

Minnesota One Block at a Time Community Visioning Sessions & Green Infrastructure Project Implementation

Lincoln Park, Duluth

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To learn more about this project visit: z.umn.edu/OneBlock or contact Madison Rodman, Resilience Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program, at mrodman@umn.edu. Additional background information on can be found in:

- Carlson, Jessy R; Bliss, Morgan; Rodman, Madison G; Sprague, Tiffany A. (2024). An Overview of the Lincoln Park Neighborhood: Vulnerability and Resilience. Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy, https://hdl.handle.net/11299/260230
- Carlson, Jessy R; Sowers, Maia A; Bliss, Morgan; Rodman, Madison G; Sprague, Tiffany A. (2024). Neighborhood Voices: A Lincoln Park Climate and Water Impacts Survey. Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy, https://hdl.handle.net/11299/260232.
- One Block: Duluth, Minnesota Summary (2024)

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Cover image: Vista view from Lincoln Park Middle School. Photo by M. Rodman.

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Report Summary

This report documents and details community visioning and project implementation efforts of the 2021-2024 Minnesota Sea Grant and University of Minnesota Natural Resources Research Institute One Block at a Time Project in the Lincoln Park Neighborhood of Duluth, Minnesota. It shares information on participant recruitment and framing of three community visioning sessions, along with detailed agendas and outcomes for each of the sessions. In addition, the document outlines the Barrels & BBQ Rainwater Education Block Party and rain-barrels-for-resident program that resulted from the visioning sessions. Our intent in preparing this report was to transparently document our process and to provide ideas and inspiration for someone who may consider embarking on similar engagement efforts in their community.



Image 1. Chalk on asphalt thank you to the neighbors of Restormel Street in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Duluth, Minnesota where a block party of rainwater and runoff was held. Photo by C. Dettmann.

Community Visioning Sessions Overview

Purpose

Three visioning sessions to co-develop and design small-scale neighborhood or city block green infrastructure solutions for the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Duluth, Minnesota, hereafter, Lincoln Park.

Objectives

The objectives of the three sessions were to:

- discuss changes to weather patterns, such as larger and more severe storms, and hear from participants how these changes impact them;
- learn about concerns participants have with wet basements, ponding water on roads, and flooding in Lincoln Park;
- develop rain-ready solutions participants would like to see throughout the Lincoln Park neighborhood and decide where in the neighborhood they could be installed;
- talk about the options for green spaces with multiple purposes, such as gardens that also control flooding; and,
- design a small-scale project to address participant concerns and make a plan to install it in Lincoln Park.

Community Leadership Team

Participant Recruitment Strategies

Two methods, at different scales, were employed to learn about Lincoln Park community needs and priorities: a larger neighborhood-level survey to guide our initial work (for more information on our survey work, please review Neighborhood Voices: A Lincoln Park Climate and Water Impacts Survey), and focus group events with a select group of individuals to refine feedback provided from the survey. These focus group participants were called our community leadership team. Participants for the community leadership team were primarily recruited in two ways: at farmers markets in conjunction with our community survey, and through email solicitation and invitation from our Great Lakes One Water (GLOW) Lake Superior Team. The purpose of attending farmers markets was to distribute our community survey on climate and flooding challenges to Lincoln Park residents, where survey participants received a $2 bill in exchange for completing the survey. Interested individuals could also provide their name and contact information if they were interested in joining our community leadership team and participating in our visioning sessions. We attended six farmers markets at Harrison Community Center in the summer of 2022, and received interest from nearly a dozen individuals to participate in our community leadership team. Out of those nearly dozen individuals, four of them engaged in next steps to join our visioning sessions.

The One Block at a Time project was born out of the Great Lakes One Water (GLOW) Lake Superior Team, started in 2018. This Team focuses on the intersection of water resilience and equity, with participation from: Ecolibrium3, City of Duluth Sustainability Office, Love Your Block (two-year [2021-2023] grant project focused on blight, partnership between City of Duluth Life Safety and Community Action Duluth), Udac, Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, and University of Minnesota Sea Grant and Natural Resources Research Institute. GLOW is a working group of Ready North. Email solicitation to Lincoln Park residents and leaders from

GLOW team members garnered interest from six individuals to participate in our community leadership team.

Additional recruitment efforts were used to expand the demographic of participants to include those who identify as male, as the initial community leadership team composition was only females. Through additional efforts from community members already signed up to participate in visioning sessions as well as help from our professional networks, 2 males were recruited to join the community visioning team.

Individuals who expressed interest in joining the visioning sessions were asked to fill out a Participant Interest and Scheduling Google Form to collect information regarding their availability, food sensitivities and access considerations. From the 12 individuals who expressed initial interest in joining the community team and filled out this interest form, 10 individuals ultimately participated in visioning sessions.

Participants

The community leadership team consisted of eight females and two males. All participants identified as white. One individual was 18-24 in age; three individuals were 25-34; two individuals were 35-44; two individuals were 45-54; two individuals were 55-64 in age. Two individuals had a high school diploma or GED; seven individuals had a bachelor's degree; and one individual had a master's degree or higher. Nine of the ten participants owned their home; one individual rented their home. Four participants have annual household incomes of less than $30k/year; one participant was $30-49k; one participant was $50-69k; three participants were $70-100k; and one participant had a household income greater than $100k. Six participants either owned businesses in the Lincoln Park community, or worked for a business or organization either within, or serving, the community.

Addressing Barriers to Participation

Equity-centered work recognizes every participant does not enter our spaces from the same background or with the same support or level of access. Thus, to the extent possible, we strove to minimize or remove barriers our community leadership team members might have in participating in the community visioning sessions.

Location

Community visioning sessions were hosted at the Ecolibrium3 Resilience Hub (2014 W. 3rd Street, Duluth, MN 55806). Prior to being the Ecolibrium3 office building, this building served as a community center for the elderly. As such, it boasts a large kitchen and dining area which has since been converted to a gathering and meeting room. In addition to being located within our focus community, this facility offers ample on-street parking, a small parking lot, and is accessible through the public transportation bus line. A few of our community team members chose to walk to the Resilience Hub for our meetings.

Meals

Initially, we intended to only serve snacks at our meetings, but feedback on our interest form indicated some participants had concerns regarding food security. Due to this feedback, we switched to serving a light meal: soup, bread, crackers, fruit and cookies at one meeting; sandwiches, chips, fruit and cookies at the second; and, wraps, fruit, chips and cookies at our final meeting. Our budget was $75 per meeting, and we worked with the local grocery co-op to

purchase our meal. All food items provided were organic, local when possible, and served using compostable dishware. Gluten-free and vegan/vegetarian items were also provided.

We did not request a discount and did not receive any food items as a donation. We felt it was important to fully support the local grocery cooperative and ensure our financial resources flowed back to the community we were engaging.

Welcoming Family

Our meeting space was large enough to provide space for our community leadership team and any family members. Again, we received feedback on our interest form of a participant who had childcare needs, and the only way for them to participate in the visioning sessions was if their child was also able to attend. We were happy to welcome them, we were prepared with a plan for child care if the situation warranted it (they were old enough to entertain themselves), and made sure they were also fed.

Validating Expertise

To express gratitude and validation for the time and expertise of the community leadership team, our project prioritized budgeting sufficient funds to compensate community leadership team members for their time. We budgeted for 10 individuals to be compensated for 6 hours of their time at $20/hour. The University of Minnesota system offers volunteer payment in the form of Visa gift cards that act similarly to a debit card. For each two hour visioning session attended, $40 was deposited onto the gift cards. One community member was unable to attend our visioning sessions due to scheduling conflicts, and instead, we hosted a 1-on-1 meeting with them; we compensated their time for this 1-on-1 meeting as well. In the future, we would match payments equivalent to volunteer rates from Independent Sector.

Meeting and Space Coordination & Set-Up

Considerations made for the first visioning session were repeated for the second and third visioning sessions. First, the facilitators made sure to arrive about an hour before the session started to provide ample time for set-up and to test technology. Food was set-up on a separate table adjacent to the meeting tables and was made available as soon as community members arrived. Time was set aside at the beginning of the meeting to allow folks time to eat, meet with each other, and have conversation amongst the group.

Blank name tags were provided for participants to fill out their name and pronouns. Folders were provided with project overview materials and Visa debit card information. A large flip chart was set-up off to the side for “parking lot” items - topics of concern or interest raised by community members but were outside the scope of our discussion or this project. After every session, relevant parking lot items were forwarded to colleagues or individuals within our network, and any information was brought back to the group at the next session or through follow-up email.

We allowed for remote participation at our first meeting to accommodate an individual who was ill and unable to attend in person. We utilized a separate laptop and an Owl Conference Camera, which rotates and highlights the individual currently speaking. During each meeting the three facilitators divided duties as follows: two shared meeting facilitation duties, while a third person was dedicated to taking notes and managing the “parking lot” flip chart.



Image 2. Large-scale infrastructure project on nearby highway near Resilience Hub where visioning sessions were held. Photo taken by M. Rodman.

Lincoln Park Rain-Ready Community Visioning Session #1

Date: April 10, 2023
Location: Lincoln Park Resilience Hub, 2014 W. Third Street, Duluth, MN 55806
Time: 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Purpose

"The What": Establish the foundations of a Duluth One Block community leadership team in Lincoln Park.

Objectives

The objectives of the first visioning session were to:

- build relationships among One Block-Duluth project leaders and community leadership team;
- establish rapport;
- provide high level project overview to community leadership team;
- establish where we are going and provide project timeline;
- share and reflect on survey results; and,

- summarize community needs on climate and water challenges, solutions, and barriers.

Process Agenda

4:00-4:10 Welcome and gather together

As people arrive informally welcome, invite to enjoy soup, and use nametags
Conversation starter topic: What signs of spring are you most excited about?

4:10-4:30 Introductions and welcome

Welcome:

- Welcome community team members and to our project
- Overview of evening 2 hrs ahead with lots of talking, at end you will get your card with $40
- Building logistics (water, restrooms, etc) and self care reminders (eat, stretch etc)

Note about notes:

- Privacy/note taking: We will be taking notes. The project team will not disclose anything that you have said. However, we cannot control participant conversations after we conclude the meeting. The community visioning data will be summarized so that specific names and locations cannot be attributed to individual responses.

Intros:

- Name, what is your connection to Lincoln Park, why are you interested in being involved with this project/why are you here tonight?

4:30-4:40 One Block project overview

Why we are here:

- We are part of bigger project in Great Lakes working on addressing water and climate challenges in neighborhoods across the Great Lakes. Erie, Hammond, Michigan City.
- We aren't alone, challenges are similar in other cities and other sea grant programs. Working together to help our local communities address climate challenges
- We are working together to understand the challenges here in Duluth, in Lincoln Park and to dream up solutions
- To learn from your expertise, even if you don't think you are an expert, you are!
- What we've done so far: worked with community organizations and the city to build a network working together to address water and equity concerns and developed and distributed community survey last summer and fall
- Throughout the spring we will hold two more meetings with you to design

and later install a small project late summer in Lincoln Park

What we aren't going to do:

- We aren't the city
- Nothing huge - scale is at the neighborhood block - trees, gutters, rain barrels, rain garden, education campaign etc.
- We can't do it all right now but all information is valuable
- We have a small project right now, but we have commitment to continue this work in the future

Scale of community engagement - community as experts:

- We will be working towards projects where we plan and act together as a team. Plan to consult, involve, and collaborate together (reference spectrum of engagement diagram)

Questions before break and dive into conversation?

4:45-4:50 Break

4:50-5:50 2023 Community Survey Summary and Debrief with Community Leadership Team

Community survey overview:

- 2023 survey at farmer's markets, apartments, etc. 100 ppl, and we want to dive deeper with you and have a lively conversation
- We are using the survey as a jumping off point for discussion, and throughout we want you to reflect on your experiences working and living in Lincoln Park neighborhood
    - you are an expert - an expert in your lived experience
- Survey available to pass around as needed

Climate challenges, flip chart 1:

- What impacts you now and what do you believe will impact you into the future?
    - This is the exact same language from our community survey
- Follow up question for group:
    - In your opinion, what are the most pressing issues related to water and climate change that our community should address?

Flooding, flip chart 2:

- What flooding and water challenges have you noticed in Lincoln Park?
- Follow-up questions to group:
    - What impacts are you seeing at your home or business?
    - What about in general in the community?
    - Have you noticed any changes, such as more frequent, or more severe, or in different times of the year than previously observed?

Reducing flooding, flip chart 3

- What have you done to manage flooding and water challenges? What limits you from taking action?
- Follow-up questions for group:
    - Have you taken any actions to reduce flooding or impacts of water to living spaces?
    - What are some of the specific challenges that you have observed in dealing with flooding or other water impacts in the Lincoln Park neighborhood?

Responsible for flooding, flip chart 4:

- Who is responsible for managing flooding and water challenges?
- Follow-up questions for group:
    - How do we encourage or support our government to take on responsibility?
    - What actions can businesses take?
    - What is needed so more individuals can take on responsibility for this work?

Barriers, flip chart 5:

- What barriers exist to managing flooding and water challenges?
    - Address each scale - homeowner, business, city
- Follow-up question for group:
    - Are there any resources or information that you feel are lacking in our community when it comes to addressing water and climate change challenges?

Solutions, flip chart 6:

- What are beneficial solutions to managing flooding and water challenges?
    - Physical solutions, partnership/relationship, funding, education
- Follow-up questions for group:
    - In your opinion, what steps should our community take to prepare for future flooding events?
    - Do you have any suggestions for how our community can work together to address these issues and build a more resilient future?

5:50-6:00 Thank you, next steps, debit card distribution

- Thank you so much for your time and sharing your expertise with us
- Next steps:
    - Visioning session 2
    - Early May- email to schedule date/time
- Debit cards

Group Discussion Summary

The group discussion was summarized and captured on large flip charts during the event and through digital notes taken by one of the facilitators. See flip chart photos in the appendix.

What impacts you now and what do you believe will impact you in the future?

- Uphill impervious surfaces
- No gutters- Walkways dangerous, slanted sidewalks may cause basement flooding
- Water melt and freeze causes hills and roads to ice- can anything be done about this?
- Emerald ash borer- A lot of tree benefits are gone (holds soil and water), dead trees could increase fire risk?
    - Varying tree species to lessen spread, trees fit for infrastructure, lots of decision planning, planting time period
- Access to what people want/ need- Access to free water barrels, compost, ect
- Duluth as a “Climate refuge”- econ and affordability, how much has the climate already changed

What flooding and water challenges have you noticed in Lincoln Park?

- Flooding creating new paths for water- maintenance of runoff areas, sidewalk tipping, not enough storm drains- noticed in multiple neighborhoods (mndot combining creeks, city adds drains)
- Winter was wet and heavy- ice blocked storm drains, more precipitation, wetter snow, could increase icing, more freeze thaw events
- Sump pump draining right into neighbors front yard, causing icy sidewalks, no drain tiles on sump pumps? Where can sump pumps drain
- Diverting 2 creeks into one
- Box culverts?
- Mega rain event (8 in of rain in 24 hrs) becoming more frequent
- No space for runoff ponds (potholes), productive for water but what about pollution? How to make it a sink?

What have you done to manage flood and water challenges?

- Plant spot before street as rain ready but everything died (plows come right up to street)
- Rain barrel, clear leaves
- Would like to plant trees
- Have a sump pump
- Volunteer with stream corp to plant trees

Who is responsible for managing flooding and water challenges?

- City (stormwater tanks, last line of defense, awareness and understanding challenges and needs, planning zoning maintaining infrastructure) & State Governments, Transportation Depts
- Groups with money to take on challenges
- All of the above
- Land development in fragile areas, changes hydrology (cultural, pop expansion, who's responsible?)
- Us?/ landlords
- Impermeable surfaces/ developments up the hill, hermantown has different rules, fees for runoff increase interest for large corps to decrease stormwater

What barriers exist to managing flooding and water challenges?

- All (Residents, Business, City): Money, Stormwater and watershed literacy, apathy, politics, scale of solution is outside of our control, infrastructure (aging, tech) and existing built environment, environmental group educating people on how to protect their watersheds (how to reach everyone?), tangible positive messaging vs doom, lack of trust and understanding, school programming

What are beneficial solutions to managing flooding and water challenges?

- Education
- Free access to rain barrels and stuff, beds, gardens, free trees & plants
- Native plants, protect wetlands
- Zoning
- Less or no salt (what's the solution for that for steep hills?), sweeping, fine line, cultural values (people want to do things immediately or need access)
- Stop building on hills?

Session Summary

The following graphic was created after the first community vision session as a way to summarize the discussion and input from community members. Printouts of this graphic were provided to community members in the second session, and the team was asked if information in the graphic accurately represented input from the first session.



Figure 1. Summary of community leadership team feedback from the first visioning session.

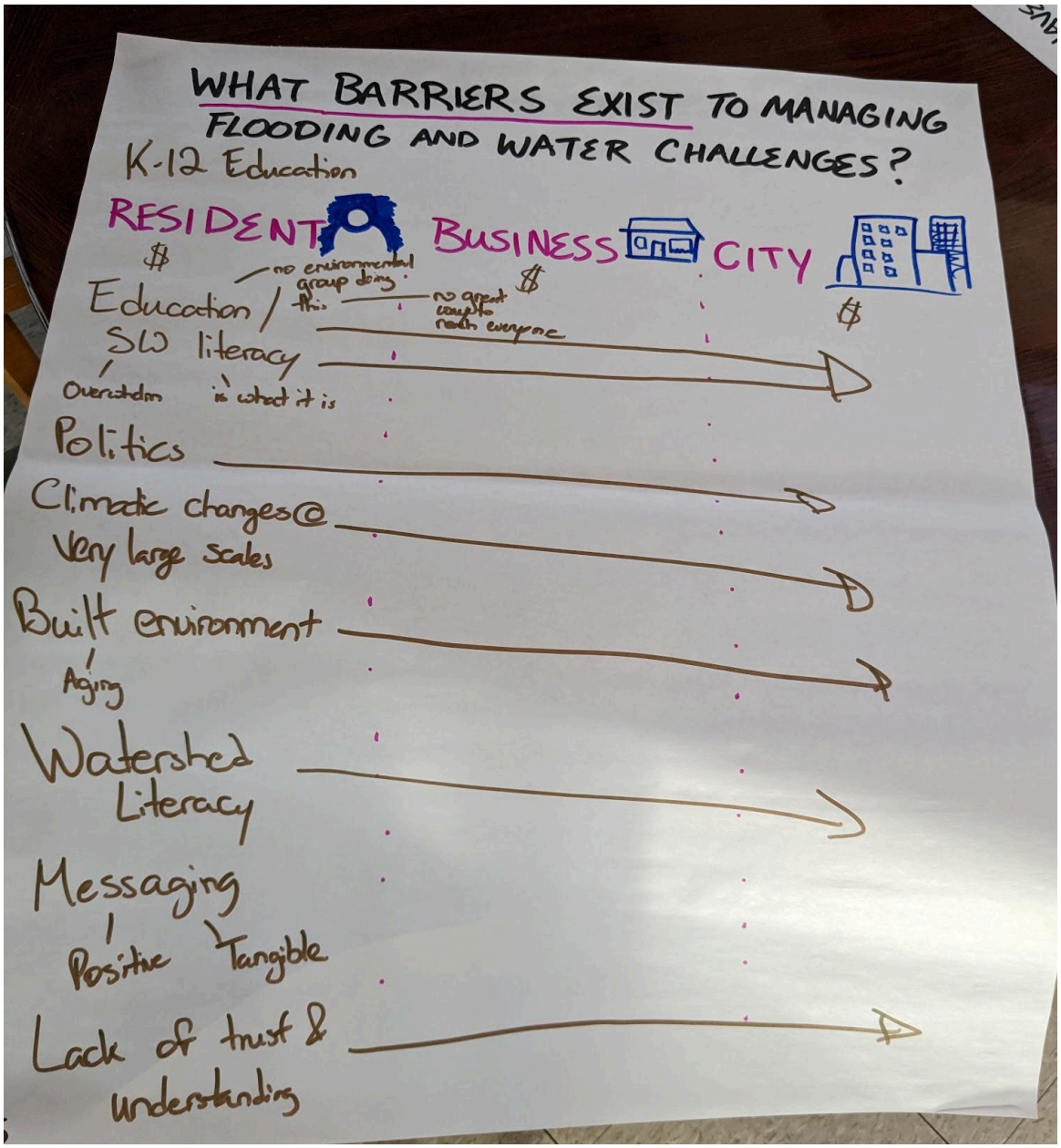


Image 3. Large sticky note used during vision session #1 to capture feedback from community leadership team on barriers to managing water. Photo by M. Rodman

Lincoln Park Rain-Ready Community Visioning Session #2

Date: May 15, 2023
Location: Lincoln Park Resilience Hub, 2014 W. Third Street, Duluth, MN 55806
Time: 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Purpose

"The Where": Identify potential locations for green infrastructure installation in Lincoln Park.

Objectives

The objectives of the second community visioning were to:

- provide a reminder and refresh on project scope, scale and timeline;
- share a summary of session 1;
- compile locations of needs and possible opportunities in Lincoln Park; and,
- prioritize a top 5 list of sites which will be scoped by project leaders before session three.

Process Agenda

4:00-4:10 Welcome and gather together

As people arrive informally welcome, invite to enjoy sandwiches, and use nametags

4:10-4:20 Introductions and welcome

Welcoming remarks:

- Welcome (new and returning) community team members to our project
- Building logistics (water, restrooms, etc) and self care reminders (eat, stretch etc)
- Two hour meeting, reminder to not leave without gift card

Note about notes:

- Privacy/note taking: We will be taking notes. The project team will not disclose anything that you have said. However, we cannot control participant conversations after we conclude the meeting. The community visioning data will be summarized so that specific names and locations cannot be attributed to individual responses.

Round-robin introductions:

- Name
- Connection to LNPK

4:20-4:30 One Block project overview and session 1 recap

Why we are here:

- We are part of bigger project in Great Lakes working on addressing water

and climate challenges in neighborhoods across the Great Lakes. Erie, Hammond, Michigan City.
- To learn from your expertise, even if you don't think you are an expert, you are!
- Throughout the spring we will hold one more meeting with you to design and later install a small project late summer in Lincoln Park

First session recap:

- Share and reflect on session 1

Where we are heading tonight:

- Lincoln Park needs - the "where"
- Start talking about the "what". What do we need to solve or help with some of the identified problems?
- Walk away with 5 possible sites that could receive a project

Scale of what this could look like:

- Install a small project late summer in Lincoln Park
- One to many projects in one site, or a series of practices in one area
- Nothing huge - scale is at the neighborhood block - trees, gutters, rain barrels, rain garden, education campaign etc.
- We can't do it all right now but all information is valuable
- We have a small project right now, but we have commitment to continue this work in the future
- We are not the city and cannot fix those problems- we can liaise and bring issues to city

4:30-4:50 Mapping exercise 1: Flooding

(2 Stations: 1 big map + zoom in map)

- Break group into half; 10 minutes with each half of the map

Where are there concerns in Lincoln Park regarding flooding?

- Yellow dots to mark areas of concerns
- Tiny post-it flags or notes to write more details if necessary
- Additional comments can be written on white area around map

Group share out based on flow of conversation

4:50-5:00 Break

5:00-5:10 Introduce green infrastructure

Options: trees, deep rooted perennial veg, rain watering harvesting, rain garden, other - education, something else, gutters

5:10-5:30 Mapping exercise 2: Green infrastructure

(2 Stations: 1 big map + zoom in map)

- Break group into half; 10 minutes with each half of the map

Where are there opportunities in Lincoln Park to install multi-beneficial green infrastructure?

- Green dots to mark potential areas for GI installation
- Tiny post-it flags or notes to write more details if necessary
- Additional comments can be written on white area around map

5:30-5:40 Mapping exercise 2.1: Green infrastructure prioritization

(2 Stations: 1 big map + zoom in map)

- Whole group exercise - members move about to maps as they wish

If you had to pick your top 1-2 sites for a project, which ones are they and why?

- Stars to mark priority areas
- Tiny post-it flags or notes to write more details if necessary
- Tiny post-it flag to write your name so we can follow-up with you individually

Prioritization questions:

- Do you know of anyone in that neighborhood, that block, that location?
- At home, public properties, outside of business
- Where can we benefit the most people with a small project?

5:40-5:50 Green infrastructure discussion

Guiding questions:

- Are there any concerns or potential drawbacks to implementing green infrastructure in our neighborhood?
- How can we ensure that green infrastructure is designed and implemented in a way that benefits the whole community?
- Do you have any examples of successful green infrastructure projects in other communities that you think could be adapted to our neighborhood?
- How can we encourage greater awareness and action among our community members to support the implementation of green infrastructure?

5:50-6:00 Thank you, next steps, debit card distribution

- Thank you so much for your time and sharing your expertise with us
- Next steps:
    - We are going to investigate the feasibility and benefits of the priority sites
    - Potential field trip to sites
    - Poll for meeting in mid/late June
- Debit cards

Group Discussion Summary

Map Exercise 1: Flooding

- Who are the responsible parties?
    - Long term development plans?
        - Comprehensive plans for roads, aging infrastructure
    - Developers relief for buying some properties in neighborhood
- Lots of investment in neighborhood right now
- One Watershed One Plan (doesn't have a focus on Lincoln Park)
- Economic watershed/ Miller Creek plan?- County responsibility?

Map Exercise 2: Green Infrastructure:

- Proper setup of a rain barrel
- Not everyone has gutters and downspouts
- Long term maintenance of projects
- Problems with invasive reeds
- Hammock trees
- Block party and education opportunity to build community
- W Superior St redo information
- Storm drain survey?

Where are the water challenges:

- One larger project or a few smaller ones + Information campaign, etc
- Priority list of areas:
    - Lincoln Park Middle School
    - 13th and 27th Creek/culvert
    - Lincoln Park Masterplan + Lincoln Park Drive, Dumping
    - Restormel Flooding

Session Summary



Figure 2. Summary of prioritized sites identified by the community leadership team based on the mapping exercise conducted in the second visioning session.



Image 4. Community leadership team participating in mapping exercising, identifying areas in Lincoln Park with water challenges, as well as marking areas where green infrastructure installations may be possible. Photo by M. Rodman.

Community Site Visit

Date: June 21, 2023
Location: 3200 Block of Restormel & Devonshire Streets; Lincoln Park Middle School; Walbank Park
Time: 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Purpose

Field investigation of potential project sites to assess feasibility for green infrastructure project.

Objectives

The objectives of the community site visit were to:

- walk the neighborhood to better understand water movement and flow;
- assess the scale and severity of water challenges at priority sites identified from community visioning session 2; and,
- gauge green infrastructure implementation project feasibility at one priority site.

Process Agenda

7:00-8:30 Gather and walk neighborhood

Group Discussion

- Lincoln Park Middle School and its associated sidewalk to the school is a challenging area due to the vast amount of bedrock and current construction on Devonshire Street.
- Two undeveloped sections of green space on Restormel Street, each with a creek bed running through. One of these sites is adjacent to documented overland water flow challenges onto Restormel Street that lead to icing issues in the late winter/early spring. It appears an inlet is blocked, and water is not appropriately flowing through this creek bed, but rather flowing through someone's yard, emptying onto the street. The storm drain on the street is not aligned with the water flow path, so water does not enter the storm drain. This leads to sheet flow of water on the street, and depending on the time of year, is very icy.
- Culverts are outside the scope of this project due to their cost and engineering requirements.
- Because of the Lincoln Park (the park) mini-master plan and updates to the park, it is beyond the scope (time, money, and number of individuals we'd need to involve) of our project efforts to work within the Park.
- 32nd Ave W Creek is visible at Walbank Park, but then is completely buried for the remainder of its flow through the neighborhood.
- Looks as though we could do some type of planting adjacent to the green space that could try to absorb the overland water flow. This property is a rental, and the individual renting there is a community team member. We would need to seek property owner approval, which seems feasible.

Session Summary

Pursuing a green infrastructure project on the 3200 of Restormel Street, likely a planting effort paired with education on stormwater and green infrastructure for residents living on block seems feasible. Note: this was an optional meeting for community leadership team members, and their time was not compensated; three members participated in this walk-about.

Follow-Up Site Visit with City of Duluth Stormwater

Following the site visit with members from the community team, facilitators Madison Rodman and Tiffany Sprague did a follow-up community site visit on July 7, 2023 with Ryan Granlund, Stormwater Specialist with the City of Duluth. This visit dug further into the stormwater challenges surrounding Restormel Street, and revealed a planting project was likely not feasible. In brief, a gravel alley above the green spaces was causing gravel runoff into the creek bed below, plugging stormwater inlets, and resulting in overland flow into the adjacent properties. Ryan alerted City staff and put in a work request to address the clogged inlets. Ryan was invited to the third visioning session to explain the situation and help brainstorm with the group potential project ideas.



Image 5. Inlet culvert of 32nd Ave West Creek at Walbank Park in Lincoln Park; the creek runs entirely underground from this point onwards. Photo by M. Rodman.

Lincoln Park Rain-Ready Community Visioning Session #3

Date: July 18, 2023
Location: Lincoln Park Resilience Hub, 2014 W. Third Street, Duluth, MN 55806
Time: 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Purpose

“The How”: Co-develop and design a neighborhood/block green infrastructure solution.

Objectives

The objectives of the third visioning session were to:

- provide a reminder and refresh on project scope, scale and timeline;
- share a summary of session 2 and community site visit;
- explore stormwater challenges on Restormel St.; and,
- identify project scope and educational campaign needs and wants.

Process Agenda

5:00-5:05 Welcome and gather together

As people arrive informally welcome, invite to enjoy sandwiches, and use nametags

5:05-5:10 Introductions and welcome

Welcoming remarks:

- Welcome returning community team members to our project - final meeting - we have learned so much from you all thank you!
- Building logistics (water, restrooms, etc) and self care reminders (eat, stretch etc)
- Two hour meeting, reminder to not leave without gift card
- Introductions of group members

5:10-5:30 One Block project community visioning session 2 recap

Summary of activities from session 2:

- mapping exercise on flooding and green infrastructure
- Share photos from maps that zoom into the various prioritized sites

Report on sites prioritized :

- Lincoln Park Middle & Associated Trail
- 13th + 27th Creek/culvert issue
- Lincoln Park Park + Lincoln Park Drive dumping
- Restormel Flooding

Summary of site visits with community team and city of Duluth stormwater:

- Community team
    - Noticed a lack of storm drains
    - Sidewalks are elevated above road
    - Where does the water go?
    - Where does 32nd Ave W Creek go?
- With stormwater
    - Public private interplay
    - Story of perhaps why Restormel is flooding
    - Developers, city allows permits, gravel alley, clogged culvert -> flooded street, street drain not in flow path, street repairs, ash trees

5:35-6:30 Pulling it all together

Jamboard exercise to refine scope and associated activities:

- Begin to create a menu of what is available to residents and how to offer
    - Plant packs - what types

    - Trees - what types
    - Rain garden - how to pick
    - Gutters - how to pick

Questions about implementation project

- What should we offer to residents in Restormel area
    - What do you like? What don't you like? What's missing?
    - What types of plants?
- What is the best way to share that support is available?
- How to make sure what we offer is equitable? How to choose if too many people request?
- Are there any concerns or potential drawbacks to implementing green infrastructure in our neighborhood?
- How to keep money in the neighborhood?

Questions about educational components

- How can we ensure that green infrastructure and water education benefits the whole community?
- What information do you need?
- How can we encourage greater awareness and action among our community members to support the implementation of green infrastructure?
- What would help you with conversations with neighbors?
- How can we best pair our on the ground work with education? What is the best format for delivery

6:30-6:50 Dream a little

- We are looking for future project opportunities!
- What else do you need? What could we do? What would you love?
- Do you have any examples of successful green infrastructure projects in other communities that you think could be adapted to our neighborhood?

6:50-7:00 Thank you and next steps

- Thank you so much for your time and sharing your expertise with us
- Next steps:
    - Work on pulling together project details from your decisions
    - Meet with people who couldn't be here tonight to get their thoughts
    - Implementation!
    - Do you want to be involved in final deliverables?
    - Graphics, planting, helping at block party, etc. No expectation beyond tonight

Group Discussion

- Water management challenges in area near school
- Restormel Waterfall:
    - Gravel alley washing out and plugging up the drain

    - Maintenance- Short term, Planning for capital improvement (paving the alley) - long term and very expensive
    - Not an uncommon problem
    - Things like this are much more complicated than veg maintenance (although this could help some) and rain gardens
    - Raised issue with city
- How else to manage stormwater
    - On-the-ground one block project
    - Educational campaign
        - How to manage
        - Who to call
        - Multiple things across an area

Session Summary

After learning from City stormwater staff of the various complications and factors contributing to the water issue on Restormel Street, the community team realized a planting project was likely not adequate to address these concerns. The community team emphasized the need for education to residents on what actions they can take to manage water on their property and how to contact the City to report utility problems in general. The team thought a block party could be a good way to provide education and bring residents together, and was very adamant that door knocking and door fliers were important ways to advertise the block party. The team also wanted block party attendees to leave with something that would allow folks to start taking immediate action, such as a rain barrel or similar.



Image 6. Ryan Granlund, City of Duluth Stormwater staff, describes the water challenges on Restormel Street in Lincoln Park, Duluth, MN. Photo by M. Rodman.

Barrels and BBQ Block Party

Date: September 26, 2023
Location: 3200 Block Restormel Street, Lincoln Park Neighborhood, Duluth, MN
Time: 4-6pm

Purpose

Bring together Lincoln Park neighbors to learn more about rainwater and runoff.

Objectives

The objectives of the block party were to:

- provide watershed and stormwater education to residents;
- register neighbors to receive rain barrels and rain barrel installation;
- increase climate resilience and rain-ready preparedness education by connecting residents with partner organizations; and,
- build connections with, and among, neighbors.

Process Agenda Summary

The process agenda for the block party was highly specific to our work in Lincoln Park and included details such as timing and permitting processes for Duluth, Minnesota and communication with partners. Instead of sharing in its entirety within this document, we've included a few key considerations we would like to ensure are remembered as well as offered for consideration to you, our reader. These highlights include:

- **Advertising:** Door knocking and door hangers advertising the block party took place approximately two weeks before the event. This meant the hanger was designed, and approved by necessary staff, and sent to a print shop about a month before the event took place. A member of the community leadership team went door-to-door with Madison Rodman to invite residents to the project and answer any questions. We were able to talk with residents of approximately one quarter of the homes who received a door hanger invitation. The door hanger was designed by one of the community team members who received additional compensation for graphic design work.
- **Food:** A full meal was provided at the block party, rather than snacks. Our meal was purchased from a local vendor (Howard's 'Que). Due to working with a local vendor not previously established in the University system, we also started to coordinate this approximately a month before the block party. Vegetarian and gluten free options were available.
- **Low Waste:** To minimize environmental impact, we worked with Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD) staff to secure a low-waste event kit to offer composting and recycling options at the block party.
- **Accessibility:** We borrowed tables and foldable chairs from our university departments so participants had a place to sit while dining, and were not required to sit on the ground or stand and eat, as that may be difficult for some individuals.
- **Restroom:** As we were hosting an outside event in a neighborhood, we lacked access to a public restroom. Thus, we worked with a local portable restroom company to secure a wheelchair accessible portable bathroom (porta-potty). Contracts were required, which also took time to coordinate, and thus about a month's lead time was also necessary to secure a portable restroom.

- **Street Closure:** To ensure public safety, and because many residents in the neighborhood park on the street, we worked with the City of Duluth to file the necessary documentation to close the street during our event. This required necessary insurance and liability documents from the University as well. This process took some time to navigate the paperwork and liabilities, and required notification of residents approximately week prior to the event; we notified residents on the same door hanger advertising the block party. The City of Duluth Police Department installed cones with details of the no parking zone and provided barricades for redirecting traffic during the event.
- **Youth:** To provide a family-friendly environment, we worked with one of our partnering organizations, Love Your Block, to provide youth-based activities. We offered a water focused painting and coloring activity, blocks and Legos.
- **Community Trust:** To continue building trust with neighbors, we did not take pictures of attendees and we turned down media opportunities to film at the event. We did not want it to seem as though we were doing this event for publicity only, and we did not want to inadvertently pressure anyone to appear on camera or for their photo to be taken. We asked all participating community partners and organizations to do the same, and to also not post to social media during the event.
- **Rain Plan:** When planning the event we also made sure to have a plan for severe weather and a phone tree for who, and how, to notify all involved with the event if we needed to postpone. Information for who to call was in event of severe weather was also identified on the door hanger.

Event Summary

The block party included the following planned activities:

- Watershed and stormwater education along with free rain barrel sign up (up to 20 barrels available) provided by Minnesota Sea Grant and the University of Minnesota Natural Resources Research Institute.
- Tabling from partner organizations who support building rain and climate-ready neighborhoods and communities. These partners included:
    - City of Duluth Stormwater
    - City of Duluth Sustainability
    - Community Action Duluth
    - Ecolibrium3
    - Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
    - Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
- Youth engagement activity coordinated by Love Your Block.
- Barbeque dinner for attendees and those supporting tabling provided by Howard's 'Que.

Invited attendees to the block party included:

- Residents in the west Lincoln Park neighborhood surrounding Restormel Street. Door hanger invitations were distributed to approximately 45 homes.
- Ten community leadership team members who live in Lincoln Park and neighbors they invited (each community team member was provided an additional 5 door hanger invitations to hand out to neighbors).

A periodic headcount was taken during the event and was at 48 participants and partners halfway through the 4-6pm event period.

Educational materials created specifically for this event and distributed to neighbors included (1) a trifold brochure on stormwater basics and how to report utility issues with the City of Duluth, and (2) a magnet on simple stormwater pollution prevention actions. These materials were developed to address community questions and needs identified during visioning sessions and designed by one of the community team members who received additional compensation for graphic design work.

At the event, 12 individuals signed up to receive a free rain barrel (remaining rain barrels were distributed to interested community leadership team members). In partnership with Community Action Duluth Community Construction, individuals could also sign up for their rain barrel to be installed; 9 individuals signed up for rain barrel installation. This included any necessary supplies, gutters and downspout connections required for their rain barrel to be properly connected. Rain barrels were delivered to and/or installed at residents homes in October 2023. Follow-up information was texted and emailed to rain barrel recipients in November 2023 on how to appropriately winterize their barrel.

View a short video of the project and rain barrel delivery.



Figure 3. Door hanger invitation (left front, right back) for Barrels & BBQ Rainwater Education & Block Party. September 26, 2023.



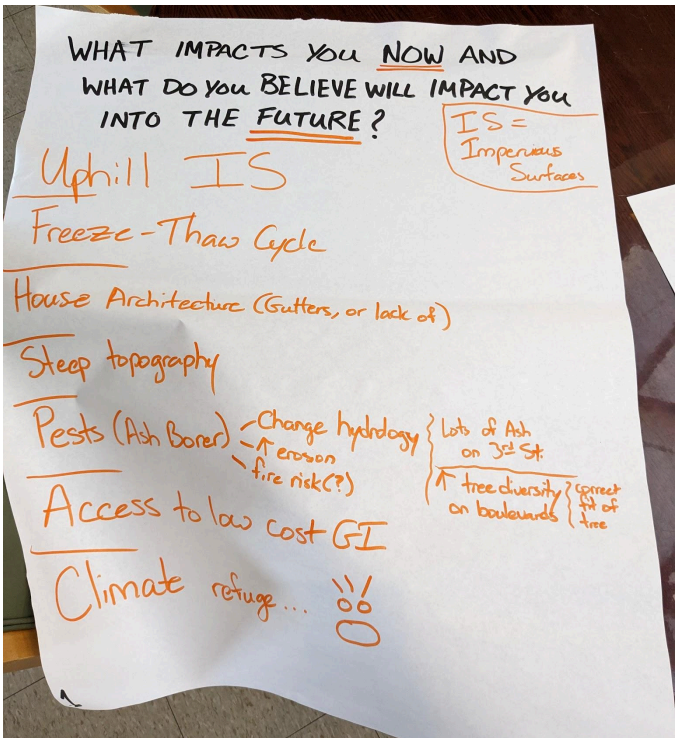
Image 7. Two rain barrels provided and installed. The rain barrel on the left was installed by the resident with a rain chain. Photo by L. White. The rain barrel on the right was installed by Community Action Duluth Community Construction along with a small length of gutter and downspout. Photo by Ron with Community Construction.

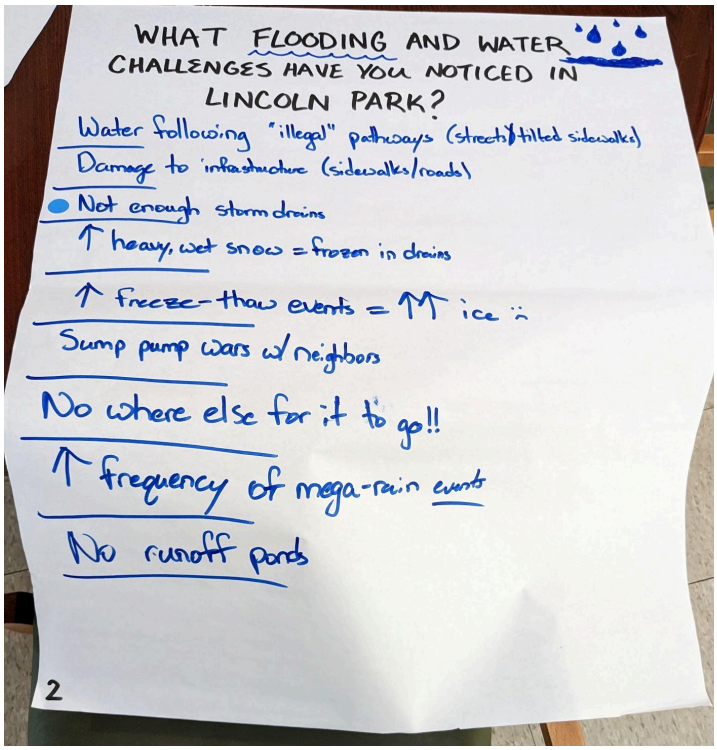


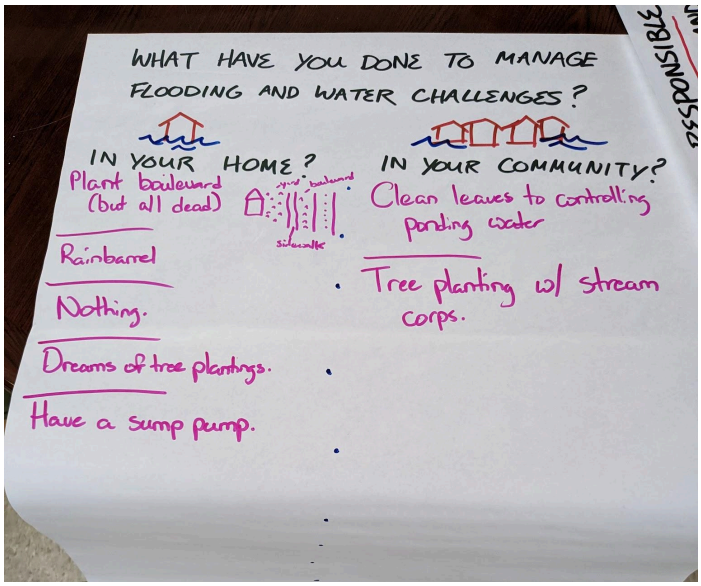
Image 8. Kick-off to the Barrels & BBQ block party! T. Sprague & M. Rodman talking through event logistics with community partners. Photo by C. Dettmann.

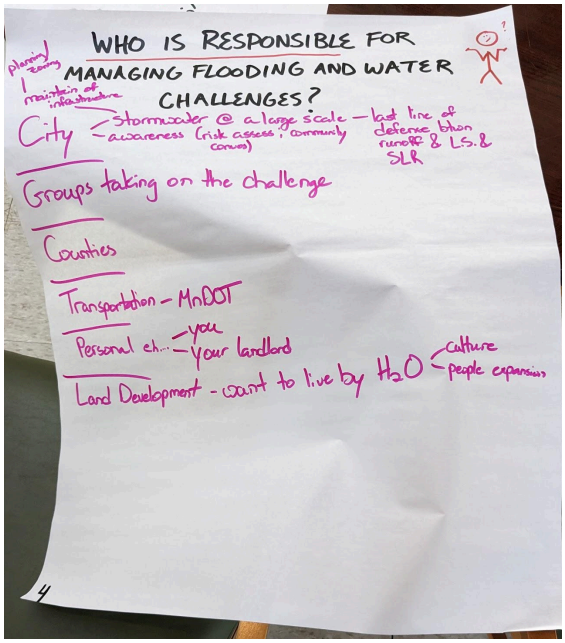
Appendix

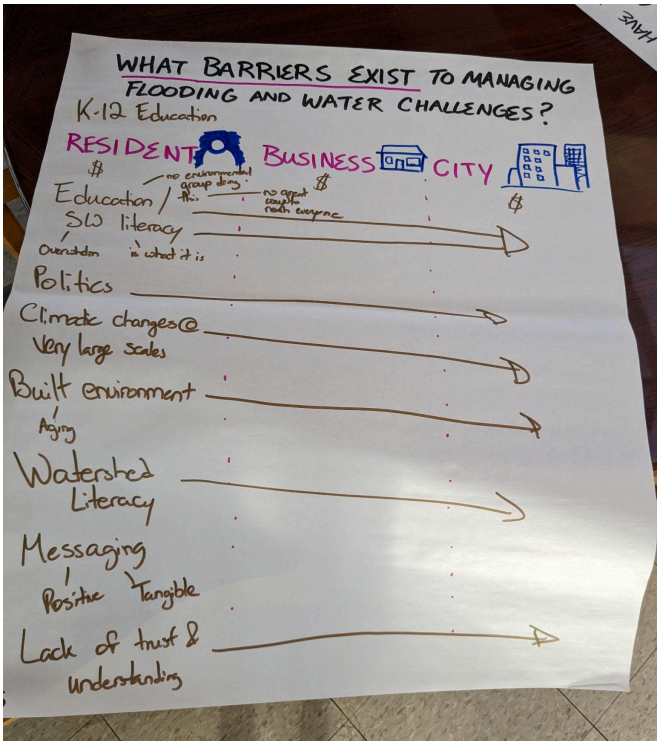
Session 1: Discussion Responses on Flip Charts

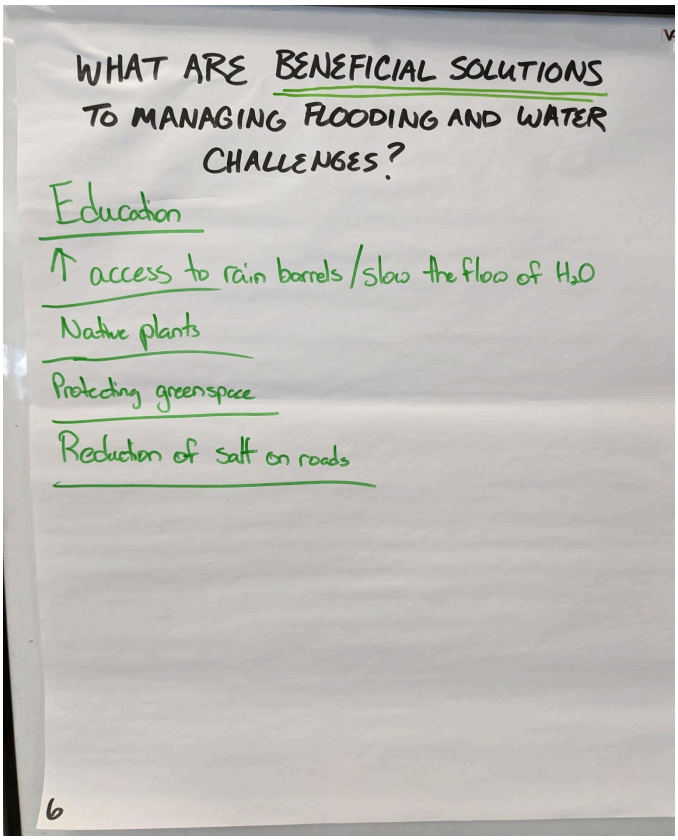


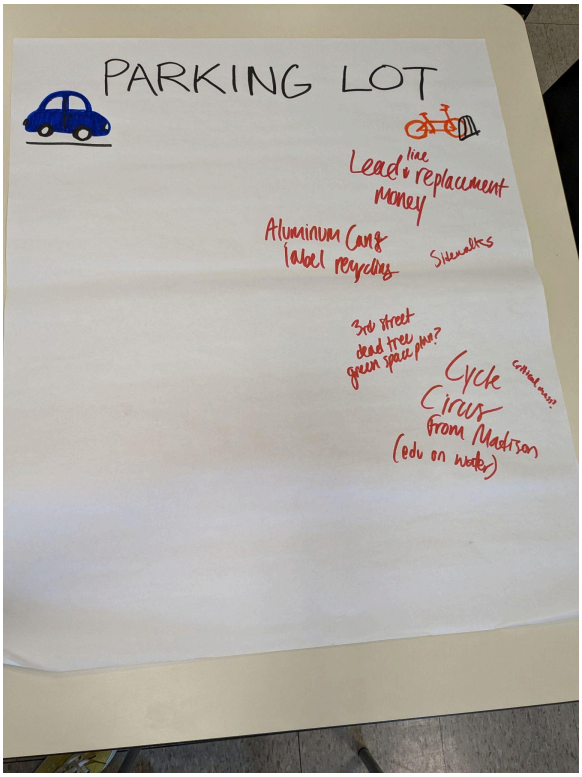







WHAT BARRIERS EXIST TO MANAGING FLOODING AND WATER CHALLENGES?
K-12 Education
RESIDENT
BUSINESS
CITY
Education / SW literacy
Politics
Climate changes @ Very large scales
Built environment
Aging
Watershed Literacy
Messaging
Positive
Tangible
Lack of trust & understanding


WHAT ARE BENEFICIAL SOLUTIONS TO MANAGING FLOODING AND WATER CHALLENGES?
Education
↑ access to rain barrels / slow the flow of H2O
Native plants
Protecting greenspace
Reduction of salt on roads
6


PARKING LOT
Lead like replacement money
Aluminum Cans label recycling
3rd street dead tree green space plan?
Cycle Circus from Madison (edu on wheels)

Slides and Jamboards from Sessions

Session 2 Slides

Lincoln Park Green Infrastructure Community Visioning Sessions

Session 2: Where to Install GI

May 15, 2023

Sea Grant Minnesota

Natural Resources Research Institute
University of Minnesota Duluth
Driven to Discover℠

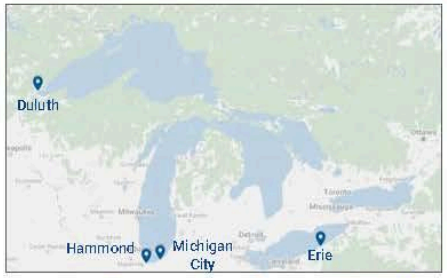
One block at a time:
equitable adaptation through green infrastructure

Sea Grant

Project team

- Madison Rodman (MN)
- Kara Salazar (IN)
- Tiffany Sprague (MN)
- Sara Stahlman (PA)
- Sara Winnike McMillan (IA)

\+ Larger local project teams in each community



Sea Grant Minnesota | Sea Grant Illinois-Indiana | Sea Grant Pennsylvania

Objectives

- Form a collaborative, **multi-community work team**
- Identify and **support 4 frontline communities** in Duluth, Erie, Hammond, and Michigan City
- Provide **educational and professional development opportunities** through university students and AmeriCorps program
- Develop a community assessment and engagement **toolkit** to scale concept across Great Lakes communities

Ready for Rain One Block Framework[1]

- Pilots achievable community-planned green and gray infrastructure projects
- Benefits to framework:
  - Visible
  - Concentrated
  - Multi-beneficial
  - Mix of public and private
  - Scalable
  - Reproducible



Photo: MN Pollution Control Agency

[1]Adapted by MNSG from the Center for Neighborhood Technology's RainReady™ Approach

Our formula for working with the Lincoln Park neighborhood:

Understand vulnerabilities and needs + Partner with organizations + Build capacity = Community visioned project

Relationship building

Community Visioning Sessions

What	Where	How
• What are the climate and water challenges in Lincoln Park? • What are the barriers? • Who is responsible? • What are possible solutions?	• Where are there water challenges in Lincoln Park? • Where can we install green infrastructure? • Where are the priority areas for multi-beneficial GI?	• How do we install our priority project? • How do we work with community members to support our project?

Community Visioning Sessions

What	Where	How
• What are the climate and water challenges in Lincoln Park? • What are the barriers? • Who is responsible? • What are possible solutions?	• Where are there water challenges in Lincoln Park? • Where can we install green infrastructure? • Where are the priority areas for multi-beneficial GI?	• How do we install our priority project? • How do we work with community members to support our project?

Lincoln Park Green Infrastructure Community Visioning Sessions:

Session 1 Recap

Madison Rodman, mrodman@umn.edu
Tiff Sprague, tsprague@d.umn.edu
z.umn.edu/OneBlock

Impacts
Uphill impervious surface, steep topography, changing climate, costs of projects

Water Challenges
No where for it to go, damages infrastructure, more ice, heavy snow and mega-rain events

Responsible Party
Cities: maintain infrastructure, planning/zoning, risk assessments; groups taking on the challenge

Barriers
Widespread education/watershed literary, politics, aging infrastructure, messaging, trust issues

Solutions
Education, protecting greenspace, improving access to tools to slow the flow of water, native plants

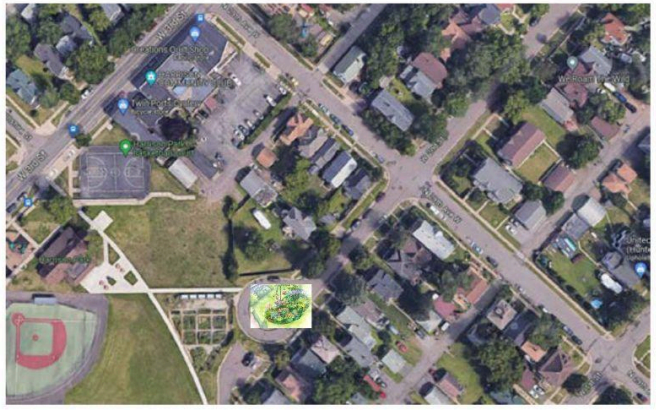
Community Visioning Sessions

What	Where ★	How
• What are the climate and water challenges in Lincoln Park?	• Where are there water challenges in Lincoln Park?	• How do we install our priority project?
• What are the barriers?	• Where can we install green infrastructure?	• How do we work with community members to support our project?
• Who is responsible?	• Where are the priority areas for multi-beneficial GI?	
• What are possible solutions?		

Where

Goal of tonight:
Identify and prioritize potential sites

- **Neighborhood block scale**
- One to a few projects at one site **OR** variety of projects across one block
- Late summer installation







Let's Map!

Where are the flooding concerns in Lincoln Park?

Green Infrastructure is a nature-based solution to mimic natural water cycles, slowing the flow of water and reducing pollutants.

Our trusty friend, the RAIN BARREL

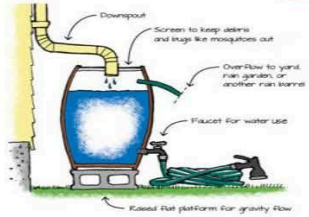


Level of Difficulty
Easy

Defining Features
Big-o-Barrel; No Excavation

Important Considerations
Heavy; Near Foundation; Roof Size

Application
Slow - Use









Veg buddies, the RAIN GARDEN & BIOSWALE



Classic GI, the RAIN GARDEN

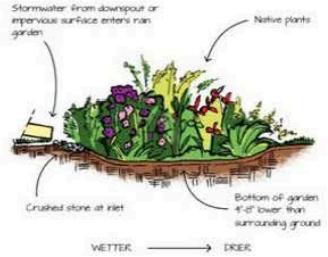


Level of Difficulty
Kinda Hard

Defining Features
Plants; Depressed into Ground

Important Considerations
Overland Flow vs. Pipe; Soil Drainage

Application
Slow - Filter - Infiltrate



Rain garden's cousin, the BIOSWALE

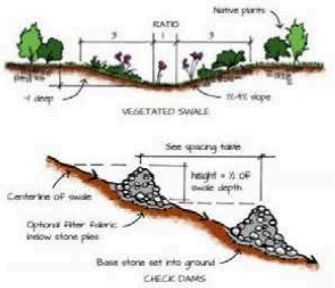


Level of Difficulty
UGH, Pythagorean Theorem

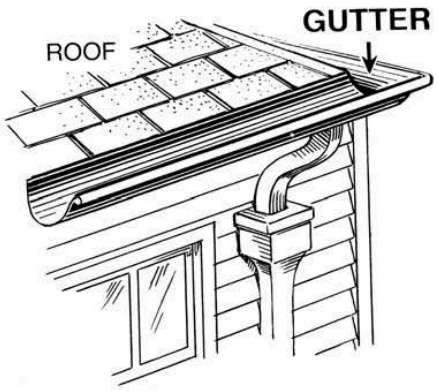
Defining Features
Plants; Ditch-Like

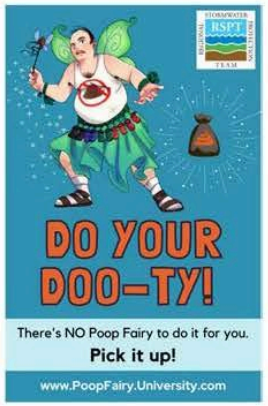
Important Considerations
Current Water Flow Paths; Slope

Application
Slow - Filter - Infiltrate









Let's Map!

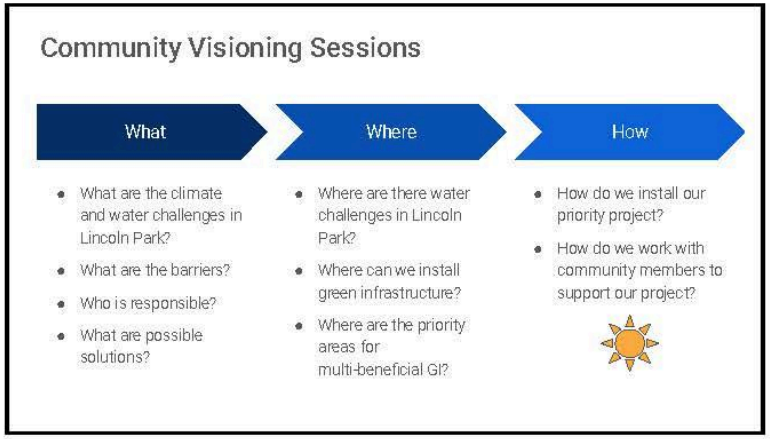
Where are there opportunities to install multi-beneficial GI?

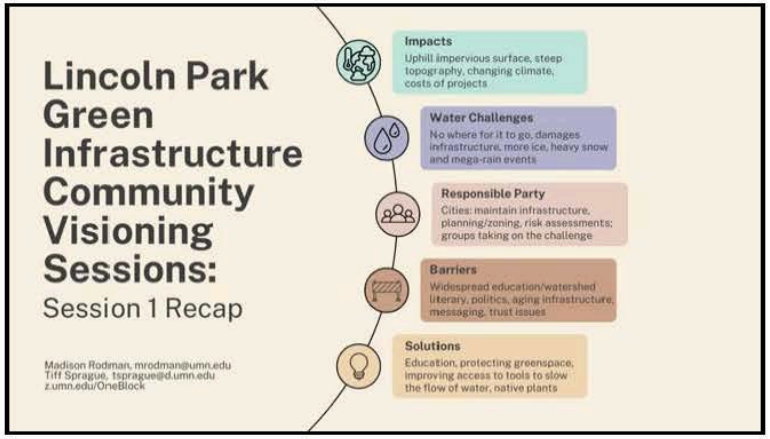
What is your top pick for a site to install GI and why?



Session 3 Slides









Green Infrastructure is a nature-based solution to mimic natural water cycles, slowing the flow of water and reducing pollutants.

Our trusty friend, the RAIN BARREL



Level of Difficulty
Easy

Defining Features
Big-o-Barrel; No Excavation

Important Considerations
Heavy; Near Foundation; Roof Size

Application
Slow - Use



Veg buddies, the RAIN GARDEN & BIOSWALE





Let's Map!



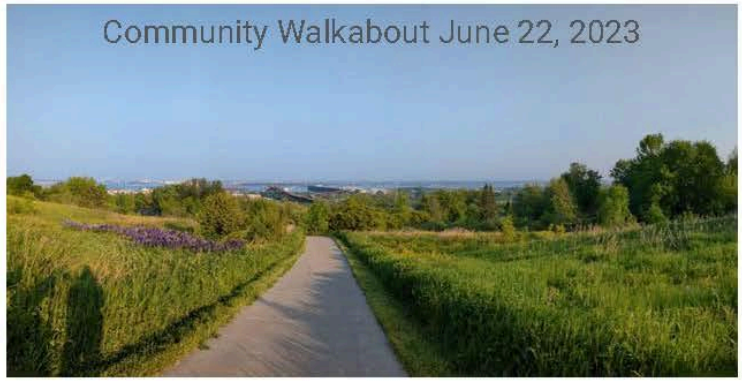




Prioritized Sites

- Lincoln Park Middle School Area
- 13th and 27th Creek/Culvert
- Lincoln Park (the park)
  - Masterplan and Lincoln Park Drive dumping
- Flooding around Restormel Street



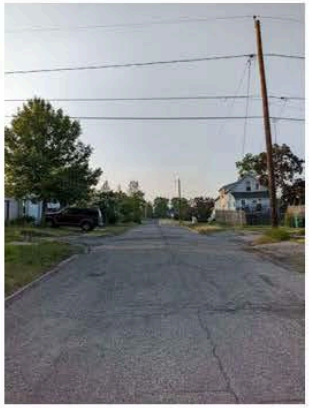


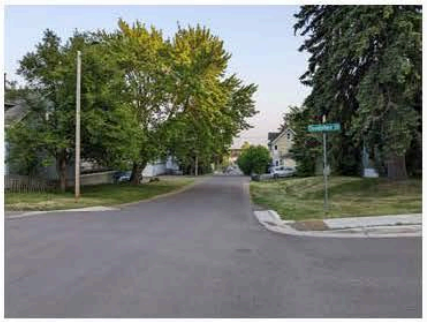
















Restormel Street flooding in spring 2023
Great photos from Amanda!

Site visit with City of Duluth stormwater





Tonight

- Confirm project scope and associated activities
  - On the ground project decisions
  - Educational campaign details
- Time for dreaming!



Jamboard and discussion time

Session 3 Jamboards

One Block Lincoln Park
Community Visionsing Session 3

July 18, 2023



on the ground project



neighborhood education



future efforts

On the ground project





What is the best way to share that this support is available?

How do we make sure what we offer is equitable? How to choose if too many people request?

Education materials





How can we ensure that green infrastructure and water education benefits the whole community? Certain format?

How can we encourage greater awareness and action among our community members to support the implementation of green infrastructure?

What would help you with conversations with neighbors?

How can we best pair our on the ground work with education?

What is the best format for delivery?

- Block party
- Infographic
- Connection to
- Who to talk to

Door Knocking

Have to come to block party and engage to get a "thing" - thing is item with/without service

use the block party to learn needs (then you get rain barrel)

Door hangers inviting to block party; education on one side and info on the other side

Offer service & installation?
- Connect community

Whats your issue?
Whats your action?
What do you want?

Using counters to see what people are thinking about



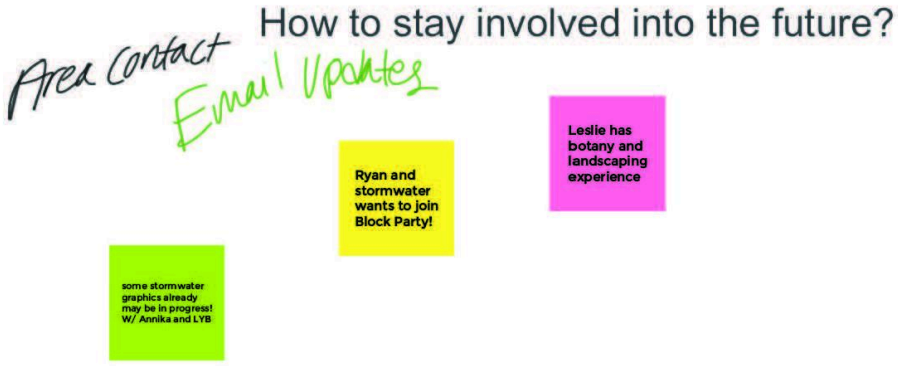
Are there any concerns or potential drawbacks to implementing this effort in our neighborhood?

Time to dream!



Do you have examples of successful projects in other communities that could be adapted to Lincoln Park?


What haven't we covered through our meetings?
What else could we do? Now or in future.
What would you love? Dream big!
How are edu materials going to keep being distributed
learning event on Stormwater - talk to
Love your block - Face to Face is great
More Food gardens
EJ on a block scale
LNPK is EJ + hills...model for replication?


How to stay involved into the future?
Area Contact
Email Updates
Ryan and stormwater wants to join Block Party!
Leslie has botany and landscaping experience
some stormwater graphics already may be in progress! W/ Annika and LYB

One Block at a Time Community Leadership Team Participant Interest and Scheduling Form Details

Here are example fields used in collecting information about community leadership team participants who were involved with community visioning sessions of the Duluth, Minnesota One Block at a Time project. Data was collected through a google form.

Section 1: Introduction

Thank you for your interest in joining the University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program in visioning green space opportunities for the Lincoln Park neighborhood. There will be a series of 3 visioning sessions from March - June, ending in installation of a small-scale green space project and celebration event during the summer to fall of 2023.

Please answer the following questions. They will help project leaders better understand who you are and find the best time to host meetings. We look forward to meeting each of you!

If you have any questions, contact Madison Rodman at mrodman@umn.edu.

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Email
4. Phone Number
5. Address (We will use this address to mail you a pre-paid debit card for your participation if we hold a visioning session virtually)
6. What is your preferred method of communication/contact
    a. Email
    b. Phone call
    c. Text
7. I am participating in this group as (select all that apply)
    a. Lincoln Park resident
    b. Lincoln Park business owner
    c. Employee in a Lincoln Park business
    d. Employee / volunteer in a non-profit located in Lincoln Park
    e. Involved in a Lincoln Park organization
    f. Community / organization leader
    g. Religious / spiritual leader
    h. Other
8. If you are part of a business, organization, non-profit or religious organization in Lincoln Park, please share these below.

Section 2: Meeting dates and times

We will work to accommodate everyone's schedules the best we can. Please let us know in general when you can meet.

1. Preferred meeting style (select all that apply)
    a. In-person (in Lincoln Park)
    b. Virtual
    c. Either
    d. Other

2. Preferred meeting time. We expect each visioning session would last 1.5-2 hours (select all that apply)
    a. Early mornings (8 or 9 a.m. start)
    b. Mid mornings (10 or 11 a.m. start)
    c. Early afternoons (1 or 2 p.m. start)
    d. Later afternoons (3 p.m. start)
    e. Early evenings (4 or 5 p.m. start)
    f. Later evenings (7 p.m. start)
    g. Other
3. Do you prefer weekday or weekend meetings? (select all that apply)
    a. Weekday
    b. Weekend
    c. Either
    d. Other
4. Preferred day of the week (select all that apply)
    a. Monday
    b. Tuesday
    c. Wednesday
    d. Thursday
    e. Friday
    f. Saturday
    g. Sunday
5. We want to eliminate any barriers to your participation. Please let us know if you have any of the following (select all that apply).
    a. Would need childcare
    b. Physical or digital accessibility needs
    c. Food security concerns
    d. Other
6. Other comments regarding meeting style, time, day of week or accommodations?
7. We will provide food during each meeting. To help us put together our menu please let us know any dietary requirements that you have:

Section 3: Demographic Information

We are seeking a wide-range of perspectives and want to make sure the voices of Lincoln Park are heard and represented in these visioning sessions.

1. Which of the following best describes you? (select all that apply)
    a. American Indian or Alaska Native
    b. Asian
    c. Black or African American
    d. Hispanic or Latinx
    e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
    f. White
2. What zip code do you live in?
3. What is your age?
    a. Under 18
    b. 18-24
    c. 25-34
    d. 35-44
    e. 45-54
    f. 55-64

    g. 65-74
    h. Above 75
4. How do you describe your gender identity?
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Nonbinary/third gender
    d. Two-spirit
    e. Prefer not to identify
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    a. Less than high school
    b. High school / GED
    c. Associates degree / trade school
    d. Bachelor's degree
    e. Master's degree or higher
6. Which best describes your living situation?
    a. Rent
    b. Own
    c. Other
7. What is your annual household income?
    a. Less than $30k
    b. $30k - $49k
    c. $50k - $69k
    d. $70k - $100k
    e. More than $100k
8. How many people are in your household, including yourself?
    a. 1
    b. 2
    c. 3
    d. 4
    e. 5
    f. More than 5

Section 4: Questions or Comments

1. Do you have any questions or comments for the project coordinators?