



**AGENDA**

**ENVISION LAKEVILLE CULTIVATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY TASKFORCE**

**June 20, 2022 – 6:30 p.m.**

**Marion Conference Room**

**City Hall**

- 1) Call to Order**
- 2) Approval of June 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes**
- 3) Focus Group Report**
- 4) Final Report Format/Ideas**



## MINUTES

### ENVISION LAKEVILLE CULTIVATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY TASKFORCE

June 7, 2022 – 6:30 p.m.

Marion Conference Room

Lakeville City Hall

Members present: Dan Wolter, Christine Yohnke, Dan Feldkamp, Ajay Raikar, John Swaney, Matt Norman, Naomi Garcia, and Cynthia Cajune

Members absent: Mike Howells

Staff: Justin Miller, City Administrator

1) Call to Order

- Chair Wolter called the meeting to order at 6:30.

2) Approval of May 3, 2022 Minutes

- Minutes were approved as submitted.

3) Focus Group Recap

- Cory Poris Plasch joined the meeting via Zoom and presented initial findings of the focus groups. She summarized the process, key themes that emerged, and discussed recommendations and next steps. Poris Plasch indicated that she would be submitting her final report within the week. The taskforce asked questions throughout and discussed how to proceed. It was agreed that an additional meeting was needed to review the findings and incorporate them into the final report. A meeting was scheduled for June 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.

4) Final Group Format

- Miller reminded the group to come to the next meeting with ideas about what to include in the final report.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.



RAPP CONSULTING GROUP

## **Focus Group Report**

### **Lakeville’s “Cultivate a Sense of Community” Taskforce**

#### **Focus Group Overview**

The Envision Lakeville: ‘Cultivate a Sense of Community’ Taskforce (Taskforce) exists to support and further enhance the City of Lakeville’s community vision. Initiated in 2013 and updated in 2018, Envision Lakeville provides strategic direction for the City’s future. As part of the Taskforce responsibilities, focus groups were held on May 16, 17, 18, and 21<sup>st</sup> and ranged from 75-120 minutes. The groups ranged in size from four to approximately fifteen participants and more women than men participated. Participants were not asked for demographic information such as age, but during the course of the conversation most identified themselves or made reference to being in the 40-70 age range with a handful of participants who identified themselves as in their 30s or 70s. While the majority of participants who identified their race identified themselves as white, there were a number of participants who identified themselves as Asian, Black or Indigenous. Of the few participants who chose to share their gender or sexual identity, they identified themselves as straight and allies. Length of residence in Lakeville varied from one year to more than 60 years.

#### **Focus Group Process:**

A focus group is a small-group discussion guided by a trained facilitator. It is used to gather in-depth information about a community's thoughts and opinions on a specific topic. The interaction enables participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences. The facilitator’s role is to gather information in an impartial and confidential manner, manage the pace of the discussion, and ensure that everyone has a chance to participate.

The process typically includes a set of questions and follow-up discussion within the small group. The group meets for a limited duration. The meetings ran for approximately 75-120 minutes and participants were recruited by city staff. In the case of Lakeville’s focus groups, the discussion topics were strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges for the city in addition to questions about the community’s success in building a sense of community. At the conclusion of each focus group, each participant was asked to identify three areas for the city to focus efforts and resources on over the next five years. This structure requires participants to prioritize their thoughts in a succinct manner and may provide a summary of key strategic issues to be considered using the qualitative data from the rest of the report.

## **Focus Group Context**

The main purpose of focus group research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and reactions in a way that complements other data collection methods such as surveys or one-to-one interviews. These attitudes, feelings and beliefs may be partially independent of a group or its social setting but are more likely to be revealed via the social gathering and the interaction which being in a focus group entails. Focus groups help to generate qualitative data that identify general themes of importance to the community.

It should be noted that there may be information included in the focus group report that is not factually correct. For example, a focus group report might include that XYZ services are not provided in the community, when in fact those services are available. This is not an error on the part of the facilitator, but a reflection of the topics discussed and participant understanding at the time of the focus group. Additionally, specific language used by participants during the discussion is included to the extent possible. At times, similar ideas are summarized, or language may be added to clarify ideas, but overall the intent is to provide an authentic representation of the themes explored by focus group participants.

## **Focus Group Questions/Areas of Exploration:**

### **Part 1: Summary of Major Themes**

#### Sense of Community:

Participants said that they would define a "sense of community" in the following ways: everyone feels welcome, invited, and included; access to all services and amenities; community comes together for those in need; a shared desire to get along; everyone has a chance to participate; different perspectives such as BIPOC and LGBTQ+ are welcomed and appreciated; everyone is treated with respect. A group of people who support each other, make each other better and lift each other up. A place where differences are celebrated as much as similarities. Like being a New Yorker, living here is a part of your identity

#### Lakeville advantages:

Participants noted that low taxes, rural area, large lots, and affordable home prices were some of the reasons why they choose to live in Lakeville. Safety was mentioned by several participants, as well as the small-town feel. Location (proximity to the Twin Cities, airport, and other amenities) allowing residents to be close to city amenities without being in the city.

#### Schools:

Schools were identified as a major reason that many people chose to move to Lakeville. While schools have historically been seen as very good, some participants noted that there have been changes that have left them less satisfied with the public schools and enrolling their children in private schools.

There were significant differences in perception about the school experience in Lakeville. While a couple of participants thought that sports brought kids together within the school and that students in districts 192, 194, and 196 were supportive of the other schools, other participants felt that the rivalry between districts divided the community. Concerns about racial divisions, particularly in District 194, was discussed by numerous participants. While many of those concerns were not direct experiences, some participants shared that their children had felt targeted because of race and did not have support from school staff. One father noted that his daughter, who is Black, was often the target of race-based taunting such as being told she “looks like a monkey”. The child saw only two options forward, either to stand up for herself and risk being ostracized or to laugh along with her “friends” and come home to cry later. She chose to come home and cry and the father expressed relief that they would soon be leaving the school district to move to another community. This experience seemed to be consistent with the type of experience many other focus group members said they had heard about. Participants in two different groups described attempts to bring a cultural night to schools and the idea was shut down, leading to the impression that celebrating other cultures was not encouraged in Lakeville schools. A participant in another group noted that friends in other communities hate playing sports against Lakeville because of the racist comments the Lakeville students say to the opposing team. While much of the discussion centered on District 194 because it serves most of Lakeville and most participants were in that district, it should be noted that it appeared that the few participants associated with other districts did not seem to feel race-based issues were as much (or at all) a concern at their schools. It’s unclear whether that is because of true differences between the environments at the different schools or the low number of focus group participants from the other two districts.

#### Barriers to Connecting:

Several participants related stories of neighbors who did not speak English as their primary language and the struggle they had to connect and get information. A couple of participants married to immigrants felt that the presence of an accent impacted their spouse’s ability to connect with others in the community. One participant discussed the growing Somali population and that they have been intimidated by the current atmosphere in Lakeville. Some of the publicized race-based issues in the last year are seen as having contributed to people of color being uncomfortable trying to connect with others in the community especially as they were widely disseminated on social media. Diversity should be reflected in leadership and especially in the schools more diverse teachers should be hired.

There were also concerns about how to best incorporate different viewpoints into community discussions. One group noted that translation services or childcare was not offered for people participating in the focus groups, and that can impact the ability for individuals who need those services to attend. Rules such as being required to give your address to provide a public comment at city council meetings can keep people who want to speak from doing so for fear of reprisal at their home.

The role of faith-based organizations prompted discussion in several groups. Where some felt that the groups were an important opportunity to connect within Lakeville, others felt that there was a Christian/everyone else schism that negatively impacted the community. One group discussed at length a recent Prayer Breakfast put on by the Lakeville faith community that did not have any participation from groups other than Christian churches. That left some with the impression that the breakfast was not welcoming to all faiths even though it was promoted as a community event.

Moving to Lakeville from another state was seen as a barrier to participants in several focus groups to connecting with others in the community. There is also a perception that established residents don't feel that they need new friends leaving new residents with fewer opportunities to build relationships. The weather and associated short window of time to be outside was another factor discussed as a barrier for connecting.

Many participants discussed the lack of a city-run community space as being a challenge, as the high cost of belonging to Lifetime Fitness as well as the facility being for-profit impacted the ability to connect there. The need for a space such as a community center, theater, and/or community pool came up in many focus groups with widespread support for the idea.

While overall the groups felt that Lakeville was safe, there is a perception that crime is increasing. Parks and places where people gather are seen as less safe than they were in the past, and that is leading people to limit their time there.

Lack of civil discourse came up repeatedly as an issue for Lakeville. Participants described the city as extremely polarized and that any sort of governmental meeting are negatively impacted by lack of constructive communication. There is a sense that this is leading to an overall sense of anxiety for the community and preventing the exchange of ideas and perspectives to the detriment of the community. A participant who identified as an LGBTQ+ ally described being screamed at while at Walmart because of wearing an ally shirt and also shared that they had people making offensive comments and obscene hand gestures to them while at their home because they display a LGBTQ+ ally flag. One group discussed that there is fear of using words like diversity, equity, and inclusion because of the response and that has made groups such as the task force and the city council to talk openly about issues surrounding race and racism in Lakeville. While several people noted that leading change is not necessarily the role of government, one participant noted that "city government does have a role to set the tone and make the space.'

The discussion at one focus group was impacted by a lack of respect for other's viewpoints and perspectives. There had been some sort of negative interaction prior to the focus group that involved at least two participants. Those participants and a handful of friends came to one focus group, making up roughly half of the focus group participants. When someone with a different viewpoint was speaking, some of these participants were making comments ("oh come on", "really?" etc.) softly enough to be difficult for the facilitator to hear but loud enough to be heard by some other participants. In addition to the verbal sparring, there were nonverbal shows of disrespect such as eye rolling, shaking of head, etc. This type of behavior is highly unusual for a focus group and according to the other participants seem to be reflective of the challenges Lakeville is facing currently in discussing difficult issues.

#### Opportunities for Building Connections:

Many participants noted that they would like to better understand ways to connect with others in the community. Neighborhoods are the place where the most participants said they felt connected, but many suggested that more needs to be done within the neighborhoods to connect residents, especially newer ones. While neighborhoods provided friendships for many participants, but there was a desire for more ways to connect with others in the city at large. One focus group discussed the increasing number of rental opportunities available in Lakeville and noted that there does not seem to be efforts to understand their needs and that the needs may be different from homeowners.

COVID was seen by some as encouraging the building of connections as neighbors checked in on one another. Some focus group participants noted that it would be advantageous for Lakeville to find a way to empower people to look out for each other and not expect the community to do it for them. A public campaign to inspire people to feel personally responsible for checking in on and connecting with neighbors was one suggestion to achieve that goal.

Many participants noted it seems relatively easy to build relationships with others when you have school-aged children because of the activities that bring both parents and children together such as sports. However, residents without school-aged children are forced to actively look for opportunities to engage with others. Community education classes, the art center, faith-based activities, and the One Book Lakeville program offered by the library fills that need for some, but others feel that more opportunities are needed.

Better advertising of opportunities in the Lakeville Paper was suggested as well as a single online source to share community information. Many participants mentioned volunteering, both with faith-based organizations and with secular community organizations, as being a great way to connect and more opportunities should be created and publicized.

Other places where people stated they connect with others included activities at Antler's Park, area trails and parks, the Chamber of Commerce, the county club, Neighborhood Night Out, Pan-O-Prog, Taste of Lakeville, etc. Several participants mentioned that Burnsville seemed to disseminate community information extremely well as they are using a variety of outbound channels including physical mail to share information with the community. Local businesses including coffee shops were also seen as opportunities to see acquaintances and reinforce connections.

Participants also noted that some communities are being proactive and bringing in civic organizations to lead productive community organizations that have helped to start and keep positive momentum. Several focus groups discussed that community conversations or similar activities are needed to create safe spaces for people to be able to solve the problems. Participants noted that it wasn't necessarily just the official community leaders that needed to be directly involved but also the people with influence in the community, the ones who get things done in an unofficial capacity and know how to encourage others to get involved. Some residents felt that while there had been surveys and conversations about building connections, not enough action had been taken to improve the situation. One participant noted, "we are in a talking loop, not an action loop." Actions like incorporating words like diversity, growth and change into the city's mission would send a message, as would having a race equity and inclusion statement adopted by the city council and put on the website.

#### Community events:

Participants noted that events should be created to celebrate and explore the diversity of experiences in Lakeville. There needs to be someone in charge of creative events who then brings in the overall community to help organize them. Businesses should also be invited to support the efforts. Participants generally felt that the city leadership should create the space for these things to happen and help the community to organize and sustain it.

Pan-O-Prog elicited a mix of reactions. Many participants, especially those who identified themselves as long-term residents, loved it and felt that it led to a sense of community identity and a place for

connection. Others felt that it was outdated and should be modified to better reflect the changing Lakeville community. One participant stated that they had gone with a Black friend and the friend was called a racist name. Other participants also noted there seemed to be less acceptance of a variety of cultures at Pan-O-Prog, both for participants attending and in the programming. Incorporating more culturally diverse activities was suggested by several participants as a way to update the existing festival.

## **Part 2: SWOT analysis**

### Strengths:

Lakeville is an affluent community with funds to do what needs to be done. Land is still available as opposed to other communities. Infrastructure is good including roads and parks. An overall good educational experience with a community that supports the schools, career readiness opportunities, and good teachers who really care about students. It is close enough to Lakeville to take advantage of amenities like the airport and urban culture like a wide variety of restaurants. Public safety is responsive, and the community feels safe. Special Education helps meet the needs of all of the community's children and Lakeville is known within the metro area for the quality Special Ed services available. The downtown area is starting to have more of a variety of restaurants and breweries and is contributing to a sense of community. Shopping opportunities are available but not overbearing. Lakeville has one of the best industrial parks in the state and it provides tax benefits for residents along with employment opportunities. AAA bond rating helps keep our borrowing rates lower and the city hires enough staff to keep the streets and public spaces clean. Some participants stated that numerous faith communities that represent a variety of faiths are an important part of the community, but others, particularly those who identified as atheist or as a faith other than Christian, saw the faith community as not being welcoming to residents in general but only those who shared their specific belief system.

### Areas to improve:

There were a variety of suggestions for improvement discussed. Communication about community events and activities could be improved and communication in general should be provided in Spanish as well as English. Growth is an issue as Lakeville needs to be proactive and not reactive like many other communities. The community needs to be more welcoming and put programs in place to support residents like Big Brothers/Big Sisters in addition to more social services to make sure that everyone is having their needs met. While overall Lakeville is a wealthy community, not all residents are affluent and programs to support all residents are needed to help maintain community safety and quality of life. Dedicated resources are needed to address issues, like a city commission or a human rights commission.

The community also needs to start digging into the "why" according to some of the focus group participants. For example, a recent prayer breakfast only had representatives from Christian churches. Why didn't other faiths attend? Is it because they were not invited or because they did not want to participate? Understanding that will help to build trust and understanding in the community.

Workforce housing is becoming more of an issue as housing prices continue to climb and some participants felt that new developments should be required to have a variety of price points and to establish a neighborhood park for all new developments. There are also limited opportunities to age in place with current housing stock according to some participants, and physically accessible housing plans (without stairs, etc.) should be prioritized.

A built environment more conducive to gathering would help as well. Pickleball courts, parks planned near apartment buildings, or an aquatic center are ideas to consider. Cupolas or other places for people to meet and chat should be planned throughout parks. Traffic needs to be considered near parks to make it safe for kids to cross roads and get to them safely, and speed limits may be too high and need to be evaluated throughout Lakeville. For example, road with trails next to them should not be zoned at 45-50 mph. Other traffic control methods should be considered for locations like the high school as Iptava needs a cross walk for students to safely cross.

Safety was a concern to several focus groups and there was consensus that sometimes Lakeville does not feel as safe as it once did. Specific instances were not related by participants other than that Antler's Park feels overrun with teens swearing and fighting. It seems to be more of a general feeling than a reaction to specific crime data.

#### Opportunities:

Participants shared a variety of opportunities for Lakeville to consider. An international bazaar or other events to highlight different cultures. A Pride festival or other celebrations should be considered. Participants noted that Lakeville has youth that want to be engaged, so reaching out to the Black Student Union at the high school, etc. and other student groups can help give some good ideas and may also be a source of volunteers. Recently there was a park clean-up day, and activities that both bring residents together and that benefit the community should be planned.

A tab on the Lakeville city website or other central online location to connect residents to community events and activities. One participant said that crime in parks has gone up and suggested that new park district funding could be used for cameras or additional police presence. Others recommended that multi-seasonal spaces should be created to more fully utilize outdoor activities, such as a space that is a roller rink in the summer and ice skating rink in the winter. Youth services, especially mentoring and safe spaces for those in crisis were identified as a significant need. Some participants discussed that there is an unseen queer community in Lakeville and that LGBTQ+ youth in particular need more support. The 55+ community is also growing rapidly, and they can be a significant resource for the community, especially if opportunities for seniors and youth to come together can be created.

Communication should be improved between boards such as the city council and the school board noted a few focus groups. They seem very disconnected right now even though they are serving the same community, and goals are established without considering how it impacts other governing bodies. Opportunities to partner should be explored as well around common interest like sustainability.

Numerous groups discussed the need for more community focus groups and other forums for people to come together and share ideas and perspectives. Youth should be invited to focus groups to share their perspective as well.

#### Issues that Lakeville is not well prepared to handle:

Continued growth and influx of diversity. Many said that Lakeville needs to become more comfortable with different backgrounds and experiences. Nearly all participants noted that the lack of civil discourse and the recent volatile conversations surrounding race, gender identity and faith as significantly impacting the community. One participant who identified as a person of color shared that they feel like others in their all-white neighborhood view them as a threat, and another participant from a mixed-race

family shared that they feel like they don't belong because of things said to and about their family. More community outreach is needed as the loud, angry voices are dominating the conversation. Many participants noted that the community is missing the opportunity to learn from each other. Lakeville is becoming more diverse in many ways and if we don't welcome residents from a variety of backgrounds, we will have a lot of issues that negatively impact the community.

Communication needs to be improved, especially since so many things require an internet connection. City infrastructure should be improved since new neighborhoods get fiber and others don't. Internet is an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed.

Some mentioned the balance needed to maintain the small-town atmosphere amid rapid growth and continued demographic changes. Some participants felt that there is cronyism and that newer residents need to have opportunities to be more involved. One common theme through multiple focus groups is that Lakeville needs to learn to focus on ways to work together despite differences in opinion. A variety of housing needs to be available to support the population in Lakeville, from workforce housing to space appropriate to age in place. The traffic and streets haven't kept up with the rapid growth and we need more left turn lanes.

Public safety is good at the present time but is a concern for the future, especially with continued growth according to some participants. Additionally the lack of a 24/7 fire department will also become more of an issue with continued growth as recruiting volunteers will become more and more of an issue as service needs increase. Going to a full-time fire department will raise taxes by a decent amount and the community needs to be prepared for that.

### Priorities for Lakeville

Responses to the questions, "If you could choose three things for Lakeville to focus efforts and resources on over the next five years, what would they be?" (The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of responses. If there is no number following, there is only one response.)

#### *Growth:*

- Planned development of community/controlled growth (7)
- Holistic look at growth (work force, streets, businesses) (3)
- Housing diversity (2)
- More diversity in food/restaurants (financial incentives to help?) (3)
- Transportation options
- Plan for the future including increased diversity (2)
- Update downtown
- Focus on creating beauty- more trees on boulevards, etc.
- Attracting workforce

#### *Community facilities:*

- Pool
- Community center (5)
- Arts center (2)

*Communication:*

- Better communication (7)
- Holistic review of communication (message, environment, recipients and how it is being decoded) (2)
- City staff position to handle outreach and share events going on in the city (3)
- Better use of social media for outreach
- Outreach methods other than online
- Funding dedicated to outreach

*Civil Discourse:*

- Taking steps towards depolarization and offering solutions (3)
- Address differences in a way that benefits community (2)
- Campaign to be a kinder community and know our neighbors
- Civility (3)
- More opportunities like the focus group for honest dialogue (5)
- Not being afraid to talk about diversity and inclusion

*Community organizations and services:*

- Better organization so there is no duplication of effort/resource pooling (5)
- Better communication between organizations (3)
- More partnering between city and residents
- More recycling
- More diverse leadership (5)
- DEI specialist position created for city (3)
- External review of governmental bodies for systemic racism

*Education:*

- Schools (12)
- More school choices
- overflowing schools how can we build without suffering in other areas
- Zero tolerance for racism/welcoming to all students (3)
- Diverse staff
- Private academy campus/additional private school option (3)
- Mental health resources and peer support resources needed in schools (2)
- Spanish language classes offered 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up

*Public safety:*

- public safety we need make sure crime remains low (9)

- More School Resource Officers in schools
- Safety including speed limits, cross walks and community awareness
- More citizens engaged in supporting public safety

*Outdoor spaces/sustainability:*

- Parks (2)
- Prairie
- More blue zones
- Higher level on green step cities
- Arborist on staff
- More pavilions
- More outdoor parks and rec activities
- Bigger community parks rather than small parks

*Connecting the community:*

- Work on ways to make everyone feel welcome (3)
- More community connection opportunities (8)
- More diverse community events (music and food connect people) (10)
- Develop a more service focused community
- Develop small working communities to work on problems
- Connect those 55+ with youth
- Continue the task force (2)
- Incorporate action steps from May 24<sup>th</sup> task force working session
- Conversations and partnerships between residents and business community
- Create volunteer pool to connect community to needs and build relationships between volunteers (2)
- Active outreach to underrepresented communities
- Focus on making sure that we have interpreters available and making things more accessible for those with disabilities.

*Top Overall Responses from all categories:*

- Schools (12)
- More diverse community events- food and music connect people (10)
- Public safety (9)
- More community connection opportunities (8)
- Planned development of community/controlled growth (7)
- Better Communication (7)
- Community center (5)
- More diverse leadership (5)
- Better organization to prevent duplication of effort (5)

**Conclusion and Recommendations:**

The focus groups were overwhelmingly considered to be a positive experience for participants. In addition to coming up several times within the focus group discussion, many participants approached me afterwards to thank me for my time and also to ask me to share with the city and the Taskforce their appreciation for a chance to discuss important community issues in a facilitated format. As the focus groups generally brought together people who had not known each other previously, it was regarded as an opportunity to understand different perspectives than many participants regularly encounter through their established social networks. As a result, many participants suggested that similar opportunities for community interaction be established.

As a result, I have two recommendations:

1. To set up community conversations or other facilitated opportunities for discussion. The focus groups had a variety of residents with different backgrounds and experiences, and participants for those conversations if they occur should also be drawn from as many different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences as possible.
2. To train both official city leaders and residents with influence in how to have constructive community conversations. This type of training can help participants develop skills that can be used for formally and informally within the community. Teaching residents how to engage in crucial conversations would extend the ability of the city and the Taskforce to have productive conversations for the benefit of Lakeville.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the city of Lakeville and the Taskforce for the opportunity to conduct these focus groups. It truly was a pleasure to have these important conversations with engaged residents and I appreciated the opportunity to interact with so many people that sincerely love their community. Please let me know if I can provide clarification of anything in the report above or be of future service to your community.

Cory Poris Plasch

Rapp Consulting Group

**Envision Lakeville Cultivate a Sense of Community Taskforce**  
**Final Report**  
**June 27, 2022**

**PURPOSE/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Envision Lakeville: 'Cultivate a Sense of Community' Taskforce (Taskforce) exists to support and further enhance the City of Lakeville's community vision. Initiated in 2013 and updated in 2018, Envision Lakeville provides strategic direction for the City's future. The Vision, Community Values and Strategic Priorities serve as an important framework for the evolving needs of our diverse community and must continue to be updated. Emphasis for the Taskforce will be to address and enhance the short-term and long-term strategies that foster opportunities for all to feel a sense of belonging within the City of Lakeville through the '*Cultivate a Sense of Community*' strategic priority.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The Taskforce is an advisory body of the City Council with responsibility to provide information and assistance in enhancing the strength and accountability of Envision Lakeville's values and strategic priorities. As its primary duties, the Taskforce shall:
  - a. Develop a proposal to initiate a community survey to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the City's efforts to *Cultivate a Sense of Community*. This survey will help measure progress of the Envision Lakeville strategic plan and will be similar to surveys conducted in 2013 and 2018. Additional questions may be fashioned to collect data specific to the needs of the taskforce.
  - b. Alongside the survey work above, develop and initiate community focus groups to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the City's efforts to *Cultivate a Sense of Community*.
  - c. Utilize collected community input to propose action steps and strategies to enhance the City's efforts to *Cultivate a Sense of Community*.
  - d. Provide recommendations to create better awareness of current census data about who we are today.
  - e. Provide recommendations to City Council for community events with the purpose of celebrating who we are and developing deeper connections among community members.
  - f. Provide recommendations to City Council, as appropriate, and present a final report to the City Council by July 1, 2022.

**FINDINGS (listed by responsibility outlined above):**

- A) The taskforce discussed strategies relating to a community survey. As was discussed with the city council at the February work session, the taskforce believes that a formal survey as part of the Envision Lakeville five-year update will provide better data than a standalone survey based solely on the topics addressed by the taskforce. Additionally, it was the belief of the taskforce that the

focus groups should be held first, giving the city potential themes to use when designing survey questions. Due to the focus groups not being designed to reach a level of statistical significance, the survey can test the themes generated from the focus groups to gauge community-wide interest.

- B) During the week of May 15<sup>th</sup>, a series of seven focus groups we held. **FILL IN DETAILS ONCE WE GET REPORT FROM CORY.**
- C) Propose action steps
- D) Need detail (possibly as part of C) above
- E) The taskforce spent considerable time discussing what a new community event may look like. Common themes revolved around music, dance, and food. In addition, the taskforce met with Pan-O-Prog and Arts Festival representatives to investigate partnering with these established celebrations. Ultimately, the taskforce became very intrigued with partnering with the Lakeville Area Arts Center and their new Outdoor Summer Concert series, planned for 2023. When the new Performing Arts Pavilion opens at Casperson Park, the Arts Center plans to provide a well-rounded, weekly concert series which will include enriching entertainment options, with a wide variety of community partners and performance groups. The new series the LAAC Staff is working on developing aligns nicely with the scope of the taskforce.

The Envision Lakeville Cultivate a Sense of Community Taskforce appreciates the opportunity to serve the City of Lakeville on this cause. We feel fortunate to live in a community that is great but can still improve in so many ways. Thank you for asking us to be part of this group. **(Needs work)**

Taskforce Members:

Dan Wolter (Chair)  
Christine Yohnke (Vice-Chair)  
Cynthia Cajune  
Dan Feldkamp  
Naomi Garcia  
Mike Howells  
Matt Norman  
Ajay Raikar  
John Swaney

Staff Liaison – Justin Miller, City Administrator