

Essence Blakemore  
Metropolitan State University  
[essenceblakemore6514@gmail.com](mailto:essenceblakemore6514@gmail.com)

## My Vision For The Future Region?

I see the local government being more inclusive. I see us finding a way to bring the voices to the table that need to be included. I see more community education, I see marginalized communities having an idea as to what is taking place around them. I see it being understandable and not using language to complicate simple matters. I see listening. Prior to this project I didn't have much of a vision for the region. I had ideas but I didn't know how complicated it could get. There are many departments and bodies that have to work together to get a region we all love. During the course of the project I began to learn, and share what I learn with those around me and they were totally confused. I shared with friends at school, and maybe older relatives who are "well off," they knew. I found it interesting that some people had no clue the met council or city council was. They had no clue we had city planners. My vision is engaging everyone.

## Systems

I met with different elected officials. I learned so much. What stuck with me was how these seats are accessible to some communities. District councils for example aren't the most diverse, I learned that when meeting with a city planner. There's a wedge between owners and renters, which is a socioeconomic issue. I feel there's not enough being done to engage marginalized communities. There's work being done, but I feel it isn't strategic enough. I found that met council dealt heavily with city council.

## COMMUNITY

The community needs to engage with each other. They need to hold each other accountable even when it hurts. We need to spread knowledge, and not hold it for our own. Anika is awesome I met with her she is currently running for city council. Many people within the Black community didn't even know she was running or what city council was. I found it sad. I decided to help out and raise awareness. I myself didn't know much about city council but getting involved and

helping is the best way to learn. Jason Sole and I met and he has started a clothing line with his business partner called “Humanize My Hoodie”. Centered around erasing the stigma people of color face when being in certain fashion. There were even people who weren’t aware of the movement he was starting. There’s a group that isn’t engaged and I feel we need to do more to do that. We need to do better with pushing education on each other.

## BUSINESS

In the sense of business I say communities of color continue establishing businesses. I think the community needs to support those. With financial gain comes upward mobility, and higher education to actually be able to come back and educate the community. Supporting businesses that give back to your community and region.

## TAKEAWAYS

I feel honored to have been apart of this process. I have so many notes and conversations saved on my phone. I am filled with gratitude to have been able to learn, and meet with the people I did. I am taking away that it is your responsibility to educate yourself at the end of the day. It’s your responsibility to share the knowledge and truth you gain. I have started a YouTube channel recently. I will be hosting a community event for people to come out and share ways we can change our community. What changes can we start to create. Jason S. gave me some books so I will be giving those away and creating a book club around that also. I have learned about the step to becoming a city council member and shocked with the power they possess. Biggest take away is that there is a wealth of information out there that is being reserved.