

**Hennepin County CARE Project
Community Environmental Workgroup Meeting #6**

Date: Friday, January 13, 2012
10:00 am to 12 noon

Location: Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church
4101 37th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55406
612.722.9527

Meeting Objectives

- Review project status
- Discuss differences/similarities in East Phillips and Longfellow issues
- Finalize environmental / health risks for next phase of work
- Identify plan for winter/spring community engagement
- Review fact sheets

Agenda

10:00 **Introductions**

10:10 **Progress Review** – Review where we are on the project timeline and status on meeting deliverables

10:15 **Longfellow / Phillips Issues Review** – Discuss differences and similarities between Phillips and Longfellow issues and concerns

10:30 **Top 25 Key Issues** – Finalize list of key issues and concerns for community prioritizing

10:45 **Outcome-Based Issues Evaluation** – Consider of key concerns from an outcome-based perspective

11:05 **Fact Sheets** – Overview of Fact Sheets

11:15 **1st Half 2012 Timeline and Community Engagement** – Discuss project activities through May and community engagement options

11:45 **Next steps**

Minnehaha-Hiawatha Corridor Environmental Collaboration Community Environmental Workgroup Meeting #6

Date: January 13, 2012 – 10:00 to 12:00 noon
Location: Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church
4101 – 37th Ave South, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Meeting Objectives

- Review project status
- Discuss East Phillips and Longfellow Issues
- Finalize list of community issues and environmental / health risks
- Identify plan for winter/spring community engagement

I. Introductions – Meeting Attendees

- Dan Swenson – Alexander’s Import Auto Repair
- Jon Hunter – American Lung Association of Minnesota
- Louis Alemayehu – Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota
- Kirsten Saylor – Gardening Matters
- Robb Luckow – Hennepin County Community Works
- John Evans - Hennepin County Environmental Services
- Kathie Doty – Hennepin – University Partnership
- Carol Pass – East Phillips Improvement Coalition
- Ruth Romano – Longfellow Business Association
- Spencer Agnew – Longfellow Community Council
- Joanna Solotaroff – Longfellow Community Council
- Robin Broms – Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church
- Mallory Anderson – Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
- Dave Stewart – Minnesota Department of Health
- Kevin McDonald – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Cathi Lyman-Onkka – Preventing Harm Minnesota
- Larry Burt – St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church
- Aisha Gomez – Women’s Environmental Institute

II. Progress Review

The project team reviewed its activities since the November 15, 2011 CEW meeting:

- Developed “word clouds” to show similarities and differences in environmental and health issues identified by respondents in East Phillips and western Longfellow area;
- Refined corridor issues based on comments from November CEW meeting and began drafting fact sheets for those issues
- Identified 11 “outcomes” that reflect overarching goals that community would like to see related to environmental and health risks.

III. Word Clouds of Phillips and Longfellow Issues

Attendees reviewed a set of word clouds showing the most important environmental and health concerns identified East Phillips and western Longfellow. Word clouds provide a visual depiction of how often people use different words to describe their community – with the size of the word representing its frequency of use. Attendees reviewed the word clouds to identify commonalities and differences between East Phillips and western Longfellow. Attendees observed:

- Health-related issues – asthma, autism, diabetes, arsenic and lead – featured prominently in Phillips. Attendees discussed whether there were any health-related programs or advocacy efforts going on that would have brought these issues to mind?
- Phillips’ comments were more people oriented (kids, food, and neighborhood) while Longfellow’s comments were more geographical (Hiawatha).
- Longfellow had a lot of air related issues, which connects to asthma and to exhaust fumes from traffic on Hiawatha Avenue.
- Energy, and to a lesser degree storm water runoff, was not very prevalent.

Attendees also made some general observations about the word clouds:

- The CEW needs a better understanding of what people meant by various words. For example, in Longfellow “healthy” shows up and in East Phillips – “health.” Are they the same thing?
- For people who visit the corridor to shop, worship, or recreate, the context of the environmental and health issues impacting the community are related to the specific things that they experience during their visits to the area, such as the grain elevators or soil for gardeners.
- Attendees expressed agreement that the East Phillips word cloud reflected the issues that community has raised through years of previous engagement efforts.
- Word clouds could help market the project – e.g. it shows the language people use when talking about environmental and health issues.

Attendees also had a few questions about the process:

- Were the discussion questions similar at each event? *Yes, the discussions all followed a similar format.*
- How were the words in the clouds determined, that is if someone talked about healthy soil and someone talked about bad soil, would it be counted twice? *Yes, the program counts the number of times a word appears within text, but not the context of how it is used, so when a word like “people” occurs in a list of issues, one would not know whether it is in a positive or negative way.*

IV. Top 25 Issues and Concerns

The CEW reviewed the list of 25 issues to finalize those to be brought forward to the community for the risk ranking process. They discussed whether any categories, including crime, vehicle emissions, business vitality, safe and healthy home, and bike/ped access, could be eliminated or merged. During the discussion, the group agreed on the following points:

- *Powerlines* could be removed as a category due to recent administrative decisions on burying the power lines under 28th Street.
- *Safe and healthy home* would be retitled to make it parallel in structure to the other issues. Attendees felt the phrase *safe and healthy homes* was somewhat ambiguous and the only positively worded issue on the list – which could impact how people rank it in the risk ranking process.
- All other issues would remain on the list, and the community could determine through the ranking process what did not fit.

The final list of environmental and health issues:

- Access to health care, health disparities
- Air pollution – dust, fumes, smoke
- Asthma
- Bugs and pests
- Community blight – graffiti, litter, rundown buildings
- Crime and personal security
- Economic instability, unemployment, poverty
- Empty storefronts, business vitality
- Energy consumption, reliance on fossil fuels
- Environmental sustainability, climate change, overpopulation
- Lack of community
- Lack of trees, parks, green space
- Lead in homes and yards
- Limited access to healthy, affordable food
- Mold
- Obesity, nutrition, poverty
- Pollutants and toxics in home
- Pollution from vehicles, traffic
- Radon
- Second-hand smoke
- Soil contamination
- Trash – hazardous waste, recycling, composting, illegal dumping
- Unfriendly bike and ped environment
- Water quality, storm water management

Attendees emphasized that the issues should be “concrete” words that are actionable and personally relevant. They need to be things people can understand and get interested in taking action..

Several attendees commented on the importance of the interrelationship among all of these issues. Though particular neighborhoods or blocks may focus on a few of the topics, the project needs to consider how all the issues interconnect when creating strategies. If the project does not consider this broader perspective, it will undermine effective solutions.

V. Risk Ranking Considerations

Attendees identified several considerations that could factor into the decision process for prioritizing risks. Attendees suggested:

- Focusing efforts on issues/topics that the EPA would more likely to fund as a Level 2 project.
- Focusing efforts on issues/topics that are not already being addressed through existing programs or organizations
- Focusing on things that can have an immediate impact
- Identifying entry topics – issues salient to the public that can bring people into the process and yield other benefits as well (lack of trees, vacant businesses, car emissions)
- Identifying ways to make this an efficient process, so that the community and project team only spend time thinking about issues that they could impact.

The project team reinforced that this project and its strategies can go in any direction based on the community's priorities. The community process will determine which issues are important and which ones make sense to bring to the EPA for Level II funding. Moreover, several attendees emphasized that issues that are not traditionally considered environmental or health issues, such as crime or community blight, have a relationship to environment and health and could be addressed indirectly through this program. Additionally, the project can utilize trainings or activities to inform or address these issues.

Some attendees observed that many of the CEW members are set up to operate in isolation from one another. Success means defining the issues where the CEW members could all speak with one voice – which will direct problem solving and come up with agenda to decide what it wants to accomplish. By working on something that is interrelated, the project can address issues of interest to multiple stakeholders.

These considerations will be put forward as potential criteria for evaluating and prioritizing the 24 issues.

VI. Outcome Statements

Attendees reviewed a list of “outcome statements” developed to provide a broad set of positive results that could result from this work. Attendees thought the list seemed like a set of “vision statements” instead of outcomes. Attendees recommended not using the list in public meetings because it was derived from community input (versus directly reflecting people's comments) and cannot be directly linked back to what people said. Attendees also thought the vision statements were broad and do not reflect all the effort we put into the project.

VII. 2012 Winter / Spring Timeline

The project team proposed activities for winter and spring 2012. The team will be completing draft *fact sheets* for the 24 identified community issues. *Fact sheets* will be sent to the CEW members for their review by the end of January. CEW members will be asked to review relevant fact sheets for accuracy and for impartial language. Completed *fact sheets* will be distributed at events / focus groups for the project, as well as through other community sources.

Project staff reviewed three proposed components for winter/spring community engagement:

- 1. Interested Community Members:** Many community members indicated, during the initial community outreach, that they would like to be involved in the project. The project team proposes a series of community meetings in February/March to update these interested community members on the project and to talk about any roles that community members could have in the project, such as community ambassadors, CEW members, topic-oriented committee members.
- 2. Outreach to Additional Community-Based Organizations:** The project team will continue engaging additional community organizations in the corridor area, including CAPI, La Oportunidad, local health clinics, and local faith organizations.
- 3. Community Focus Groups:** In conjunction with its work with interested community members, area stakeholders, and CEW members, the project team will set up a series of one-to-two hour focus groups with residents and businesses in the community to share information on corridor risks and to conduct a risk ranking exercise. An assessment on the need for larger community meetings will follow these focus group sessions.

Attendees observed there needs to be some education and much community organizing and problem solving. People in the community need to be active in solving their problems and issues – to begin to create a new culture by acting together and bringing their life experiences to address what they have in common. This project can provide the education and organizing to facilitate this process.

VIII. Next Steps

- Fact Sheets will be emailed to CEW members by the end of January for their review.
- Approved Fact Sheets will be formatted, printed, and prepared for distribution
- Subcommittees will be created to look at ways to encourage local community building efforts in conjunction with this project.

CARE Project: Phillips and Longfellow Community Assets

What makes Longfellow and Phillips a good place to live, work, worship, and visit?



December 2011. Created in wordle.net based on community member comments during CARE project assessment process.

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