

Hiawatha CARE Project: Fact Sheet

Issue: Lack of Green Space



Why is Green Space Important?

Green space includes athletic fields, gardens, golf courses, active and passive park space, and any other piece of vegetated land in the built environment. Urban green space plays an important role in creating places to play and socialize, enhancing the environment, managing storm water, and stabilizing communities.

How Does the Lack of Green and Open Space Affect Us Locally?

The East Phillips-west Longfellow corridor area contains East Phillips Park at the northern tip of the project area and Minnehaha Park at the southernmost park of the project area. The Midtown Greenway is a narrow, east-west stretch of greenspace bisecting the corridor.

A significant part of the remaining land is covered by industrial uses, railways, utility lines, and roadways. As a result, most area residents are beyond walking distance to a park amenity or any other green space.



Health Impacts

- Access to parks within a community can influence the health and well-being of urban residents.
- Lack of places for children and adults to socialize and hold community events.
- Fewer opportunities to play and exercise which can lead to stress, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Environmental Impacts

- Lack of green spaces and trees lead to higher air temperatures and contribute to lower air quality.
- Impervious surfaces, such as parking lots, roads, and roofs, send many pollutants directly to lakes, streams, and rivers, and also can cause neighborhood flooding problems.

Financial Impacts

- Communities without green space can be less desirable – detracting from the image of a community.
- Decreased property values.

Hiawatha CARE Project Partners

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| 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 parks and green space to become physically active and improve health and well being.
- Start up or join a neighborhood community garden.
- Volunteer for maintenance or clean up activities at area parks and green spaces.
- Advocate for more public green spaces.
- Replace lawns with native plants to attract birds, butterflies, and other native species.

What Can the Community Do?

- Identify potential sites, such as foreclosed properties, for conversion to green space, gardens, or other public space.
- Develop educational or incentive programs to promote environmentally beneficial landscape practices.
- Identify and coordinate volunteers to maintain green space and parks.

What Can the City, County, and State Do?

- Explore public-private partnerships to expand green space and civic space opportunities.
- Identify options for developing small infill parcels as parks, open space, or community spaces.
- Encourage native plantings; review regulations that may limit native plantings in yards.

For More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/default.htm

Gardening Matters, www.gardeningmatters.org

Minnesota Department of Health,
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/lig_htrail/parks.html

National Recreation and Park Association,
www.nrpa.org

The Trust for Public Land,
www.tpl.org/publications/books-reports/park-benefits/the-economic-benefits-of-parks.html

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,
www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/openspace.htm

Photo - Hennepin County Housing, Community Works, and Transit

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.