

Memorandum

TO: City Council Workshop

FROM: Renee Eisenbeisz , Assistant City Manager

DATE: February 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Review of final reports from University of Minnesota's Resilient Communities Project Partnership

ITEM NUMBER: 1.b

SECTION: GENERAL BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, the city has added nearly 1,500 multi-family units (MFUs), with approximately 300 more coming in the next few years. This, along with the number of townhomes, means that MFUs account for almost 45% of Shoreview households. In 2021, the city council created a strategic goal to improve and enhance its engagement with residents, especially those living in MFUs. The hope is to not only provide residents with information about the city but to ensure we are hearing from all of our residents and identifying potential community partners or volunteers.

The city created an internal task force in 2023 that was responsible for identifying strategies for engaging residents in MFUs. Since then, the task force has provided "Connect with us" postcards to apartment buildings to include in their welcome packets, hosted a few ice cream socials, and attended hot dog with a deputy events hosted by the Sheriff's Office.

In 2025, the city partnered with the University of Minnesota through their Resilient Communities Project (RCP). Through this partnership, the city was paired with two groups of students in the spring and fall semesters. By partnering with RCP, the city was able to continue work on an engagement plan with residents in MFUs. Below is a summary from each course, as well the task force's recommendations for moving forward. The final reports from each course are also attached.

DISCUSSION

Civic participation in public affairs

The first course that the city was paired with was civic participation in public affairs. Throughout the semester, the students worked on a variety of assignments that resulted in an engagement plan. The goals for the plan are to:

- Develop relationships with renters
- Understand their perspectives and incentives for participating on advisory boards
- Explore different engagement methods
- Increase a sense of belonging for renters

The plan provides a range of recommendations for the city to pick and choose from over two years:

- Events
 - Apartment pop-ups - host informal events with city staff at apartment complexes.
 - Slice of Shoreview, farmers market, and night to unite - have booths at special events throughout the year to educate renters on city happenings and opportunities for volunteering.
 - Focus groups - host focus groups with renters to hear about their perspectives.
- Activities
 - Participatory art piece - have renters participate in an art project that could eventually be displayed at city hall or the community center.
 - Renter or staff-led tours - host tours with renters to hear about their perspectives.
 - Food - focus the event around culturally appropriate, locally sourced food
 - Share of Shoreview game - play Share of Shoreview to help educate residents on our advisory boards.
 - Survey - coordinate a survey for renters.

Program evaluation

The second course was program evaluation. Over the semester, the students worked on a variety of assignments to help us with the survey and focus group recommendations from the first course. The goal for the students was to create methods for us to answer the following questions:

- Are the city's engagement efforts reaching MFU residents?
- Why aren't MFU residents currently participating in advisory boards?
- How do MFU residents engage and interact with the community at large?

The students identified the following methods for the city to implement over four years:

- Short-form survey - ask visitors at city events to place a token or check-mark answering the question "What type of housing do you live in?"
- Long-form survey - send a longer survey to MFU residents via Polco and ask a variety of questions around their current engagement efforts and potential barriers.
- Focus groups - facilitate three to five focus groups to help dive deeper into MFU residents' perspectives.
- Council interviews - talk with city council members to better understand how they interact with MFU residents.

Task force recommendations

The task force met in January to discuss the above information and identified the following recommendations:

- 2026
 - Create a tabling kit with a variety of information to hand out at events.
 - This would include making Share of Shoreview into a more interactive game.
 - Continue attending hot dog with a deputy events hosted by the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office.
 - Host one event at a senior facility.
 - Staff attended a monthly meeting at Scandia Shores in early February to give a city overview.
 - Host one event at a non-senior facility.
 - Host a booth at the Slice of Shoreview on Saturday
 - Conduct the short-form survey at farmers markets, Slice of Shoreview, and other

- city events throughout the year.
- Create and distribute the long-form survey.
 - Staff recommend having it open for at least six months so it can be advertised at apartment pop-ups, hot dog with a deputy events, rental inspections, etc.
- Distribute information to property managers for them to include in monthly e-newsletters or new resident packets.
- 2027
 - Continue with events outlined in 2026.
 - Continue distributing information to property managers.
 - Incorporate public art piece at events for city's 70th anniversary.
 - Staff recommend having this be more community focused rather than renter focused.
 - Would work with Gallery 96 to create a paint-by-number mural.
 - Conduct city council interviews.
 - Host focus groups in late 2027.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the city council provide direction on the above. If the city council is comfortable with the task force's recommendations, they will begin working on the 2026 action items.

ATTACHMENTS

[Civic participation in public affairs](#)

[Program evaluation](#)