



Hennepin County News

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Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works project receives CARE award from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Hennepin County's [Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works project](#) recently received a [Community Action for a Renewed Environment \(CARE\)](#) award of \$100,000 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The CARE program aids communities in creating partnerships to reduce toxins in the local community. Hennepin County and community partners will use the grant to launch the Minnehaha-Hiawatha Corridor Environmental Collaboration, which will identify, prioritize and address environmental health risks.

"Investment in transit isn't just about transportation. It's about creating healthy and sustainable communities for residents," said Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, who represents the area. "This grant will help us design a healthier Hiawatha Corridor and guide us in building it."

Historically, the Minnehaha-Hiawatha corridor has served as a rail, highway, and utility services corridor, and remains a hub of industrial activity. The collaboration will consider all potential environmental risks along the corridor, including indoor/outdoor air quality, hazardous waste, lead paint, radon, water quality, and brownfields. Brownfields are sites whose reuse or redevelopment is hindered by the known or perceived presence of contamination, and are common in industrial areas.

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The [Women's Environmental Institute](#) and [Longfellow Community Council](#) will help lead the Minnehaha-Hiawatha Corridor Environmental Collaboration, which will include community groups, environmental and environmental justice organizations, and government agencies, whose work will focus on the geographic area encompassing the East Phillips and western Longfellow neighborhoods.

The information gathered as a result of this award will allow the county to:

- Help area residents and businesses gain an understanding of the major sources of exposure to toxic pollutants and environmental concerns in the corridor.
- Collect all existing cumulative environmental health data and present information on extent of existing risk.
- Collaborate with the community to prioritize risks for reduction.
- Develop an action plan for responding to the prioritized tasks.
- Build capacity with project collaborators to address these environmental issues.

The Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works is one of several projects underway through Hennepin County's innovative Community Works program. Hennepin Community Works applies a corridor-oriented approach to infrastructure investment to enhance how the communities of Hennepin County work together to create good jobs, provide access to employment, and build the long-term value of communities.

The five basic principles of Community Works projects are:

- Stimulate economic development.
- Build bridges for effective planning and implementation.
- Maintain and improve natural systems.
- Strengthen communities through connections.
- Enhance the tax base.

Other Community Works projects include the Humboldt Greenway, Lowry Avenue Corridor and the Midtown Greenway.