

Hiawatha CARE Project: Fact Sheet

Issue: Food Access and Security



Why are Food Access and Security Important?

Food insecurity reflects a household's and community's ability to have enough food for a healthy, active life (USDA). To be "food secure," a household needs to have resources available to purchase healthy food at a reasonable price. This food needs to be easily accessible and readily available.

The 2008 Farm Bill defined a "food desert" as an area with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly an area of predominantly low-income neighborhoods and communities. A USDA study of food deserts found that more than 23 million Americans, including 6.5 million children, live in low-income urban and rural neighborhoods where the closest supermarket is more than one mile from their homes.

How Does Food Access and Security Affect Us Locally?

There are several grocery stores in and near the corridor area. However, these stores are not necessarily easily accessible via transit, walking, and biking. Moreover, fresh produce can be an expensive option for households on a limited budget. Conversely, easy access to fast food and cheap, low nutrition foods contributes to obesity and an array of health issues.

Development of local food sources is one method to increase access to affordable nutritious food. The corridor area includes four community gardens that provide opportunities for residents to choose and grow their own fresh produce. Little Earth of United Tribes in East Phillips has an urban farm and the Midtown Farmers Market is adjacent to the project area.

Health Impacts

- Limited access to healthy, affordable food choices often leads to poor diets and high levels of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. (2010 White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity)
- Easy access to cheap, less healthy, high-calorie foods contributes to obesity problems.

Environmental Impacts

- Energy consumption and pollution associated with transporting foods long distances - including internationally.
- Industrial food production can use more energy, including chemicals and pesticides.

Financial Impacts

- Cost of cheap, low nutrition food can show up in higher health costs.
- Cost of transporting food from non-local sources.



Hiawatha CARE Project Partners

Alexander's Import Auto Repair	Hennepin County	Minnesota Department of Health
American Lung Association of Minnesota	Hennepin - University Partnership	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Blue Construction	Little Earth of United Tribes	Mississippi Watershed Management Org.
City of Minneapolis	Longfellow Business Association	Preventing Harm Minnesota
East Phillips Improvement Coalition	Longfellow Community Council	St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church
Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota	Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church & Longfellow Lutheran parishes	US Environmental Protection Agency
Gardening Matters	Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	Women's Environmental Institute

Hiawatha CARE Project - A project of Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works

What Can Individuals Do?

- Use programs and resources to obtain healthy, affordable food.
- Join a community garden or purchase a share of food from a community-supported agriculture farm.
- Donate cash to a food shelf. Bulk purchasing allows a food shelf to buy food at a lower price per pound than retail prices.

What Can the Community Do?

- Support community gardens as a way to improve diet, build community, provide exercise, and create green space.
- Support food shelves, feeding programs, and other activities that bring people together over healthy, affordable food.

What Can the City, County, and State Do?

- Ensure low-income families and children have access to nutritious, affordable, and safe foods.
- Continue to fund programs that promote the benefits of healthy eating and importance of fruits and vegetables in the diet.
- Protect funds for emergency and supplemental food programs that provide a nutrition safety net for low-income families and children.
- Address the root causes of hunger by ensuring that policies and programs allow low-income families to be economically stable.

For More Information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood_environment.htm
- City of Minneapolis, www.minneapolismn.gov/health/homegrown/index.htm
- Gardening Matters, www.gardeningmatters.org
- Hennepin County, www.hennepin.us/, search: Healthy Eating Minnesota
- Minnesota Department of Health, www.health.state.mn.us/nutrition/, www.health.state.mn.us/obesity/
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/
- US Department of Agriculture, Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit, www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EFAN02013
- Midtown Farmers Market (accepts EBT and WIC): www.midtownfarmersmarket.org/
- For information about Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program for pregnant and nursing women and children up to age five, call **(612) 348-6100** or www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/wic/
- For information about Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) for seniors and children age 5 - 6: call **(651) 484-8241** or www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/csfp/index.html

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What is the CARE Project?

The Hiawatha CARE Project is a new effort to address environmental toxins in western Longfellow and East Phillips. The project brings together two dozen business, community, government, and non-profit agencies in a community-

driven effort to identify, prioritize, and address environmental risks in the area.

The project was initiated in December 2010 when Hennepin County received a \$100,000 Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) award from the

US Environmental Protection Agency. The CARE program supports local collaborations to reduce toxins in the local community.

More Information:

www.minnehaha-hiawatha.com/care
612.348.9344.