



# Hear from our community:

## LITTLE EARTH / PHILLIPS NEIGHBORHOOD IN MINNEAPOLIS

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

**Safe Routes to School** helps more kids walk and bicycle to school more often through infrastructure improvements, education and promotion of walking/biking activities (Minnesota Statutes 2013 174.40).

This project aims to take a step towards achieving health equity by bridging the information gaps that exist between underserved communities, research, and health policy. Identifying community needs and conveying the findings to multiple decision-makers better positions the community to gain access to Safe Routes to School grants.

**The purpose of this project is to improve conditions so that all communities can realize the benefits of active living.**

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase positive police presence and patrols to ensure safety of children.
- Create structured opportunities for groups to walk to school together.
- Allow designated elders/adults to ride school bus.
- Establish community schools that are closer and more accountable to community families.
- Engage the community in designing solutions at the planning levels.
- Educate community members about existing resources, such as bike programs.

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

Residents of the Phillips neighborhood expressed very serious safety concerns for children going to and from school, ranging from sexual trafficking solicitation and threats of sexual violence, to physical and verbal fighting on the school bus. There are virtually no effective adult intervention controls either enroute or at bus stops in the neighborhood, or even at some of the schools. A lack of effective support in dealing with these safety issues makes many parents unwilling to allow their children to walk or bike to school on their own. In fact, some parents take time off from work in order to take their children to school.

# LITTLE EARTH / PHILLIPS NEIGHBORHOOD IN MINNEAPOLIS

Approximately 34 community members from South Minneapolis/Phillips Neighbourhood (Little Earth) gathered for a listening session jointly coordinate by The Womens Environmental Institute and the University of Minnesota Program in Health Disparities. Participants' ages ranged from 14–65. Participants in the listening session consisted mainly of women (~75%) who identified as American Indian/Native American (~92%). Approximately 40% of the participants were parents with 38% of the parent participants having more than one child. Parent participants overwhelmingly had children who were "school age," i.e. between 7 months and 20 years of age.

MEETING LOCATION: LITTLE EARTH NEIGHBORHOOD EARLY LEARNING CENTER, 2438 18TH AVE SOUTH, MINNEAPOLIS

MEETING DATE: MARCH 3, 2014

## NOTES FROM FIRST CONVENING

### Pedestrian Safety Concerns

#### PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

A strong need was expressed for enhanced bike lanes on major roads in the Phillips and South Minneapolis neighborhoods. Apart from general concerns related to the extreme nature of Minnesota's winter season, community residents also voiced concerns related to how responsive regulatory agencies/facilities management is in clearing off snow and ice banks in a timely manner, particularly on busy sidewalks in and around the Little Earth Community. Residents also voiced strong concerns related to cars speeding on Cedar, 26th and 28th Avenue South. Other concerns included a need for winter-friendly clothes and boots.

#### SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Residents expressed a need for crosswalk guards and/or walking school bus programs, speed bumps, and other infrastructure investments that are designed to reduce the likelihood of biker/pedestrian crashes. Residents also cited a strong need for educational resources connected to already existing resources like bike share programs.

### Crime-Related Concerns

#### PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

Residents expressed very strong concerns related to crime, violence, drugs and gangs. Residents reported the frequent nature of random acts of violence, drug and even human trafficking. Residents were overwhelmingly united around their shared concerns related to the sex-trafficking of vulnerable Native Americans, particularly in the Little Earth Neighborhood.

#### SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Residents expressed a need for increased police patrols to address concerns related to sex trafficking, gangs and violence.

### Education, Socioeconomic and Other Related Concerns

#### PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

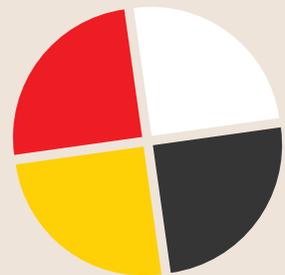
Residents reported a general lack of physical activity among children in the community related to lack of information for parent involvement, limited access to existing exercise equipment in the area, a lack of diversity in the physical activity offerings (particularly within school settings), and a lack of community engagement around these issues in general.

#### SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Residents expressed larger overriding concerns related to persistent socio-economic and educational inequalities. The need for solutions that integrated community involvement/engagement was also voiced.

### Assets/Knowledge of Community Resources

Participants generally cited a lack of knowledge about resources/assets in the community that are designed to address issues related to children's physical activity, healthy eating and general active living and active commuting projects. Participants who did express knowledge of existing programs in their communities that are designed to address the aforementioned concerns spoke of them in general terms and presumably had little/no experience benefiting/participating in these programs.



### THIS PROJECT IS A COLLABORATION

Health Equity Working Group

Pillsbury United  
Communities – Brian Coyle

Women's Environmental Institute  
Program in Health Disparities  
Research (University of Minnesota)



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
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