

Climate Justice in the Twin Cities



The Minneapolis Climate Action Plan

In June 2013, the Minneapolis City Council approved the [Minneapolis Climate Action Plan](#), one of the first climate plans in the Midwest region to address racial, social and economic disparities in housing, transportation and waste planning. The Environmental Justice Working Group worked to make sure all Minneapolis communities - Indigenous, low-income and communities of color – will benefit.

Bringing Green Zones to Minnesota

In California, the Green Zones Initiative is a community-led approach to transforming communities that have been overburdened with environmental hazards and limited economic opportunities. The goal of Green Zones is to target public and private investment in neighborhoods with the highest levels of pollution and environmental degradation—where people have been exposed to the toxic effects of pollutants from heavy industry, factories, and busy highways. These neighborhoods should be the first in line for much-needed local, state and federal resources for parks, community gardens, energy-efficiency, renewable energy and “green” small business entrepreneurship.

Green Zones are based on the principle that community voices should be involved in defining and planning their future. Goals of Green Zones are to:

- Reduce environmental pollution, and improve land-use decision making
- Invest in sustainable, community-based development
- Increase community capacity and power for positive change

First Steps to Green Zones in Minneapolis

The Environmental Justice Working Group successfully called for Green Zones to be included in the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan:

“The Green Zone Initiative will create a city designation for neighborhoods, or clusters of neighborhoods that face the cumulative impacts of environmental, social, political and economic vulnerability. Green Zones are an environmental and economic development tool that targets new green infrastructure and retrofits for a specific area, in a comprehensive manner. Minneapolis Green Zones could correspond with targeted housing and commercial retrofit campaigns, to increase energy efficiency or boost renewable energy installation. Green Zone designated neighborhoods may be better positioned to access benefits offered by the city as well as state and federal agencies, ranging from targeted pollution reduction, to increased funding opportunities.”

To find out how to get involved with Green Zones planning in the Twin Cities contact the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy: www.ceed.org. For more information on Green Zones, see the California Environmental Justice Alliance Green Zone Initiative at www.caleja.org/greenzones

‘Bringing Justice to Sustainability’