



# COMMON GROUND

CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACES AND ISSUES IN THE TWIN CITIES REGION | SPRING 2010

## VICTORY! East University Avenue Communities Win 3 LRT Stations!

**A**t a historic press conference on January 25, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, along with members of our congressional delegation and St. Paul and Ramsey County officials, announced that all three missing stations at Western Avenue, Victoria Street and Hamline Avenue would be built by the completion of the Central Corridor LRT line.

The announcement was a major victory for the Stops for Us coalition, which has been advocating for the three missing stops to serve transit-dependent communities along east University Avenue for years. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability has been an active coalition member in organizing for transportation equity within the Central Corridor since 2005. Working with our coalition partners, we helped to organize community leadership, organizations and agencies to identify common goals and prioritize joint campaigns to leverage community benefits from the development of the Central Corridor LRT.

*"You've made a difference and we will use you as an example across the country that if you hang together, have great projects that are for the people and work with your delegation, you can make things happen."*

elevated community livability and sustainability factors over the former method which primarily took cost-effectiveness into consideration.

The addition of the missing stops came largely as a result of major changes in how federal matching funds could be allocated to local projects. Responding to years of frustration from transportation planners and advocates, the Federal Transit Administration has finally

In the announcement, LaHood was quoted as telling the Stops for Us organizers, "You've made a difference and we will use you as an example across the country...that if you hang together, have great projects that are for the people, and work with your delegation, you can make things happen."

Through the skills and assets of its different members, the Stops for Us coalition successfully brought attention to the inequities of the Central Corridor plan by creating joint organizational strategies, mapping demographics, influencing public officials and federal gatekeepers, and persisting to change the outcome. The hard work of all the coalition and community members made it possible to include all three stations in the Central Corridor LRT project.

The great news for all residents along the Central Corridor and future transitways in our region is that the FTA's new evaluation formula could put decisions about our region's transit planning back in the hands of people who live and work here. It will allow local plans for new lines and stations to be influenced by our own region's environmental, community and economic development priorities. The Alliance will continue to work with low-income people and people of color to ensure their voices are heard when major decisions are being made about the future development of their communities.



ASANDC Executive Director Nieeta Presley and Alliance Coalition Organizer Joan Vanhala celebrate the Stops for Us Victory. Photo courtesy of ASANDC.

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**Alliance for Metropolitan Stability**

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*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 occurs in the Twin Cities region.*

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

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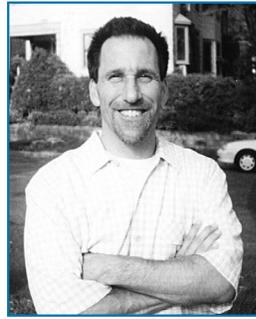
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*and by individual contributions from people like you.*

*From the Director's Desk*

## *Common Sense, Cost Effectiveness, & Community Benefits*

January 2010 signaled the start of a new decade – one that promises to be a truly transformative period relative to recent American history. The previous ten years have been called “the lost decade,”

because the United States slipped behind other countries in terms of social, economic and public health indicators. American prestige abroad dipped to alarmingly low figures, thanks to our intransigence on foreign policy matters and reluctance to take meaningful steps on important global issues.

By the end of the decade, our country had plunged into a Great Recession – with unemployment averaging 10 percent, and much higher for communities of color. Massive government bailouts were provided to the very financial institutions responsible for the banking and mortgage crisis that had led to the collapse of the economy. Those same banks were busy providing year-end bonuses to their top executives in 2009, while Congress failed to negotiate a much needed reform of our health care system.

*Now more than ever, it is important to recognize where government is showing forward-thinking approaches and living up to its promise to benefit all communities.*

While our country stayed mostly stuck in traffic thanks to our auto-dependent transportation policies, other nations deeply invested in multi-modal public transportation systems – reducing their dependence on foreign oil, clearing their air of harmful emissions, and laying

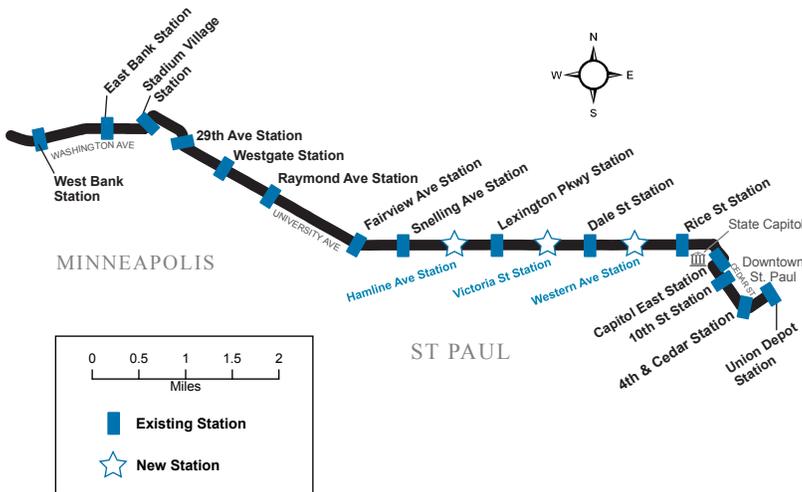
the foundation for more sustainable urban development patterns. Meanwhile, the U.S. wasted precious time because of our insistence on politicizing even the most common sense approaches to addressing civic needs.

By early 2010, media pundits began suggesting that Americans had not just lost confidence in their political leaders, they harbored grave doubts and rising anger towards the federal government's inability to make decisions that would benefit the lives of everyday working people.

It would be easy to become disheartened in the face of all this bad news. But now more than ever, it's important to recognize where government is showing forward-thinking approaches and living up to its promise to benefit all communities.

We saw that type of leadership in St. Paul this month, when the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) changed its project evaluation rules, and suddenly, community benefits mattered! The FTA announced that a problematic rule called the cost-effectiveness index would be eliminated as a pass-fail measure in evaluating federal matching fund-

# Central Corridor Rail Line



ing for transit projects, in favor of a more balanced approach that also took land-use, social benefits and community livability into consideration.

This change was great news for our nation’s future transportation planning, but it is even better news for the local residents and community groups working to secure transit access for low-income communities of color along the Central Corridor. Within a week of the announcement, they were able to secure the three missing train stations they had demanded since preliminary planning for the Central Corridor had begun. Citing civil rights concerns and the need to serve the African American and Asian American communities living along the Central Corridor, the federal government kept its word to the leaders of the Stops For Us coalition – equitable access to the nearly \$1 billion project, with the promise of increased connections to jobs, housing and other amenities the community needs most.

Because FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff was actually willing to listen to, consider, and accept the local community’s views – and reject the rationalizations provided by the Metropolitan Council – the eastern end of the corridor will now have stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street and Western Avenue. It also helped that the city of St. Paul and Ramsey County aligned with the Stops For Us coalition leaders early enough to help put pressure on regional and federal agencies.

This won’t single handedly restore our collective confidence in government, but it is a refreshing reminder that our government’s policies and actions can and should improve the lives of everyone. That’s the positive role that government can play, and this new decade will demand broader public benefits than ever before.



**The Alliance released two major papers this winter that explore the failures and opportunities of recent federal transportation decisions.**

*Evaluating Our Transportation Future: How Federal Spending Influences Local Transportation Planning and What Communities Can Do About It*

Federal guidelines have always played a major role in how transitways are developed in our communities. Local leaders often feel helpless when up against rules developed and enforced by officials in Washington, D.C. This paper provides an overview of the shifts in decision-making at the federal level, and how Twin Cities communities can use these opportunities to play a role in shaping the future of our regional transportation system.

*Transportation Stimulus in Minnesota: Increasing Equity or Exacerbating Disparities?*

Millions of federal stimulus dollars have been invested in transportation projects across Minnesota and the nation. Transportation projects received so much attention in the economic recovery because they can create a lot of jobs quickly. But did our transportation investments result in an equitable recovery? This paper provides an overview of the Obama Administration’s goals for equity in the stimulus bill, and analyzes whether Minnesota was able to meet that challenge.

To download these reports, please visit [www.metrostability.org/resources](http://www.metrostability.org/resources).

# The Benefits of Public Transportation

*Transportation is the lifeblood of a nation's economy, moving and connecting people, goods and services. For many Americans, talk of our transportation system may bring to mind our expansive highway system, undoubtedly the largest in the world. But increasingly, studies are showing that Americans want alternatives to driving to their destinations.*

Public transportation can answer that call, and can play a significant role in solving a number of other challenges facing our nation today. Public transportation: creates jobs and stimulates economic growth, benefits families and improves our quality of life, protects our environment, and moves America toward energy independence. Research from around the country indicates that public transportation investment not only reduces traffic congestion, but also creates healthier communities.

## Public transportation creates jobs.

- For every \$1 billion spent, public transportation investments generate 31 percent more jobs than new construction of roads and bridges.
- For every \$1 billion invested in public transportation, more than 41,000 jobs are created.

## Public transportation stimulates economic growth.

- For every \$1 invested in public transportation, \$6 is generated in economic returns.
- For every \$10 million in capital investment in public transportation, up to \$30 million in business revenues are generated.

## Public transportation benefits families

- Public transportation provides access to job opportunities and other places people need to go, including schools, community events, grocery stores or doctor's offices.
- Using public transportation increases a household's disposable income. A family that uses public transportation can save more than \$8,000 per year -- even more as the price of fuel rises -- just by driving one less car.

## Public transportation improves quality of life

- Public transportation eases traffic congestion. Public transportation saves an estimated \$541 million worth of hours in travel time and 340 million gallons of fuel annually.
- Public transportation is a vital link for the elderly and persons with disabilities.



Photo courtesy of Metro Transit

## Public transportation improves air quality and protects our environment

- Public transportation prevents the release of 37 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually – equivalent to emissions from the electricity use of 4.9 million households.
- Switching to public transportation from a 20-mile car commute will reduce an individual's carbon emissions by 4,800 pounds every year.

## Public transportation moves America toward energy independence.

- Public transportation saves the U.S. the equivalent of 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline annually.
- Households near public transportation drive an average of 4,400 fewer miles annually compared to those without access to public transportation.
- Greatly reducing oil imports will make the U.S. less vulnerable and decrease our dependence on foreign oil.

Sources: American Public Transportation Association, Surface Transportation Policy Project, Victoria Transport Policy Institute

# Regional Transitways: Integrating land-use, housing, economic development and transit planning approaches

*What once was considered the realm of policy wonks is now a rallying point for diverse Twin Cities neighborhoods.*

Several years of community organizing along the Central Corridor light rail transit (LRT) line have given locally based groups a new appreciation of the opportunities -- and perils -- presented by new development along transitways. Grassroots groups are beginning to think proactively about how to plan for and shape transitways in the Twin Cities region -- and some are actively embracing transit-oriented development (TOD) as an economic development strategy.

A variety of transit-dependent, low-income and cultural constituencies could be impacted positively or negatively as new transitways come into their communities. Some stations along the existing Hiawatha line, the proposed Central Corridor line and the future Southwest and Bottineau lines are positioned in the heart of communities of color. How can these communities ensure they reap the benefits of new corridor development?

Too often, the planning process that surrounds new transitway development encourages haphazard economic growth, without consideration for existing community needs. While unguided growth and development can attract new residents and provide quick tax-base increases for municipalities, it can also decrease community livability and bring a strong risk of displacing existing community members.

## Transit Corridor Concerns

The local news has been full of stories about the progress made by communities of color along the Central Corridor. They have secured commitments to build three missing LRT stations in low-income communities, and are now joining with local business groups to advocate for more mitigation funds to protect small businesses. A group led by the NAACP has filed a federal lawsuit arguing that communities of color will be negatively impacted by the train if more changes are not made now.

Other communities are taking note, and beginning to organize residents along other transit routes to secure community benefits before it gets too late in the game. The Southwest Corridor, for example, is home to many Somali, East African, African American and Hmong American communities that can and should benefit from the new investment. While further out in the planning stages, the Bottineau corridor is also home to large African American and Hmong American populations that are already planning for their community's future. And along the existing Hiawatha rail line, the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) is working with residents and community-based groups to create a cultural corridor at the Franklin Avenue station along the Hiawatha line.

## How can these communities work together and support each other's efforts?

To help further the potential development opportunities for these communities, the Alliance started a new working group in 2009 called Regional Transitways. This table brings together organizers and policy advocates for transit, affordable housing, the environment and low-income communities to work on the future impacts of transitway development in the Twin Cities.

Through Regional Transitways, local groups organizing around transitway development share information and exchange thoughts on equitable development approaches and best practices. The group also connects local community leaders to our policy, research and advocacy allies who have a particular expertise on transit issues, government rules, and comprehensive planning.

Our peer-to-peer information-sharing sessions will help these groups identify and explore common approaches, tools and strategies necessary to create new economic opportunities for the people who live, work and do business in their communities. Our hope is that this proactive approach will place transit equity at the forefront of future transitway planning, rather than as an afterthought as it has in the past.

### MULTIPLE TRANSITWAY OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

*Community based groups and local leaders will examine a host of potential issues along future rail transitways, including the need to:*

**1** Craft equitable, transit-oriented station area plans

**2** Ensure that affordable housing be included in station area plans

**3** Meet workforce development goals for women and minority workers during construction of the line, stations and associated development

**4** Create zoning overlay districts to direct how new development is planned and approved along the length of a new corridor

**5** Fashion community compacts or community benefits agreements to secure these social benefits and influence future development of the sites

# STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

*What makes all of these sites so interesting is the potential to link local community-based planning efforts to broader strategies for equitable development for low-income communities of color. These efforts will unfold in the short term while our region considers multiple rail transitways that will be built out over the next 10 to 15 years.*

### Crystal Airport

Because of its location along the proposed Bottineau Boulevard LRT, the Crystal Airport's days may be numbered. The Bottineau Boulevard Partnership and the city of Crystal are pursuing the closure of the airport in order to convert the 430-acre site into a mixed development of industry, business and affordable housing. The Metropolitan Airport Commission has completed a long-term plan for the airport, which calls for it to remain open until 2025. This promises to be a classic showdown between proponents of local government control, transit and affordable housing advocates, and regional planners.



Maple Grove

**BOTTINEAU BOULEVARD**

### Linden Yards parcel under threat

Communities of color living near the Southwest LRT's future Van White station are at high risk of losing a larger portion of the economic benefit promised to them in the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan. If city and county staff have their way, a train layover facility would replace nearly half of the developable portion of the station area, impacting the nearly 2,800 jobs, 500 units of housing, 750,000 square feet of office space, and millions of dollars in tax-base revenue projected over the life of the project.

**SOUTHWEST**

Louisiana

Shady Oak

### Upper Post Landing/Fort Snelling area

Near the Fort Snelling rail station along the Hiawatha LRT line, there are more than 200 acres of land owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources called the Upper Landing. A station area plan was never created for this stop, which is surrounded by a parking lot, old barracks and military buildings. NACDI is interested in working with partners to develop the site. Observers predict that new development near the rail station could include a hotel, housing, commercial/retail development and even a Native-American themed media center. It's a complicated, but very promising project.

Eden Prairie

Eden Prairie  
Town Center

Mitchell



**West Bank station near the Cedar/Riverside area**

Several East African community-based groups and local community development organizations were involved in the successful battle to site the farthest western Central Corridor station closer to the thriving local merchant and business district of Minneapolis' West Bank neighborhood.

Local residents and businesses have an opportunity to shape the site in a way that could produce mixed use, transit-oriented development that connects to local businesses and addresses community needs. Key partner groups include the African Development Corporation, the Somali Action Alliance and the West Bank Community Development Corporation.

**The Missing Stops along the Central Corridor in St. Paul**

In January, it was announced that three missing stops at Hamline, Western and Victoria will be added along the eastern portion of University Avenue. Now that the stops are approved, how will community groups shape the redevelopment of the area in ways that will prevent gentrification and displacement? Station area planning has already commenced, with the guidance of a community based steering committee. The first drafts of the plans are scheduled to be completed by March 2010.

**CENTRAL CORRIDOR**



**East Franklin station along Hiawatha Corridor**

Through a community planning process that commenced more than a year ago, NACDI developed a plan for a Native American cultural corridor that would encourage economic development in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. NACDI envisions a revitalized corridor along Franklin Avenue, near the Hiawatha LRT. Site design plans are being conceptualized, and land ownership issues and easements have been largely resolved.

*Minneapolis*

*St. Paul*

*Bloomington*

*\*Some of the lines and stations depicted on this map are in various stages of planning and are subject to change.*

## Harrison Neighborhood Fights to Stop the Cycle of Disinvestment

**I**f you've ever had your car towed in Minneapolis then you've probably spent a frustrating hour or two trying to retrieve it from the city's impound lot, located in an industrial section of the Harrison neighborhood in north Minneapolis. The impound lot is adjoined by a city-owned aggregate storage area, called Linden Yards. It runs along the Cedar Lake Bike Trail, but has an older history tied to the freight rail trains that still run through this area.

Linden Yards and the surrounding Bassett Creek Valley area are part of a long-term redevelopment plan, mutually agreed upon by the surrounding community and the city, that promises a vibrant economic transformation of the Harrison neighborhood and the greater Northside.

But that vision for economic recovery and commercial revival is now under threat by a new plan favored by Hennepin County and city staff. These public officials would prefer to reserve a key section of the site for future commuter rail train storage.

The Harrison neighborhood won't sit back and watch this happen without a fight. Community reaction to the new plan is clear: Neighborhood residents want jobs, quality housing, and opportunities for their families, not to be a storage yard for trains and cars. The neighborhood, located in north Minneapolis, is home to about 66 percent people of color with a median income around 30 percent lower than the city average.

### LINDEN YARDS

When redeveloped, Linden Yards will host the Van White rail station, one of the rare undeveloped sections of the proposed Southwest light rail transit line.

The proximity of the Van White station to downtown and the transit hub at the new Minnesota Twins ballpark makes the Linden Yards site highly attractive. The Van White station development is projected to create nearly 500 new units of housing, new office buildings, commercial/retail space and 2,800 new jobs for the Harrison neighborhood.

As the rail station development unfolds, surrounding property owners and businesses are anticipating an economic echo effect that could revive nearby Glenwood Avenue as well. This would be welcome news for an area that has been saddled with industrial pollution, a long-neglected waterway and economic abandonment over the years.

However, the rail storage scheme proposed by the city and Hennepin County could likely undermine the site's potential – maintaining the valley's current status as an industrial site rather than



Community members attended a standing room only meeting to learn about the city's proposal in January. Photo by Pat Carney, courtesy of Harrison Neighborhood Association.

transforming it as an asset for Harrison residents and a catalyst for the greater Northside. Harrison residents argue that the rail storage scheme turns back the clock and makes the Bassett Creek Valley an abandoned, low-job zone all over again. Since the city recently signaled its intent to keep the impound lot open at this site, residents are now concluding that the city is preparing to scrap the community-endorsed redevelopment plan for Bassett Creek Valley.

The Harrison Neighborhood Association (HNA) has asked the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability to partner with them to build a coalition of transit and social justice allies to support the neighborhood in its effort to uphold the city's promise to revitalize the Bassett Creek Valley. The community has already organized a number of public meetings with public officials, and we will continue to support them by engaging the policy, research and organizing strategies necessary to win this battle. With HNA at the lead, the Alliance and our allies will ensure that the city takes racial and economic equity into consideration when making these important decisions for Minneapolis.

Photo courtesy of Transit for Livable Communities



## Governer's Candidate Forum

**A**round 550 people attended a January governor candidate forum on land use, transportation and environmental issues. Eleven candidates representing all three major parties debated issues such as transit investments, urban sprawl and how to increase biking and walking across the state.

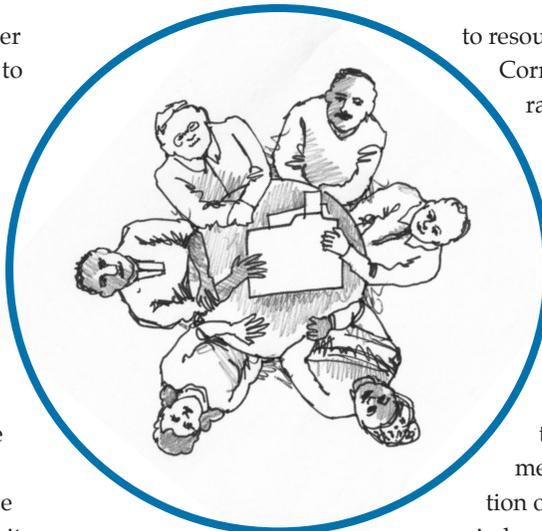
The forum was sponsored by **the Alliance, 1000 Friends of Minnesota\*, Fresh Energy\*, HIRE Minnesota, ISIAH, Minnesota Public Interest Research Group, Minnesota Public Transit Association, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy\*, Sierra Club\* and Transit for Livable Communities\***.

\*Indicates Alliance member groups.

# Organizer Roundtables Focus on Transit Equity

Each month, the Alliance holds Organizer Roundtables, led by and for organizers, to build a strong network of people that work on issues related to growth and development in the Twin Cities. The final two roundtables of 2009 focused on providing organizers with a variety of resources and information related to transportation equity.

In November, organizers heard from their peers who had attended the 2009 Rail~Volution conference in Boston. The conference is annually held for practitioners from all perspectives who believe strongly in the role of land use and transit as equal partners in the quest for greater livability and greater communities. Organizers who attended the conference were able to share the lessons they learned and resources they gathered from other experts around the country. In particular, participants brought up the need for more tools to address concerns about the affect of Central Corridor LRT development on low-income communities along east University Avenue in St. Paul. Charles Ellis, a member of the Rondo community, said that the conference helped him connect



*Organizers must take the time to engage residents in conversations translating the policies of transit development into tangible community benefits.*

to resources that would help ensure the Central Corridor project happened **with** the community rather than **to** the community.

The December roundtable focused explicitly on the lessons learned from organizers who have been working for years on the Central Corridor. Participants discussed how to leverage community benefits from new transitway development in the Twin Cities. As the discussion opened up to all participants, organizers brought up the common problem of transitway development resulting in displacement and gentrification of community residents and businesses. The main lesson from our presenters was that community residents need to be involved in the solutions to preserve their neighborhoods. Although the communities along the Central Corridor started late, other communities along future transitways can learn from this experience and start sooner in the process. Most importantly, organizers must take the time to engage community residents in meaningful and informed conversations translating the policies of transit development into tangible community benefits. Read more at [www.metrostability.org/resources](http://www.metrostability.org/resources).

## HIRE Minnesota Heads to the Capitol



Participants at a HIRE Minnesota gathering are trained by HIRE Minnesota leader and Alliance board member Karen Monahan of the Sierra Club on how to talk to their legislators

Another new year, another legislative session. HIRE Minnesota is heading to St. Paul again to secure legislation that ensures public investments create new jobs and training opportunities for low-income people and people of color in the infrastructure and renewable energy industries. During the 2010 legislative session, HIRE will continue to call on our leaders to make decisions that benefit all members of our community by:

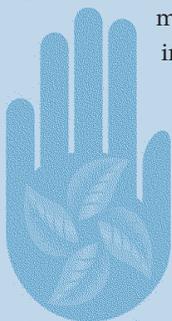
- **Ensuring publicly funded green jobs and training opportunities reach low-income people and people of color.**

HIRE Minnesota will advocate for hiring equity principles to guide the bonding bill and support capital investments in bonding projects that maximize green jobs and energy efficiency. We seek to use the bonding bill to create jobs that are accessible to and inclusive of low-income communities and communities of color, and reduce carbon emissions.

- **Ensuring agencies in charge of public infrastructure investments meet their women and minority hiring, contracting and training goals.**

HIRE Minnesota will lead efforts to ensure that the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the lead agency in charge of our state's public infrastructure investments, will meet and enforce women and minority hiring goals. We are seeking increased and improved **reporting** on workforce demographics, more **transparency** in how contracts are awarded and contractors' workforce goals are enforced, and **accountability** for firms that do not meet workforce goals.

For more information about HIRE Minnesota, visit [www.hiremn.org](http://www.hiremn.org) or contact Alessandra Williams, HIRE Minnesota Coordinator at 612-332-4471 or [awilliams@hiremn.org](mailto:awilliams@hiremn.org).



## Member Spotlight: Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance

The Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) brings together Unitarian Universalists (UUs) and UU congregations to work collectively for social change based on their religious imperative to create a just, sustainable and peaceful world.

MUUSJA, and its predecessor the UU Affordable Housing Partnership, is a long-time and active Alliance member. Most recently, MUUSJA



UUs rallied in the rain at the 2009 HIRE Minnesota Capitol Day. Photo by Megan Dobratz.

representatives have been working with the Alliance and other allies through the HIRE Minnesota coalition. MUUSJA leaders are active in both the infrastructure and green jobs work groups, and continue to engage more UUs across the state in our efforts to secure better outcomes for low-income people, women, and people of color in the infrastructure and renewable energy industries.

MUUSJA's social justice values are at the heart of all this work. By placing faith in action, MUUSJA is working to create a civic culture that works for everyone. A big thanks to MUUSJA for your work for social, economic and environmental justice!

## CELEBRATE!

The Alliance celebrated our **15th anniversary** on November 12, 2009, at the Capri Theater in north Minneapolis. The event featured our *in/stability* photo exhibit, showcasing photographs submitted by community members that depicted the progress we have made toward becoming a more stable region, and the work we have left to do. Angela Glover Blackwell of PolicyLink was also on hand to congratulate the Alliance – and all of our partners – on our work for equity in the Twin Cities region.



Dwayne Marsh Photography

Dwayne Marsh Photography

From top left: Alliance Executive Director Russ Adams addresses the crowd. A-yia Thoj stands in front of one of his winning photos. Alliance Development/Communications Director Tracy Babler and contest winner Paula Fynboh. Angela Glover Blackwell of PolicyLink spoke on strengthening our regional equity movement. Community members admired local photographers' work. State Rep. Bobby Joe Champion addressed the crowd.

## Staff News:



### Jennifer Jimenez Moves on to Work with Lutheran Social Services

Coalition Organizer Jennifer Jimenez left the Alliance in February to work with Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota as a community resource developer for the growing refugee community in the St. Cloud area. Her new work will include creating partnerships with various community institutions and organizations to gather needed resources for new refugee arrivals. "I leave with very fond memories of my time with the Alliance. I've learned so much from the people I work with and greatly respect their tenacity in advancing racial equity issues. I hope I can continue the spirit of their work in my future endeavors," Jennifer said. Thanks to Jennifer for her contributions to our work – we wish her the best!



### Alessandra Williams Wins Organizer of the Year Honors

HIRE Minnesota Coordinator Alessandra Williams, an Alliance staff member, was honored by Grassroots Solutions as the Organizer of the Year! The national consulting firm organized the contest to find an up-and-coming organizer who works tirelessly to improve the lives of others and empower people to effect change.

Alessandra was nominated by her peers from HIRE Minnesota and chosen from a diverse field of grassroots organizers. Her nominations read, "Alessandra Williams, is a confident, committed, professional and passionate community organizer. She was instrumental in organizing the HIRE Minnesota coalition, a group of 70+ organizations that advocate for hiring equality and green jobs training for low-income communities and communities of color in Minnesota, and she helped the coalition secure \$2.5 million for training and outreach in the 2009 Energy Programs Act. Alessandra has a remarkable ability to develop relationships, motivate people and help them build skills, all while keeping a large coalition of diverse organizations moving toward a common goal." Congratulations to Alessandra and to all the committed organizers who were nominated. We are proud to work with you!



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## JOIN THE MOVEMENT FOR A JUST AND EQUITABLE REGION

### Support the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability!

**YES!!!** I support the work of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability to engage communities in eliminating racial and economic disparities in growth and development patterns in the Twin Cities region.

You can count on me! Here's my tax-deductible contribution to support your efforts:  
\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_ (Other \$\_\_\_\_\_)

Stay up-to-date with bi-weekly news about regional development by subscribing to the Metro Organizer e-newsletter. My e-mail is: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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