Resolution
Of the
City of Minneapolis

By Gordon, Frey, Reich, Yang and Cano

Promoting racial equity and sustainable community revitalization through the development of a Green Zones Policy and creating the Green Zones Policy Task Force.

Whereas, low-income communities and people of color in Minnesota are disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of traffic and stationary pollution sources, brownfield sites, blight, housing, lack of access to jobs, and will be disproportionately impacted by the adverse effects of climate change; and

Whereas, low-income communities and people of color in Minnesota suffer health inequities, such as higher rates of asthma emergency department visits and hospitalizations, higher rates of low-birth weight babies and infant mortality, and higher overall mortality rates, as demonstrated in the 2014 "Advancing Health Equity Legislative Report" produced by the Minnesota Department of Health; and

Whereas, a person's zip code has become a predictor of his or her health outcomes and the importance of place-based interventions are widely acknowledged in the fields of urban planning and public health; and

Whereas, recent evaluations of participation in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs across the U.S. show lower involvement rates and more barriers to participation for lower-income households and renters; and

Whereas, cities across the U.S. are developing Green Zones policies that target resources and regulatory tools to specific areas experiencing high levels of cumulative pollution and related health impacts to address environmental justice and community revitalization, and that are each unique and crafted based on community-identified concerns and solutions; and

Whereas, Green Zones can be designed to be a comprehensive, place-based, targeted approach to combat multiple connected issues to reinvigorate communities and build climate resiliency; and

Whereas, a Green Zone Policy will guide the equitable distribution of environmental resources and burden; and

Whereas, equity is one of the City's Values, defined as "fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people;" and

Whereas, the City Council has committed to the development of a Green Zone Policy through the following actions:

- Adoption of the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan on June 28, 2013, which identified developing a Green Zone initiative as a cross-cutting strategy under the Buildings and Energy chapter.
- Adoption of the Minneapolis Energy Pathways Study on March 7, 2014, which listed establishing a Green Zones pilot with key community leadership as a next step on Minneapolis Energy Pathways recommendations.

– Adoption of the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan Two-year (2014-2015) Priorities on March 7, 2014, which included developing a Green Zone initiative; and

Whereas, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Climate & Health Program facilitated a health impact assessment (HIA) with community based organizations on the possible implementation of a Green Zones initiative in Minneapolis, and established a Steering Committee that has developed recommendations to inform a Green Zones Policy for the City; and

Whereas, policy developed by impacted stakeholders ensures that decisions are informed by local knowledge and creates buy-in for effective implementation and community empowerment for positive change;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by The City Council of The City of Minneapolis:

That the City of Minneapolis creates a Green Zones Workgroup aimed at analyzing data and developing data-driven recommendations including:

1. Criteria and eligibility requirements of Green Zone designation.

2. Goals, expectations and metrics aimed at tracking progress within each designated Green Zone.

3. Strategies aimed at improving health and supporting economic development using environmentally conscious efforts in communities that face the cumulative effects of environmental pollution, as well as social, political and economic vulnerability. Such strategies could include the development of community environmental goals; enforcement of existing and needed standards; recommendations for future planning efforts; promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy; support for green amenities, including tree canopy; and focused economic development activities such as creating green jobs and incentivizing healthier and more environmentally-friendly business practices. Such strategies shall address, and increase the community's capacity to address, the identified environmental and health impacts identified by the Workgroup's data analysis below.

Be It Further Resolved that the City of Minneapolis directs the Workgroup to identify Green Zone recommendations based on specific data sets, including environmental issues (land, air and water) as well as race and income, to create basic overlays to demonstrate the intensity of the intersection of these factors.

Be It Further Resolved that this Workgroup shall be led by the Coordinator's Office, including Sustainability and Equity and Inclusion staff, in conjunction with the following relevant City staff and external partners, including:

1. Representatives from the Community Environmental Advisory Commission's (CEAC).

2. Representatives from the Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC).

3. Representatives from the Minneapolis Green Zones Health Impact Assessment Steering Committee.

4. Technical experts with experience in environmental justice policies.

5. Community representatives with demonstrated technical expertise in climate resiliency and/or cumulative health impact issues.

6. Representatives from local businesses or industries with expertise in green manufacturing or environmentally-friendly business practices.

7. Representatives from pertinent City departments, including Health, Community Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, Neighborhood and Community Relations and others as needed.

8. Representatives from environmentally over-burdened communities.

Efforts shall be made to ensure representation that reflects geographic and cultural diversity within the Workgroup.

Be It Further Resolved that this Workgroup shall then review the gathered data and shall draft recommendations regarding Green Zone priority areas based on the results of the above data analysis.

Be It Further Resolved that this Workgroup shall present its recommendations to Council for approval no later than fourth quarter 2016.

Be It Further Resolved that upon acceptance of the Workgroup's Report and Recommendations, Council may designate a zone-specific Task Force to be selected in accordance with the City's Open Appointments Process as set forth in the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances to work with staff and area stakeholders on developing a Designated Green Zone Work Plan specific to the selected area. The Work Plan shall be presented to Council for approval and shall include at a minimum:

1. A community outreach plan to inform residents, businesses and other stakeholders of the proposed plan and to seek input into the strategic implementation of the same.

2. Identification of targeted strategies and expected outcomes.

3. Identification of specific resources needed for implementation.

Appointed members shall include local, impacted stakeholders, as well as other members who represent various constituencies and/or expertise, such as relevant City of Minneapolis Advisory Committees, industrial workforce members, and individuals with demonstrated technical expertise in climate resiliency, cumulative health impact issues, environmental justice policy and green manufacturing processes and practices.