



**TOWARDS A
STABLE, UNIFIED
METROPOLITAN
REGION**

**SUMMER
2009**



HIRE Minnesota: Fighting Pollution and Poverty Together

Tanya Hill will graduate this spring from a North Minneapolis workforce training program with a certificate in pre-apprenticeship carpentry. She started the 20-week program at Summit Academy OIC with dreams of finding steady, stable employment that would help her provide for her two young children. Entering the final weeks of her training, she was unsure that dream would be realized.

The economic slowdown has meant that hundreds of workers formerly employed in the building and construction trades are now out of work. With those laborers on the bench, leadership at Summit Academy wonder if students like Hill will be given an opportunity to put their new skills to work.

“Our students are prepared for the workforce,” says Summit Academy President and CEO Louis King. “But they face employment challenges even in a good economy. In this environment, we need to fight even harder to make sure there is room at the table for new workers.”

Instead of waiting around for opportunities, Summit and its students decided to make new opportunities for themselves. That’s why they initiated HIRE Minnesota, a campaign to create a new green economy and rebuild our

national infrastructure — and to do it in a way that creates new jobs, reduces our global warming pollution, and creates opportunities for low-income people and people of color.



“These jobs will help me find gainful employment and be supportive of my children . . . we are qualified, we need to be heard, and we want to be a part of the green economy.”

— Tanya Hill

As the president of one of Minnesota’s major workforce training programs, King saw this moment as a time to make change for his students in the long and short term. As our country invested in weatherizing homes, fixing roads and bridges, building rail lines and manufacturing new green products, we could also create jobs that are accessible to low-income people and communities of color. This moment in history would be an unprecedented opportunity to employ low-income people in well paying jobs in emerging green industries.

REBUILDING OUR ECONOMY AND PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

With a host of serious economic problems facing our communities right now, environmental issues might seem low on the list of priorities to many people. Yet the green jobs movement has captured the imagination of people who care about a variety of issues — for example, climate change, racial justice and workforce preparation — and demonstrated how deeply intertwined our economy and environment are.

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Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

2525 E. Franklin Ave., Suite 200
 Minneapolis, MN 55406
 Phone: (612) 332-4471
 Fax: (612) 338-2194
www.metrostability.org

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition of 26 grassroots organizations that work together to advance racial, economic and environmental justice in the way growth and development happens in the Twin Cities region.

Executive Director — Russ Adams
russ@metrostability.org

Development/Communications Director — Tracy Nordquist Babler
tracy@metrostability.org

Associate Director — Maura Brown
maura@metrostability.org

Coalition Organizer/Researcher — Jennifer Jimenez
jennifer@metrostability.org

Administrative Coordinator — Caroline Krafft
caroline@metrostability.org

Coalition Organizer — Joan Vanhala
joan@metrostability.org

MEMBERS

1000 Friends of Minnesota
 African American Action Committee
 All Parks Alliance for Change
 Community Stabilization Project
 Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota
 Family & Children's Service
 Fresh Energy
 Fund for an OPEN Society
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 Native American Community Development Institute
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 St. Paul Area Coalition for the Homeless
 Sierra Club, North Star Chapter
 Somali Action Alliance
 Transit for Livable Communities
 University UNITED
 Women's Environmental Institute

The work of the Alliance is generously supported by the following **FUNDERS**:

Ford Foundation
 F.R. Bigelow Foundation
 Otto Bremer Foundation
 McKnight Foundation
 Minneapolis Foundation
 Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation
 St. Paul Foundation
 Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock
 and by individual contributions from people like you.

From the Director's Desk



Growth, Development and Equity in the Climate Change Era

Before there was a mass failure of sub-prime mortgages, before there was an economic meltdown on Wall Street, and before the presidential election campaign season had begun, many state and national policymakers were focused on the perils of global warming and greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change had catapulted into our national consciousness driven by a confluence of events: the alarming loss of glacial ice shelves, intensive weather events and natural disasters in the U.S., the popularity of Al Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and finally, \$4 per gallon gas.

As climate change has grown as a major environmental concern, so has our understanding of how closely it is related to land-use, transportation and community development decisions. We often think of big polluters when we think of the root causes of global warming — oil companies, coal power plants, chemical plants and heavy industry. And these sources of emissions do have a significant impact. But it would be a mistake to overlook how our own urban development patterns, our auto-dominated transportation system and our land-use policies contribute to climate change.

"Climate change will be the defining issue for urban planning and land development in the years ahead."

— Reid Ewing

Climate change realities are beginning to collide with long-existing market conditions, including our overreliance on a largely carbon-based energy economy. For years, inexpensive gasoline, low-interest mortgages, and ever-expanding highway and sewer networks have driven sprawling development patterns in most major metropolitan regions. Meanwhile, urban communities — with their climate-friendlier high densities, better developed transit systems and walkability — have struggled to hold on to their fair share of resources during the last five decades of post-war economic and geographic expansion. Redlining mortgage and insurance policies sought to segregate communities of color, while business capital, jobs and middle class white families migrated to the suburbs.

With this in mind, how can communities grow and develop in ways that provide opportunities for all our residents while minimizing our carbon footprint?

Unmitigated regional growth patterns are now beginning to be challenged across the country. Planners in California are applying new state goals for

See **Growth, Development and Equity**, page 6

What's at Stake?

Advocates around the country and in Minnesota have their eyes on major opportunities to advance racial, economic and environmental justice this year. Here are a few we are working on or monitoring:

FEDERAL OPPORTUNITIES

• American Investment and Recovery Act:

Passed in early 2009, this bill made \$787 billion available to create or save 3.5 million jobs in infrastructure, renewable energy, weatherization and other projects. It may also create funding for job training and apprenticeship programs. Funding will flow through state agencies. Read about how HIRE Minnesota influenced stimulus spending in the cover story.

• Transportation Reauthorization:

The federal transportation bill must be reauthorized every six years. This bill will authorize an expected investment of billions of dollars for roads, rail, transit and trails. Advocates are looking for opportunities to connect transportation investments to housing and job opportunities. Read about our efforts to make sure equity is considered in the transportation reauthorization on page 4.

• Green Jobs Act:

This bill was introduced in 2007, but never passed. The main aspects of the bill were incorporated into the stimulus act with \$500 million to provide training in the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries. The language focuses on creating opportunities for labor reserves, the unemployed, low-income people and formerly incarcerated people.

• American Clean Energy and Security Act:

Proposed in April 2009, this legislation sets national standards for energy efficiency, renewable energy and global warming pollution. The bill includes green jobs language and focuses on transitioning the U.S. to a clean energy economy and energy independence.



STATE OPPORTUNITIES

• Energy Programs Act:

In May, the state Legislature passed the Energy Programs Act, which lays out a plan for spending \$200 million in federal stimulus dollars for weatherization programs and other energy efficiency opportunities. The Alliance worked with the HIRE Minnesota coalition to secure \$2.5 million of those funds for green jobs training for low-income people and energy efficiency community outreach programs. Read the details in the cover story.

• Green Job Opportunity Zones Bill:

Modeled after the state's existing JOBZ program, this bill would create tax incentives for businesses to create green jobs in selected communities. Local units of government would apply to become Green Job Opportunity Zones, and earn that designation for up to 12 years. This program was proposed by Governor Pawlenty, but did not pass this session.

• Building Sensible Communities:

This bill would create incentives for Minnesota communities to implement land-use planning practices that would achieve global warming reduction goals, including making Minnesota's adopted global warming pollution-reduction targets a goal of the Metropolitan Council's comprehensive planning process and requiring MnDOT to plan for a multi-modal transportation system to reduce our region's vehicle miles traveled. Several recommendations of the bill were incorporated into legislation, including a requirement that the Metropolitan Council report to the Legislature on transportation and land use strategies to reduce air pollution, mitigate congestion and reduce infrastructure costs. Read more about page 2.

• Homes not Roads:

Recently, several manufactured home parks have been threatened by highway projects. A One-for-One Replacement policy was discussed this session that would require the Minnesota Department of Transportation to replace every manufactured housing unit it displaces by road projects. Read more on page 5.



Transit Equity: Federal Opportunities

By Jennifer Jimenez, *Alliance for Metropolitan Stability Organizer/Researcher*

Federal decisions, some recently made and some coming over the course of this year, mean that there will be tremendous transportation and infrastructure investments in the coming years. The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, otherwise known as the stimulus bill, is providing nearly \$50 billion in transportation investments alone. These funds are expected to help build and repair our nation's roads, bridges, highways and transit system; create jobs; and spur our ailing economy.

In addition, every six years the federal government passes major new transportation legislation, authorizing millions of dollars in new projects. The existing bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), provided \$244.1 billion for transportation spending and will expire in September 2009. Congress is expected to work on a replacement bill soon after that.

TRANSPORTATION AND THE ECONOMY

Transportation investments are not only important to help us get from place to place. Those investments can also be an important driver for economic growth, allowing for the efficient movement of goods and people. Transportation can help people to access the jobs, resources and opportunities they need for a good, quality life. Smart investments in mass transit can also decrease our negative impact on the environment and our dependence on foreign oil.

Transportation investments are now being accelerated as a way to speed our economic recovery and create jobs, especially through construction projects. The significant transportation investments in the stimulus package bring a lot of promise to help our ailing economy and to put people back to work.

There is, however, an increasing consensus that our transportation planning doesn't always result in the same benefits to everyone. The transportation policies of the past

have failed to meet many of the needs of working families and communities of color.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF POOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Post-World War II transportation policies encouraged massive building of highways, resulting in overreliance on automobile use. This resulted in an overdependence on single-occupancy vehicles, leading to underdeveloped mass transit systems in many American cities. Poor transit access disproportionately affects communities of color and low-income people. Recent statistics released by the Civil Rights Project show that 24 percent of African-American people, 17 percent of Latino people and 13 percent of Asian-American people do not own a vehicle, compared to only 7 percent of white people. Without a car or adequate access to transit, many people of color aren't able

to access critical resources like employment opportunities and housing choices.

As would be expected, lower-income households trail behind higher-income households in car ownership. Despite this relative lack of car ownership, lower-income households nonetheless both spend a higher percentage of their income on transportation as compared to higher-income households.

In fact, the costs of owning a car, including gas, maintenance and insurance can be especially prohibitive to many low-income families. According to the Surface Transportation Policy Project, the poorest fifth of Americans spend 42 percent of their annual household budget on automobile ownership, which is more than twice the national average. This means that they have less income to spend on housing, food, education, health care and other needs.

Favoring highway development over public transit has also created a spatial mismatch, where many entry-level or manufacturing jobs have been moved to suburban areas that are often inaccessible to inner-city residents who need jobs.



Community members rally for transportation equity in Central Corridor LRT planning. Photo: Art Sidner

Transit Equity: Federal Opportunities continued from page 4



Residents of a manufactured home park ask MN DOT to value homes over roads

See sidebar story on right.

While public transit may be available in densely developed areas, transit connections far from downtown areas are often unreliable if not unavailable.

Even when public transit is available, public investments have often been directed to rail projects rather than bus routes, furthering transportation disparities. Nationally, rail is more used by higher-income riders, whereas buses tend to serve more lower-income riders. We are already seeing this trend in Minnesota as we develop our fledgling light rail system. The planned Central Corridor line that will run between Minneapolis and St. Paul will result in the reduction of high-frequency bus routes that serve low-income communities. The rail stops that are currently planned are not enough to make up for the lost bus service, especially with stops planned one mile apart in many transit-dependent neighborhoods.

USING TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

A nation's transportation system is the lifeblood of its economy and it should provide economic opportunity for all. Our objective should not be merely to plan efficient, low-cost systems, but to provide genuine access to economic and social opportunities, regardless of race, class, gender and disability.

With significant transportation investments expected, thousands of jobs will be created in the construction industry. For every \$1 billion in federal transportation spending, approximately 35,000 jobs are created (Surface Transportation Policy Project 2004).

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, 9 percent of construction firms are minority owned, and those firms have received only 5 percent of construction receipts. A recent study showed that African Americans are employed in the construction sector at rates significantly below their participation in the general workforce. In Minneapolis/St. Paul, there is about a 6 percent gap between the overall workforce participation of African Americans and their employment in the building trades (University of Missouri 2008).

The previous way of spending money on transportation has proven to have disadvantages for low-income people and communities of color. We must use this unprecedented opportunity to not only invest in our physical infrastructure, but to invest in people by creating new jobs, training a new workforce and providing affordable access to jobs.

Affordable Homes are Vulnerable to MnDot Projects

Throughout Minnesota, manufactured home residents are being threatened with displacement as a result of highway expansion projects. Manufactured home parks, home to many elderly people, veterans, low-income people and people of color, are particularly vulnerable because the residents rent rather than own the land their homes sit on. If the land is taken by MnDOT (or another governmental authority), residents frequently have no options for relocating or selling their homes. And in many communities, these parks are the only affordable home ownership opportunities around.

The Alliance has worked with All Parks Alliance for Change (APAC), ISAIAH, Housing Preservation Project and other partners to oppose road projects that would displace residents from the Arden Manor park in Arden Hills. Fifty homes were once threatened by the expansion of Highways 10 and 96. Today, as a result of our organizing efforts, only 17 homes remain at risk.

APAC proposed a more comprehensive solution this legislative session, a One-for-One Replacement policy. This approach would require local and state agencies to: first try to **avoid displacement**, then work to **relocate people**, or if those options are not feasible, then finally **replace** every manufactured home threatened by road projects. Although the policy did not receive a hearing this session, APAC secured the participation of key stakeholders and legislators in a new working group whose mission is to fashion a policy based on the Avoid/Relocate/Replace model.

Growth, Development and Equity continued from page 2



While swift action is critical to get the economy back on track, the need for deliberate speed shouldn't undermine the opportunity to utilize these dollars to transform the economy into one that is more just and green, and that provides real opportunity to all Americans. Our nation has dug an economic and ecological hole that is too deep and too polluted to be refilled carelessly. Instead, we need to creatively develop and employ new tools and materials, with a focus on deliberate action, scaling up local innovation, and ensuring that all can participate and prosper.

From *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User's Guide to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* by Green For All and PolicyLink

reducing green house gas emissions towards new suburban development projects. In a recent Maine court case, a major housing developer was challenged to calculate and minimize the carbon footprint of the project before plans would be allowed to go forward.

In Minnesota, a bill was heard at the state Legislature this session that attempted to address land use and climate change concerns statewide. The Building Sensible Communities Act, proposed by Alliance member groups Fresh Energy, Transit for Livable Communities, 1000 Friends of Minnesota and Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, built off the state's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Task Force recommendations for finding innovative ways to tackle both climate and land use issues at once—for instance, by forcing MnDOT to plan for more multi-modal transportation options or requiring analysis of energy use and efficiency in a development's environmental review process. The bill also included recommendations to help reduce our average state vehicle miles driven (VMD). Since vehicle emissions account for about 30 percent of our total emissions, helping people find alternatives to driving for some of their daily trips would have a measurable impact on lowering global warming pollution. The Building Sensible Communities Act asked all cities in the metro area to consider how their comprehensive land-use plans would help lower overall VMD, starting in 2014. Although the bill did not pass in its entirety, a piece of legislation survived that will require the Met Council to study land use and VMD patterns in the Twin Cities.

CLIMATE EQUITY IN MINNESOTA

The piece that too often gets lost in the climate change discussion is how global warming and the changes we make to respond to it will impact low-income

communities, working class people and people of color. We know that while these communities are some of the smallest contributors to global warming pollution, they bear disproportionate health and environmental burdens from the effects of climate change. Alliance member groups like Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota, the Sierra Club, Fresh Energy and Women's Environmental Institute have been educating people about these climate justice issues for years.

Now, these groups are coming together with the Alliance and other partners in the HIRE Minnesota campaign, to ensure low-income people and communities of color are a part of the solution. The campaign, led by new partners Summit Academy OIC and the Will Steger Foundation, has garnered the support of more than 70 community organizations, united in one voice to demand that the millions of dollars headed to Minnesota through public investments boost our economy, focus on green solutions that reduce our carbon footprint, and most importantly, provide new, living-wage employment opportunities to underrepresented communities. You'll read much more about HIRE Minnesota in this issue of the *Common Ground*.

It is heartening to know that the Alliance and our member and partner groups are not alone in this fight. A multitude of organizations are advocating for a dramatic shift to a cleaner, more sustainable economy. Our shared end goal is to create a market for an equitable green energy economy—one that can end our dependence on fossil fuels, generate thousands of new jobs at livable wages, reduce green house gas emissions and effectively respond to the root causes of climate change.

—Russ Adams, *Executive Director*





HIRE Minnesota: Fighting Pollution and Poverty continued from page 1

The excitement has been amplified now that the movement is moving beyond the conceptual stage and real resources are being dedicated to put people to work to improve the environment.

By now, most people know that the federal government authorized a stimulus package early this year that could put millions of Americans back to work. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will create or save an estimated 3.5 million jobs over the next two years. What is less known is that the Obama administration has stated a priority to use those dollars to invest in jobs that also address our environmental problems — specifically, lowering our carbon footprint to decrease the harmful effects of global warming.

Many people see the green jobs movement as an opportunity to make deliberate investments that tackle social, environmental and economic problems. The challenge will be to ensure that those jobs — and the other jobs that will be created by the economic stimulus bill — don't just result in business as usual. These new resources must also be used to lift low-income people and people of color out of poverty.

THE ALLIANCE AND OTHER GROUPS QUICKLY JOINED THE COALITION

The Alliance was one of the early members of HIRE Minnesota. Our member groups saw the campaign as integral to our mission to include a racial and economic justice analysis in the way public resources are allocated in our region. "We joined HIRE Minnesota because it so uniquely fit our mission to work for equity across racial, geographic, cultural and issue boundaries," said Alliance Associate Director Maura Brown.

Groups like Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota, Insight News, the Indigenous Green Jobs Task Force, Catholic Charities Office for Social Justice and Family and Children's Service soon joined the coalition, united in the promise of fighting pollution and poverty at the same time.

"BE PREPARED AND BE HEARD"

The first priority of HIRE Minnesota was to begin educating community members about the opportunities that would be coming to Minnesota.

HIRE Minnesota started out by launching a series of town hall meetings to engage communities across the metro area, beginning in north Minneapolis. No one knew what to expect at the first meeting at the Minneapolis Urban League, which was held on a cold, snowy night in December. Despite the weather, more than 200 community members showed up to learn about HIRE Minnesota and green jobs. One of those people was Will Steger, polar explorer and founder of the Will Steger Foundation, a climate change education organization. Steger stood up and made a bold statement: "I see this as our moral obligation. The alternative is mass extinction."



From left: HIRE Minnesota co-chairs Louis King and Will Steger with Reverend Van Leer.

***"I see this as our moral obligation.
The alternative is mass extinction."***

— Will Steger



More than 1,200 people attended HIRE Minnesota's town hall meetings early this year.

The Will Steger Foundation immediately signed on as co-chair to HIRE Minnesota, bringing a wealth of knowledge about climate change and an urgency to the environmental message of the campaign.

Town hall meetings continued in diverse communities — Lao Family Community of Minnesota, the Minneapolis American Indian Center, and Sabathani Community Center — and attracted more than 1,200 people.

See **HIRE Minnesota: Fighting Pollution and Poverty**, next page



HIRE Minnesota: Fighting Pollution and Poverty *continued*

The town halls were an opportunity to hear the thoughts and concerns of community members, and were a vehicle to start harnessing community voices to influence our decision-makers to support green jobs and hiring equity.

“Our communities need to be prepared and be heard if they are going to access these new jobs,” said Alliance coalition organizer Jennifer Jimenez. “The town halls are a way to make sure people know what is coming so they can access new employment and training resources.”

The message at the town halls was clear: this is a turning point in our nation. Decision-makers must be bold and ensure that public investments would benefit all Minnesotans and create a sustainable economy — and not reinforce failed policies of the past.



Workforce training students gathered at the HIRE Minnesota Rally at the state Capitol.

The Minnesota legislation was written to provide guidance on how to spend the money the state would receive from the federal government. HIRE Minnesota met with legislators to secure their support, and turned out dozens of community members to hearings on the bill.

After months of our work, the energy programs bill passed with \$1 million in funding for training of low-income people for weatherization jobs, \$1 million for training of low-income people for other renewable energy jobs and \$500,000 for energy efficiency outreach programs. The bill also contains strong reporting requirements, which means state agencies that administer the funds will have to frequently report their progress toward training, hiring and outreach in low-income communities and communities of color.

ADVOCATING FOR GREEN — AND FAIR — LEGISLATION

The second priority of HIRE Minnesota is to promote legislation that will move us closer to a sustainable economy for all people. Coalition members have been working to ensure that bills that will utilize stimulus money create green jobs, include hiring goals for women and people of color, and contain strong accountability and reporting mechanisms to ensure those standards are met.

One of the first bills to be proposed would authorize funds for energy programs in our state, including funding for weatherization programs. Weatherization programs make homes and buildings more energy-efficient, reducing utility bills and conserving energy at the same time. Existing programs that weatherize low-to-moderate income homes in Minnesota are expected to receive \$132 million from the federal stimulus package. This is a huge increase from the \$10 million annual funding these programs previously received.

ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS TO JOBS

HIRE Minnesota’s objective is not only to create new green jobs, but to hold public agencies accountable to their goals for hiring and training low-income people and people of color. Right now, HIRE Minnesota is especially concerned with the minority hiring practices of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). MnDOT, which received millions of dollars of stimulus money for road, bridge and transit projects, has consistently fallen short of the established goals for training and hiring minorities.

Before a legislative committee hearing in February 2009, MnDOT admitted that its minority hiring practices have fallen short of its goals. HIRE Minnesota filled the room with 200 supporters, and testified before a House committee to emphasize that MnDOT must include specific recommendations on how they would comply with federal hiring requirements, while being accountable and transparent in their practices.



HIRE Minnesota: Fighting Pollution and Poverty *continued*

As a result of our organizing, MnDOT agreed to reorganize its Civil Rights Department to better serve the community. HIRE Minnesota will continue to work with MnDOT to ensure that this concession results in meaningful opportunities for people of color.

BRINGING COMMUNITY VOICES TO THE CAPITOL

On April 20, hundreds of people rallied with HIRE Minnesota at the capitol for green jobs and hiring equity (see photos on pages 10-11). Allied elected officials, including Sen. Ellen Anderson, Speaker of the House Margaret Anderson Kelliher and U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison, also spoke in favor of HIRE Minnesota's legislative goals and pledged their commitment to passing strong legislation this session.

Despite those high profile guests, the highlight of the rally was when Tanya Hill and her classmate Lindell Jackson stood before a crowd of hundreds of people and talked from their personal experience about why green jobs and hiring equity were suddenly such an important part of their lives.

"These jobs will help me find gainful employment and be supportive of my children," said Hill. "I am delighted to be a part of HIRE Minnesota and I'm very excited about going into the construction field. Let's let our legislators know that we are qualified, we need to be heard, and we want to be a part of the green economy."

Hill never thought that her carpentry training would include learning about climate change, lobbying at the capitol

and speaking at rallies of hundreds of people. And that's what has made HIRE Minnesota's work so exciting: the coalition's ability to bring different communities together to talk about issues as seemingly disparate as climate change, unemployment in communities of color, economic resurgence and transportation planning. The coalition now has 70 organizational members that have come together, across

real and perceived differences, to make sure no one is left behind.

"I have been around a long time," said King. "And I have never seen anything like this. You have no idea what it means to my students when they see all these different types of people fighting for them in the halls of the school and the halls of the Capitol."

WHAT COMES NEXT?

On June 2, we will bring all of the communities and stakeholders that HIRE represents together to celebrate our victories and discuss our future priorities. To learn how to get involved with HIRE Minnesota, please visit the HIRE Minnesota web site at www.hiremn.org.

For more information on HIRE Minnesota, visit www.metrostability.org/campaigns.

Some of HIRE Minnesota's legislative champions spoke about their commitment to green jobs and hiring equity.

Pictured clockwise from top left: Sen. Ellen Anderson, D-66; Rep. Jeff Hayden, D-61B; Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher, D-60A; Rep. Bobby Joe Champion, D-58B

Bottom photo: U.S. Representative Keith Ellison addressed the crowd.





HIRE Minnesota Rallies at the Capitol for Equity, Our Economy and Our Environment

On April 20, hundreds of people braved rain and hail to rally at the capitol for green jobs and hiring equity for all people. Coalition members, workforce preparation students, musical performers and community members joined together to affirm their commitment to rebuilding our community and bringing all of our neighbors with us. Photos: Megan Dobratz.



Above: A young man listened to the HIRE Minnesota rally speakers. Below, below right and right: Community members showed their support for HIRE Minnesota.



Above left: Native American dancers opened the HIRE Minnesota rally festivities. Above: Workforce training student Lindell Jackson addressed the rally crowd. Below: A woman made a sign to prepare for the rally.



HIRE Minnesota Rallies at the State Capitol for Equity, Our Economy and Our Environment *continued*



Alliance board member Karen Monahan (above left), organizer for the Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota, talked about health disparities climate change causes in communities of color. Jeff Bauer of Alliance member group Family and 5Children's Service (above right) spoke to the rally participants. Alliance coalition organizer Jennifer Jimenez (below left) asked our legislators to be accountable to our communities. Patrick Ness (below right) of Alliance member group Catholic Charities also addressed the crowd.

Above and below: Despite the cold and rain, students gathered to learn about green jobs and listen to musical performers Maria Isa and Brother Ali. Below left: Supporters arrived dressed for the weather.



Central Corridor Communities Develop Statement on LRT

“To be successful, the light rail line must not only improve mobility, but must also serve as a catalyst to strengthen and enhance existing and future neighborhoods, workforces and businesses along the line.”

This decisive message was the conclusion reached by 150 community members from Saint Paul, Minneapolis and the metro area who gathered at the Central Corridor Resource Center March 7 and 8. This community summit allowed people to exchange ideas on the \$1 billion dollar Central Corridor light rail infrastructure project and to seek solutions to unresolved community concerns.

While summit participants agreed that it is critical to build the Central Corridor light rail line, they also agreed that we must balance project needs with community and business needs, especially when it comes to economic opportunities and neighborhood livability.

This agreement evolved out of a day and a half of deliberations on seven issues: transportation equity, equitable development and affordable housing, neighborhood livability, workforce and jobs, environment and sustainability, small business mitigation, and community as stakeholders. Following a series of small group discussions, participants identified core values that thread together the myriad concerns that the Central Corridor LRT project raises for community members, workers and small businesses.

Equitable distribution of benefits is one of these core values. There was broad agreement on the need to:

1. Ensure the line benefits, and provides a net gain in transit access and convenience, for all neighborhoods, with special attention to the needs of ethnic minorities, transit-dependent and economically disadvantaged populations;

2. Build the three missing stations at Western, Victoria and Hamline before the line opens in 2014;

3. Protect the diversity of the corridor with additional

resources to maintain a supply of affordable properties, so that current and future residents can remain in their homes and small businesses can survive and thrive;

4. Set aggressive requirements, not just goals, for hiring local workers from under-represented populations, and undertake increased outreach and training;

5. Ensure safe, easy pedestrian access to LRT stations and across the light rail line;

6. Improve and expand bus service and bicycle lanes to connect to the light rail;

7. Preserve as much on-street parking as possible; and

8. Make streetscape improvements a required element, not an optional “betterment,” in building the LRT: wider sidewalks, trees, boulevards, benches and green space.

These improvements are essential to ensure the success of local businesses and encourage mixed-use development along the line.

Transparency and authentic, meaningful community participation is another core value that ran across all issues. Community members, workers, and small business owners must be recognized as stakeholders in policy decisions and as partners in crafting and implementing solutions to ensure the benefits of the project outweigh the negative impacts.

See **Central Corridor Communities Develop Statement on LRT**, next page



The Central Corridor Resource Center's scale model of proposed Central Corridor development. Photo: CCRC.

Central Corridor Communities Develop Statement on LRT

continued

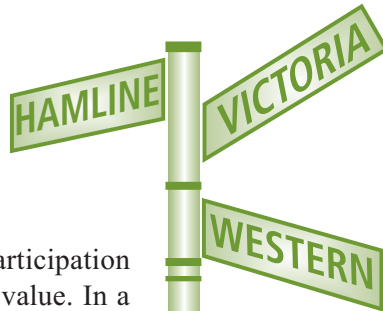
Along with transparency and participation comes **accountability**, a third core value. In a project as large and far-reaching as the Central Corridor we are all accountable for achieving the long-term goals of healthy and sustainable neighborhoods, a thriving workforce and prosperous small businesses.

The summit laid the groundwork for a comprehensive community vision and action agenda. The findings and recommendations of the summit will be integrated into a first draft of a community statement. Comments and additional input on the draft community statement are being sought from the broader community through small group discussions and individual submissions, both written and verbal, with a large community gathering planned for early June.

The community statement will also form the basis for discussions among governmental entities, community members, businesses and organizations to coordinate efforts to meet the objectives set forth in the community statement.

To download a copy of the draft community statement, please visit www.metrostability.org or www.districtcouncilscollaborative.org.

The Central Corridor Community Summit was planned and co-sponsored by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Aurora Saint Anthony NDC, Community Stabilization Project, District Councils Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, ISALAH, Just Equity, Jewish Community Action, Minnesota Project, MICAHA, Saint Paul NAACP, Transit for Livable Communities, UFCW Local 789, University Avenue Business Association, University UNITED, and William Mitchell Community Development Clinic.



The Alliance has been working with the Minnesota coalition of **Transportation for America**, led by member group **Transit for Livable Communities**. This national organization is seeking a transportation system that works for all Americans by investing in:

- A world-leading, sustainable transportation system
- Safe walking, biking and driving
- Reduced exposure to dirty air
- Restoration and maintenance of existing roads, bridges and transit
- Projects with multiple pay-offs, including reduced energy use and access to affordable housing and jobs
- Smart requirements for local and state matching financing
- Government accountability
- Local authority over funding and planning



Community and stakeholders group discussion (top) and (below) John Slade shows 3-D model to participant at 2009 Central Corridor Community Summit. Photos: Transit for Livable Communities

Developments to Watch

New developments are cropping up all around the Twin Cities. These local development projects have regional significance because they have the potential to provide new jobs, incorporate affordable housing, make transit connections and revitalize communities. Here are a few we have our eye on.



Task Force Focuses on 141-acre Upper Post Area by the Airport

A task force led by Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin has been meeting for three years to create recommendations for the redevelopment of a 141-acre area by the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Known as the Upper Post, the site sits across Highway 55 from Fort Snelling, and was once an active military base. A few years ago, it was named one of the 11 most endangered historic places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The current focus of the task force, and the most pressing need, is to stabilize the historic buildings on the site. The working group is developing plans to preserve and redevelop the Upper Post as part of a much larger National Historic Reserve. The Sibley House Historic Site, Fort Snelling State Park and the Camp Coldwater area are being considered for inclusion in the reserve area.



The task force is made up of representatives from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Boy Scouts of America, Minnesota Department of Transportation and the National Parks Service, reflecting the complex nature of land ownership at this site. The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community is also participating in the redevelopment process because of its historic relationship to the site.



Proposed future uses for the site include a museum of aviation, a youth rehabilitation facility, a charter school, a hotel complex, a motocross track, an athletic village and an American Indian multimedia center.

Historic buildings on the Upper Post site.

Developments to Watch continued



CommonBond Communities and District Council Sign a Development Agreement in St. Paul

CommonBond Communities worked with representatives of Union Park District Council (UPDC) and took community input from residents as well as the Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, to outline a list of expectations and joint responsibilities regarding its Lexington Commons housing and office development project. It now appears that UPDC is ready to sign the agreement with CommonBond.

While the project was small in scale (48 residential units and an office building for Common Bond's headquarters), City Councilman Melvin Carter III believes it will form the basis for "community benefits" style agreements for future development along the Central Corridor LRT line along University Ave. in St. Paul.

The agreement has several important characteristics:

- it is a legally binding agreement that spells out responsibilities of both parties that sign it;
- it has a formal review and mediation process built into it;
- the agreement can be amended in the future if both parties agree to it; **and**
- the key section in the agreement that details the specific actions that CommonBond commits to taking suggests that the purpose of the document is to **"address community concerns and confer community benefits ..."**

Community benefits secured include commitments to creating greenspace; hiring women, people of color and small businesses at prevailing wages; notification of community and neighborhood organizations when jobs are available; and reporting on women and minority hiring goals.

The Alliance helped secure legal representation for UPDC and ASANDC via William Mitchell College of Law and advised the community stakeholder groups throughout the negotiation process.

Phillips Neighborhood Fights High-Voltage Power Line Plan

Xcel Energy has proposed placing 75-foot-tall high-voltage power lines down a large section of the Midtown Greenway in south Minneapolis. Citing the need to provide more reliable energy for businesses and major employers in the Phillips neighborhood (including Abbot Northwestern Hospital, the Midtown Exchange complex, Allina and Wells Fargo), Xcel plans to build two substations at either end of the power lines.

Neighborhood residents and community organizations, led by the Midtown Greenway Coalition, have challenged the need for this project and asked Xcel to demonstrate how a coordinated energy conservation strategy (including use of energy-efficient materials and lighting, building weatherization and use of smart grid technology) would lower or eliminate the need for the project.

Observers believe that Xcel has larger plans to extend power lines and substations across the core cities of the region. By breaking the project up artificially into arbitrary sections, it could be attempting to sidestep state law that requires utility projects that are 10 miles or longer in length to receive municipal consent.

Hennepin County and Minneapolis officials have vigorously opposed placement of the power lines along the popular greenway site, arguing that burying the lines below 28th Street would be a more sensible alternative. Local legislators are investigating whether state statutes can be modified to stop Xcel from using the 10-mile loophole.

The final decision for the project will rest with the governor-appointed Public Utilities Commission. Public hearings are expected, perhaps later this year.

Join Us for the 2009 Regional Equity Series

The Alliance is pleased to present the 2009 Regional Equity Series, which brings local and national leaders together to talk about emerging issues that are critical to creating an equitable Twin Cities region. The series was developed as an ongoing learning opportunity for Twin Cities leaders who attended PolicyLink's Regional Equity '08 conference in New Orleans. Other members of the community are invited to join us in these unique dialogues that will allow us to jointly examine tools and strategies that have worked around the country to confront racial, economic and environmental injustices.

The Emerging Green Jobs Movement

The first event in the series was held on **March 6** to a crowd of more than 150 community members, organizers and advocates. Majora Carter, one of the



Majora Carter. Photo: Pat Carney.

nation's pioneers in successful green-collar job training and placement systems, presented the keynote address on how we can generate thousands of new jobs at livable wages, lift low-income people and people of color out of poverty, end our dependence on fossil fuels, and respond to the root causes of climate change.

Resisting Gentrification and Displacement

On **April 15**, community members gathered in dialogue about how low-income communities can benefit from new economic development, while resisting the



Sushma Sheth from the Right to the City Alliance.

effects of gentrification and displacement. Sushma Sheth from the Miami Workers Center and the national Right to the City Alliance discussed the leading strategies for mitigating the harm and displacement felt by low-income communities when redevelopment activity occurs—and for capturing the positive outcomes that can help lift people out of poverty.



Alliance executive director, Russ Adams, addresses the crowd at one of the Regional Equity Series events. Photo: Pat Carney.

Join Us for the 2009 Regional Equity Series *continued*

Upcoming . . .

Measuring the Racial Impact of Public Policies

SUMMER, date and time TBA

Racial disparities in our region are growing at an alarming rate—and the way we plan growth and development in the Twin Cities is one of the major contributing factors. Educational gaps, health inequities, and poverty that disproportionately impact people of color are directly related to where people can afford to live, what types of jobs are located there, how easily they can get around and what types of community amenities are available. Racial equity impact policies are designed to empower people of color by specifically naming and addressing racial disparities that can result from public decision-making related to development. This event will provide participants with an opportunity to learn about the different types of existing racial equity impact programs and explore the advantages of this type of policy.

Strengthening Our Regional Equity Movement

FALL, date and time TBA

The Twin Cities boast a strong network of organizations that partner on a variety of grassroots efforts to create a more equitable region. How can we build on our existing strengths and networks to place racial justice and equity issues at the center of regional priorities? This event will allow grassroots organizations to highlight their successes, identify the technical and capacity-building support they need to strengthen their efforts, and connect with national equity leaders from PolicyLink. The final event in our series, this forum will provide Twin Cities equity leaders with local context to prepare us for PolicyLink's national regional equity conference in 2010.

Visit www.metrostability.org to find the dates and times of upcoming events.

Thank you to the McKnight Foundation for its generous support of the 2009 Regional Equity Series.

Organizers Gather to Share Resources, Support

Once a month, Twin Cities organizers working on a broad variety of issues are brought together by the Alliance for Organizer Roundtables. At the roundtables, a panel of organizers leads a group discussion about emerging organizing practices, successful strategies and the challenges they struggle with in their work.

Each roundtable focuses on a particular issue in organizing. Recent topics have included the role of organizing in community development, the intersection of electoral and issue organizing, and how to effectively use research to bolster organizing campaigns.

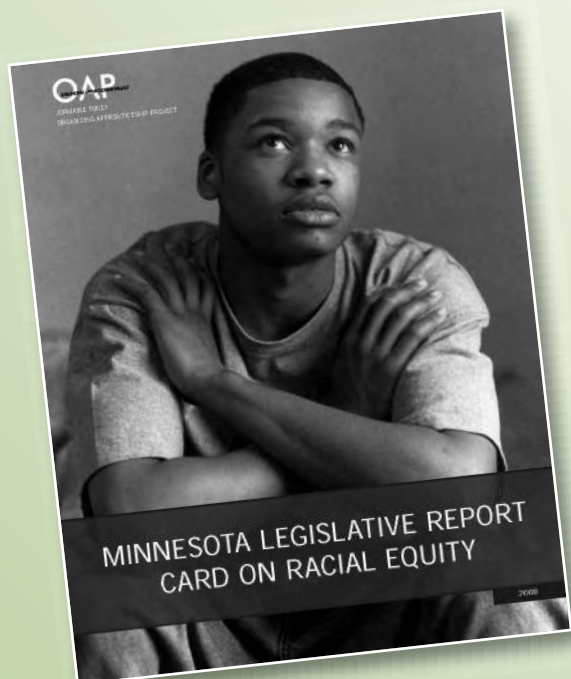
Additionally, the Alliance holds quarterly Metro Organizer Networking Sessions, giving organizers the opportunity to share resources and knowledge—and to build stronger connections with their peer organizers.

Participants at both roundtables and networking sessions value the informal, supportive and energizing atmosphere. "I enjoyed the opportunity to meet like-minded people, and the chance to share our experiences and hopes," said one recent participant.

To read more about our Organizer Roundtables and Metro Organizer Networking Sessions, or to sign up for the next session, visit www.metrostability.org.



Governor and Legislators Fail to Make a Passing Grade in Racial Equity in 2008



The **Organizing Apprenticeship Project (OAP)** released its 2008 Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity this spring. This is the third report card OAP has released to assess the governor's and state legislature's commitment to policies that strengthen opportunity, racial equity and American Indian tribal sovereignty in Minnesota.

This year, Governor Tim Pawlenty and the state legislature overall earned a grade of "F," only passing 7 of 15 racial equity bills that were proposed. Last year, our leaders earned a "D" grade, meaning even less attention was paid to racial equity in 2008 than in 2007.

Despite this discouraging news, OAP reports that more legislators led and supported racial equity legislation in 2008.

To download the report, go to www.oaproject.org.

St. Paul One Step Closer to Adopting Racial Equity Criteria for Analyzing New Developments

Work to incorporate racial equity language in the city of Saint Paul's development process has begun!

The way development is planned and implemented has a profound effect on a community, from how many jobs are available, to where the nearest school, grocery store or bus stop is located, and how many parks are nearby. Communities of color have historically borne many of the negative outcomes of development, including gentrification and displacement, without benefiting equally from many of the positive outcomes it can spur. A racial equity impact policy is a tool to help communities of color work with public decision-makers to eliminate common disparities caused by the way development happens.

The Alliance has been working with our member groups Community Stabilization Project and Jewish Community Action, and partners Organizing Apprenticeship Project and Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, for nearly two years to develop a racial equity impact policy in St. Paul.

Coalition members and other community research partners drafted equity criteria that local governments should consider when planning new large-scale developments. Each criteria (fiscal, transportation, housing, employment, environmental, and zoning and planning equity) asks planners to think about whether new developments will be a positive or negative contributor to racial equity in the community.

The coalition has been working with St. Paul officials to determine the best way to incorporate the racial equity criteria into city policy. St. Paul Planning and Economic Development staff are exploring ways their existing processes can be strengthened with our equity criteria, and are analyzing how the criteria can be meaningfully incorporated to improve outcomes for communities of color in the city.

However the equity criteria are incorporated into city policy, the most important thing will be to ensure the information generated in city reports can be meaningfully accessed by communities. Coalition members will be conducting outreach to St. Paul communities to discuss how racial equity impact reports could be used to evaluate incoming developments.

The Alliance is pleased to welcome three new members to our board of directors

Kristina Homstad is a program officer for Twin Cities Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), an Alliance member group. Prior to joining LISC in the fall of 2008, Tina worked with LISC's national office, coordinating the management and strategic direction of the Sustainable Communities program and working with local LISC offices. She holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and a B.A. from Concordia College.



Kristina Homstad

Karen Monahan is an organizer for Alliance member group Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota, an organization that addresses environmental and health issues affecting urban core communities. A graduate of Wellstone Action Fund's Organizing Fellows program and the Urban Teaching Program at Metropolitan State University, Karen brings rich experience in grassroots organizing and continuing education.



Karen Monahan



Steven Renderos

Steven Renderos joined the board as an at large member. Steven is the project coordinator for the Minnesotano Media Empowerment Project, working to advance accurate and unbiased media on issues and information relevant to Latinos in Minnesota. Steven was formerly an organizer for Alliance member group All

Parks Alliance for Change and is currently a board member of the Organizing Apprenticeship Project.

Julia Freeman, board vice president and at large board member, and **Mari Lecours**, executive director of member group Community Stabilization Project, were both reelected to second terms on the Alliance board. The Alliance thanks these individuals for their time, energy and commitment! We would also like to extend a special thank you to outgoing board members **Rachel Dykoski**, **Beth Kodluboy** and **Matt Hollinshead** for their years of dedication to the Alliance.

Four new member groups join the Alliance

The Alliance was pleased to add four new member groups at our annual meeting in April.

The Somali Action Alliance (SAA) is a unique organization focused on building the power of the Somali community through collective, proactive action. SAA's work began with voter participation efforts in the 2002 Minnesota senate campaign. A combination of voter registration, voter education, convening activities and leadership training opportunities created a space where community members could learn and act together. Today, SAA focuses primarily on education, immigration and election issues.

1000 Friends of Minnesota is dedicated to addressing the important connections between our development patterns and the health of our communities and the environment. Its mission is to promote development that creates healthy communities while conserving natural areas, family farms, woodlands and water. To that end, their programs and strategies are designed to promote smart and balanced growth and the conservation of water and land.

The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) is an important legal and scientific voice protecting and defending Minnesota's environment. MCEA works in the courts, the legislature and state agencies, using science and policy to develop, communicate and implement environmental change. MCEA uses legal action and legislative advocacy, as well as research, communications and collaborations to improve Minnesota's environment.

The Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) is an American Indian intermediary community development organization. NACDI believes that all American Indian people have a place, purpose and future strengthened by sustainable community development. Its mission is to partner with American Indian communities to build and implement 21st century community development strategies. Foremost in their transformation plan is to build community capacity and assets within high growth economic sectors.

in/stability photography contest

Is our region in stability? Or instability?

The Twin Cities region is known for its many positive attributes — clean air and water, a healthy economy, strong and diverse communities, and friendly people. But people who live here — especially low-income people and people of color — know that what you see from the outside isn't the whole picture. Racial and economic disparities, as well as environmental degradation, are also a real part of the Twin Cities.

sta•bil•i•ty: having the ability to resist deterioration or displacement

Stability wants to see the Twin Cities region through your eyes. As a community, what progress have we made toward resisting deterioration and displacement? And what work do we have left to do?

We are looking for original images that display your ideas about what metropolitan stability and instability look like. Images submitted should reflect your experience of the Twin Cities region.

in•sta•bil•i•ty: being likely to give way or fail

Your photograph(s) will be entered into our **in/stability photo contest** for a chance to win prizes and be displayed along with fellow citizen-artists at our 15th anniversary event! Enter up to five photographs into each of the contest categories:

Metropolitan Stability or **Metropolitan Instability**.

Deadline to submit photographs: July 22, 2009.

Winners will be chosen through a community judging process and announced October 2009.

Please visit **www.metrostability.org** for more information and for the contest rules.



ALLIANCE FOR
METROPOLITAN
STABILITY

2525 E. Franklin Ave.,
Suite 200

Minneapolis, MN 55406

Phone: (612) 332-4471

Fax: (612) 338-2194

www.metrostability.org

Address Service Requested

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability advances racial, economic and environmental justice in the way growth and development occurs in the Twin Cities region.