

# Southside Green Zones Community Report

## History-->Current Moment

In 2012, Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy guided the environmental justice working group to recommend Green Zones through the Mpls Climate Action Plan. With important work rooted in community, a set of five community organizations recruited by Nexus Community Partners ultimately consented to participate on the HIA Community Steering Team (CST), which included: Waite House, Hope Community, Isuroon, Land Stewardship Project, Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy, and Nexus Community Partners.

\*\*The primary condition for participation in the CST was that the community organization must be located in, and serving, residents in the Phillips Neighborhood (Waite House, Hope Community, Isuroon, Land Stewardship Project). In addition, the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy (CEED), an environmental justice research and policy education organization based in Minneapolis, served as a community-based technical assistance partner. While not physically located in Phillips, CEED had extensive experience working with community groups and organizations located in, and serving community residents in the neighborhood.

The CST formally met at least once a month, and often twice monthly under the MDH sponsored HIA from 2015 through December 2016. In addition to these meetings, CST members met with MDH staff routinely to advise and consult on the HIA environmental justice framework, data collection, and indicator development. CEED facilitated two screening sessions for the steering committee; assisted with the development of a survey for Phillips residents; linked the steering committee to the Minneapolis Health Department and MPCA research activities; assisted with utilization of the Twin Cities Environmental Justice Mapping Tool to identify additional sites in the neighborhood for the Minneapolis Air Quality study sites; and provided technical feedback on questions per the steering committee's request. The survey was developed by CEED with input from the CST and was translated into Spanish and Somali. MDH was responsible for compiling the survey data. With a community recommendation of a Green Zones, in April 2017, the City Council adopted the recommendations and a city ordinance was created designating a North and South Minneapolis Green Zones. ***\*\*History provided from the Health Impact Assessment for Phillips Neighborhood :Green Zones in the City of Minneapolis***

For the Southside zone, the Greater Phillips and Cedar Riverside neighborhoods were designated as Green Zones in order to address these historical and present day inequities. We know that the residents of Phillips and Cedar-Riverside have been historically overburdened by adverse environmental conditions such as traffic and stationary pollution sources, brownfield sites, blight, and substandard housing. Green Zones are rooted in environmental & economic justice, anti-displacement, equity, and much more.

In the fall of 2017, a mix of community members and city staff were comprised to make up the Southside Green Zone Task Force, who met monthly to discuss issues and develop an action-oriented Work Plan specific to the Southside Green Zone that would promote health and economic well-being using environmentally-beneficial strategies. They were the key decision makers on creating actions that reflected community voice and lived experiences. As of July 2017, there were 14 prioritized actions that were coming out of the work plan that will go to City Council in September 2018. They are:

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<b>Equity &amp; Anti-Displacement</b> Stabilize Housing Costs City accountability framework/ principles Community Steering Team	<b>Air, Water and Soil Quality</b> Increase Cost-Share for businesses Design transportation for people not cars Address drinking water quality in homes Deindustrialize the community using EJ principles
<b>Healthy Food Access</b> Land Trusts for urban agriculture Funding for small food businesses Comprehensive program for food businesses Food education in schools	<b>Health and Energy in Housing</b> Stabilize rental housing costs Housing clean-up resources linked to affordability Lead testing and disclosure in housing

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## What we Did

As part of the Green Zones Engagement process, Hope Community and the Land Stewardship Project hosted a series of engagement events from February to July 2018. We listened to community, we discussed issues and prospective solutions, and we shared personal stories to facilitate knowledge exchange. Feedback, insight and community voice from these engagement events was brought back to the Task Force, who then worked to incorporate community voice into the work plan. Here's a summary of what we accomplished:

### **We hosted Green Zones 101s**

This was an informal community learning space over dinner, which provided community members with information about the past, present, and future of the Green Zones Initiative. In addition to informing those affected and sharing information about getting more deeply engaged; a part of the evening was also dedicated to collecting data and feedback to share with the Green Zone Task Force and wider community. A mix of community members and staff from community organizations, who live, work, or go to school in the zone attended these sessions. Estimate: 60-75 people

### **We held Community Partner Convenings**

We hosted two community partner convenings to gauge interest and connect around issues in the zone. A mix of neighborhood organizers and city staff participated. Ideas about base-building in the neighborhood and developing community capacity were discussed, along with sharing updates on existing work that is in alignment with the Green Zones topics and strategies to build more connections across efforts. Estimate 15 people

### **We supported Community Partner Events**

- MCTC Professor Lena Jones held an event on 4/18 with her Public Policy class on the intersection of environmental justice and art. Estimate: 50 people.
- In the Heart of the Beast Puppet Mask Theatre: Lunch/Meet up with artist staff and Inquilinos Unidos network on housing justice in the Green Zones 4/21; Estimate 15 people
- Educator Luis Regalado held a spring event with all students and families at Aurora Charter School. We tabled and shared about Green Zones through mapping and planting activities 4/21. Estimate: 100 people
- MayDay Parade: The Hope Engagement Team prepared a Green Zones banner and marched in the parade doing some street outreach while handing out flyers and buttons on 5/6. Estimate: 1,000 people
- Ventura Village community member Khadro Mohamed hosted a dinner and dialogue with her neighbors to discuss the potential impact of Green Zones on housing issues on 7/16. Estimate: 12 people

We also met with KRSM, a local radio project out the neighborhood, about using local media as a platform for the Green Zones initiative. We hosted the Southside Green Zones Community Gathering to connect with each other over a meal, share where we've come these last few months, what we've learned along the way, and where we're headed. 7/19 Estimate: 40 people.

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Another element of our work was collaborating with the Design Team comprised of Kelly Muellman, the lead city staff for this initiative and Task Force facilitators, Etonde Awaah and Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn, and the engagement team from Hope Community and Land Stewardship Project. Here we shared the feedback we were hearing from community, advocated for slowing down the process, opening up the decision making, holding space for honest conversations and pushing for community voice to be central to the narrative this work was building. We held the tension of being on community time and working with city speed. We additionally offered guidance in the visual aid that Anne Gomez was creating as well as providing facilitation support for the Task Force meetings.

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## What we Heard

At our Green Zones 101s—we asked what issues people face, what their ideas are for solutions and what vision they have for success. Here is a summary of what we heard:

### Air, Water and Soil Quality

#### Community Issues

- Excessive automobile exhaust and pollution in the neighborhood.
- Feeling a lack of control about traffic patterns, constructions, detours, and road closures.
- Contaminated soils in open areas like parks and playgrounds.
- Old houses have older piping-contaminated water, residents lack of knowledge on water quality.

#### Community Solutions/Visions for success

- Community has more to say in these decisions and needs more transparent environmental data on how environmental factors and traffic decisions impact our health.
- Expansive and ongoing outreach and education about these issues demanded
- Utilize neighborhood schools as allies
- Initiate affordable testing and trainings for soil, water and air quality.
- Employ indigenous plants and rain gardens to help heal the soil and remediate toxins in our neighborhood.
- Establish land permanency so we can invest in our soil and health for the long haul.
- Support existing efforts happening at Center for Earth Energy and Democracy, Dream of Wild Health, and Pillsbury United Communities

### Anti-Displacement and Equity

#### Anti-Displacement

- Focus on tenant-centered public policy and policies that center people over profit
- Redistribution of wealth.
- Community voices must determine a community-centric process.
- Better neighborhood, same neighbors.
- Deep roots.
- Collective wealth sharing.

#### Equity

- Reparations
- Repair what was damaged and stolen.
- Decenter whiteness and center communities of color.
- Examine the structures that create violence and dismantle them.
- Power and distribution to the roots.
- Heal the wound.

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## Green Jobs

### **Community Issues**

- We have low-wage and no benefit jobs here in the neighborhood.
- Undocumented workers are targeted and exploited.
- Many businesses are not local to the neighborhood.
- There's a lack of readily available information or trainings for new job opportunities.

### **Community Solutions/Visions for Success**

- Create living wages jobs in this neighborhood
- \$15/hour minimum wage works now, but it must also grow in time.
- We want access to free healthcare and training opportunities for youth.
- We want to prioritize hiring locally for jobs and supporting local businesses to thrive.
- We envision a protected sanctuary status, so undocumented workers can report exploitative practices by employers without reprisal.
- Support existing efforts including Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha (CTUL), Inquilinos Unidos Por Justicia, Neighborhood Development Corporation, Step-Up, and local business associations

## Health and Energy in Housing

### **Community Issues**

- High rent is a barrier to staying in the neighborhood or purchasing a home.
- The cost of utilities is too high.
- Landlords are not held accountable to fix and repair or keep energy costs down.

### **Community Solutions/Visions for Success**

- We want rent control.
- Keep the property values at an affordable rate.
- We need more access to loans for first time homebuyers.
- Landlords should absorb the cost of energy efficiency, not the renters.
- Education and accountability standards set for landlords.
- Transparency needed on who regulates landlords to create tenant-centered policies and protocols—renters should shape these.
- Support existing efforts: Inquilinos Unidos, City of Lakes Land Trust, CTUL, local credit unions and financial institutions.

## Healthy Food Access

### **Community Issues**

- Healthy food is expensive and inaccessible in our neighborhood.
- Convenience stores do not provide healthy food.
- It is hard to budget for healthy food when we are making poverty wages.
- Limited funding opportunities for smaller grassroots food-based organizations in the neighborhood.

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### **Community Solutions/Visions for Success**

- We want to change policies and remove barriers so that smaller grocery stores and convenience stores can sell fresh organic produce.
- We want more food education in our schools.
- We want more land access for gardens and an improved, accessible city process to increase land.
- We want to develop cooperatively owned and run local food vendors.
- Grow public food forests.

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## What We Recommend

### Define and center equity and anti-displacement

- A clear and community-crafted definition of equity and anti-displacement needs to be central to this work.
- Proactive strategies that are addressing gentrification patterns need to be a part of this initiative.
- If this initiative is really about anti-displacement and equity, then this needs to be anchored in each topic area (air, water and soil quality, health and energy in housing, green jobs and healthy food access) and the bottom line for all actions moving forward.
- Those who are most impacted by gentrification and development aimed to displace people are those who are best positioned to develop these strategies.

### Community leadership is critical

- Community needs to be put in a position to shape priorities, articulate their own decision making model and build the momentum of this initiative.
- Any future engagement, implementation and decisions need to be led by community.
- Our recommendation is that there be ongoing resources committed by the city to support a community leadership team, comprised of people who live in the zone and collaborating with community organizations and stewarding this work forward.
- Create a process for holding the city accountable and a leadership team that will continually shape this process.

### Ongoing, long-term engagement and base building

- Conduct ongoing engagement across all neighborhoods and cultural groups in the greater Phillips and Cedar Riverside area.
- Decentralize the outreach efforts from one community-based organization or one-full time organizer to a cohort of community organizations that can build the base for this work to continue forward.
- This work is complex, it covers many topics and issues and challenges, and it is addressing a long history of harm placed on this neighborhood; it is not appropriate for the city to say the engagement period is over. This work will require long-term relationship building, capacity and training for neighbors to be shaping these solutions and time for it to evolve and change into what it needs to be by community process.

### Local leadership and facilitation

- Facilitators, if used in the future, need to live or work in the zone.
- Recruit people who have lived experiences and social networks they can access to bolster the Green Zones initiative is important in developing local leadership and power-building.

Community members identified important next steps in the process they'd like to see transpire:

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- Anti-displacement centered as the principle around which policies are crafted and how they're implemented. Can be used as model for other neighborhoods facing gentrification.
- To define: what is the goal, what is the dream of the Green Zones? Let's center community.
- Clear answers and transparency from the city regarding budget and what it can do about affordable housing
- Clear pathways for community consent and leadership in the decision-making process.
- Active and refine the work plan, so that prevents gentrification instead of merely responding or reacting to it.

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### Next Steps—>Future

- Share this community report! A colorful zine-style version of this text and hard copies can be found at Hope Community. Contact Maryan Abdinur 612-400-6357
- Become involved in this initiative and join the community leadership team for the Southside Green Zones initiative. Contact City Staff Contact: Kelly Muellman, 612-673-3014 [kelly.muellman@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:kelly.muellman@minneapolismn.gov)
- Attend community workshops led by the Center for Earth Energy and Democracy to build our capacity for transformational change. Contact Say Yang, 612-345-8255 [syang@ceed.org](mailto:syang@ceed.org)
- Show up for the City Council vote on these prioritized actions and advocate for long-term funding from the City for the Southside Green Zones initiative!
  - Wed, Sept 12 at 10am, City Hall, Room 317 for the presentation;
  - Fri, Sept 21 at 9:30am, City Hall, Room 317 for the full City Council approval
- Get connected to Parks & Power Campaign— dedicated to grassroots community organizing for racial equity & justice in Minneapolis' parks system, with deep work in community on housing justice and addressing the threat of displacement and gentrification. Contact: [ParksandPower@gmail.com](mailto:ParksandPower@gmail.com)
- For a copy of the Task Force work plan and report, and to be updated on where this initiative stands in the City Hall, Contact City Staff Contact: Kelly Muellman, 612-673-3014 [kelly.muellman@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:kelly.muellman@minneapolismn.gov)

For More Information and Supporting Documents to this Report contact Maryan at  
612-400-6357

# Southside Green Zones Community Report

## Gratitudes

**This Land**—We all stand on stolen land. We honor the Dakota people who resided here and tended to these lands prior to European settlement and colonization. We recognize the effects that our history of enslavement, stolen labor and land and cultural genocide continue to affect health and social outcomes in our neighborhoods. May we recognize this history and heal the harm we have made here.

**Engagement Team**—Maryam Abdinur, Alisa Hoven, Eric Avery  
Thank you for scheming up an engagement plan to hear from community, for practicing patience along the way and co-learning with community in humility and truth.

### **GZ 101 participants and community partners**

Thank you for showing up, for sharing your truth and critiquing this process, for demonstrating commitment and curiosity in improving the health and well-being of Philips and Cedar Riverside.

**Community Steering Team**—Center for Earth Energy and Democracy, Nexus Partners, Hope Community, Land Stewardship Project, Isuroon, Waite House  
Thank you for offering wisdom and guidance and posing critical questions as we journey towards transformational change.

**Task Force Members**—Michael Goze, Tyler Sit, Abé Levine, Jose Luis Villaseñor, Rep. Karen Clark, Nimo Mohamed, Aiden Yano, Thamyra Golafaie, Darius Gray, Steve Schacht, Tina White, Patrick Hanlon, Brian K Smith, Michelle Chavez, Joseph Bernard  
Thank you for your commitment to shape actions that reflect community voice, for showing up to all those monthly meetings and for rolling your sleeves up and getting to work.

### **City staff** —Kelly Muellman

Thank you for your time, energy and stamina to coordinate this process, making connections and following up with questions, advocating for this work inside City Hall and for stepping aside so community can step in.

### **Task Force Facilitators**— Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn and Etdonde Awaah

Thank you for crafting and shaping all the agendas for meetings, carefully tracking all the ideas and comments and keeping tabs on that work plan and prioritization process and for holding multiple truths and complexities.

## **Southside Green Zones Community Report**

Text—Alisa Hoven

Sketches—Samie Johnson

Design Layout—Rachel Rolseth

Button artwork—Quinn Rivenburgh