survey respondents included: "I think it's a useful organization and it provides a voice for residents, businesses on a local level," contrasted with "CRC tries hard and has some success, but it needs to improve communication with and participation of more stakeholders."

At the same time, interview data indicated that the Community Conversation on Homelessness held in 2018 was widely regarded to be a success. Respondents indicated that the event was constructive and useful because it engaged a wide cross-section of Downtown stakeholders on a difficult issue facing Downtown, and gave participants an opportunity to learn from a variety of perspectives.

4. Relationship with business communities in Downtown.

Interview and survey data presented evidence of a variety of perceptions of CRC's existing relationships from favorable to poor. In addition to resident engagement, some respondents asserted that the CRC "really ha[s] to figure out [its] relationship with the business community" and maintain a "healthy working relationship" with the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Saint Paul BOMA, the Downtown Alliance, and directly with businesses (I-20, 23, 31, 32).

In this area, the newly-formed Saint Paul Downtown Alliance was mentioned repeatedly in many interviews. Perceptions ranged from viewing the organization as a threat to CRC due to influential members involved with the Downtown Alliance shifting the power dynamic away from CRC, to a sense that the shared goals of the organization could be leveraged by CRC to further its mission. As noted below, this is an area where further study is needed, as the Downtown Alliance develops within the Downtown ecosystem.

C. Livability Issues in Downtown Saint Paul

As with the other two areas of focus that emerged from the data, the research team found that the CRC has some strengths related to serving as a voice to address livability issues in Downtown, including the work and success of the CRC Skyway Committee, and its ongoing community engagement efforts on key issues. Respondents generally saw the CRC as playing a role in "advocating for additional parks and greenspace" and, more broadly, "livability issues in Downtown" (I-2, 19, 31).

In response to the question "What are the big things St Paul should do to make the Downtown area better for everyone?" CRC stakeholders indicated the following priorities:

1. **Greenspace:** "maintaining vibrant parks, increasing greenspace, maintaining or increasing trees" (I-19); "the impact of greenspace in an urban Downtown has more impact than anywhere" (I-20)
2. **Vibrancy and activity:** "a city that is connected" (I-25). Interest in enhancing street-level retail and general amenities for residents (I-6) (e.g., a movie theater, place for youth to be entertained, (I-1))
3. **Multimodal transportation:** "make it a friendlier, more walkable city" (I-25), "an emphasis on pedestrians and shared transit and moving away from cars" (I-19), need for more effective public transit (I-1, I-2, I-11, I-12, I-14, I-27), "address a perceived parking shortage" (I-24)
4. **Security and public safety:** Some respondents identified a need to improve perceptions and experiences around safety (I-24), including in skyways (I-8), for pedestrians on the street level (I-1), and street-level activities in general (I-27).
5. **Aesthetic improvements:** Respondents identified cleaner sidewalks, better building facades, street-scaping, and signage as necessary upgrades to improve Downtown (I-3, I-29, I-31).

As is discussed below in the Recommendations section, having such a strong consensus on the importance of these key issues is a strength that the CRC Board can utilize to identify its vision and priorities for the future.

D. SWOT Analysis

The research team conducted an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Some of the key SWOT findings have been discussed above. A summary of the complete SWOT findings can be found in Appendix F.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on their analysis of the key findings described in the previous sections, the research team identified recommendations for each of the three areas of consideration that emerged most strongly from the data sets.

A. Recommendations: Internal Functions of the CRC

To capitalize on the strengths and success the CRC has enjoyed to date, and to make improvements where needed, the CRC Board should consider the following:

1. Identify the CRC's core constituency.

The CRC represents a diverse set of stakeholders: residents, businesses, property owners, workers, and visitors. The data described above reflects the general consensus that the CRC could thrive as the lead voice in Downtown for residents. While the number of residents is growing, the CRC's influence in Downtown has some limitations when compared to some businesses and owners, due to issues of organizational capacity (human and financial resources) and lack of coherence on priorities. At the same time, because of the interconnectedness of Downtown stakeholders, the CRC has the opportunity to be the place where all constituencies can come together. By gaining consensus among all stakeholders, the CRC can serve as the official voice for residents to the Saint Paul City Council and others, to the benefit of many other stakeholder groups in Downtown.

2. Choose and rank priorities.

At a time of such significant change in Downtown Saint Paul, it could be easy for the Board to become overwhelmed by the shifting landscape. As noted above in the findings related to livability issues in Downtown, there is general consensus among CRC stakeholders about the key issues in Downtown. The CRC Board could identify those that are most important in the short-, medium-, and long-term to develop a strategy to guide the CRC's energy and resources.

The CRC Board could also consider developing a new CRC Strategic Plan with these priorities in mind. (The CRC's most recent strategic plan runs from 2016-2018.)

3. Reassess committee structure to effectively respond to emerging needs and clearly-identified priorities.

As is discussed in the comparative study of the other Saint Paul District Councils (see [Appendix E](#)), the CRC's committee structure is somewhat different from the other councils. While each council and community's needs are different, there is an opportunity for the CRC to determine whether the current committees are structured to respond to identified needs (e.g., multimodal transportation, safety and security), and to determine whether the current committees are designed to address the most pressing and ongoing issues as well as nimble enough to address issues requiring immediate action as they arise.

4. CRC Executive Director should participate fully in collaboration efforts by multiple district councils, including continuing to attend monthly meetings of the executive directors, and take advantage of other opportunities to connect with other district councils to form a cohesive voice.

There is strength in numbers, and by joining with other district councils and similar community organizations, the executive director could make connections across the City that could join the CRC's voice with other councils' voices to bring more power to the messages delivered to the Mayor and City Council.

5. Amplify the board's effectiveness through improved onboarding procedures; board training; and succession planning.

Given the unique constituencies that the CRC serves, it is imperative that new board members learn their role and duties. Board members should be fully aware of the bylaws or policies and procedures, but should also have adequate information about what it means to be a board member, what issues the CRC is working on, and what is on the horizon. This is especially true for new board members.

Accordingly, as the CRC establishes its priorities, there should be an emphasis on establishing programming for onboarding. In a nonprofit organization, board members are not just volunteers, but are also "the highest-ranking members of an organization, and are ultimately responsible for the sustainability of the" organization (Hunt, 2017). Board members take on special duties as part of their role, and are obligated to do what they think is best for the organization (duty of care), avoid conflicts of interest (duty of loyalty), and adhere to standards of appropriate behavior while also adhering to the organization's mission, bylaws, and policies (duty of obedience) (Renz, 2010). CRC should consider including information on these key responsibilities during onboarding.

After onboarding, it is important that the CRC offer training or retreats for board members on an ongoing basis, and that all board members participate together as to create cohesion and reiterate the role of the board (Hunt, 2017), as "...the best organizations consistently invest in board effectiveness and thereby capture significant benefits truly dynamic boards can provide to even the strongest organizations" (Jansen, et al., 2006). There is an opportunity for longer-serving CRC board members to take on a formal or informal mentoring role with new members.

In addition to robust onboarding and education of board members, the CRC board should develop an equally-robust succession plan for departing board members and staff. Developing this “bench strength” or a “pipeline” of strong and capable leaders (Price, 2005) for both board members and staff is one of the best ways that the CRC board could make sure that the organization can respond to internal and external changing conditions (Santora & Sarros, 2012).

The board should take full advantage of the fact that board members are deeply invested in key organizations and groups across Downtown. Board members’ connections and relationships could amplify not only the board’s internal effectiveness, but also the CRC’s effectiveness in Downtown.

For additional discussion of board governance generally, including onboarding, education, and succession planning, see the Literature Review ([Appendix B](#)).

6. Amplify CRC influence with City elected officials and staff by empowering board members.

To increase influence in Downtown, the CRC can appoint specific board committee members to follow particular issues, and either observe and report back, or communicate the position of the committee at City of Saint Paul (City Council and city department) public meetings. The data showed that other district councils enjoy a deep commitment from their board members to serve as a “working board,” where members take the lead on individual efforts of importance to the district.

As is discussed in the Literature Review ([Appendix B](#)), one study found two key factors that impact the effectiveness of neighborhood organizations in their interactions with local government: (1) the nature of representation and issues of participation, legitimacy, and connection; and (2) the kind of relationship that is created between the neighborhood organization and the government itself (Chaskin & Garg, 1997). Because of the connections that board members have across Downtown, the CRC can strengthen its position and legitimacy with the City through strategic appointment of board committee members to work on key issues that serve all of Downtown.

7. Expand fundraising efforts.

Because the formula that the City uses to determine the budget allocation to the District Councils is primarily (75%) based on residential population (See Literature Review, [Appendix B](#)), financial resources are scarce with the CRC. Accordingly, the CRC should seek pro-bono assistance in applying for grant funding to support maintenance of staff and additions to staffing structure. Grant writing efforts will be more effective once CRC has better determined its purpose and priority initiatives. The idea of fundraising might be difficult or intimidating for some board members, but if the board engages in training and coaching members in understanding the CRC’s mission and priorities, and develops a strategy, it might be possible to initiate a fundraising campaign to supplement the CRC’s budget (The NonProfit Times, 2015).

B. Recommendations: Navigation of the Downtown Ecosystem

1. Focus on establishing the CRC as the primary Downtown organization that advocates for quality of life issues by bringing residents and other Downtown stakeholders to the same table.

Because the CRC engages a diverse constituency of stakeholders across Downtown and serves in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Council, the CRC board should choose priorities carefully to maximize its inherent leverage to address issues that affect all stakeholders in Downtown.

2. Strengthen existing networks and build alliances with other Downtown organizations.

The CRC board is comprised of representatives from a variety of Downtown organizations, who each bring a connection between the CRC and their own organization. That network of influence can create a strong voice.

3. Leverage coordination and partnerships across the Saint Paul District Council system.

As noted above, there is strength in numbers. Although the CRC is unique in some ways from the other district councils, the District Council Comparative Study indicated that there are some common interests and opportunities for shared services that could be used to leverage unity on significant issues that cross district boundaries.

4. Proactively define CRC's relationship with the Downtown Alliance.

The data indicated that there is great energy and excitement around the formation of the Downtown Alliance, which presents both an opportunity and perhaps a threat for the CRC. The CRC board and executive director should affirmatively establish and cultivate a connection with the Alliance's board and executive director, and reassert the CRC's position with the Mayor and City Council, to avoid being pushed aside.

5. Initiate forward-leaning engagement with both newer players (e.g., Downtown Alliance, Mayor Carter's administration) and established players, once the CRC's mission has been refined.

After twelve years under the previous mayor, the CRC has a prime opportunity to help Mayor Melvin Carter define and implement his agenda in Downtown, and to build an alliance with the new administration for support in the CRC's engagement efforts related to the CRC mission and priorities.

C. Recommendations: Livability Issues in Downtown Saint Paul

The emphasis on livability issues identified by CRC stakeholders is also in alignment with a core objective of Saint Paul's Comprehensive 2040 Plan (see Literature Review at [Appendix B](#)), including land use designation targeting higher density, especially in Downtown; transportation, and parks, recreation, and open space. The CRC has an opportunity to engage stakeholders and strengthen its connection to the work of the City and the future of Downtown.

1. Continue and expand community engagement to identify and respond to future issues as they arise.

As discussed above, there is a consensus about the most pressing issues facing Downtown stakeholders. Because the CRC brings these diverse stakeholders to the same table, the CRC can maximize this network to build on successful community engagement efforts and have a vision for opportunities and challenges on the horizon.

2. Replicate Community Conversations on key issues identified by CRC stakeholders.

The research team heard repeated references to the success of the Community Conversation on Homelessness, convened by the CRC in 2018. The format of this well-received event could be used to engage Downtown stakeholders on the issues identified in the findings above, including:

- a. **Greenspace:** As the residential population continues to grow, there will be an increased need for parks and greenspace for adults, kids, and dogs. This is an area where the CRC could engage the community to gather input about changing needs and participate in creating the vision for Downtown.
- b. **Vibrancy and activity:** As observed by the research team at a Development Review Committee meeting, there is a high level of street-level vacancies in buildings throughout Downtown. Downtown stakeholders identified great need for activation of these street-level spaces with retail, entertainment, restaurants, and other amenities. Engaging the community on filling these spaces would serve all Downtown stakeholders.
- c. **Multimodal transportation:** Despite an expectation that Downtown residents and workers are increasingly moving away from cars, there is still a persistent perception of a parking shortage in Downtown. Respondents also indicated a desire and a vision for a more walkable Downtown. As Downtown stakeholders continue to adjust to the presence of the light rail and make greater use of shared transit, the CRC has an opportunity to bring Downtown stakeholders together to explore managing these issues in the near term, and plan for the future.
- d. **Security and public safety:** As with parking, there is a persistent perception that Downtown Saint Paul is not safe, particularly in the

skyways. The CRC Skyway Governance Advisory Committee and the City's Skyway Committee have made great strides at improving actual and perceived safety in the skyways, and have a unique opportunity to work together to engage the community on additional steps that might be taken.

- e. **Aesthetic improvements:** The research team heard from multiple respondents that there is a strong need for maintenance and upkeep of public spaces, some private buildings, and government buildings. Some respondents commented about cleanliness of sidewalks and lack of public bathrooms. Others commented about a need for better signage so that people can access the skyways from street level. This is a complex set of issues that the CRC could engage the community in study and conversation.

V. LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

A. Time

The research team was limited to only three months of research time to acquire and assess data. However, while this was a short time span, the amount of useful data collected by the four-person team far exceeded initial estimates and allowed the team to develop concrete recommendations for the CRC board and staff. The researchers' recommendations aim to enhance the CRC's engagement efforts.

B. Board Transition

Due to the timing of this research project, the team was unable to interview the new slate of board members who were elected on June 27, 2018.

C. Areas for Further Study

The research team identified a number of areas for further study:

- Partnerships and collaboration across the Saint Paul District Council system.
- Effective marketing, outreach, and engagement strategies to meet the needs of Downtown stakeholders.
- Strategies for developing consensus for solutions to livability issues.
- In-depth strategy and recommendations to enhance the CRC board.
- Comparative study of all Saint Paul District Councils.
- Determination of relationship and aligned goals with the Downtown Alliance.
- Comparative study of neighborhood councils in other cities.

VI. CONCLUSION

“It’s more important than ever to figure out, what is our role and our voice?” (I-31)

The CapitolRiver Council is in the midst of tremendous change—including change in the Downtown landscape, and in the CRC’s efforts to enhance internal governance functions. Residents of Downtown are a growing and important constituency, but not the CRC’s only constituency. The CRC may be “under-resourced, but has lots of important policy decisions—inherently in a Downtown, but especially in this moment” (I-24).

In this moment of this change and its accompanying momentum, the CRC has the opportunity to set a clear agenda to enhance livability and serve its constituencies. What should the CRC’s priorities be? How will the CRC represent its constituencies? How can the CRC’s Board of Directors amplify the organization’s voice, on behalf of “everybody’s downtown”?

We don’t have the answers to these questions. Only the CRC can determine its path forward. However, we hope that our recommendations in the areas of internal function, navigating the Downtown ecosystem, and addressing livability issues will guide the CRC’s Board of Directors and staff in determining priorities to enhance the future of “Everyone’s Downtown Saint Paul.”

Appendix A: References for the Key Findings and Recommendations

- Berry, J. M., Portney, K. E., & Thomson, K. (1993). The rebirth of democracy. *Washington: The Brookings Institutions*.
- Bryson, J.M., (2004). Stakeholder Identification and Analysis Techniques. *Public Management Review*. 6(1) 21-53 DOI: 10.1080/14719030410001675722
- Capitol River Council. (2018, July 29). Retrieved July, 2018, from <https://www.capitolrivercouncil.org/about/>
- Capitol River Council. (2018, July 29). Retrieved July, 2018, from <https://www.capitolrivercouncil.org/committees/>
- Chaskin, R. J., & Garg, S. (1997). The issue of governance in neighborhood-based initiatives. *Urban Affairs Review*, 32(5), 631-661.
- City of Saint Paul Council Resolution 266179 (Oct. 10, 1975). Creating the District Councils.
- Colond, J., Harris, J., Overholt, R., Rodgers, L., & Wilkens-Costello (2006). Saint Paul District Councils.
- Hunt, M. L. (2017). Nonprofit Board of Director Training: The Experiences of Chief Executive Officers in Western Kentucky.
- Jansen, P., Kilpatrick, A., & Cvsa, V. "Creating a dynamic board." *Journal of Microfinance/ESR Review* 8.1 (2006): 24-31.
- The NonProfit Times. (2015). Onboarding board members gets everyone involved. Retrieved August 2018, from <http://www.thenonproffitimes.com/management-tips/onboardingboard-members-gets-everyone-involved/>
- Provan, K.G., Veazie, M.A., Staten, L.K., & Teufel-Shone, N.I. (2005). The Use of Network Analysis to Strengthen Community Partnerships. *Public Administration Review*, 65 (5), 603-613. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3542526>
- Price, M. L. (2005). Succession planning and sustainability in nonprofit organizations. *Wisconsin Philanthropy News*, 4-5.
- Renz, David O. 2010. "Leadership, Governance, and the Work of the Board." In (D.O. Renz and Associates, ed.) *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 125-156.
- Santora, Joseph C., and James C. Sarros. "Do non-profit organizations ever really learn from their mistakes—or are they doomed to repeat them?." *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal* 26.3 (2012): 8-10.

Schneider, J. (2008). Small Nonprofits and Civil Society: Civic Engagement and Social Capital.
In R.A. Cnann & C. Milofsky (Eds.) *Handbook of Community Movements and Local Organizations* (pp.74-88). New York, NY: Spring Science + Business Media, LLC.

Appendix B: Literature Review

Civic organizations often operate in a complex network of government officials, residents, business entities, non-profits, and bureaucrats who hope to influence policy outcomes. This is especially true when policies that shape the physical and economic landscapes of communities are being created. To better understand the ecosystem in which the CapitolRiver Council (CRC) operates and potential activities that may enhance their influence in the City of Saint Paul's policy making, this literature review encompasses a historical overview of neighborhood councils, a draft of Saint Paul's newest comprehensive plan, background on the strategic efforts of the CRC, a discussion of effective board governance, and finally, some considerations regarding stakeholder engagement.

Neighborhood Councils: An historic overview

Neighborhood councils have long been viewed as a mechanism for public participation in government, and are an effort to chase the “elusive ideal” of citizen participation in representative government (Kathi & Cooper, 2005). Even Thomas Jefferson is believed to have argued that citizens have a “fundamental right” to participate in government (Kathi & Cooper, 2005). Since Jefferson's time, the level of public participation in government has ebbed and flowed, partly as a result of various approaches to public administration through the early part of the 20th century that tended to control tightly the opportunities for public input as a means of promoting “order and stability” (Kathi & Cooper, 2005). As Kathi and Cooper note,

“the legal framework was designed to protect political and administrative processes from an active citizenry. Responsiveness to citizen was deemed a necessary evil that could inhibit effective performance by professional administrators Though accountable to politicians, scientific public administration was expected to safeguard government against the caprices of society.”

This dominance of government at the local, state, and federal level by professional administrators was in place for many years, where citizens were viewed as clients or constituents, and information was controlled and doled out by administrators as they saw fit (Kathi & Cooper, 2005). While perhaps well-intentioned in its effort to promote the Progressive ethical norms of economy and equity, a system where citizens were separated from administration and governance worked to “prevent neighbors from competently addressing communal problems” (Cooper & Musso, 1999).

The environment began to change in the 1960s and 1970s, first with the War on Poverty of the Johnson administration, followed by the “New Federalism” of the Nixon administration (Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010). Partly in response to advocacy of mayors across the country, in the 1970s Congress adopted policies changing how federal funding for local projects was distributed. Among the new distribution methods was Community Development Block Grants (“CDBG”), which were particularly used for housing subsidies through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) and implemented locally by planning and economic development departments or organizations (Conlan, 1984). Since 1978, CDBG program rules have mandated that the recipient local government include public participation and a Citizen

Participation Plan that documents the recipient's efforts to increase citizen participation (Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010) as a condition of receiving the federal funds. The expressed goal of Congress was to encourage "maximum feasible participation" (Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010).

It is in this political environment that neighborhood councils, including those in Saint Paul, Minnesota, began to emerge as a vehicle for public participation at the local level. The nature, composition, and function of neighborhood councils varies from place to place, but they generally can play an official role in government, often in an advisory capacity; they are funded and staffed in a variety of ways (Nabatchi & Leighninger 2015). They often operate like city councils, with formal procedures and adherence to *Robert's Rules of Order*.⁴

Unfortunately, these federal public participation requirements have long been viewed as "superficial" efforts, easily met by a minimal action like publishing a notice of a public hearing (Handley & Howell-Moroney 2010). Because local officials have been given broad discretion in determining just how much citizen participation is allowed after the minimal requirements are met, public hearings "generally consist of one-way communication that is used as a forum to educate and share information with citizens" but involve limited meaningful engagement (Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010).

As neighborhood councils grew in popularity, challenges emerged, including the danger that neighborhood groups would focus on narrow, finite issues, "such as a locally undesirable land use, and will not develop any lasting organizational structure, or engage with issues that transcend local boundaries" (Cooper & Musso, 1999). One study of neighborhood organizations (Chaskin & Garg, 1997) found two main issues that impact effectiveness of neighborhood organizations interacting with local government: (1) the nature of representation and issues of participation, legitimacy, and connection; and (2) the kind of relationship that is created between the neighborhood organization and the government itself. The former deals with the way that the organizations connect to residents, the logistics of participation by citizens, and the level of trust that citizens have that the organizations truly represent the citizens' interests (Chaskin & Garg, 1997). Legitimacy is dependent not just on representation and accountability, but on "the auspices under which participation in governance is provided" (Chaskin & Garg, 1997, Cooper & Musso, 1999).

Chaskin and Garg (1997) examined four possible means of addressing these issues:

"First, neighborhood governance entities may be developed as parallel institutions to local government, seeking to provide an alternative mechanism for the development and provision of public goods and services currently the responsibility of local government. Second, neighborhood governance entities may be developed as separate but complementary institutions to local government, operating independently but with the intent to plan for and provide goods and services that are beyond the purview of local government. Third, they might be developed as entities incorporated into local government as formal

⁴ Nabatchi and Leighninger view *Robert's Rules of Order* negatively because the rigidity of the rules can decrease accessibility for participants and potential participants.

extensions of municipal mechanisms of representation and action. Fourth, they may be developed as entities in opposition to local government, as advocacy mechanisms to influence policy making, resource allocation, and service delivery. Each of these general approaches has implications for the likely effectiveness, legitimacy, and long-term viability of the governance entity being developed.”

Each of these approaches has its difficulties. All five neighborhood organizations that Chaskin and Garg studied faced challenges with defining membership and representation, with providing for means of accountability, and with managing loss of legitimacy (Cooper & Musso, 1999). They also found that effectiveness of the neighborhood organizations was particularly impacted by an inability to determine what roles would be played by citizens and professionals because some of the people involved had greater skills and expertise than others (Cooper & Musso, 1999). They further found that the success of neighborhood organizations was largely dependent on whether they were considered permanent or “ad hoc” (for a short duration or for a narrow specific purpose, like updating a comprehensive plan) (Cooper & Musso, 1999).

One of the seminal studies of city-level public participation was conducted by Berry, Portney, and Thomson (1993). Berry, et al, studied five cities (including Saint Paul) which had neighborhood councils matched against a control group of 10 cities without neighborhood councils (Cooper & Musso). At the time of their study, Saint Paul was seen as a model for success, and the findings of Berry, et al, provide “strong support” for a city-wide network of these organizations (Cooper & Musso 1999). Although neighborhood councils generally were not found to necessarily *increase* public participation, they did *improve the quality* of public participation (Cooper & Musso 1999). Berry, et al, found that the neighborhood councils “reduce[d] destructive conflict among citizens, government, and the business community; reduce[d] alienation and strengthen trust in government; increase[d] tolerance among groups in the cities; cultivate[d] a sense of community; strengthen[ed] citizens’ internal and external efficacy; and ma[d]e government more responsive to its citizens” (Cooper & Musso, 1999). One key finding by Berry, et al, was the importance of the city-wide nature of the neighborhood organizations; they were not as successful if they were concentrated in low-income neighborhoods only (Berry, Portney, & Thomson, 1993).

More recently, studies have found generally “positive expectations” and “broader administrative potential” for neighborhood councils, but this potential is largely theoretical (Dierwechter & Coffey, 2010). In many cities where neighborhood councils have been established, they are largely city-wide, but generally suffer from challenges related to resource distribution, political support, Board and management issues, and empowerment structures (Dierwechter & Coffey 2010; Musso, Weare, Elliot, Kitsuse, & Shiau, 2007; Horton, 2016).

For example, in Tacoma, Washington, where a neighborhood council system was adopted in 1992, researchers’ conversations with stakeholders showed that resources were allocated from the city to the councils in ways that did not correlate to the actual needs of the residents in the council area (Dierwechter & Coffey, 2010). As a result, the councils there had not increased their ability to affect change or impact policy despite many years of work (Dierwechter & Coffey, 2010). Similarly, in Cincinnati, Ohio, which has operated a system of Community Development

Corporations across 52 neighborhoods since 1979, one study found that the biggest challenges included an over-reliance on a single funding source and inadequate staffing (Horton, 2016).

District Councils in Saint Paul

In Saint Paul, the City Council established a system of 17 District Councils in 1975, with the goal of creating a vehicle for “citizen input for community development” and a 10-step process for citizen participation (Resolution 266179, Oct. 10, 1975). These 17 districts are independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporations that provide residents an opportunity to participate in the city planning process (City Council webpage 2018). While some Councils focus on narrow issue like parks, community gardens, and neighborhood beautification, most of the Councils focus primarily on land use, community development and transportation (City Council webpage 2018). The Councils all receive funding from the City annually through the Community Engagement Fund (City Council webpage 2018). The City Council allocates funding to all of the District Councils based on the following formula based on data from the decennial census:

- Total population (75%)
- Poverty (15%)
- Non-English-speaking residents (5%)
- Employment (5%) (City Council webpage 2018).

The District Councils also a minimum amount of City funding, and are able to receive grants and engage in fundraising (City Council webpage 2018).

CapitolRiver Council

District 17, commonly known as the CapitolRiver Council, includes the Downtown and State Capitol area of Saint Paul, generally bounded by the Mississippi River to the south, Highway 52 to the east, University Avenue to the north (including Regions Hospital), Marion Street and John Ireland Boulevard to the northwest, and west to Kellogg Boulevard and Interstate 35E to the southwest (including the RiverCentre complex). The District also extends to the west in a narrow corridor along Interstate 35E to Summit Avenue and Ramsey Street (shown in Figure A in purple).

As part of the Saint Paul District Council system, the CRC is an official advisory group to the Saint Paul City Council related to urban planning, land use matters, and community building efforts (Capitol River Council webpage 2018). It serves residents, business owners, workers, and property owners on issues and projects within the District (CapitolRiver Council webpage 2018). The CRC’s responsibilities include reviewing City of Saint Paul planning documents, proposals, and long-term strategies for economic growth, among other topics.

CRC Strategic Plan

The CRC’s current strategic plan, covering 2016 through the end of 2018, outlines the CRC’s plan for the board and district. However, the scope of the strategic plan is limited and focused on tasks which are more “workplan focused” than strategic in nature.

The current Strategic Plan articulates the CRC’s mission statement, to wit: “CapitolRiver Council, an official advisory group to the City Council, represents and works in partnership with all District 17 stakeholders to act on urban planning and community building efforts as part of a shared vision to support sustainable, safe, healthy, and vibrant neighborhoods.”

The CRC board members who created the current strategic plan recognized the unique nature of District 17, with almost the entire geographic area of the board’s purview comprised of the Downtown area and state capitol grounds, facilities, with stakeholders comprising business and a relatively small population of Downtown permanent residents. They also recognized it is a broadly diverse population that lives and works in the Downtown area.

Outlining several goals in the strategy, the CRC hopes to achieve the following items by the end of 2018:

1. Be a resource of information for our residents and a way to connect with the city, businesses, other residents.
2. Be a leader in the community working toward increased safety, development, and information sharing.
3. Be a strong supporter of economic development and quality of life for those who live and/or work in Downtown Saint Paul.
4. Be a voice for the needs and aspirations of small business.
5. Be a preferred partner for our councilmember and the mayor, involved proactively in work occurring here.
6. Be recognized as an organization known for effective facilitation of conversation, collaboration, and building community (CapitolRiver Council webpage 2018).

Assessment of these core strategic plan objectives guided the team’s research efforts, and determined general alignment of the current strategic plan’s goals with its organizational approach, which includes four parts:

1. Three key focus areas (Constituents, Governance, and Resources)
2. Key deliverables defining the board’s objectives by the end of 2018
3. Strategic initiatives that will lead to the destination goals
4. Tactical approaches that comprise each strategic initiative

Identifying these four core areas in their current strategic plan helped the CRC board in 2016 adopt yearly work plans, which were intended to complete specific tasks that would culminate in achieving the six objectives outlined above.

A deeper dive into the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan suggests a need for a well-designed plan to address the three focus areas of meeting the needs of constituents, establishing solid board governance, and pursuing resources to empower CRC to advocate on behalf of District 17. The 2016-2018 Plan appears more aligned with the content of a workplan rather than a more broadly designed strategy that would inform shorter-term actions.

Saint Paul's Future: 2040 Comprehensive Plan Draft

The next iteration of the city's planning guide, the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan 2040, has implications for the downtown area. Comprehensive Plan 2040 address issues such as community health, aging in place, racial and social equity, urban design, and resiliency.

Although it still in draft form⁵, Comprehensive Plan 2040 spells out core objectives for the entire City of Saint Paul, and is a blueprint for future growth informed by three principles:

1. Saint Paul Residents' core values
2. Local community priorities (such as District 17)
3. The City's broader and current focus areas

While these three principles are not specific, they are designed to serve as an umbrella concept for issues such as expanded housing choices for diverse populations, preservation of Saint Paul's history, the enrichment of the quality of life for all residents, sustainable future development, and the expansion of multiple transportation options which meet the needs of all residents. Capitalizing on the City's location next to the Mississippi River is a key opportunity for the CRC, as is leveraging the core components of the comprehensive plan to guide action on future Downtown development to best serve the CRC's core stakeholders.

Comprehensive Plan 2040 is a people-centered plan that embraces concepts such as Walkable Cities, innovation, health, and taking full advantage of Saint Paul's unique sense of community in the many close-knit neighborhoods, as well as the creation of more economic opportunities for all residents. One key aspect cited in the overall Comprehensive Plan 2040 is the integration and coordination of all City of Saint Paul policies, programs, and departments to ensure a comprehensive approach to not only developing the city as a model of urban design for the future, but also to better serve the people of the city.

The comprehensive plan is broken down into six main chapters: Land Use; Transportation; Parks, Recreation, and Open Space; Housing; Water Resources; and Heritage and Cultural Preservation. These six main areas of concern will be used to guide the expenditure of public funds, seek additional government funding, guide additional private investment, and inform policy decisions through the year 2040.

Land Use will target growth higher density area of Downtown Saint Paul—the core area of District 17. Redevelopment of under-utilized sites is envisioned, which will likely impact District 17. The overall land use concept includes a Downtown area that is more pedestrian-friendly, offers greater use of bike lanes and public transportation options, and encourages greater exercise options for all residents and workers.

Transportation concepts include reducing the number of single-use vehicles in the Downtown area, increasing public transportation options, development and expansion of well-managed parking systems, and an increased connection for District 17 to the rest of Saint Paul through multiple public transit options.

⁵ As of July 2018

The *Parks and Recreation* chapter addresses the choice of quality over quantity for facilities and programming, and an increase in residential-centric recreation options such as dog parks, community gardens, senior fitness options, and extreme sports. Comprehensive Plan 2040 is specific in seeking public-private partnerships to enhance parks and recreation facilities and recreation opportunities available to all Saint Paul residents.

Affordable housing choices for the economically-diverse neighborhoods of greater Saint Paul is a key component of the *Housing* chapter. The plan specifically states the desire for an aggressive redevelopment effort to rehabilitate housing throughout the city. Transit-oriented housing, meaning locating redeveloped higher density housing near major public transportation routes, and ensuring their affordability for decades to come is an important component of the plan. Due to its central location along the Metro Transit Light Rail Green Line, this will likely impact District 17's future, and provide an opportunity for CRC to leverage stakeholder engagement to influence the mayor's office and city council on policies, programs, investments, and development ideas to achieve this vision.

Awareness of the Mississippi River's importance to the city, as well as the detrimental impact of a human population's impact on the health of the river are brought to the fore in the *Water Resources* chapter. The chapter outlines a goal of reducing all pollutants that might be washed into the river or other watershed areas. Additionally, it aims to protect the drinking water supply from sewage or other harmful impacts by making investments in sewer infrastructure and other mechanisms that preserve water resources.

Finally, *Historic Preservation* of Saint Paul's rich history remains an important part of the plan and is embedded in each component of the Comprehensive Plan 2040's long-term implementation.

Effective Councils: Board Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

Board Governance

The research team's initial interviews and observations with CRC staff and board members underscored the need for greater education concerning board governance. Extensive academic literature exists around nonprofit board governance, concerning the fiduciary responsibilities of board members, the moral and economic imperatives for increased board inclusivity and diversity, and case studies that provide models for approaching board conflict.

Nonprofit board members' responsibilities are primarily centered around three fiduciary duties: duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience (Renz, 2010). Nonprofit board members are legally obligated to conduct their activities in accordance with these three principles in order to avoid civil and/or criminal sanctions, including from the Internal Revenue Service; in greater detail, they entail the following:

- Duty of care entails acting in ways which a board member believes is in the best interest of the organization.

- Duty of loyalty is a “standard which constrains a board member from participating in board discussions and decisions when they as an individual have a conflict of interest (that is, their personal interests conflict with organizational interests, or they serve multiple organizations whose interests intersect)” (Renz, 2010).
- Duty of obedience entails adherence to the “organization’s mission, bylaws, and policies, as well as honoring the terms and conditions of other standards of appropriate behavior” (Renz, 2010).

These three responsibilities, when followed, mitigate opportunities for legal and moral ambiguity in the organization’s governance. In addition, working with an awareness of these three responsibilities could have the potential to refocus the board on issues critical to the CRC’s mandate.

Board Education

With these important duties, the board generally acts as the “chief steward” of a nonprofit organization, managing its resources and mission (Wilson, 2014). In many nonprofits, a board member’s role is not always made clear, which can impair the functioning of the board and the organization as a whole (Hunt, 2017). Boards that act as a team are more effective and engaged (Hunt, 2017). Onboarding and on-going training are essential, first, to acquaint board members to their roles and duties, and second to reinforce that education during their term on the board (The NonProfit Times, 2015). Board members must understand that they are the “highest-ranking members of the organization and ultimately are responsible for the sustainability of the [organization]” (Hunt, 2017). It is helpful for a board to “plan for success with a written statement of expectations” (The NonProfit Times, 2015). (Hunt (2017) enumerated the “Key Components of Training” as follows:

- “a. General information about the organization: History, mission, and services;
- b. Financial documents: Certificate of Tax Exemption, IRS 990 form, and current budget;
- c. Legal documents: Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, liability insurance coverage; and conflict of interest;
- d. Board member agreements: Expectations for attendance, requirements of fundraising, and code of conduct;
- e. Copy of most recent board meeting minutes;
- f. Contact and biographical information for officers and board members;
- g. A list of standing committees and committee members;
- h. Board and committee self-assessment form;
- i. Calendar of meetings for the year;
- j. Job descriptions for board of directors and executive staff;
- k. Organizational charts with executive staff bios;
- l. Whistleblower policies; and
- m. Personnel policies.”

In addition to these components, boards should continue training on a regular basis three or four times each year, or more often if needed (Hunt, 2017).

Board Succession Planning⁶

Succession planning is a means of “building . . . bench strength” or “developing a pipeline of leaders who are strong and capable (Price, 2005). Many nonprofit organizations fail to do succession planning, given that they are often small organizations who have thin staff and resources (Wolfred, 2008). However, for long-term sustainability, it is imperative that there is a plan for making sure that there are strong members to take over as board members rotate off the board. Wolfred has identified three ways to consider this planning:

- 1) strategic leader development (a continuous practice based on the organization’s strategic vision to identify and cultivate leaders who can implement that vision);
- 2) emergency succession (planning that ensures core functions will continue if an emergency occurs); and
- 3) departure-defined succession planning (a plan for when a long-term leader is expected to leave the organization, including identifying organization goals, characteristics and skills a successor might need, and building capacity within the organization to carry the vision forward) (Wolfred, 2008).

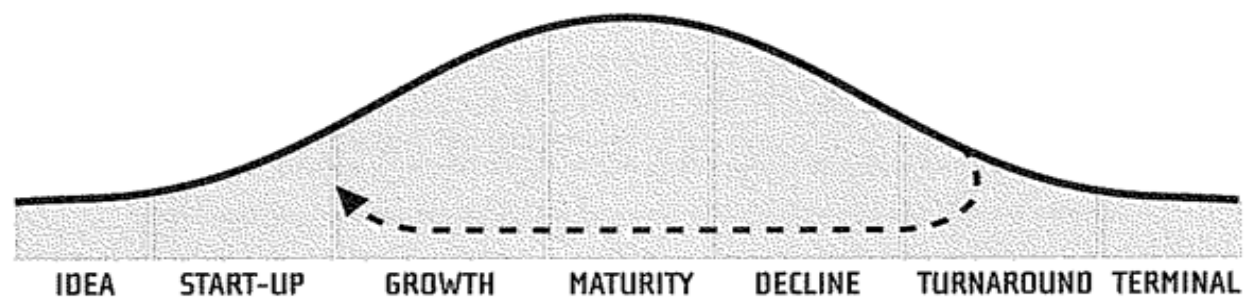
Succession planning should be an ongoing process, even when there is no expected transition in leadership (Price, 2005).

Board Lifecycles

In addition to the three primary responsibilities of nonprofit board members, researchers have found that, similar to for-profit corporations, boards tend to go through “lifecycle stages” (Stevens, 2001; Classen, 2011). In the growth phase, there is a high tolerance for risk. At maturity, risk-mitigation becomes the default state. When an organization is going into decline, there is typically an aversion to risk. In the turnaround phase, there is a move from aversion to risk, to running into risk – which frequently leads to a shift in board membership and board leadership. Therefore, it may be useful for nonprofit organizations to introduce the “nonprofit lifecycle” concept during board orientation: the lifecycle of an organization – and the lifecycle of a board member – tends to follow a particular pattern, and depending on the organization’s current stage, board members may have more or less asked of them.

⁶ These principles of succession planning may also apply to transitions of staff.

Figure 1: Nonprofit Lifecycle Stages



(Source: Stevens 2001)

Diversity in Board Governance

Research on the connection between greater diversity and board performance is a somewhat underdeveloped field. Quantifying the value of a more representative and diverse board of directors is a challenge; with greater diversity in board composition can come greater complexity in the board's operations, which can make it more challenging for researchers to measure impact over time. However, Gazley identifies three main arguments used to argue in favor of enhanced board diversity:

- Agency theory postulates that a more inclusive board is linked to an enhanced ability to “manage self-interested actions” by the organization’s leadership and staff (Miller, 2002 in Gazley, 2010). In other words, a more inclusive board provides greater checks and balances against misconduct by other board members and stakeholders.
- Resource dependence theory argues that a more inclusive board is more capable of securing “public and private funding, case referrals, advice, expertise, and opportunities to achieve organizational efficiencies”—perhaps because it is viewed as more representative of the organization’s constituencies (Gazley, 2010).
- The moral argument for greater board inclusivity is also frequently made, citing leaders’ moral obligation/responsibility to represent its diverse constituencies. (Keeley, 1978 in Gazley, 2010).

While boards may claim that increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion around race, gender, and other indicators of diversity, studies have shown that such efforts can ring hollow and lead to tokenism if they are not thoughtfully implemented. “Functional inclusion” entails changes to the structure of the organization to promote a multiplicity of voices and perspectives, while “social inclusion” stresses values and meaningful relationship-building across differences (Fredette, 2016). For example, an organization could prioritize functional inclusion—i.e., ensuring that 50% of the board of a refugee resettlement agency came from a refugee background themselves—and at the same time fail to promote diversity of thought and opinion by neglecting the aspect of social inclusion. When a board is operating optimally, it is able to focus on items of strategic interest instead of interpersonal issues.

Importance of Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging stakeholders to find aligned interests and leveraging stakeholder relationships is critical to any organization, but can be especially useful for community-based organizations lacking in the financial and human resources to exert influence. A scan of relevant academic literature suggests that stakeholder engagement is most effective when it is neither transactional nor ad hoc, but rather grounded in intentional skill building and strategic action to cultivate relationships which lead to the development of social capital. Once developed, a community organization can utilize social capital to pull the levers of power and encourage the engagement of stakeholders in participatory governance.

Social Capital

According to Schneider, community-based organizations often foster civic engagement and the development of social capital (2008). While sometimes linked, these are two distinct activities with civic engagement grounded in action that enhances the common good of a “wider population or defined community” and social capital inwardly facing relationship building focused on the betterment of that network (Schneider, p.86). In their research, Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi & Herremans identify three different community engagement strategies that form a continuum of involvement: Transactional engagement, which is characterized by “one-way information sharing,” to transitional, characterized by “two-way dialogue and collaboration,” to transformational which is typified by “intensive alliances” that “lead to community leadership or empowerment” (2010, p.8). While these are identified as engagement strategies and not methods to build social capital, they could likely be deployed to serve both ends depending on desired outcomes.

To be nimble in an ever-changing policy environment and utilize stakeholder networks to leverage change, it is critical that building social capital with stakeholders and group members is an institutionalized practice and not solely the relationship building efforts of a single member of the organization. While personal relationships do offer important ties between organizations and lay the groundwork to institutionalize organizational relationships, they do not offer sustainable foundations for strong network ties because if one person in the relationship leaves their organization, the connection may dissolve (Provan, Veazie, Staten & Teufel-Shone, 2005). Additionally, to be most effective in leveraging stakeholder relationships, building trust is a necessary component which requires an on-going effort (Bowen, et al., 2010; Gable & Shireman, 2005; Provan, et al., 2005; Schneider, 2008). In tandem with trust building, Schneider identifies creating “connections among people, developing common norms, values and cultural attributes” as key to building both social capital and civic engagement (Schneider, p. 75). The careful cultivation of these relationships and the proactive growth of social capital creates a capability among organizations for dynamic action necessary to successfully influence their political environments to generate value for the organization (Oliver & Holzinger, 2008) or manage shifting stakeholder roles as they react to situational circumstances (Fassin, 2011).

Stakeholder and Network Analysis

A clear theme in the literature is the importance of identifying stakeholders and mapping the organization's relationship to them as well as determining where there is issue alignment and where there is potential conflict (Bryson, 2004; Fassin, 2011; Gable & Shireman, 2005; Raile, Raile & Post, 2017; Schneider, 2008). It is important to note these relationships are not static. Fassin offers a useful framework for identifying the fluid role of stakeholders in reaction to different situations with three different classifications: stakeholders, "stakewatchers" and "stakekeepers." In this framework stakeholders can be defined in the traditional sense as those who have "a concrete stake in the company, the dedicated stakeholders with a real positive and (or at least expected) loyal interest in the" organization (p. 40). Stakewatchers do not have a direct stake in the group, however they serve as watchdogs who protect the interests of the traditional stakeholders such as unions, environmental organizations or consumer advocacy groups. Stakekeepers are "the independent regulators" who do not have a stake in the firm but exert authority over the organization, with the organization have little "direct impact on them," most often government (p. 40). This broadened definition of stakeholders offers a comprehensive view of the ecosystem in which an organization is operating, which may make it more effective in activating stakeholders to exert influence. Additionally, it is useful for civic organizations to recognize that their role may often fall into the category of stakewatcher.

For public organizations "'success'... and certainly survival depends on satisfying key stakeholders according to their definition of what is valuable" (Bryson, 1995 p. 27; Moore 1995 as cited by Bryson, 2004 p.25). According to Bryson, the process of stakeholder analysis will result in a more "successful" strategic management process as measured by its ability to "meet mandates, fulfill missions and create public value" (2004, p.26). He goes on to identify four categories of techniques (with 15 different techniques in total) that form a road map to identifying stakeholders and the role they play in shaping outcomes: "organizing participation; creating ideas for strategic interventions; building a winning coalition around proposal development, review and adoption; and implementing, monitoring and evaluating strategic interventions" (2004, p.27).

Stepping back for a moment from utilizing stakeholders as a source of power, it may be worthwhile for organizations which lack in more formalized sources of power, such as regulatory or economic power, to analyze their own role as a stakeholder to the organizations they are trying to influence. By analyzing the network in which they are operating, the organizations can identify potential partnerships with other network members who play a central role or have access to important resources in shaping outcomes (Provan, et al., 2005). A network analysis may be similar if not identical to stakeholder analyses, however it may be less contextually based and provide a broader view of the framework the organization is operating in beyond topical instances. Creating this type of analysis could make an organization more prepared to act quickly when unexpected situations arise, as well as providing a point of reference to examine how relationships have evolved or devolved over time. This information may make it easier to engage in stakeholder analyses based on specific projects or provide a starting point to begin the process. Provan, et al., advocate for network analyses to be an ongoing endeavor that illustrates the dynamic nature of networks and not just a static point-in-time illustration (2005).

Leveraging Influence through Stakeholder Engagement

When utilizing political strategies to shape outcomes, organizations can employ influence tactics to leverage their stakeholders both for maintaining value through a defensive strategy or value creation with a proactive strategy (Oliver & Holzinger, 2008). Defensive political strategies utilize influence to prevent changes and maintain the status quo. “Continuous cultivation of social ties” is used to advocate the government to continue with current policies. Proactive strategies are undertaken to influence “the norms and beliefs of stakeholders to shape” how “norms and public policies are defined” (Oliver & Holzinger, p. 507).

Utilizing value (in a context defined by the organization) as a benchmark offers further use of this framework as a litmus test of when organizations should engage stakeholders so as to not overburden the leveraging of those relationships. When determining whether to engage stakeholder activity organizations should ask the following questions:

- Will this action preserve our value?
- Will this action increase our value?

If not, it may be better to preserve social capital and refrain from engagement.

When leveraging stakeholder relationships Raile, et al., offer the following set of tasks to generate public or political will for targeted policy change:

- Identify key stakeholders in issue area
- Determine existing problem and solutions definitions
- Align problem and solution definitions, as necessary
- Build firm commitments and mutual accountability (2017, p.4)

The first two tasks are defined as a measure of “system characteristics” and the last two are tools for persuasion and accountability (Raile, et al., 2017, p.4). The authors go on to outline several tools to utilize depending on which task an organization is completing: Diffusion modeling, integrative negotiation, institutional analysis, issue framing, network analysis, persuasion tactics, primary source data collection and social marketing.

When leveraging citizen stakeholders in issues of governance Fung emphasizes that practitioners should be clear in the purpose of engaging citizens and deliberate in designing a strategy that provides “a clear path leading from engagement to the satisfaction of that intention” (2015, p. 513). They should ensure that outcomes are meaningful to those involved, otherwise the resulting impacts could be cynicism, frustration or apathy among participants.

Skills for Stakeholder Engagement

Gable & Shireman advocate for engagement teams to have training in the following areas (p.11):

- Stakeholder research
- Effective communications
- Negotiation and conflict resolution

- Risk/crisis management
- Media relations
- Stakeholder dialogue techniques

Future Stakeholder Research

As noted by Bryson, and encountered in this scan of the literature, it would be fruitful for practitioners if future avenues of stakeholder engagement research focused on how stakeholders increase their influence, particularly in the context of policy and governance (Bryson, 2004). More public affairs-based stakeholder research, particularly in the form of case studies would be useful as most literature encountered in this scan was focused on business entities, particularly activities related to corporate social responsibility.

Effectively influencing local government policy and priorities requires a deep understanding of context. Civic organizations should strive to understand their local networks, history, and stakeholder priorities to properly leverage influence. To ensure the organization is operating productively, emphasis should be placed on effectual board governance. Leveraging goal alignment with city priorities to achieve action can offer an opportunity for easy ‘wins’ that build momentum with stakeholders and increase legitimacy in the local network. Looking to the history of civic organizations as well as case studies of other district council success provides a framework for future success. Utilizing these tools will help CapitolRiver Council be a powerful advocate for the organization’s stakeholders.

Bibliography of Literature Review

- Berry, J. M., Portney, K. E., & Thomson, K. (1993). The rebirth of democracy. *Washington: The Brookings Institutions*.
- Bryson, J. M. (1995) Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (rev. edn), San Francisco, CA: JosseyBass.
- Bryson, J.M., (2004). Stakeholder Identification and Analysis Techniques. *Public Management Review*. 6(1) 21-53 DOI: 10.1080/14719030410001675722
- Capitol River Council. (2016). *Capitol River Council 2016-2018 Strategic Plan*.
- Capitol River Council. (2018, May 21). Retrieved May, 2018, from <https://www.capitolrivercouncil.org/about/#faqs>
- Chaskin, R. J., & Garg, S. (1997). The issue of governance in neighborhood-based initiatives. *Urban Affairs Review*, 32(5), 631-661.
- City of Saint Paul. (2018). Saint Paul for All: 2040 Comprehensive Plan (PRELIMINARY DRAFT). Retrieved from: https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/Media%20Root/Planning%20%26%20Economic%20Development/CSP_2040_CompPlan032718.pdf
- City of Saint Paul Council Resolution 266179 (Oct. 10, 1975). Creating the District Councils.
- Classen, Julia. 2011. "Here we go again. The cyclical nature of board behavior." *Nonprofit Quarterly*, April. 4
- Conlan, T. J. (1984). The politics of federal block grants: From Nixon to Reagan. *Political Science Quarterly*, 99(2), 247-270.
- Cooper, T. L., & Musso, J. A. (1999). The potential for neighborhood council involvement in American metropolitan governance. *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior*, 2(1/2), 199-232.
- Dierwechter, Y., & Coffey, B. (2010). Assessing the effects of neighborhood councils on urban policy and development: The example of Tacoma, Washington. *The Social Science Journal*, 47(3), 471-491.
- District Councils. (2018, May 21). Retrieved May, 2018, from <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/city-council/district-councils>
- Fassin, Y. (2011). A Dynamic Perspective in Freeman's Stakeholder Model. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 96, 39-49. DOI 10.1007/s10551-011-0942-6

- Fredette, Christopher, Bradshaw, Patricia, and Krause, Heather (2016) "From Diversity to Inclusion: A Multimethod Study of Diverse Governing Groups." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Vol.45(IS) 28S-51S.
- Fung, A. (2015). Putting the Public Back into Governance: The Challenges of Citizen Participation and Its Future. *Public Administration Review*. 75 (4) 513-522 DOI: 10.1111/puar.12361
- Gable, C. & Shireman, B. (2005). Stakeholder Engagement: A Three-Phase Methodology. *Environmental Quality Management*. 14 (3), 9-24
- Gazley, B., Change, W.K., and Bingham, L.B. 2010. "Board diversity, stakeholder representation, and collaborative performance in community mediation centers." *Public Administration Review*. Vol. 70(4): 610-620.
- Handley, D. M., & Howell-Moroney, M. (2010). Ordering stakeholder relationships and citizen participation: Evidence from the community development block grant program. *Public Administration Review*, 70(4), 601-609.
- Horton, E. (2016). Community Development Corporations in Cincinnati: Capacity Building and the Neighborhood Approach to Developing Communities. *MUP Capstone*.
- Hunt, M. L. (2017). Nonprofit Board of Director Training: The Experiences of Chief Executive Officers in Western Kentucky.
- Kathi, P. C., & Cooper, T. L. (2005). Democratizing the administrative state: Connecting neighborhood councils and city agencies. *Public Administration Review*, 65(5), 559-567.
- Moore, M. (1995) *Creating Public Value*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Nabatchi, T., & Leighninger, M. (2015). *Public participation for 21st century democracy*. John Wiley & Sons.
- The NonProfit Times. (2015). Onboarding board members gets everyone involved. Retrieved August, 2018, from <http://www.thenonproffitimes.com/management-tips/onboardingboard-members-gets-everyone-involved/>
- Oliver, C. & Holzinger, I. (2008). The Effectiveness of Strategic Political Management: A Dynamic Capabilities Framework. *The Academy of Management Review*, 33 (2), 496-520.
- Price, M. L. (2005). Succession planning and sustainability in nonprofit organizations. *Wisconsin Philanthropy News*, 4-5.

- Provan, K.G., Veazie, M.A., Staten, L.K., & Teufel-Shone, N.I. (2005). The Use of Network Analysis to Strengthen Community Partnerships. *Public Administration Review*, 65 (5), 603-613. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3542526>
- Raile, A.N.W., Raile, E.D., & Post, L.A. (2017). *Guide to Generating Political Will and Public Will: PPW Toolkit*. Retrieved from: https://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/files/ppw_toolkit_0.pdf
- Renz, David O. 2010. "Leadership, Governance, and the Work of the Board." In (D.O. Renz and Associates, ed.) *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 125-156.
- Schneider, J. (2008). Small Nonprofits and Civil Society: Civic Engagement and Social Capital. In R.A. Cnann & C. Milofsky (Eds.) *Handbook of Community Movements and Local Organizations* (pp.74-88). New York, NY: Spring Science + Business Media, LLC.
- Stevens, Susan. 2001. Nonprofit Life Cycles. Long Lake, MN: Stagewise Enterprises, Inc. Ch. 3, "Seven Stages of Nonprofit Capacity," and Ch. 4, "Diagnosing Nonprofit Capacity."
- Wilson, K. R. The Board as the Chief Steward of the Nonprofit Organization (2014).
- Wolfred, T. (2008). Building leaderful organizations: Succession planning for nonprofits.

Additional Board Governance Resources

- Board Checkup An online board assessment. Murray, V. and Harrison, Y. Accessed May 10, 2018. <https://www.boardcheckup.com/>
- Brown, Will. 2005. "Exploring the association between board and organizational performance in nonprofit organizations." *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*. Vol. 15(3): 317-339.
- Case: Board Facilitation and Engagement, Hubert Project. <https://www.hubertproject.org/hubert-material/393/>
- Freiwirth, Judy. 2014. "Community-Engagement Governance." In C. Cornforth and W. Brown (eds.), *New Perspectives on Nonprofit Governance*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.
- Harrison, Y. and Murray, V. 2012 "Perspectives on the leadership of chairs of nonprofit organization boards of directors: A grounded theory mixed-method study." *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*. Vol.22 (4): 411-437
- Jeavons, Thom. 2010. "Ethical Nonprofit Management." In (D.O. Renz and Associates, ed.) *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 178-205.

- Reid, Wendy and Johanne Turbide. 2014. "Dilemmas in the board-staff dynamics of nonprofit governance." In C. Cornforth and W. Brown (eds.), *New Perspectives on Nonprofit Governance*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.
- Ryan, W. Chait, R. Taylor, B. 2017 "Problem Boards or Board Problem?" *Nonprofit Quarterly*.
<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2017/05/08/problemboards-or-board-problem/>
- Stone, Melissa Middleton and Francie Ostrower. 2007. "Acting in the Public Interest? Another Look at Governance Research in Nonprofit Organizations." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Vol. 36(3): 416-438.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol and Consent Form

The following questions were asked, in whole or in part, of every interview respondent in this research project:

Interviewee Name:

Role with CRC:

Length of Involvement:

Why did you get involved with the CRC?

Identify projects or other efforts of the CRC that you consider to be accomplishments.

Identify projects or efforts you feel missed the mark.

Who are the key stakeholders or allies you think should be part of any long-term planning effort, and why would you include them?

What are the big things Saint Paul should do to make the Downtown area better for everyone?

What role do you see the CRC playing in the future of Saint Paul?

If you were to consider what you wanted Downtown Saint Paul to look like in, say, 20 years, what would that be?

When you hear the term long-term planning, or a “Roadmap to the Future,” how many years out do you envision such a plan would reach?

In your view what are or should be the CRCs top priorities?

What do you see as CRC’s strengths?

What do you see as its weaknesses?

What can CRC do to collaborate with other Downtown Saint Paul stakeholders?

Is there anything else you would like to add? Or any other questions you think we should have asked?

Who else should we talk to?

Interview subjects were given the following:

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH

You are invited to be in a research study in support of the CapitolRiver Council. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a CRC stakeholder. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Molly Hayes, Jon Olson, Amy Schmidt and Tracy Shimek under the direction of Dr. Kevin Gerdes from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you are asked to do the following things: Answer questions while being audio recorded. The interview should last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. The audio recording of the interview will be transcribed, and the recording will be accessible only to the researchers listed above, for this research project only, and will be retained no longer than September 1, 2018.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researchers conducting this study are: Molly Hayes, Jon Olson, Amy Schmidt and Tracy Shimek. Your interviewer is [name of researcher]. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact the researcher at [phone and email of researcher], or Dr. Kevin Gerdes at 612-626-1337, kgerdes@umn.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Appendix D: Survey Information

To gain a broader set of stakeholder perspectives of the CRC than was possible to achieve through qualitative interviews alone the research team developed a survey that was announced at the CRC's annual meeting and distributed via the CRC email list. The 9-question survey assessed qualitative and quantitative indicators and was distributed to 1,172 contacts. The survey was available to respondents for 23 days. Fifty-nine people responded. The email for the survey had 344 unique opens, 121 unique clicks which represented an open rate of 33% and a click rate of 35%, which is higher than CRC's average open rate of 27% and click rate of 15%.

Q1: Respondents were asked to identify whether they were residents, property owners, Downtown employees (working for any employer in Downtown), and/or business owners. Respondents could select multiple categories. Of the respondents:

- 74% Identify as residents (44 total)
- 44.1% Identify as property owners (26 total) *Note: the survey did not distinguish between commercial property owners or homeowners*
- 28.8% Identified as Downtown employees (17)
- 8.5% identified as business owners (5)

Q2: Do you find the information in the CapitolRiver Council e-newsletter useful?

80% of respondents reported find the information in CRC's e-newsletter useful

Of those:

- 77% of residents
- 85% of property owners
- 88% of Downtown employees
- 80% of business owners

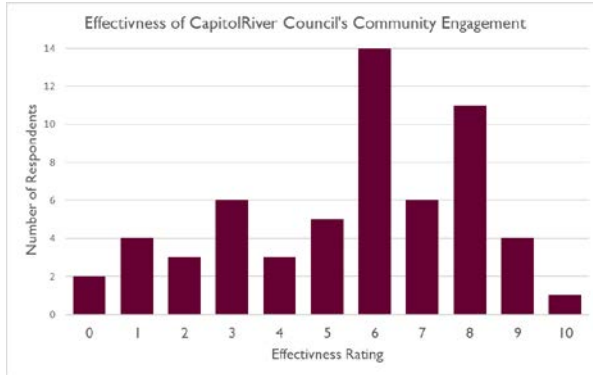
Q3: Why do you feel it is or is not useful (optional)

Answers varied for those who found it useful but centered around staying informed about what was happening Downtown including city meetings, opportunities to get involved, CRC committee information, events and issues happening in the area. For those who responded that they did not find it useful answers were varied as well, from being unsure whether they received the e-newsletter, to feeling it only discussed business matters, the format being in summary form with "not enough detail," to the contact list not having a large enough distribution.

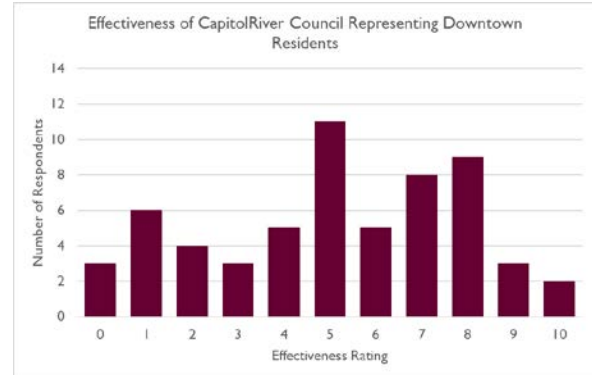
Q4: How does CRC add value to Downtown?

Positive responses had an overarching theme of providing a forum for different stakeholders together to discuss the issues facing Downtown and giving people a voiced with the city government. Negative responses varied but included themes of a lack of influence and lack of direction

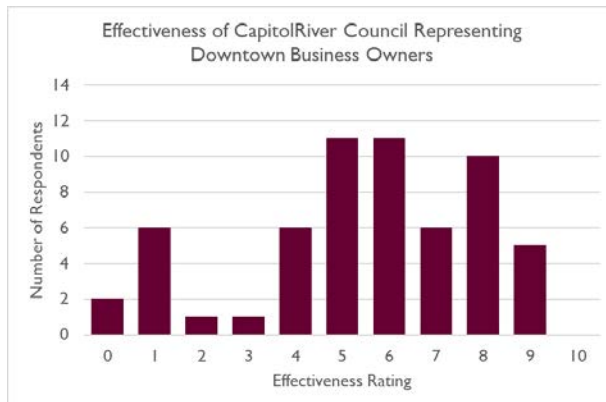
Q5:* Rate the effectiveness of CRC in



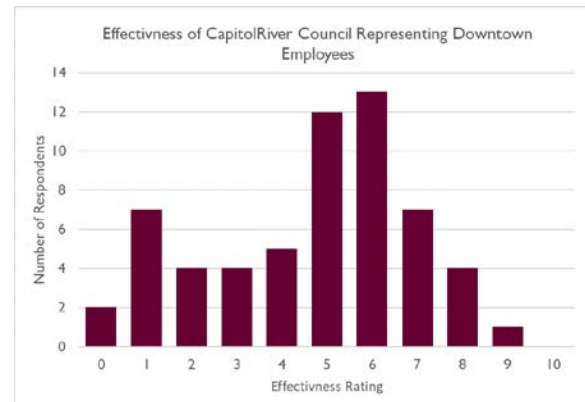
Community Engagement:
 8 or higher: 27%
 4-7: 47%
 3 or lower: 25%



Representing Downtown Residents:
 8 or higher: 24%
 4-7: 49%
 3 or lower: 27%



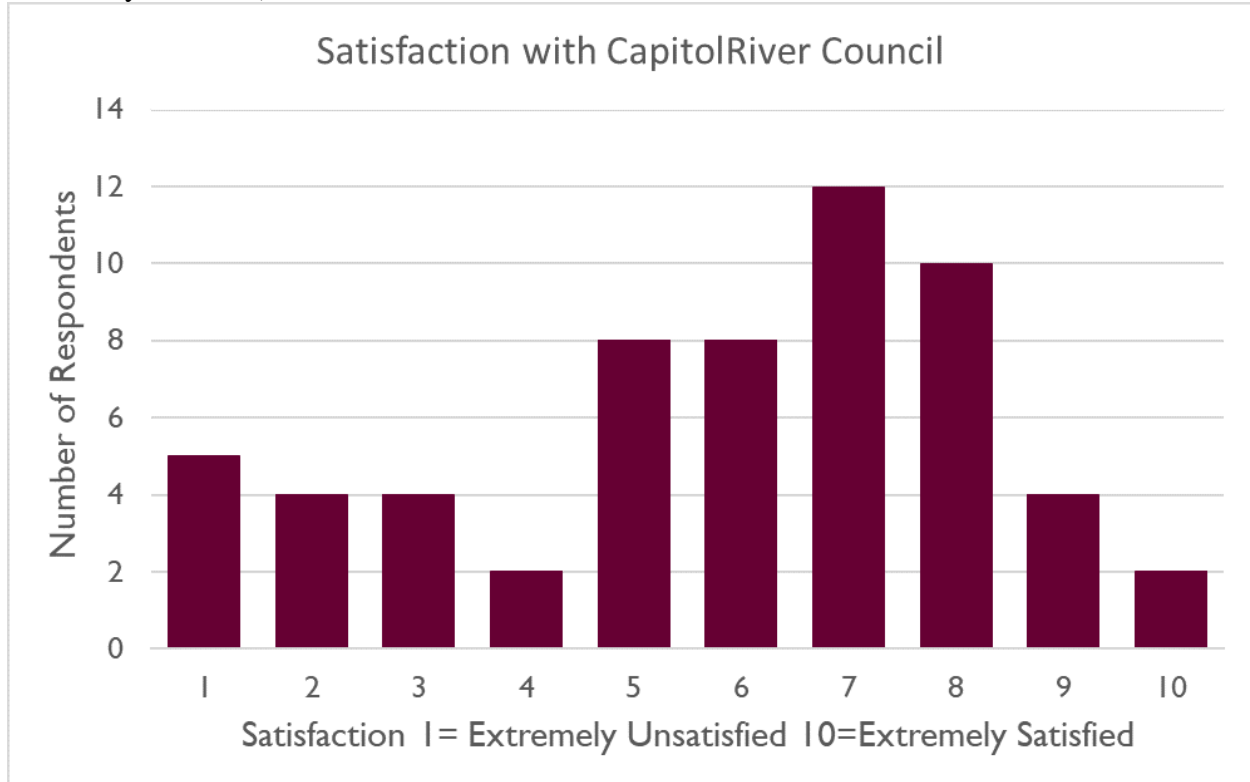
Representing Downtown Business Owners:
 8 or higher: 25%
 4-7: 58%
 3 or lower: 17%



Representing Downtown Employees:
 8 or higher: 8%
 4-7: 63%
 3 or lower: 29%

*Note the text of the question specified a range of 1-10, however due to an error in formatting the survey for this question, the responses allowed respondents to select 0 as an option.

Q6: On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with the CRC? (1=Extremely Unsatisfied, 10=Extremely Satisfied)



Q7: Why?

Answers varied and included concerns about the effectiveness of the board to work on important priorities and having an influential voice to satisfaction in the “high quality volunteer group with a balanced membership.”

Q8: What work should the CRC prioritize?

Themes in answers included reaching more stakeholders through engagement, striving for inclusion, safety in Downtown, more greenspace, increasing the vibrancy of the community including economic vibrancy, transportation and generally issues of livability

Q9: What would motivate you to become more actively involved in the CRC’s work?

Themes were schedule conflicts, timing of meetings (although some responses preferred evening meetings and others preferred meetings during the day), having a better awareness of what CRC does, already involved with CRC or not having an interest in participating.

Appendix E: District Council Comparative Study

In crafting recommendations for CapitolRiver Council, the research team found it would be useful to identify comparable organizations to highlight effective practices which CRC could consider adopting. Recognizing the unique nature of Saint Paul's district council system, the research team concluded the most useful parallels to draw would be from other district councils in Saint Paul. Due to the limited time available to conduct a thorough analysis of the practices used by other district councils the team determined it would be feasible to analyze three additional district councils. To identify which councils would be most suitable to examine, the team reviewed the emerging findings from qualitative interviews to identify topics useful to surface recommendations to address. Based on that data, the team identified the following priority areas:

- Board Structure
- Governance
- Committees
- Community Engagement
- Budget and Staff

With no identifiable resources to determine which councils performed best in these categories the team created a survey to distribute to people who were familiar with all of Saint Paul's district councils. Respondents were asked to identify which district council(s) they perceived to be most effective based on a set of 8 questions, with no specified limit to the number of councils they could identify for each response. Each time a council was named in a category it was awarded a point. The councils with the three highest point scores were the councils used in the analysis. These councils were chosen selected on the respondents' perception of effectiveness for specific functions, and are not a comprehensive study or evaluation of effectiveness of Saint Paul's district councils either individually or as a whole. A comprehensive evaluation of the strengths of each of Saint Paul's 17 district councils may be an opportunity for future research.

Respondents completed the following survey questions:

“Please identify the Saint Paul district council(s) you feel are most effective in each of the following areas:

- Stakeholder engagement (residents, area businesses, area employees, local organizations, etc.)
- Advocacy on behalf of their stakeholders
- Fiscal responsibility
- Developing additional revenue sources
- Balancing multiple viewpoints
- Board of Directors engagement
- Executive leadership of their council
- Maintaining good working relationships with Saint Paul City Council, City of Saint Paul staff and the mayor of Saint Paul”

Based on the data that was gathered from this survey, Union Park, Macalester-Groveland, and Highland Park were selected for analysis. The research team interviewed the Executive Director and Council President of each of the selected Councils.

A summary of comparative findings is included in Figure 1 below, and shows some strong similarities between Union Park, Macalester-Groveland, and Highland Park. The CRC stands alone in certain aspects of board representation, committee structure, and in many aspects of governance. A difference between all four councils includes the amount of funding provided by the City of Saint Paul (see the funding formula described in Literature Review, [Appendix B](#)). As the CRC has a sizeable disadvantage in resident population compared to the other three councils in this analysis, the budget afforded the CRC from Saint Paul is approximately half of what the other councils analyzed receive. However, the other councils also seek grant funding from Ramsey County and philanthropic foundations, as well as carry out fundraising events each year to expand district council coffers, which allows for a more robust community engagement strategy.

	<u>Union Park</u>	<u>Macalester- Groveland</u>	<u>Highland Park</u>	<u>Capitol River</u>
Primary Constituency	Residents	Residents	Residents	
Board Structure				
President/Chair	X	X	X	X
Vice President/Vice Chair	X	X	X	X
External Relations				X
Internal Relations				X
Treasurer	X	X	X	X
Secretary	X	X	X	x
Grid Representatives	X	X	X	
Business Organization Representatives	X		X	X
Nonprofit Representatives	X			X
Board Members-at-Large	X	X	X	X
Representation from Universities / Colleges	X	X		
Representation from Citizen Groups / Other Local Councils	X	X		
Landlords / Renters Representative		X		X
Faith Community Representatives		X		X
Governance				
Participates in District Council ED Monthly Forum	X	X	X	X
Board Training Beyond Initial Orientation				
Succession Planning for Board Leadership	X	X	X	
Executes Strategic Planning / Board Retreats	X	X	X	
Regularly Reviews 10-Year Community Plan	X	X	X	

Committees				
Arts / Culture / Entertainment				X
Land Use / Economic Development / Housing	X	X	X	X
Marketing / Fundraising				X
Skyway Advisory				X
Public Realm / Green Spaces / Environment	X	X		X
Neighborhood Involvement / Community-Building	X	X	X	
Transportation	X	X	X	
Community Engagement				
Provides Micro-Grants to Residents	X			
Regularly Holds Community-Centric Events	X	X	X	
Public Safety / Crime Prevention Initiatives	X	X	X	
Engages Business Associations	X	X	X	X
Comprehensive Communication Methods	X	X	X	X
Budget and Staff				
Annual Budget	~\$125,000	~\$140,000	~\$100,000	~\$56,000
Staff	2	2	2	1

X	Yes
	No
	Unknown

Figure 1

Core Constituencies and Partnerships

Union Park, Macalester-Groveland, and Highland Park are absolutely clear on their primary mission: the district council boards and staff represent residents and pursue higher quality of life for their residents. Their process to succeed in this mission is to work collaboratively with all stakeholders in their respective districts, to include real estate developers, building owners, business owners, homeowners associations, faith communities, non-profits, and certainly with the City of Saint Paul government organizations, as well as Ramsey County and State of Minnesota departments. The district councils also prioritize cooperation with the Saint Paul Police Department and the Saint Paul Fire Department.

The CRC, being uniquely positioned in Downtown Saint Paul, has, for many decades, worked tirelessly to represent the interests of all community stakeholders, but these efforts may be stretching the CRC board and staff in directions not wholly supportive of quality of life issues for residents, workers in Downtown Saint Paul, and even for business owners and building owners. Modeling primary advocacy in support of resident constituents may be a benefit to the CRC as it would allow the board and staff to focus efforts, ensuring outcomes are more effectively pursued, and optimizing relationship-building with all stakeholders in Downtown Saint Paul (see Recommendations).

Similarities in Governance

The Union Park, Macalester-Groveland, and Highland Park district councils have benefitted from long-term executive directors who have worked steadily to build close professional relationships with leaders in citizen advocacy organizations, real estate developers, business owners, property owners, faith leaders, and executive directors of other non-profit organizations in their respective districts. The executive directors have also built close professional relationships with key city government leaders, staff members, or directors of core city government offices. (Note: This remains true for Macalester-Groveland and Highland Park, but Union Park has a new executive director with as of early summer 2018.)

All three of these district councils also have highly-engaged board members who undertake substantive work and who compete for the available board positions. Some have been recruited, while others started as committee members who naturally transitioned to board leadership positions. None of these three district councils actively plan for leadership succession, but all three have benefitted from a process that guides effective leaders into the top-level position of board president or other board officer positions.

Additionally, none of the four district council boards carry out a board member training program beyond an initial orientation session for new board members, but the board presidents and executive directors at Union Park, Macalester-Groveland, and Highland Park all reported dedicating significant time to coaching and educating board members for strategic planning, board retreats to assess board effectiveness, and routine reviews of the districts' 10-year plans.

	<u>Union Park</u>	<u>Macalester- Groveland</u>	<u>Highland Park</u>	<u>Capitol River</u>
Governance				
Participates in District Council ED Monthly Forum	X	X	X	X
Board Training Beyond Initial Orientation				
Succession Planning for Board Leadership	X	X	X	
Executes Strategic Planning / Board Retreats	X	X	X	
Regularly Reviews 10-Year Community Plan	X	X	X	

Figure 2

The executive directors from Union Park, Macalester-Groveland, and Highland Park all attend the monthly District Council Executive Directors' Monthly Forum. All three executive directors at these councils stated they valued this monthly dialogue with their counterparts. The CRC executive director currently participates in the monthly meetings as well.

Committee Structure Differences

The Union Park, Macalester-Groveland, and Highland Park district councils all maintain three similar committees: Transportation, Land Use/Economic Development, and a committee that focuses on Neighborhood Involvement/Community Engagement. Union Park and Macalester-Groveland also have a “Green Spaces”/Environment committee, which is a priority of effort for their respective councils.

These three district councils focus heavily on both the Transportation and the Land Use/Economic Development committees, ensuring the residents in their respective districts remain well-informed and retain a strong voice on issues that fall into either of these two core categories. Resolutions from the committees, or even from the entire board, related to issues inside these two committees are often sent to the Saint Paul City Council for action or to advise the city council regarding constituent feelings on specific matters.

	<u>Union Park</u>	<u>Macalester- Groveland</u>	<u>Highland Park</u>	<u>Capitol River</u>
Committees				
Arts / Culture / Entertainment				X
Land Use / Economic Development / Housing	X	X	X	X
Marketing / Fundraising				X
Skyway Advisory				X
Public Realm / Green Spaces / Environment	X	X		X
Neighborhood Involvement / Community-Building	X	X	X	
Transportation	X	X	X	

Figure 3

The CRC committee system is somewhat different from the other three. For example, the CRC does not have a Transportation Committee (despite many respondents on the board stating that parking in Downtown Saint Paul is a serious issue), but is alone in having a committee focused on the arts, culture, and entertainment. A Skyway Governance Advisory Committee is also part of the CRC committee structure, which is an entirely unique construct since the skyway system exists only in Downtown Saint Paul. The City of Saint Paul also maintains a Skyway Committee, which consists of City Staff and the Ward 2 City Councilmember, and is charged primarily with taking recommendations from the CRC Skyway Committee and identifying specific ordinance changes, approvals, and other technical solutions needed to implement the recommendations. The CRC Skyway Committee was frequently mentioned as one of the CRC’s strengths (see Key Findings).

Appendix F: SWOT Analysis

Strengths (Internal)	Weaknesses (Internal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director (Jon Fure) • Legal mandate from the City of Saint Paul • Direct communication line between CRC and Ward 2 City Council Member • Good board recruitment • New board members: energy, skills, full board • Successful engagement work & respected engagement staff (Tabitha Benci DeRango) • Strong network players involved with board • Represent Downtown (influential area & “everyone’s Downtown”) • Active committees • E-Newsletter • History with the city • Set strong foundation with establishing bylaws, policies & procedures • Only organization representing Downtown residents and employees • Institutional memory is thin: opportunity to have clean slate to work from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear on priorities • Some lingering acrimony regarding previous conflict • Internal competing interests • Limited resources (time & money) • Funding: unclear priorities make it more difficult to secure grant funding • Onboarding new board members • Not all constituents are aware of the org or its role • Board leadership/succession planning • Sense of fatalism—not recognizing big wins • Not enough engagement work • Unclear on role • Unclear on who to represent & how to do it • Need work on activating network • Perceived as not advocating loudly enough when taking positions on Downtown issues • Institutional memory a ‘bit thin’ now • Slow to respond to issues and propensity to be more reactive and less proactive • Board development: Meeting facilitation & leadership development/succession planning
Opportunities: (Outside forces)	Threats (Outside forces)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official standing as an advisory board to the city • Increased funding w/increased number of residents • Growing network with new board members • Potential access to a lot of funding through foundations • Downtown Alliance • Growing number of residents in Downtown/fastest growing area in STP • Well-agreed upon issues facing Downtown that CRC could champion • Other district councils may have shared needs (share knowledge, resources and partner to advocate for shared interests, also “everyone’s Downtown”) • Direct access to city officials & staff • Lots of residents to recruit for board • There are some very energized stakeholders • Reenergized board • City of Saint Paul’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan • Mississippi River & reconnecting it to Downtown • Shared goals with powerful Downtown players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived by some to be dysfunctional, ineffective & facing fiscal challenges • Perceived by some businesses as a “barrier” to development • Downtown Alliance—need to deconflict, partner, assert the CRC’s value • Perceived by some as lacking influence and/or power • Staff turnover • Lingering acrimony from change in board leadership • Adversarial property & business owners and residents • Potential for board members who may have self-interested agendas and don’t support the CRC’s mission • Small fish in a big pond • Individuals coopting the function of CRC to move their personal agendas • No standing if city moved away from district council system

Appendix G: Presentation Handout: CapitolRiver Council: Mapping the Future to “Everyone’s Downtown”



Downtown Saint Paul and CapitolRiver Council are facing changing demographics and residential growth, a changing economy, and new mayoral administration. As CRC navigates this change, it needs an actionable set of recommendations to guide council priorities and efforts while using limited resources to maximize influence and stakeholder engagement in the political and planning process in downtown Saint Paul.

Key Research Questions

- Who are CRC's key stakeholders and what relationships exist? Are there organizations with aligned goals or others with competing interests?
- What are successful strategies for board governance and engagement?
- What are the most effective council districts and how do they operate? What do successful neighborhood associations and groups have in common?

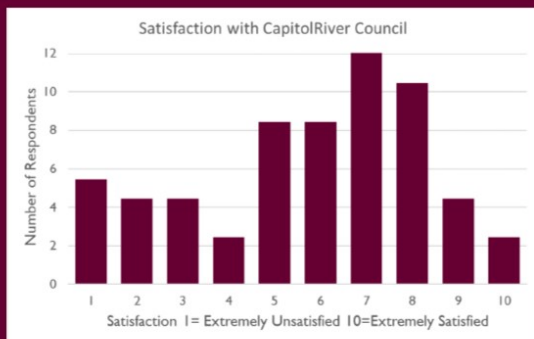
Research & Methods:

- Academic Literature review
- 35 Interviews
- 7 observation sessions
- 59 Survey Respondents
- Comparative analysis of 3 Saint Paul District Councils

Key Findings

CRC is navigating **significant change** with three areas of improvement surfacing through data collection:

1. Internal Functions of CRC | 2. Navigating the downtown Saint Paul Ecosystem | 3. Livability of downtown Saint Paul



- 27% rated 8 or higher
- 51% rated between 4 and 7
- 22% rated 3 or lower (on a 10-point scale)

"The biggest accomplishments that I've seen over the last year have been more internal and organizational than community outcomes... It makes success a possibility that otherwise would not exist...But they have a lot of work to do."

-Downtown Stakeholder

"I'm vested in District 17 and recognize that this council is my best advocate for seeing the changes that continue to revitalize this area."- Downtown Employee

I. Internal Function:

Strengths

- Improved governance with updated bylaws, policies, and procedures
- Capitalized on strengths of CRC staff
- Recruited a talented and diverse board

Areas for improvement:

- Lack of vision and priorities
- Lack of resources: money and time
- Lack of onboarding of new board members
- Sense of limited influence

Recommendations

- Choose and rank priorities
- Reassess committee structure to effectively respond to emerging needs
- Pursue funding to expand staff
- Amplify the board's effectiveness
 - Onboarding
 - Training and mentoring
 - Leveraging strengths and connections
- Reframe: affirm and build on CRC's successes

2. Navigating Downtown Ecosystem

Strengths

- Official standing with City of Saint Paul
- Board connections across downtown
- Shared goals with Downtown Alliance
- Some success with engagement projects

Areas for improvement:

- CRC is perceived by some as:
 - Lacking influence
 - A barrier to development
- Shifting of power dynamic with emergence of the Downtown Alliance

Recommendations

- Focus on advocating for quality of life issues by bringing residents and other downtown stakeholders to same table
- Strengthen existing networks and build alliances with other downtown organizations
- Amplify coordination and partnerships across the District Council system
- Proactively define CRC's relationship with the Downtown Alliance

3. Livability:

Strengths

- General consensus on key issues facing downtown
- Skyway Committee
- Community engagement efforts
- Growing residential population

Areas for improvement:

- Prioritization of issues facing downtown
- Strong, recognizable advocacy on the key issues

Recommendations

- Continue community engagement to identify and respond to future issues as they arise
- Replicate Community Conversations on key issues identified by CRC stakeholders:
 - Maintenance and upkeep of public spaces
 - Parks and greenspace for adults, kids, and dogs
 - Perception of safety
 - Need for activation of street-level spaces

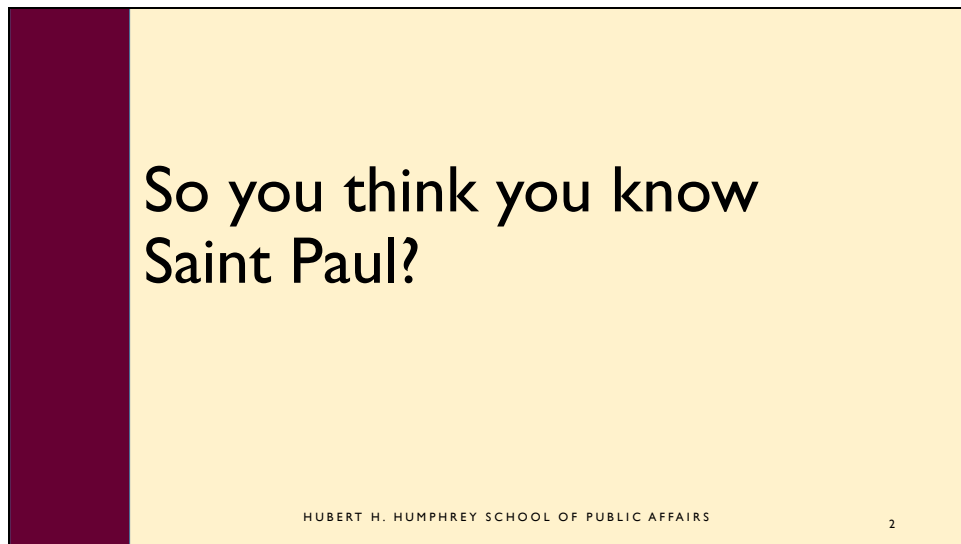
We owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who shared their time and perspectives with us, Jon Fure and Tom Erickson for their enthusiastic participation and open access to information, and to Dr. Kevin Gerdes and Dr. Angie Fertig for their wisdom and guidance.

Appendix H: Presentation Power Point Slides (delivered to the CapitolRiver Council Board of Directors, July 31, 2018): CapitolRiver Council: Mapping the Future to “Everyone’s Downtown”

Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3

What year did the first steam boat
come up the Mississippi River to
Saint Paul?

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

3

Slide 4

1823

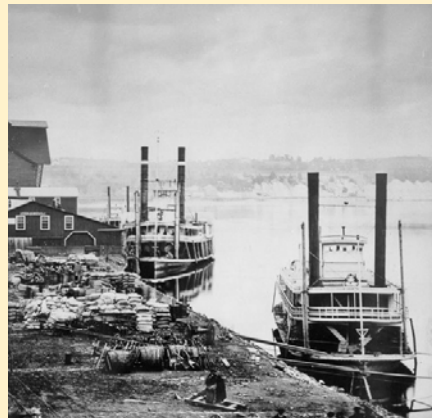


Image credit: National Parks Service

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

4

Slide 5

When did Saint Paul create
its neighborhood district council
system?

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

5

Slide 6

1976



HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

6

Slide 7

What was the population
of Saint Paul in 1860?


HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

7

Slide 8

10,000

Image credit: Placeography



HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

8

Slide 9

CapitolRiver Council:
Mapping the Future to “Everyone’s Downtown”

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 9

This slide features a maroon vertical bar on the left side. The main content area has a light yellow background. The title is in a large, black, sans-serif font. The subtitle is in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The footer text is in a small, black, sans-serif font.

Slide 10

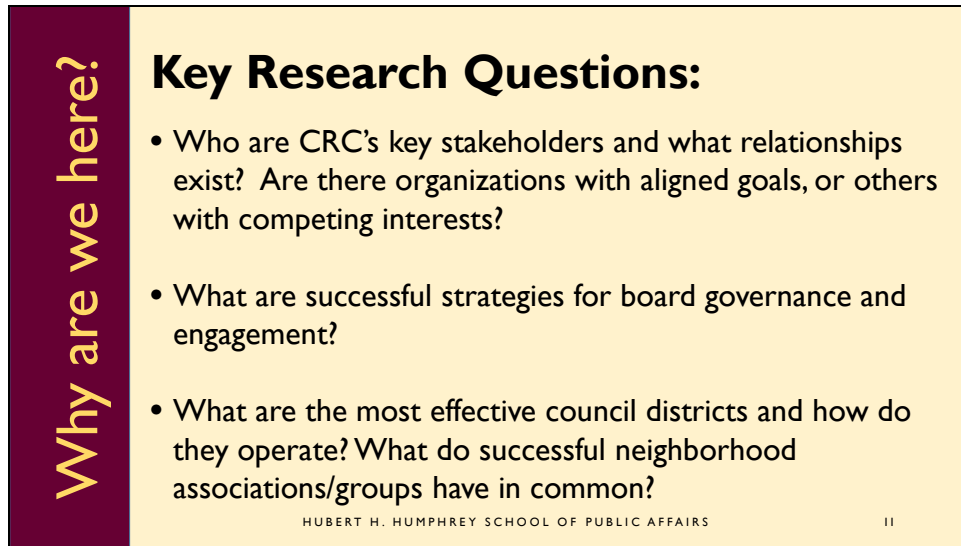
Who are we?

Master of Public Affairs
Humphrey School of Public Affairs

- Molly Hayes
- Tracy Shimek
- Jon Olson
- Amy Schmidt

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 10

This slide features a maroon vertical bar on the left side. The main content area has a light yellow background. The title is in a large, black, sans-serif font. The subtitle is in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The list of names is in a black, sans-serif font. The footer text is in a small, black, sans-serif font.



Why are we here?

Key Research Questions:

- Who are CRC's key stakeholders and what relationships exist? Are there organizations with aligned goals, or others with competing interests?
- What are successful strategies for board governance and engagement?
- What are the most effective council districts and how do they operate? What do successful neighborhood associations/groups have in common?

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 11



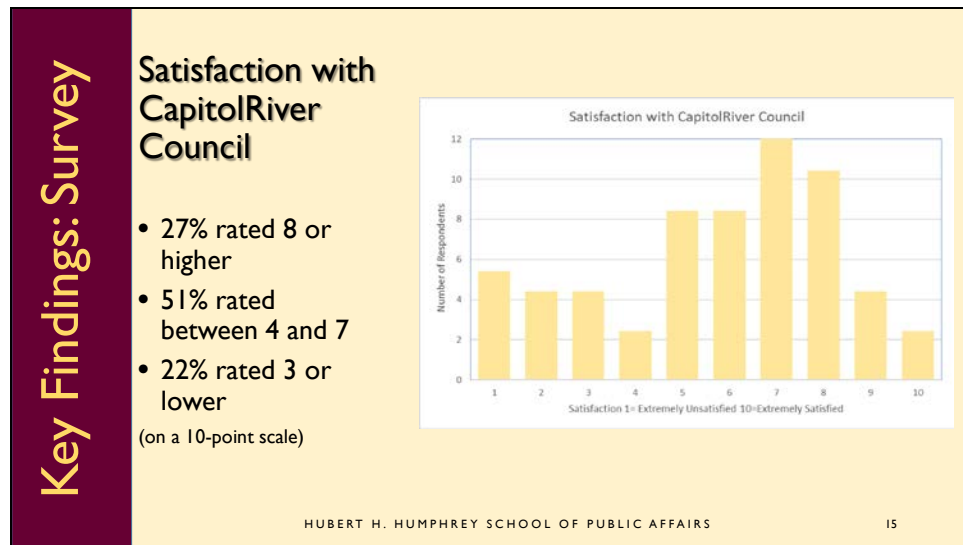
Agenda

1. Research Methodology
2. Findings and Recommendations
3. Discussion

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 12

Research and Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 35 qualitative interviews with CRC stakeholders• Academic literature review of civic engagement and board governance• Survey with 59 respondents• Seven observation sessions• Comparative analysis with other district councils
<small>HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS</small>	
<small>13</small>	

Research and Methods: District Council Analysis	Districts	Focus Areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Union Park• Mac-Groveland• Highland Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board Structure• Governance• Committees• Community Engagement• Budget and Staff
<small>HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS</small>		
<small>14</small>		



Key Findings

CRC is navigating **significant change**

- Internal Functions of the CRC
- Navigating the Downtown Saint Paul Ecosystem
- Livability of Downtown Saint Paul

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 16

**Key Findings:
Internal Functions**

Strengths:

- Improved governance with updated bylaws, policies, and procedures
- Capitalized on strengths of CRC staff
- Recruited a talented and diverse board

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 17

**Key Findings:
Internal Functions**

Areas for Improvement:

- Lack of vision and priorities
- Lack of resources: money and time
- Lack of onboarding of new board members
- Sense of limited influence

"I don't know what the CRC's priorities are."

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 18

Slide 19

**Recommendations:
Internal Functions**

- Choose and rank priorities
- Reassess committee structure to effectively respond to emerging needs
- Amplify the board's effectiveness
 - Onboarding
 - Training and mentoring
 - Leveraging strengths and connections
- Pursue funding to expand staff
- Reframe: affirm and build on CRC's successes

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 19

Slide 20

**Key Findings:
Navigating Downtown Ecosystem**

Strengths:

- Official standing with City of Saint Paul
- Board connections across downtown
- Shared goals with Downtown Alliance
- Some success with engagement projects

“[CRC] provides a focal point where stakeholders can express concerns, make connections, [and] improve our district.”

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 20

Key Findings:
Navigating Downtown Ecosystem

Areas for Improvement:

- CRC is perceived by some as:
 - Lacking influence
 - A barrier to development
- Shifting of power dynamic with emergence of the Downtown Alliance

“...I am not sure [how CRC adds value to downtown]. Now we have the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance, so [I’m] not sure how these two orgs work together or if there is redundancy?”

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 21

Recommendations:
Navigating Downtown Ecosystem

- Focus on advocating for quality of life issues by bringing residents and other downtown stakeholders to same table
- Strengthen existing networks and build alliances with other downtown organizations
- Amplify coordination and partnerships across the District Council system
- Proactively define CRC’s relationship with the Downtown Alliance

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 22

Key Findings: Livability

Strengths:

- General consensus on key issues facing downtown
- Skyway Committee
- Community engagement efforts
- Growing residential population

“I am vested in District 17 and recognize that this Council is my best advocate for seeing the changes that continue to revitalize this area.”

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 23

Key Findings: Livability

Areas for Improvement:

- Prioritization of issues facing downtown
- Strong, recognizable advocacy on the key issues

“We should take the sidewalks and make them pleasant places, pretty places to walk. We should get some retail at street level, even if it's subsidized, so that there's that compelling vibrancy. Retail could be somebody who repairs shoes, a boutique, a little art store. Anything to start getting a culture that's on the streets.”

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 24

Slide 25

Key Findings: Recommendations

- Continue community engagement to identify and respond to future issues as they arise
- Replicate Community Conversations on key issues identified by CRC stakeholders:
 - Maintenance and upkeep of public spaces
 - Parks and greenspace for adults, kids, and dogs
 - Perception of safety
 - Need for activation of street-level spaces

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 25

Slide 26

Q&A

Thank you!

Everyone who shared their time and perspectives with us

Jon Fure and Tom Erickson

Dr. Kevin Gerdes and Dr. Angie Fertig

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS 26

Appendix I: Biographical Information of Research Team

Molly Hayes: Born and raised in Saint Paul, Molly Hayes lives in District 12 on University Avenue near the Green Line's Westgate Station. Molly served as a foreign policy advisor at the State Department in Washington, DC from 2008-2014 with an emphasis on the Middle East and East Africa. Since returning to the Twin Cities in 2015, Molly served as the program director for workforce development and education at a local refugee resettlement agency, continues to guest lecture for the Foreign Policy Association and Global Minnesota, and currently serves as Deputy Chief of Staff to the President of the University of Minnesota. Molly holds a graduate certificate in international relations from Johns Hopkins-SAIS and a BA in English and Arabic from the University of Notre Dame. She will complete her Master of Public Affairs degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs in August 2018.

Jon Olson: Jon Olson served as a U.S. Naval Intelligence Officer before retiring in 2011 at the rank of commander. During his 21-year naval career, Jon's assignments included duty aboard aircraft carriers and large deck amphibious ships, numerous international operations including to Iraq, Bosnia, and Afghanistan, and service in the U.S. Navy strategic-level clandestine Human Intelligence collection operations as a CIA-trained case officer. He also qualified as a U.S. Navy parachutist, logging 35 jumps. Jon's final assignment before retirement was as the U.S. Naval Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki, Finland. Since retiring, Jon has co-authored several novels and short stories, and a feature-length screenplay about the Falklands War named, "A Close Run Thing." Currently, Jon is an adjunct professor at Carleton College and in the School of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice at Metropolitan State University. He served as president of the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association – Upper Midwest Chapter from 2012-2018. Jon holds a bachelor's degree from the U.S. Naval Academy and a master's degree in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College.

Amy Schmidt: Amy is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Bloomington. She started her municipal law career as a law clerk in the Saint Paul City Attorney's Office in 2000 and graduated from the William Mitchell College of Law in 2002. Although she grew up in Kentucky, Saint Paul is her Minnesota hometown. Her family roots are in the Como neighborhood and on the North End, where her grandfather had a service station on the corner of Rice Street and Maryland Avenue for over 35 years. She fell in love with Saint Paul on summer visits every year, so she brought herself to Saint Paul to attend the College of St. Catherine, where she earned a BA in English. She worked in Downtown Saint Paul for more than 10 years, and volunteers at nonprofits all over Saint Paul through her activities with the St. Kate's Alumnae Council. She will complete her Master of Public Affairs degree at the Humphrey school in December of 2018.

Tracy Shimek: A Saint Paulite at heart, Tracy Shimek spent nearly 15 years introducing people to the Mississippi River on riverboats in Saint Paul, working her way from crew member to captain and collaboratively promoting the city, the Twin Cities region, and Minnesota as a destination for group travel. Currently Shimek is the director of the Inver Grove Heights Convention and Visitors Bureau. Additionally, she serves on the board of Tour Minnesota Association, and as the policy committee chair and a board member for the Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus. In her free time Shimek, is a Girl Scout troop

leader, coaches youth softball, and serves on a subcommittee of the White Bear Lake Economic Development Corporation. Shimek holds a BA in economics and political science from Gustavus Adolphus College and will complete her Master of Public Affairs degree from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School in August of 2018.