



Chapter 3

Racial Equity

Vision for Racial Equity

St. Louis Park's vision for racial equity is to commit to being a leader in racial equity and inclusion in order to create a more just and inclusive community for all. The goal is to ensure all practices, programs and services of the city are fair, inclusive and equitable to all. From an elected, appointed and staffing perspective, our organization will mirror the community. We will strive for racial equity by building understanding of the issues in our organization and intentionally and proactively take measures that break down barriers to a just and inclusive community.

Where We Have Been

Population Growth by Race/Ethnicity

St. Louis Park is becoming more racially/ethnically diverse, as seen in Figure 3-1. As late as 1970, the racial make-up of St. Louis Park was over 99% White. By 2000, the White proportion of the population declined to 87.5% of the total population, and in 2016 was 81%. This change in racial/ethnic diversity follows national and statewide trends. The State Demographer (2015) noted that 19% of Minnesota’s population identified themselves as non-white and projected an increase to 20% by 2020 and 25% by 2035.

A majority of St. Louis Park residents are of German descent. Norwegian and Irish ancestries have strong representation within the city. The city also has a large population of Swedish, English, Polish, Russian, and Sub-Saharan African descent. Twenty percent (9,475) of residents reported other ancestries in the 2016 US Census American Community Survey (ACS).

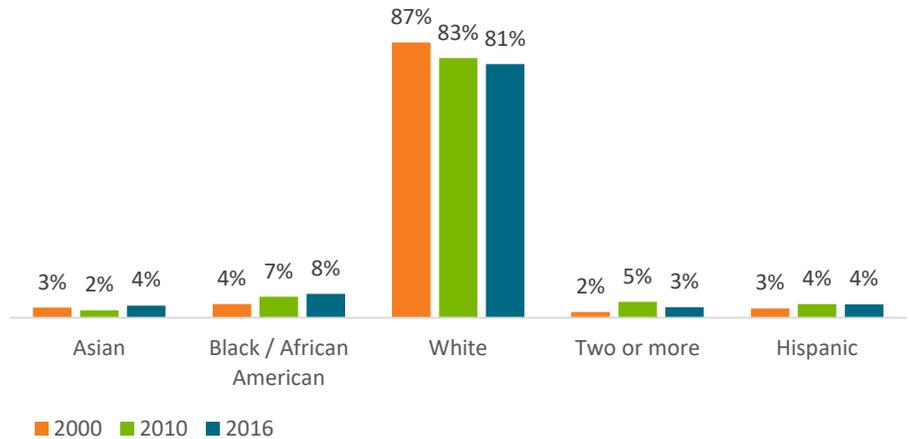
Household Income

As illustrated in Figure 3-2, household income varies significantly by race/ethnicity. The median income for White households was almost \$75,000 while the median income for Black/African American households was just \$30,000. Similar disparities in poverty rates also exist. People of Color are much more likely to be in poverty than White people.

Education

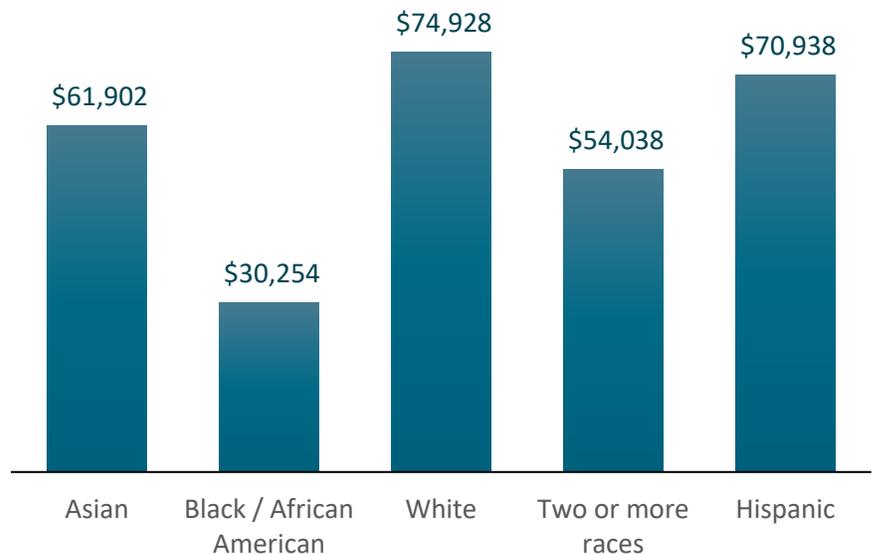
There are significant disparities in educational attainment among people of different races and ethnicities, as illustrated in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-1. Population Growth by Race/Ethnicity 2000, 2010, 2016



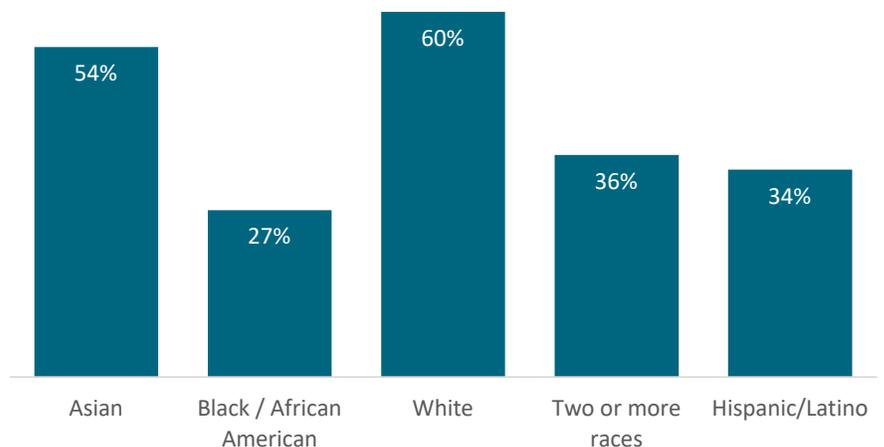
Source: Census Bureau 2000, 2010 & ACS 2012-2016

Figure 3-2. Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



Source: Census Bureau ACS 2012-2016

Figure 3-3. 2016 Percent of population over 24 with bachelor’s degree or higher



Source: Census Bureau ACS 2012-2016

Advancing Racial Equity

In 2016 a team of St. Louis Park City Council members and city staff participated in a year-long program on advancing racial equity. This program was facilitated by the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) along with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Center for Social Inclusion (CSI), and provided an introduction to the roles, responsibilities and opportunities for government to advance racial equity.

The city participated with the following goals in mind:

- » Gain understanding of racial equity.
- » Develop a shared racial equity analysis including definitions.
- » Analyze policies and practices from a racial equity perspective.
- » Strategize with others on how government can advance racial equity.

Where We Are Today

The city has developed a racial equity statement that is woven into the city's regular business and service delivery. Every department of the city created a racial equity action plan to ensure that practices, programs and services of the city are fair, inclusive and equitable. All city staff was provided professional development on racial equity, as well as on-going opportunities to deepen their understanding of racial equity issues and practices. The city council is also working with the Human Rights Commission, Multicultural Advisory Committee and other groups on ideas and direction for continued outreach and advancement of racial equity.



Where We Are Headed

For the future, work will progress toward creating a racial equity strategy that focuses on strategies for governance and change management in all of the city's practices, programs and services. For the city operations, the intent is to continue to improve city practices, business processes, work environment, and talent management processes.

Externally, the city will work with the community to break down barriers and increase community involvement by creating opportunities for community engagement.

Racial Equity Goals and Strategies

1. Break down barriers in creating a just and inclusive community for all



Strategies

- A. Continue to expand efforts and processes to recruit persons from communities of color and indigenous communities for service on Boards and Commissions and other city leadership roles.
- B. Consider people of color-owned and indigenous-owned small businesses and services in city purchasing practices and contracts where possible.
- C. Expand racial equity conversations within all areas of city business.

2. Ensure racial equity in city services and programs to make a tangible difference for all.



Strategies

- A. Apply a racial equity lens to all city work and city decisions.
- B. Build a city workforce that reflects the racial make-up of our community at all levels in the organization.
- C. Support city work areas and departments with new resources to engage and expand understanding and skill sets around racial equity.
- D. Establish a racial equity assessment program to continually review the city's racial equity work.
- E. Re-evaluate established city systems and processes to effectuate change in how the city conducts its business.

3. Continue to create opportunities to build social capital through community engagement



Strategies

- A. Foster and facilitate transparency between community members and the city.
- B. Build strategies and opportunities to reach historically unheard voices and unseen communities within St. Louis Park.
- C. Build trust and deeper connections through outreach and community engagement with communities of color and indigenous people.
- D. Connect and engage with St. Louis Park School District and other community organizations to meet the needs of current and future community members.
- E. Encourage Neighborhood Associations to deepen their reach and connections within the community to include people of color and indigenous people.

