



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

AGENDA SECTION	WORK SESSION ITEMS
MEETING DATE	3/1/2021

ITEM:	Youth Commission	
DEPARTMENT:	Administration	BY/DATE: Ben Sandell, 2/26/2021
<b>CITY STRATEGY:</b> <i>(please indicate areas that apply by adding a bold "X" in front of the selected text below)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diverse, Welcoming "Small-Town" Feel		
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Strength <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent Housing/Neighborhoods		
<input type="checkbox"/> Equity and Affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Infrastructure/Public Services		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for Play and Learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaged, Multi-Generational, Multi-Cultural Population		

### BACKGROUND:

The Mayor discussed the idea of recruiting youth representatives for the Columbia Heights boards and commissions. After further discussion with the Mayor and City Manager, staff suggested an alternate but related proposal: the creation of a youth commission.

### DETAILS:

A youth commission would act as an advisory board to the Council, like any other commission, and could provide youth input on items that come before other boards or commissions such as the Park and Rec Commission. The commission would provide feedback to Council regarding youth initiatives and youth perspectives on City policies, and help plan youth-led initiatives. The commission would give members valuable experience and build their leadership skills. It would also reinforce social bonds. Additionally, the City could use the opportunity to organize guest speakers to attend commission meetings and share their knowledge with the younger generation. Guest speakers might include elected officials, community leaders, Toast Master instructors, business owners, department heads, and more.

Several cities in Minnesota already have youth commissions, including St. Paul, Minneapolis, Northfield and Rosemount. Youth Commissions tend to meet about 5 to 7 times per year, though it varies from city to city. Number of members also varies depending on the city, but the commissions are usually made up of 10-15 members, and members tend to be high school juniors and seniors. Term limits are roughly two years, or until graduation. Time demands and attendance expectations vary widely from city to city. Members are usually selected in the same fashion as members on any other commission.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION:

For now, we just want to see if this is something the Council would be interested in exploring further. If given the direction to move forward, the next steps would be to decide specifics: 1.) How many seats would be on the commission? 2.) How long would term limits last? 3.) How often would the commission meet? 4.) Would members of the commission be expected to occasionally attend Council meetings and other commission meetings? 5.) How best to approach the application and selection process? 6.) How to get the word out and work with area schools to ensure participation? Staff would work on these questions and revisit the proposal at a future work session if the Council thinks the youth commission is a valuable addition to the City.