

**St. Paul Public Input Session Summary**  
**Metropolitan State University**  
**August 4, 2018**

The hearing began with a round of introductions. Everyone was split up into tables, where individuals shared where they were from and why they were in attendance. A number of St. Paul neighborhoods were represented. A few individuals at the hearing lived in Minneapolis, but worked in St. Paul and wanted to learn about the process. People's reasons for attending varied widely. Quite a few individuals worked in the restaurant industry and wanted to be a part of the discussion surround tip credits. Most tables spoke about the importance of representing workers needs – not only in through the act of raising their wages, but also in including them in the process. The subject of affordable housing was mentioned at a number of tables also. A few tables felt strongly that if the idea was to tackle poverty, then the minimum wage conversation needed to be a part of a bigger picture conversation including housing and other government benefits. The theme of enforcement also came up.

Tables were then asked to discuss the opportunities and challenges of raising the minimum wage to \$15. A common theme in the discussions around the opportunities was that raising the minimum wage would help lift people out of poverty. Lifting individuals from poverty would in turn strengthen the community, and the community could then focus more on tackling issues such as affordable housing. Another opportunity that was mentioned the ability to continue taking time to carefully craft a nuanced ordinance in order to avoid any unintended consequence. Attendees also spoke to the opportunity to engage the community after implementation to make sure that the process is, in fact, making the community thrive.

Groups also shared what they saw as the challenges of raising the minimum wage. A number of tables spoke to the challenge of enforcing such a policy. An equal number also expressed concern for the well-being of small businesses and immigrant run businesses that might be negatively affected by a raise in wages. One table spoke at length about the challenge of navigating the tip credit/penalty debate going forward. Another discussed how \$15 might not even be enough to provide low wage workers a livable wage.

The final question asked groups to discuss how to best move forward now that they were more well-informed about the Citizens League process. A common theme between tables was to expand outreach. Individuals suggested working harder to include all communities in the conversation, especially the low wage workers who the ordinance is meant to help, through further discussions and education programs. The other common theme on how to best moved forward amongst a number of tables was to speed up the process. Tables expressed the desire to move faster with the process in order to catch up to Minneapolis, to start getting individuals out of poverty sooner, and to simply start acting on raising the minimum wage since the Mayor's office has already expressed a desire to do so.