

# The Role of Cultural Outreach Assistants In Racially Equitable Engagement

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PSRC Regional TOD Committee  
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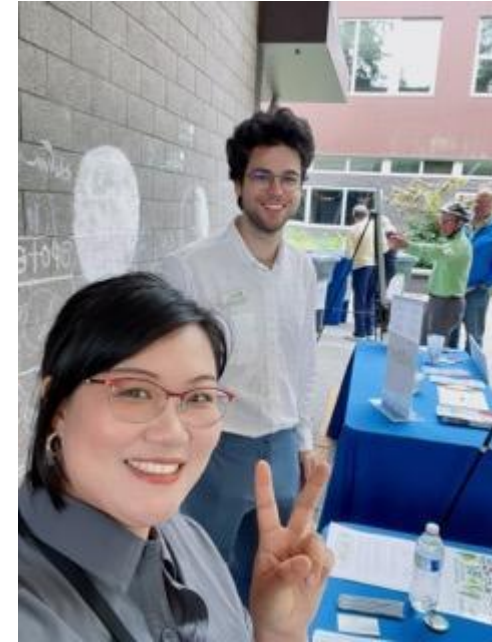
# Cultural Outreach Assistants



**Erik Mercado -  
Latinx**



**Nona Dhawan - S.  
Asian**



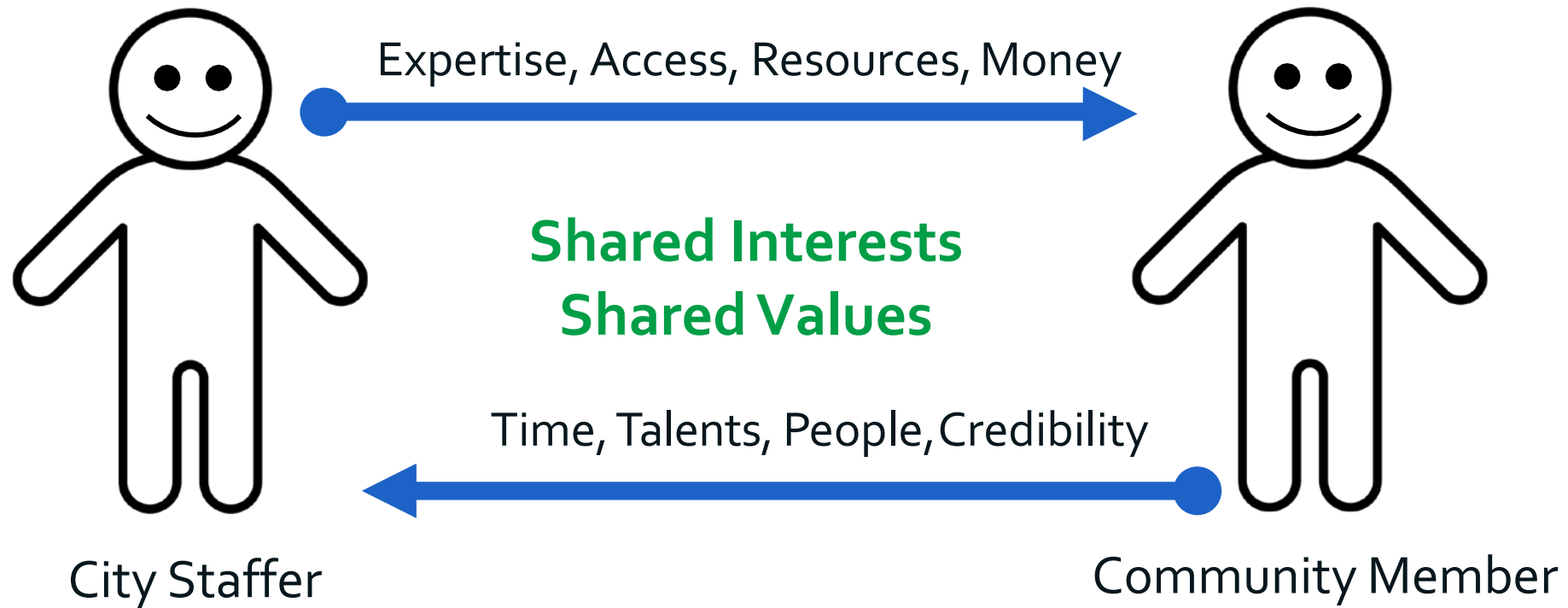
**Run Zhu - Chinese**

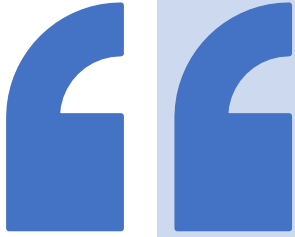


**Organizing is a fancy word  
for relationship building.**

**~Ernesto Cortes Jr**

# Relationships are Exchanges



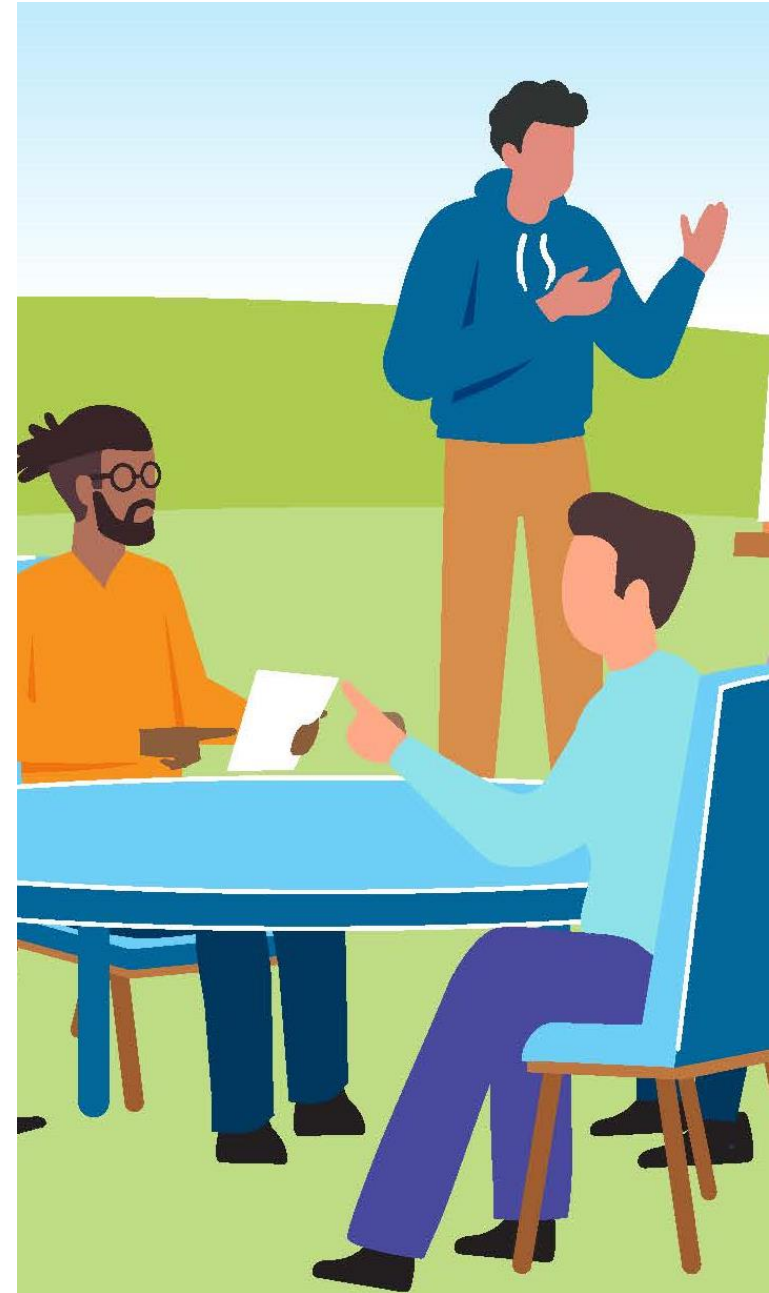


But a relationship is more than an exchange. A relationship implies a future... A conversation over coffee contributes to a relationship only if there are to be more conversations. This commitment to a shared future ... transforms an exchange into a relationship.

~ Marshall Ganz

# Responsibilities

- Work 5-8 hours per week
- Part-Time, Variable Staff
- Build relationships through one-on-one meetings
- Leverage those relationships into opportunities for presentations, workshops, tabling, or other community engagement opportunities
- Assist at events
- Promote opportunities to engage on language specific social media sites
- Review translations for cultural competency





# Events & Other Work



Chinese Student Meeting - April 2022



Latinx Community Meeting - April 2022

- 3 Workshops/Presentations
- 8 Tabling Opportunities
- 125 Questionnaire Responses in Other Languages
- Ongoing Relationship Building

# What We're Learning

- Having them as staffers is a plus
- Relationship building takes time
- Relationship building needs to be ongoing
- Adapt approach to the way people self-organize
- Share the resource





# Looking Ahead – Wilburton Vision

**What is the vision?** *Bellevue's next urban mixed-use community that enhances livability, promotes healthy living, supports economic vitality and serves the needs of a diverse and growing population.*

## How?

- Comprehensive Plan Amendment - 2023
- Land Use Code amendment - 2024

## Outcomes

- New land use designations, development standards and design guidelines for 300-acre area within Bellevue's growth corridor

# Looking Ahead - Wilburton Vision



Downtown  
Bellevue

Wilburton

Spring  
District

Grand  
Connection

East Link  
Light Rail

East  
Main

\*  
\*  
DASH Sites

Eastrail

**Vision Statement...***transformation of the Wilburton study area into Bellevue's next urban mixed-use community that enhances livability, promotes healthy living, supports economic vitality and serves the needs of a diverse and growing population.*



# Looking Ahead - Wilburton

## The Wilburton Vision Implementation Opportunity

- Align the 2018 vision for Wilburton and outcomes with racial equity factors
- Recognize that in Wilburton:
  - 45% are white
  - 55% are people of color
  - The percent of people of color increased over the past decade (28% in 2009 and 55% in 2020)
- Wilburton is bordered by Crossroads (most diverse n'hood) and BelRed (least diverse area in the growth corridor)



# Racial Equity Toolkit Application

## Potential Impacts/harms:

- MF Residents living in areas where redevelopment is likely
- Redevelopment may not result in affordable housing or housing that meets the needs of diverse population
- Existing minority-owned small businesses could be displaced
- Displaced businesses result in community losing businesses that serve their needs
- Parks improvements may not meet needs of diverse community and/or be welcoming to all

## Helped us identify the following groups to engage:

- BIPOC Small Business Owners;
- MF Residents w/in the study area; and
- Youth



# Integrated Approach

- **Wilburton integrated within the successful Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update engagement**
  - Wilburton staff support CPPU engagement
  - Wilburton-related topics integrated in online and in-person engagement
- **Involvement with Boards and Commissions:**
  - Youth Link
  - Bellevue Diversity Advantage Network (BDAN)
  - Bellevue Network on Aging (BNOA)
- **Meeting Community where they are:**
  - School District curriculum
  - Small business walks
  - “Engaging Bellevue” + “Experience Bellevue”

# Aspirations and Reality

- COAs will help us reach out to people who were not actively engaged before
- We are excited to be able to offer flexibility and be nimble with engagement to meet people where they are
- Wilburton engagement must fit into a timeline that has a fixed end date
- We can not respond to every opportunity
- We value the COA program as a way to potentially provide ongoing engagement beyond project conclusion to work on implementation







We'd love to see the area become truly walkable, with commercial (coffee shops, restaurants, etc.) easy to get to and fun to spend time at.  
~ Bellevue resident

# As We Move Forward....

## **We invite you to...**

- Share your experiences w/similar programs
- What are your lessons learned?

# Reach Out!

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