Youth Master Plan: Identifying the Issues Executive Summary

October 2, 2019

The purpose of the Youth Master Plan is to rally stakeholders and policymakers around a common set of values and priorities to move the needle forward and make Minneapolis the best city for children and youth. Because youth voices are central to the Youth Master Plan, it is a chance for youth to be heard by local decisionmakers and help inform policy directions. The findings from the Youth Master Plan will guide the work that the YCB and its collaborations with its jurisdictional partners prioritize in the next five years, after which we will update the Youth Master Plan to ensure its relevance and reflect changes in our work.

Values

The values build the foundation for the Youth Master Plan. They name visions the YCB has for the young people of Minneapolis, are reflected in our priorities and directions for change, and are as follows:

1) **Equity and justice** recognizes the meaningfulness of forces such as race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality, and all their intersections, and confronts forces and institutions that marginalize youth on these grounds.

2) Public jurisdictions must make every attempt to provide **stability** for young people, including meeting basic needs and ensuring social and emotional supports.

3) Though youth and children are **resilient** by nature, we must provide them with the resources, community, and support necessary to fully actualize their resilience and promote healing.

4) We encourage and support **collaboration and alignment of strategies** across jurisdictional lines.

Methods

We engaged youth, youth work and early childhood professionals, our jurisdictional partners, families, and service providers (teachers, social workers, police officers, etc.) via surveys and comment cards to develop our priorities. To develop beginning directions for our recommendations, MYC youth led ward meetings with their peers in 12 City Council wards to identify youth visions for the future.

Priorities

The priorities significantly structure the Youth Master Plan by bringing our values to life and articulating directions for change over the next five years. Each priority has youth-centered findings that came out of our ward meetings listed under them, which will guide our subsequent policy and practice recommendations.

1. **Youth agency:** Youth are active agents in shaping their futures through youth-adult partnerships that recognize and value youth ownership and leadership within their communities.
   a. **Power of knowledge** speaks to the disempowerment youth feel among adults in the community as they fail to recognize and value youths’ experiential knowledge.
Priorities (continued)

2. **Culturally responsive approaches**: Acknowledges that race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, and all their intersections are foundational to one’s identity, honors their meaningfulness to the individual and community, and the importance of cultural resilience.
   a. **Identity** seeks to ensure that youth are confident in their racial/ethnic identity, develop positive racial/ethnic identify, are free from all forms of discrimination and gaps

3. **Gender and sexuality inclusivity**: Gender and sexuality inclusivity acknowledges the foundational nature of gender and sexuality to one’s identity and prioritizes the safety and inclusion of female, nonbinary, and LGBTQ+ youth.
   a. **Female safety** ensures that female-identifying and female-coded youth, including trans youth, feel safe in their communities.
   b. **Sex education** advocates for consent-based sex education and increased resources.

4. **Social connection**: Young people must have supportive community, supportive relationships, and a say in building and contributing to their communities.
   a. **Unity** seeks to ensure that youth have access to strong community ties.

5. **Supportive systems**: We must advocate for systems and institutions that promote youth development through collaboration and aligning strategies, and break down and reform systems that hinder youth development.
   a. **Community improvements** advocates for park and recreation activities, built environment, and public art that are inclusive and accessible to all youth.
   b. **Climate literacy** seeks to increase to environmentally friendly practices and increase the accessibility of alternate forms of transportation.
   c. **School improvements** supports increasing school-based systems for support, making the curriculum more diverse and relevant to youths’ experiences, and expanding opportunities to access resources.

6. **Developmental needs**: Children and youth must live in safe, stable environments in which their needs, both for survival and for social, political, and economic advancement, are met to grow and thrive in directions that are personally fulfilling and enrich their communities.
   a. **Accessible necessities** seek to secure basic needs for youth in Minneapolis, including opportunity and economic stability.
   b. **Community safety** addresses the lack of preventative resources for youth involved in violence and the need for increasing protective factors against, such as jobs and community services for youth.
   c. **Public health necessities** address the lack of mental health advocacy and awareness, the inaccessibility of affordable healthcare, and substance abuse.

**Conclusion**

In total, the Youth Master Plan will serve as a framework for the YCB’s initiatives and dictate which initiatives the organization brings to head over the next five years. Part Two of the Youth Master Plan will include a complete status of youth data report, children’s budgets for each of our four jurisdictions, and policy recommendations for our jurisdictional partners to advance our priorities and weave youth voice into formal decision making.