



# dayton's bluff

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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January 24, 2017

To Members of the St. Paul City Council

The Board of Directors of the Dayton's Bluff Community Council (District 4) joins with the Frogtown Neighborhood Association (District 7) to bring forward an important issue that directly affects many St. Paul communities. We encourage a careful review of the purpose, process and goals of the Innovation Fund made available to District Councils in an annual competitive grant process. Most agree there is much more to be done to ensure the inclusion of communities of color in the District Council System. The funding criteria for 2016 states the purpose is to build capacity that includes *"increasing collaboration with other organizations, achieving an increase in productivity through economies of scale and implementing methods of community engagement that address inclusive involvement and racial equity."* The current process heavily favors traditionally homogeneous district councils. We feel strongly that City Council leadership is needed to ensure that new methods for achieving equity and inclusion are adequately funded in the future.

While the City of St. Paul has made Equity a priority, the District Council System is not held accountable to the same expectations for advancing equity. We feel the additional funding for District Councils could be more effectively used to support the innovative equity work of a small number of councils that have established significant involvement from communities of color.

Therefore, the Dayton's Bluff Community Council approved the following request at a full board meeting on January 23, 2017:

We ask that the City Council designate these extra funds to support organizations that have demonstrated high levels of involvement from people of color, with the expectation that these organizations will help lead the way to a more equitable and inclusive St. Paul District Council System.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Deanna Abbott-Foster  
Executive Director