

# Hiawatha CARE Project: Fact Sheet

## Issue: Solid Waste



### Why is Solid Waste Important?

On average, each Hennepin County resident creates eight pounds of waste per day while at home, work, school, and on the go. All the waste created in the county in a year is enough to fill Target Field more than 11 times.

While at home, out shopping, at events, and at work, people make decisions that affect how much trash is generated. By reducing waste, recycling more and properly disposing of yard waste, they can reduce the amount of trash generated – protecting the environment and saving money.

### How Does Solid Waste Affect Us Locally?

Illegal dumping and littering occurs in abandoned or blighted properties and in parks and along rivers. Illegal dumping and littering can affect nearby properties, create pest or environmental concerns, and contribute to a blighted image of a community.

Sweeping grass clipping and leaves into the street can pollute nearby lakes and streams. Grass clippings and leaves left in the street end up in the storm sewer, where they are carried to nearby lakes and streams. The phosphorus and other nutrients in yard waste can cause excess algae growth that can negatively impact other plants and wildlife and can be unsafe for pets.

### Health Impacts

- Extracting, transporting and processing raw materials and manufacturing products causes pollution of air and water, which in turn impact human health.
- Waste disposal also has environmental impacts.
- Reducing waste and recycling helps reduce pollution of air and water.

### Environmental Impacts

- Using recycled materials to create new products saves energy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and conserves natural resources.
- Improper waste disposal may cause pollution.
- Illegal dumping and litter create unsightly areas and can pollute the environment if materials in the trash contain toxins that leach into the soil or run off into waterways.
- Sweeping grass clippings and leaves into the street pollutes nearby lakes and rivers.

### Financial Impacts

- More than 36,000 jobs in Minnesota are related to the recycling industry.
- The recycling industry contributes \$64 million in taxes to help pay for public services.
- The 70,000 tons of recyclable material that was **thrown away** in Hennepin County in 2009 had an estimated value of nearly \$6 million.
- Minneapolis residents who actively participate in the city's recycling program receive a monthly recycling credit of \$7. Homeowners can also save money by switching to a smaller garbage cart.

### 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?

- Reduce waste – use reusables, get off junk mail lists, buy products with minimal packaging, and shop reuse.
- Recycle – only 55% of what could be recycled in households is actually recycled, so there is more work to be done! More materials are accepted in curbside recycling programs than ever before.
- Close the recycling loop by purchasing products made with recycled content.
- Properly dispose of yard waste. Leave grass clippings on your lawn, start a backyard compost pile, or use the City of Minneapolis' yard waste disposal program.
- Report illegal dumping by calling 311. Provide the license number, vehicle description, person involved in the dumping, and a description of the item that was dumped, if possible. Callers may remain anonymous.

## What Can the Community Do?

- Aim for low- or no-waste neighborhood events and community meetings. Add recycling to your events by borrowing recycling containers for free from Hennepin County. [Visit [www.hennepin.us/eventrecycling](http://www.hennepin.us/eventrecycling)]
- Increase education about waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting to significantly reduce the amount of solid waste generated. [Visit [www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation](http://www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation)]
- Encourage manufacturers to create products with increased recycled-content and more recyclable parts and packaging.
- Support manufacturers that minimize packaging.

## What Can the City, County, and State Do?

- Consider policies to incentivize composting, recycling, reuse, and reduction of solid waste.
- Implement communitywide collection of compostables.

## For More Information

City of Minneapolis,  
[www.minneapolismn.gov/solid-waste](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/solid-waste)

Hennepin County,  
[www.hennepin.us/environment](http://www.hennepin.us/environment),  
[www.hennepin.us/atozdisposalguide](http://www.hennepin.us/atozdisposalguide),  
[www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse](http://www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse),  
[www.hennepin.us/reducewaste](http://www.hennepin.us/reducewaste),  
[www.hennepin.us/recycle](http://www.hennepin.us/recycle),  
[www.hennepin.us/yardwaste](http://www.hennepin.us/yardwaste)

US Environmental Protection Agency,  
[www.epa.gov/osw/](http://www.epa.gov/osw/)

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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](http://www.minnehaha-hiawatha.com/care)  
612.348.9344.