

Streets.MN Racial Equity Impact Assessment

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Purpose: This racial equity analysis examines the board practices, editorial policies and strategies for engaging with Streets.MN's readership.

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Executive Summary

Report Purpose/Objective:

This racial equity analysis examines the board practices, editorial policies and strategies for engaging with Streets.MN's readership. The REIA process is most concerned with BIPOC communities and is specifically focused on inclusion and equity issues as it relates to BIPOC communities. Thus each question will focus on those communities as a centerpoint. This tool can be expanded to include other historically-marginalized communities around gender, sexual orientation, class, immigration status, etc etc. However, it is also important to recognize that these issues are intersectional and that is brought into these assessments with strategic intention. REIAs will have their own unique geographic focus, depending on the work of the campaign or organization. Racial Equity Assessments assume that racial equity can be measured, although we also know that racial injustice cannot always be deconstructed.

Methodology

In order to conduct this research project, I attempted to gather data from several sources: background research into Streets.MN's online presence, interviews with members of the Streets.MN's team, community interviews, a survey, and external interviews. Following the completion of all the different research steps, the transcriptions and other data was collected and organized. Major themes from each data point were pulled out and coded down to a single phrase. Data was organized in a spreadsheet organizing those themes and the supporting comments. After pulling out the themes, and organizing the data, I applied that data to the completion of the Racial Equity Impact Analysis/Assessment.

REA Results

There are systemic issues within Streets.MN that are causing a disconnect between some who see racial equity as a requirement for the organization to move on and an organization that operates independent of an equity value. Likely this disconnect stems from capacity issues, but it also definitely stems from a lack of equitable representation within the organization and because there does not seem to be a systemic understanding or definition of racial equity - both generally and as it pertains to the organization, though there does seem to be a somewhat more well-thought-out understanding of the racial equity and racial injustice elements of land use and transportation issues. None of these issues have seemed to be surprising to those within the organization, so the recommendations, resources, and next steps will try to chart a path forward for the organization.

Another internal issue seems to be a lack of confidence in wanting to make institutional change within this arena. There is clearly an interest in pushing forward an external commitment to racial equity, but there is a lack of internal confidence, within individuals and the organization to make a systemic commitment to racial equity. However, a lack of confidence can be beaten if strategic steps are taken, as laid out in the training recommendations.

Most crucially, it is clear that the organization must develop a vision and a shared understanding for what racial equity is and what it should look like within the parameters of the organization, as well as its own regular assessment process.

Recommendations

- The organization must develop a commonly shared vision for racial equity. This will create a guardrail on which to judge the organization's efforts and set parameters for racial equity as a specific goal of the organization.
- The organization must be trained to conduct quantitative assessment, in order to ensure that it is effectively making steps towards racial equity. Assessment is one crucial tool that we use. Qualitative assessment is also crucial but that happens in different ways and as a tool for reflection.
- In order to increase BIPOC representation within the organization, and coverage and understanding of BIPOC issues, the organization must put intentional capacity and resources into building relationships within these communities. This should be done strategically, intentionally, and respectfully. While Board representation is crucial, the Board should also consider its structure and how it can measure representation on the Board from across geographies and communities. This does not solve the problem, but it will hopefully create space for people in impacted communities to have the discussions.
- The organization should (and must) develop a toolkit for measuring and tracking BIPOC representation within its events work, outreach efforts, and editorial efforts. Whether it be spreadsheet or something more (spreadsheet is recommended), this should be regularly tracked and measured by every member of the organization, with an "organizational lead" to ensure accountability.
- The organization must invest in meaningful networking at the grassroots level (laid out in training recommendations)

Project's Next Steps

- Given a commitment to offer training workshops laid out in the original REA proposal, the organization and consultant must decide on 3-5 trainings, or training materials, to be provided to the organizations. Specific options - that seem most pertinent based on the organization's work - are laid out in the full report.

Methodology

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comments. After pulling out the themes, and organizing the data, I applied that data to the completion of the Racial Equity Impact Analysis/Assessment.

Background Research

I began this work by researching both the organization and the local field as it relates to land use and transportation. I spent several hours looking at the organization's online presence in terms of website and social media, including the articles published, the types of issues discussed in the reporting, and how those issues are shared on social media. My goal in completing this background research was to understand some of the organization's public-facing work and to see how the organization talks about its work. I also looked into the larger field of land use planning and transportation, and I cross-mapped the last two years of issues covered by Streets.MN and the equity/injustice issues I saw in my research.

Internal Interviews

I did interviews with most members of the Board and staff. The goal in completing these interviews was to understand the work and processes of the organization, as well as how members of the organization define, design for, and/or implement towards racial equity. I also spoke with 3 former writers for the organization. These interviews will remain anonymous.

Community Interviews

I conducted interviews with six members of the Twin Cities community. Each conversation focused on one of two issues, by and large:

- 1) Land use and transportation issues that had their attention in the Twin Cities, as added context to the background research
- 2) Thoughts on land use and transportation reporting in the Twin Cities

Survey

There was one response to the survey. That single response cannot be representative of a larger group, and most questions were not responded to. The individual did say that they were not familiar with Streets.MN's racial equity efforts, but again that is not necessarily representative of a larger response.

Coding Process

All interview transcriptions were anonymized, with any identifying information stripped from them (though that's not a perfect process). After transcribing each interview and pulling out pertinent notes from each interview and other notes that I had collected, I reviewed the research for major themes. I then created one-word "symbols" of each theme and added them to a spreadsheet. Interview and research notes were then organized on the spreadsheet, by theme. I then reviewed the one-word theme and created a one-paragraph summary of the data collected by

theme. I also reviewed the data collected to make sure I had responses to each of the questions and to understand what data I still need to collect.

Preliminary Report Process

The REA questions are influenced by the Racial Equity Impact Assessment process developed by the Applied Research Center, as well as the REA process developed by Voices for Racial Justice.

Final Report Process

In order to complete the final REA, I met with two additional Board members that I had not had the chance to meet with previously. I also met independently with the Events and Editorial teams to discuss recommendations and support they were looking for specifically. I then coded those notes and built them into the research. I updated the report throughout, such as in updating this specific section. I developed, reviewed, and produced a list of training recommendations and potential next steps, using content from the Journalism of Color Training Center and partner organizations. I then reviewed the document a few final times.

The primary change to the final report is in next steps, training recommendations, and the development of an appendix.

Racial Equity Impact Assessment

Questions

- 1) Which stakeholders are most impacted by transportation and land use issues within the coverage area?

Streets.MN is currently focused on the Twin Cities, but aims to be a statewide organization. There are several stakeholder groups directly impacted by transportation and land use issues in the Twin Cities and across the state.

- Within the Twin Cities proper, land use and transportation issues directly impact several different historically-marginalized communities, including K-12 and higher education students, immigrant populations, and specific underserved neighborhoods.
 - Within rural communities and Greater Minnesota, there are other specific issues impacting Indigenous communities, low-income farming communities, and even urban communities in Greater Minnesota.
- 2) Have stakeholders from different racial/ethnic groups— especially those most adversely affected—been informed, meaningfully involved and authentically represented in the development of this organization and its work? Who's missing and how can they be engaged?

No. It is easy to blame this on capacity, and that can be a meaningful response, but it is not a roots-based/system-centered understanding of the true issue. More specifically, the organization seems to not have a vision for racial equity within the organization and thus there is not a practice or a commitment to that practice. Again, this is in terms of the organization's system, as a whole. When specifically considering the development of the organization, there is no equitable and diverse BIPOC representation in people or issues, and they are not currently being meaningfully involved or represented in the organization's overall work. There are efforts happening on the editorial end of things currently that I would consider to be meaningful, but it is not enough (yet) to counter the organization's history and the work that needs to be done to ensure authentic representation. Roots-based work requires a relationship-based approach and that is something that also seems to be missing when it comes to ensuring racial equity within the organization.

- 3) Which racial/ethnic groups are currently most advantaged and most disadvantaged by the issues this organization and its work? How are they affected differently? What quantitative and qualitative evidence of inequality exists? What evidence is missing or needed?

Currently white urbanites are most advantaged by the organization. Most other BIPOC communities are disadvantaged. In a Racial Equity Impact Analysis it is not just about not intentionally causing harm, it is about recognizing that neutrality is, in and of itself, harmful. This harm is caused both within the system of the organization and within its output. There are also processes and missing evaluative methods that seem to be causing harm.

- 4) What factors may be producing and perpetuating racial inequities associated with this issue? How did the inequities arise? Are they expanding or narrowing? Does the organization address root causes? If not, how could it?

There are several areas where harm is being caused.

- In the organization's system, equity requires that marginalized communities not be spoken for and that their voices be actively and intentionally heard. This is not happening.
- There needs to be intentional work done by the Board to develop a vision and (sustainable) strategic plan and evaluation plans for measuring racial equity.
 - Vision is crucial and it's something that is needed in order to have a "rubric" to base the work off of
- Racial equity is not currently the intent of the organization, and if it is, it's not being communicated effectively.

- 5) What does the organization seek to accomplish? Will its work, at its root, deconstruct disparities or discrimination? Is that the intent of the organization?

If the organization were to strategically and intentionally take on the work of building the organization with and for BIPOC communities, it could possibly deconstruct the idea that land use and transportation is a “white issue,” when it very much is not. Additionally, racial equity must become an organizational intention.

- 6) What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from the reporting? Which racial/ethnic groups could be negatively affected? How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized?

It is very possible for an untrained organization, committed only on the surface to racial equity, to create incredible harm to BIPOC individuals and BIPOC communities. From interviews, BIPOC individuals affiliated with the organization shared that organizational process has often been used as an excuse for not moving equitably. This is both a people-failure (not a person-failure) and a system failure, but it could be worse if an organization committed to equity and failed - that can be akin to gaslighting and can be irreparably harmful.

- 7) What positive impacts on equality and inclusion, if any, could result from this organization? Which racial/ethnic groups could benefit? Are there further ways to maximize equitable opportunities and impacts?

If the organization were to make racial equity an intent, a vision, and a practice - with adequate evaluation, it could minimize harm and build justice for communities impacted adversely by stereotypes around the whiteness of land use and transportation issues, as well as those BIPOC communities whose stories in this space are commonly ignored. Additionally, the organization could be a powerful platform for communities and community organizations (both journalistic and not) as a platform and collaborative partner.

- 8) Are there better ways to reduce racial disparities and advance racial equity? What provisions could be changed or added to ensure positive impacts on racial equity and inclusion?

Racial equity is both a systemic response and an individual practice. In order to move towards a more racially equitable organization, the organization must be strategic in moving the work forward. Making sudden steps, moving without intention or training, and “saying racial equity” without “doing racial equity” can all cause harm. Thus “a better way to reduce racial disparities and advance racial equity” requires training, particularly in non-extractive relationship-building and organizational process reconstruction, including interviewing, event development, and more.

- 9) Are there provisions to ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, stakeholder participation and public accountability? What additional knowledge or training is needed?

The organization does not currently have a process for evaluation and public accountability, when it comes to racial equity. Additional knowledge and training is discussed elsewhere in this

report, and is specifically recommended to be built into specific aspects of the organization's work.

- 10) What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks? How will impacts be documented and evaluated? How will the level, diversity and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed?

The organization does not currently have success indicators and progress benchmarks for its racial equity work. It is not currently documenting and evaluating its racial equity efforts. Evaluative methods, success indicators, and progress benchmarks are discussed under training recommendations. This can include everything from participant interaction, to DEI source tracking, Board representation, and more.

Recommendations

- The organization must develop a commonly shared vision for racial equity. This will create a guardrail on which to judge the organization's efforts and set parameters for racial equity as a specific goal of the organization.
 - The organization must be trained to conduct quantitative assessment, in order to ensure that it is effectively making steps towards racial equity. Assessment is one crucial tool that we use. Qualitative assessment is also crucial but that happens in different ways and as a tool for reflection.
 - In order to increase BIPOC representation within the organization, and coverage and understanding of BIPOC issues, the organization must put intentional capacity and resources into building relationships within these communities. This should be done strategically, intentionally, and respectfully. While Board representation is crucial, the Board should also consider its structure and how it can measure representation on the Board from across geographies and communities. This does not solve the problem, but it will hopefully create space for people in impacted communities to have the discussions.
 - As part of this project, the organization should (and must) develop a toolkit for measuring and tracking BIPOC representation within its events work, outreach efforts, and editorial efforts. Whether it be spreadsheet or something more (spreadsheet is recommended), this should be regularly tracked and measured by every member of the organization, with an "organizational lead" to ensure accountability.
 - The organization should invest energy into DEI tracking - events, reporting, contributors, and any other areas of the organization. DEI Tracking provides solid data about who is engaged in the organization, what they do, and more.
 - The organization should invest energy into an "exit interview" process with any BIPOC community members leaving the organization, or that have left.
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Recommendations

Evaluative methods, success indicators, and progress benchmarks

Throughout the analysis and assessment process it became clear that Streets.MN does not have any specific evaluative methods for measuring racial equity work within the organization. This is not unexpected.

While I do recommend throughout this report that the organization focus on implementing specific training recommendations one-at-a-time, there are four things that the organization must do first to begin this work.

- 1) Define racial equity for the organization.
- 2) Define racial equity-centered goals. Consider the organization's work and its people. What do you want Streets.MN to be and how do you want to grow into being a more racially equitable organization?
- 3) Break those goals down into plans. More on this can be found in Appendix 10, and is largely adopted from community organizing methodologies.
- 4) Develop regular check-ins with the organization as a whole, asking each individual on the Board and staff to answer specific questions like the ones listed here:
 - a) What have you specifically done over the last [insert specific period of time] that implements the recommendations noted in the trainings and report discussions?
 - b) What support do you still need?
 - c) Who is represented in this work?
 - d) What relationships are you building and which communities are meaningfully represented?
 - e) What is not working about your work, when thinking about racial equity?
 - f) What is working about your work, when thinking about racial equity?

I also want to note, and this is particularly crucial, that nobody should expect immense transformation - as well-meaning as people are and can be - in less than 18 months time, if not much longer. A job done well but slowly is more important than a rushed job done incorrectly and harmfully.

It is up to the Board and the organization's leaders to decide that implementing racial equity commitments is a priority. If they commit to that priority, then my recommendation would be that the institution develop a timeline, alongside both the editorial and events teams, and use the trainings as tips for what should be implemented, and why/how.

Training materials and notes can be found in the appendix, to support each training recommendation below. Some of the recommendations come in the form of organizational activities, others are informational.

Additional resources aimed at supporting the organization's work are in the "resources section."

Institution/Organization: Recommendations

- Each member of the Streets.MN Board (and staff) should participate in a set amount of one-to-one relationship-buildings each year, as a requirement of the work, beginning with one one-to-one per quarter.
 - Appendix 1: One-to-One Training
- The organization must develop a shared vision for racial equity. This is crucial for level-setting.
 - Appendix 2: Developing a Shared Vision for Racial Equity.
- A shared vision goes hand-in-hand with public accountability. Developing an equity statement allows for that public accountability and a public commitment.
 - Appendix 3: Developing an Equity Statement

Events: Recommendations

- Streets.MN must make a public commitment to accessibility and equity-centered events. These do not need to be every event the organization does - but rather there should be a set amount of time each year dedicated to important discussions related to equity and the issues that Streets focused on. However, Streets should not center themselves in these discussions. They should be a platform for folks directly impacted by issues in impacted communities.
 - Appendix 4: Equitable event planning & production
 - Appendix 5: Equitable networking and outreach

Editorial: Recommendations

- Streets.MN should review its editorial process to ensure that there are specific guideposts for equity built into the process, whether that is on a story-by-story basis or larger. Additionally, Streets.MN editorial team must develop a shared vision for the Crosswalks and a longer-term plan that is communicated to larger audiences.
 - Appendix 6: DEI Source Tracking
 - Appendix 7: Racial equity in reporting (tips & recommendations for writers and editors)
 - Appendix 8: Collaboration as a tool for equitable reporting
 - Appendix 9: Pitching for Equity

In the original iteration of the proposal, I proposed 3-4 trainings or training materials. The training materials and recommendations listed below are somewhat more extensive and I have developed three lists of training recommendations: one specific to the organization, one specific to events-work, and one specific to editorial work.

Upon review of any of the training materials, the Journalism of Color Training Center is happy to provide up to one-hour training sessions for each of the training recommendations, each no

longer than 90 minutes long and as the final piece in this contract and project. These trainings would need to be offered by July 25, 2023 at the very latest.

Appendix

Appendix 1: One-to-One Relationship-Building

A one-to-one, or intentional relationship-building meeting, is one of the most important activities that a community organizer engages in. Community journalists also need to conduct one-to-one's. The practice of conducting a one-to-one is necessary for any work that is centered in relationship-building and community spaces.

As noted, a one-to-one is an intentional conversation. These are tools that organizers are/should be familiar with and while there are different schools of thought about how and why to conduct a one-to-one, there are some best practices.

One-to-one's are focused on understanding a person's self-interest. The term self-interest comes from the Latin word "inter ese," which literally translates back to "self amongst community." In short, a one-to-one is used to understand what a person's values are and what motivates them (or could motivate them) to engage in a specific campaign or the larger work for social justice.

There are generally two kinds of one-to-one's. One-to-one's with a request and one-to-one's without a request.

A one-to-one with a request is a one-to-one that ends with an ask. That ask might pertain to a donation, attendance at an event, etc. The ask is a real thing, not just support for a campaign, but a thing with real impacts and that makes the askee accountable to a supportive action. I generally think that one-to-one's with a request are ethically gray, particularly if the folks you're talking to do not know you plan on asking them something.

A one-to-one without a request is a one-to-one that is more focused on the relationship-building and trying to get to know a person

There are some generally-recognized best practices AND, through your organizing work, you'll come to understand what one-to-one practices work best for you. Here are some best practices to start with:

- One-to-one's are generally between 60-90 minutes.
- One-to-one's are generally conducted in-person, though this has shifted some given the COVID-19 pandemic.
- One-to-one's are generally held at a neutral location.

- Do NOT take notes during a one-to-one. Prep questions before a one-to-one and reflect on the one-to-one after your meeting is conducted.

One-to-one's can be deeply emotional and challenging conversations. Approaching them with a sense of compassion is very much a requirement.

[Audio: Conducting a One-to-One](#)

Additional Resources:

- [League of Women Voters - FAQ: The Power of Relational Organizing](#)
- [The Commons Library - Organizing: People, Power, and Change](#)

Appendix 2: Developing an Organizational Vision for Racial Equity

When we define community journalism, and specifically when we discuss anti-racist community journalism, there's a few questions we need to consider:

- 1) What is your community/are your communities?
- 2) What media, if any, is serving your communities?
- 3) What relationships do media have with your community and vice versa?
- 4) What does your community need from the media?
 - a) Specifically, what media processes/platforms (print, online, etc.) best serve your community?
- 5) How do we understand how the historically-marginalized peoples and communities within our community will interact with community journalism?

Community journalism is, in short, journalism that serves a specific hyperlocal community. Community, here, is loosely defined as a collective of people with a similar quality. This may be a geographic quality or a quality related to ethnicity, identity, challenge, etc.

Lauterer (2006) defines community journalism as

serving people who live together in a distinct geographical space with a clear local-first emphasis on news, features, sports, and advertising. A more liberal definition of community journalism will include papers serving not just 'communities of place' but also communities of ethnicity, faith, ideas, or interests (p. 1).

These community newspapers serve audiences or a readership of less than 50,000 people. According to Lauterer (2006), there are over 9000 community news organizations in the country.

Community journalism focuses on any one of eight coverage areas: (Meijer, 2020, p. 359)

- 1) "Emergencies and risks, both immediate and long term"
- 2) "Health and welfare, including specific local health information as well as group specific health information"
- 3) "Education, including the quality of local schools and choices available to parents"
- 4) "Transportation, including available alternatives, costs, and schedules"
- 5) "Economic opportunities, including job opportunities, job training, and small business assistance"
- 6) "The environment, including air and water quality and access to recreation"
- 7) "Civic information, including the availability of civic institutions and opportunities to associate with others"
- 8) "Political information, including information about candidates at all relevant facts of local governance, and about relevant public policy initiatives affecting communities and neighborhoods"

There are many major conversations happening within the community journalism world right now. One pertains to sustainability, another pertains to the interactions between community and legacy journalism, a third pertains to objectivity and equity within journalism and within the world surrounding journalists.

Lewis Raven Wallace (2019), the co-founder of Press On and the author of *The View from Somewhere: Undoing the Myth of Journalistic Objectivity*, says about objectivity:

Abandoning 'objectivity' leaves us in need of new ways to think about journalism and trust, work that many people are already doing; transparency, equity, an analysis of power and oppression, and community accountability are all elements of the movement to revive and revise journalism for the twenty-first century. Journalists in the US today need to define our values, identify and acknowledge the ideological frames from which we work, and develop tools for being accountable to the communities we cover. Verification, deep sourcing, and data-based research must increasingly be paired with radical transparency and media activism; curiosity must increasingly be paired with a sharp, and shifting analysis of power and oppression and how they operate both in our daily lives and in our newsrooms. Rebuilding trust with audiences must begin at the grassroots (p. 13).

There is a really crucial conversation that everyone has to be engaged in, but especially community journalism participants, and that is in regards to our responsibility to anti-racism work.

It bears repeating many many times but journalism exists to hold the powerful accountable and to ease powerlessness (a paraphrase with sourcing that I can not remember). Community journalism, specifically, is about building deep connections in a community, mapping power ecosystems, and empowering (a word I generally loathe) those without traditional/systemic power. To take it further, particularly when discussing community journalism education or even

education within any field that can be related to journalism, there is a responsibility to name systems of oppression and how these systems play out in people's lives.

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Additional Resources:

Lauterer, J. (2006). *Community Journalism: Relentlessly Local*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Appendix 3: Developing an Equity Statement

The challenge of an equity statement is that they too often can be performative. However they can also be important accountability statements. And rather than stating "this is who we are now," they can be crucial ways to share "this is who we want to become."

Developing an equity statement requires group buy-in and it requires that the organization develop a shared vision that they can then communicate, alongside a plan for implementing vision, alongside specific values that the organization will seek to embody.

Additional Resources

Rash, M. (2021). How one local news organization approaches the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion day in and day out. *EdNC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ednc.org/how-one-local-news-organization-approaches-the-work-of-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-day-in-and-day-out/>

Last Call Media. (2021). Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement. *Last Call Media*. Retrieved from: <https://lastcallmedia.com/diversity-equity-inclusion-statement>

Poets Reading the News. (n.d.). Cultural Equity Statement. *Poets Reading the News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.poetsreadingthenews.com/cultural-equity-statement/>

Appendix 4: Equitable event planning and production

This rubric, developed by the Journalism of Color Training Center, uses narrative design to help community news organizations like Streets.MN assess organizational projects like events. This rubric will not be perfect every time, and definitely not to start with. Rather it is a tool that aims to lay out specific directions for growth, while simultaneously allowing the organization to do its work.

Recommendation activity: Event planning assessment

Were BIPOC community members explicitly invited	
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to attend and participate? Please describe their participation and the invitation.	
Was the event accessible, physically, economically, and geographically? If yes, please describe what was accessible. If not, please describe what was not accessible.	
Was the event produced in such a way that multiple communities, including BIPOC communities, would feel welcome and represented?	
Were there any collaborations with BIPOC-representing organizations, and/or BIPOC community leaders? What were they? What was learned from those collaborations? How will Streets.MN push more deeply into that specific collaborative relationship?	
Did the event focus on any justice/equity issues? If so, what was learned? Were communities impacted by the justice/equity issues discussed invited to be a part of the planning process and the event itself?	
Additional Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia Business School - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Event Planning Checklist 	

Appendix 5: Equitable networking and outreach

Similar to one-to-one's and equitable event planning and production, equitable networking is about making sure that Streets.MN, and any other community news organization, expands beyond their normal networks to build new relationships and potential collaborations.

Below I've shared a tool for post-relationship-building-notetaking, but first I want to say that equitable networking does not mean friending BIPOC folks on LinkedIn. Instead, it is the basis for future collaboration and partnerships, for connection-building and community creating. It requires the organization at hand, in this case Streets.MN, to reach out to one organization at a time over a period of months and get to know them. Have coffee, have a one-to-one, get to know their team, support their events, build a relationship, and find ways to collaborate. Expand to additional organizations slowly. Be open to what people would from Streets.MN as a community news organization - be willing to be a resource for people. Show up where people are!

For example, as shared in the meeting with the events team, a powerful connection might be between Streets and the Hmong American Farmers Association, as an example. If that is a relationship you want to build, what types of resources can Streets provide (not in terms of money but socially and journalistically) and how can HAFA feel welcome to collaborate with an organization like Streets?

Additionally, I am recommending that the events and editorial team - and even the organization as a whole - participate in meaningful outreach in historically-marginalized communities across the Twin Cities (and especially Minneapolis) and any other area the organization wants to build with.

This might be tabling at coffee shops, using a practice called community cafe's (promoting Streets will be at a coffee shop with permission from the coffee shop, to specific communities and then hosting come-when-you-can gatherings). This might be having a presence at specific community events. But most importantly it should always include collaboration and relationship-building with organizations in specific communities.

However, and this is crucial, this requires a lot of slow movement and it should not, in any way, be rushed. Streets.MN should pick one community and one outreach activity, and do that right before expanding the effort.

Recommendation activity: Post-relationship-building notetaking (important to organizational memory)

What organization did we meet with?	
What stories did that organization have to share?	
Did they seem comfortable with the meeting? Were they familiar with our organization?	

How did we meet?	
Who represented our organization? Who represented theirs?	
Is there a potential for connection and collaboration? If so, what?	

Additional Resources:

- [Interaction Institute - Why equitable networks?](#)
- [Interaction Institute - Understanding racism - By design](#)
- [Networking for Equity and Equality](#)

Appending 6: DEI Source Tracking Training

Assessment is key to working towards racial equity, because assessment is a sign that the work the organization is trying to do matters. However, rather than traditional assessment, DEI Source Tracking is an ongoing practice that happens in partnership between editors and reporters who choose to participate in this practice.

DEI Source Tracking can most simply happen via spreadsheet or online form. It allows editors to understand what their reporter's priorities and connections are and it can support Streets.MN's efforts in training and supporting their reporters to do more deeply equitable reporting work.

The Reynolds Journalism Institute offers incredibly valuable discussion on DEI source tracking. This "[practical playbook](#)" can help you understand where Streets is and how to build towards more meaningful DEI sourcing.

Additional Resources:

Video: [Whose Voices are We Amplifying? Source Tracking 101](#)

Video: [The Pipeline is the not the Problem: Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting the Next BIPOC Leaders](#)

Appendix 7: Racial equity in reporting (tips & recommendations for writers and editors)

Journalists, and students of journalism, have begun in recent years to inch towards a discussion pertaining to racial justice and journalism.

Racial justice in journalism can mean any one of two things. Please keep in mind that there's no official "vision" here for what racial justice in journalism is, so these meanings are generally umbrella understandings.

- 1) The act of creating news institutions that embody and practice towards racial justice. This would include racial justice in hiring, editorial practices, organizational priorities, etc.
- 2) The act of pursuing news content that aims to build racial justice. This might mean internal journalistic processes (in interviewing, sourcing, etc.) and it may also be the editorial/content focus.

The conversations being had in community news organizations committed to racial justice are diverse, but some of the questions being considered include:

- 1) How do we ensure that our news organizations/newsrooms look like the BIPOC communities we seek to serve?
- 2) How do we build equity into our editorial practices?
- 3) How do we make our community journalism accessible to those we are in community with?
- 4) How do we assess our efforts towards racial justice?

In short, when we talk about racial justice in journalism, what we're actually saying is how do we do (big umbrella, little umbrella) the news in ways that the work we do is equitable, accessible, and "empowering," for lack of a better word, to the communities that we are trying to be a part of. As well, this conversation speaks to the need to create processes and structures within journalism, as well as journalism support organizations that also do the work of racial justice.

Additionally, there's a clear connection between the conversations had around racial justice in journalism and the conversations being had around journalistic objectivity.

Journalist Wesley Lowery said, in an op-ed written for The New York Times:

We also know that neutral "objective journalism" is constructed atop a pyramid of subjective decision-making: which stories to cover, how intensely to cover those stories, which sources to seek out and include, which pieces of information are highlighted and which are downplayed. No journalistic process is objective. And no individual journalist is objective, because no human being is...The failures of neutral objective journalism across several beats in the news media are countless. And these shortcomings have real consequences for the readers we are sworn to serve — particularly black readers, who we know are more likely to have interactions with the criminal justice system (whose leaders we court), more likely to be the targets of white supremacists (whom we commonly indulge) and more likely to have lives made more difficult by racist politicians and implicitly racist policies that we repeatedly refuse to call out. (2020).

Lowery and other journalists discuss, for example, reporting on policing and criminal justice and the failure of journalists to investigate police claims or to unfairly report on these issues, as an element of the discussions being had re racial justice in journalism. One article states,

“The basic [journalistic] principle should be, treat the police like any other source, with the same degree of skepticism as you treat any other source,” said Susan Chira, the editor in chief of the Marshall Project, a digital news site that focuses on the criminal justice system and avoids breaking crime news.

“‘Police said’ is not a shorthand for truth,” she added. “You don’t give up your obligation to verify and corroborate” just because the source wears a badge and a gun,” (Farhi & Izadi, 2020).

For the purposes of this course, when we talk about racial justice in community journalism, we are most specifically discussing the practices that we as journalists should always build into our work. Here are some of the practices that belong to journalism, when the journalist is prioritizing racial (and social) justice.

- 1) Ask people their pronouns and confirm how folks spell their names - and pronounce those names right.
- 2) Don’t record without letting people know they’re being recorded. Even in single-consent states where only one person in a conversation needs to know a conversation is being recorded, you should ask your community members and interviewees.
- 3) Respect people’s time. If you ask for 30 minutes, and you get to 30 minutes and still need more time, ask for it and be okay if they say no.
- 4) Community journalism is about being in community so show up for people. If folks are discussing an event, even if it’s not directly in your beat, and you have the capacity to attend then show up for folks. Community journalism requires that you be a part of the community you’re reporting on.
- 5) Look for BIPOC sources and prioritize the voices of people impacted by an issue
 - a) Most people don’t read a full article. So, for example, if reporting on a policy or legal decision, make sure the voices of the people impacted by a decision are higher up in the article.
- 6) Talk to people in the community you’re reporting on about the issues they want to see discussed. Listen to people and show up where people are discussing their concerns. Don’t judge those concerns.
- 7) Never, ever assume that all members of a community have the same opinions and perspectives. Seek out a diversity of perspectives.

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Additional Resources:

Farhi, P. & Izadi, E. (2020). Journalists are reexamining their reliance on a longtime source: The Police. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved by:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/media/journalists-are-reexamining-their-reliance-on-a-longtime-source-the-police/2020/06/30/303c929c-b63a-11ea-a510-55bf26485c93_story.html

Lowery, W. (2020). A Reckoning Over Objectivity, Led by Black Journalists. *The New York Times*. Retrieved by:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/23/opinion/objectivity-black-journalists-coronavirus.html>

Appendix 8: Collaboration as a tool for equitable reporting

Communities impacted by issues important to the Streets.MN communities have their own expertise and they often just need a platform for sharing that expertise.

Collaboration as a reporting tool is already happening in some ways at Streets.MN, but I recommend that the organization develop a plan for relationship-building (with a goal of future collaboration) with specific organizations in specific communities, both journalistic and non-journalistic.

For example, some businesses along West Broadway in North Minneapolis are concerned about light-rail and others are very excited about it. The West Broadway Business and Area Coalition is attempting to provide resources and advocate on behalf of all these businesses. This might be an opportunity for collaboration and information-sharing about the diverse perspectives of West Broadway businesses.

Collaboration in journalism, and particularly anti-racist journalism, might and could also include relationship-building with other community newsrooms working in impacted communities.

For example, The Alley in the Phillips community has deep connections with folks familiar with Roof Depot-related issues and North News has deep connections in the Northside with its own transportation and land use issues. These are examples of potential collaborations that Streets.MN could serve and that could serve Streets.MN.

Additional Resources:

Clements-Housser, K. (2018). The Importance of Collaboration Between Newsrooms and Their Communities. *Gather*. Retrieved from:

<https://medium.com/lets-gather/the-importance-of-collaboration-between-newsrooms-and-their-communities-456471ee9712>

Appendix 9: Pitching for Equity

Anti-racist journalism requires that, even from the pitch, reporters think about the impacts of their stories and the communities around those stories. For editors, it requires much the same.

Now, obviously, for Streets.MN, not every person will want to participate in anti-racist journalism. But for those who do, and for the editorial team, the pitches below might be helpful to thinking through some of the stories that Streets.MN comes across.

Here are examples of pitching structures for various racial justice/social justice-centered news organizations, past or present. These are not necessarily perfect or in line exactly with what serves Streets.MN, but they can be examples of something can be made useful (with some changes) for Streets.MN

Pitching for Colorlines

Questions	Answer
What is the story you want to tell and why does it need to be told	
What makes this a Colorlines story? Is there a racial or social justice angle? What is it?	
How has the story, if it has been covered somewhere else, been covered? How will your angle be different?	
What will people learn from / or gain by reading your work?	

Pitching for Prism

Question		Answer
What's the idea?		
Suggested word count?		
Suggested sources?		
How does this story impact specific		

historically-marginalized communities?		
Additional & Misc. Notes		

Intentionally anti-racist pitching looks a lot like the pitches above, from explicitly focused racial justice organizations, but it does go one step further. For example, when considering sources or the best way to tell your story, whose voices are often seen as less credible and what mediums can our low-income communities and/or communities of color consume news in? Is there a language barrier? What is the role of trust and relationship-building? See the questions in the Journalism of Color pitching form for more details.

Journalism of Color Training Center: Pitching Layout

- 1) Why are you interested in or curious about the story?
- 2) What's new about the story, and why do you want to tell it now?
- 3) Why will the reader or viewer care about the story?
- 4) Why will historically-marginalized communities, as our audience, care about your story?
- 5) What is the best way to tell this story? (Consider the tools, mediums, and languages that your audience and low-income communities and/or communities of color have access to?)
- 6) What questions will you need to ask to understand this story and who are the sources who will help you answer those questions? What role have your sources played in relation to this story?
- 7) What is your development timeline and reporting plan? What space, time, and resources do you think this story deserves?
- 8) What are the potential power dynamics within your reporting?
- 9) What is the injustice or solution to injustice you will explore?
- 10) How will your work differ from other work covering the same issue?

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Additional Resources

Prism. (n.d.) Call for Pitches. *Prism*. Retrieved from:
<https://prismreports.org/about/call-for-pitches/>