

Dear members of the MN House Redistricting Committee,

My name is Mónica María Hurtado, and I am with Voices for Racial Justice. During the past 4 months we conducted community of interest mapping as part of the [Our Maps MN](#) campaign. I worked with 5 different BIPOC communities in Worthington, Northfield, Dayton Mobile Home Park, West Side Saint Paul and Duluth to create community of interest maps.

Below are the links to each of these maps with some of the comments or highlights made by the community at the listening session:

[Worthington](#) session had participants from Latinx, Asia and East African immigrant communities. Some highlights are:

- When discussing the issues that impact their community, they talked about the danger of residents not understanding how the infrastructure of the city is and where all that money comes from.
- A common thread was the underinvestment in BIPOC communities across Worthington. Many noted that there is not an equitable process for what resources BIPOC receive in the form of education and access to public spaces such as parks.
- Another major issue they articulated was accessibility to things like food, social services, and housing. Accessibility in Worthington is closely correlated with language access. Because the population is largely immigrant and refugee, when there aren't language services like interpreters and translators made available people can't receive the support they need.
- Participants shared concerns regarding policing of their communities. "People are getting pulled over all the time for traffic violations. The policing in our community does not reflect our community at all," one person said. This, like other issues identified, connects to the issue of BIPOC not having representation in positions of power in Worthington."

[Northfield](#) session had participants from Latinx community, and the session was in Spanish. Some highlights are:

- Immigration reform: "We have been waiting for many years, many years and nothing has happened yet. With an immigration reform we would have many more opportunities to prosper, to have a home, and to have no fear. We are always fighting"
- Education: "Our children do not have the same opportunities. There are differences and confusion in how Anglo children are treated than Latinos."
- Housing: "If we buy a trailer [Mobile Home] it is devalued. If you rent an apartment, they don't offer you good maintenance or care. There are too many requirements to get housing"
- Driver Licenses: it is too important to have access to licenses "I have dealt with this issue for too long. With my son who is 20 years old. We will never forget about this, nor me or my son. He is always mentioning this story. He has always liked sports and I remember when he was in a soccer team and the matches were about an hour from here and unfortunately I had to remove him from the soccer team due to the lack of a Driver's license.

- Lack of representation. We have to acknowledge our power, and also send our invoice. Thanks to the growth of our communities of color, and because we made ourselves count, MN has 8 districts, and now they are going to have to recognize us. Now there are at least two
- Lack of healthcare access and medical insurance. We are fortunate to have a clinic in Northfield that treats us at no cost, but it is not enough.
- Food. Most of the Latino community is in a food desert, there is nothing but gas stations and a dairy queen. The closest market is in downtown Northfield. We need a closer market
- There are no accessible places to do sports
- Young people need a special place for them to meet and for example learn more about dance. Only when they go to parties can they get together

[Dayton Mobile Home](#) session had participants from Latinx community, and the session was in Spanish. Some highlights are:

- Housing is one of the biggest concerns for this community. They mentioned increases in rent every year. The park owners won't fix the areas where residents park their cars
- Safety of the park, there are children playing in the street and it's dangerous for cars to be driving through at high speeds.
- "Our representatives aren't coming to meet with us" "I want our senators and representatives to come to our community and come face to face with the realities we are facing. "We need to believe in the power that we have when we come together as a community"
- "We need to know about the resources that are available, because we don't know where to go".
- There is no public transportation.
- There are also not any clinics nearby for people who don't have insurance. All of those clinics are in the twin cities.
- Comprehensive immigration reform is needed
- Our post office is in Maple Grove. It can be confusing to know what our main city even is
- Their utilities come from maple grove

[West St. Paul](#) session had participants from Latinx, African American and African Immigrant communities. Some highlights are:

- The community expressed great concerns around:
- House inequality
- Historic and current disinvestments
- Bussing, housing, education, deteriorating physical infrastructure, a viaduct and bridge that is in desperate need of repair and we are only repeatedly told to wait- most recently they have detected physical movement on the structure walls of the viaduct. *crumbling bluff top (literally that needs to be invested, investigated, and fortified) Large boulders fell on one of the main roads a few yrs ago
- Racism especially most currently towards the Muslim West Side Community
- A community that has experienced deep trauma at the hands of the City through imminent domain and unlawful toxic industries next to housing without a buffer. (Now

illegal, but was grandfathered into place leaving toxic sites and air particles for members living in the southport area of the West Side)

[Duluth](#) session had participants from Latinx, African American, Native and White communities. Some highlights are:

Addiction and mental health are probably the biggest problems

- Parks are not safe; lots of needles; people sitting in the park late at night doing drugs; not safe for our children in Lincoln Park
- Housing is a big issue; redlining used to elect senators and to silence people of color; landlords are slumlords; filthy buildings; not clean. Substandard housing in Lincoln Park;
- Jobs depends on who you know to get a good job;
- We have shorter life spans; lower graduation rates; high expulsion rates for children of color. There is no grocery store - or access to food. Food desert
- Only 2 high schools - we have to bus our children to schools and they don't know how to treat our children
- School to prison pipeline;
- Halfway houses should work with mental health centers; therapists on site who could provide services
- "There is nothing in Lincoln Park" "There's nothing out here though" There are two very poor districts in Duluth Lincoln Park and Central Hillside - they keep them poor through redlining.

Please center the interest of our black, indigenous and people of color communities in the redistricting process. If we want to achieve honest district maps that truly reflect ALL Minnesota communities it is essential that communities of interest be kept intact and that community maps be prioritized, or minimally given deference, when drawing our district voting maps. Status quo no longer works for all Minnesotans. Racial inequities are hurting ALL Minnesotans

Sincerely,

Mónica María Hurtado (She/her/hers)
Community Organizer