

“Ready and Resilient Hamline-Midway”

Hamline Midway Neighborhood Resiliency Climate Project Final Report

Hamline Midway Environmental Group (HMEG)

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Objective 1: Increase climate change awareness and readiness in the Hamline Midway neighborhood through community listening sessions.

What ideas, insights, plans came up at each of the three meetings you planned and facilitated?’

Holy Trinity Church, Oct 24, 2015:

IDEAS:

- Identify strategic locations to serve as local gathering places in emergencies, especially after hours. Who will let us in?
- Generators at strategic locations within communities to service local neighborhoods
- Holy Trinity as a possible ‘emergency shelter’ for the neighborhood.
- Have event(s) to bring neighbors (community) to church such as Community sing along to grow neighborhood resilience and communication and build relationships between church and neighbors – eg. Block Party.

INSIGHTS:

- Trust is an important part of a resilient community
- Holy Trinity church is ‘destination’ church for it’s members. In an emergency church authorities may live too far away to open church. Emergency during church services may require neighborhood assistance (depending on situation and needs).

- People will step up when needed. People step into leadership roles when the situation arises .
- It takes a conscious effort to develop and nurture relationships – to organize + get people out to get know each other.
- Watch out for each other – when neighbors know each other and “habits and patterns” they can discern if something is out of order and take action.
- Neighbors are resilient and can self-identify their strengths + challenges
- Needs of individuals in emergency can vary greatly (supply of water readily available for taking medications of utmost concern to one attendee).
- Planning for climate change/emergency is of interest to the community
- Realize the needs/challenges of contacting renter’s in emergency and other neighbors who may be unknown to their neighbors

PLANS:

- Discuss with Holy Trinity ramifications of being an ‘emergency shelter’ for neighborhood.
- Follow-up with Holy Trinity on their interest to host block party.
- Develop and nurture relationships – organizing to get people out and get to know each other. “Get to know my neighbors”.
- Engage Hamline Midway Coalition to help identify strategic locations throughout the community, assess their capacity to assist neighbors in times of extreme weather emergencies, identify gaps and solutions to providing that assistance.

Hamline Midway Elders, Hamline Church, Nov 10, 2015

IDEAS:

- Identify flaws in R and R system – ie: who has generator? Who is ‘responsible’ to open public places that normally keep daytime hours only?
- Put together a ‘sample’ emergency kit and have on display at Hamline Hardware. Encourage Hamline Hardware to carry the items in kit.

- Put ‘emergency kit’, and other emergency ‘checklists’ in Midway Monitor.
- Tools/skills needed in emergency vary and need not be ‘held’ by one person. Explore what skills/expertise exists in neighborhood.
- Climate emergency could involve pollution/disruption from water or air. Be cognizant of particular health concerns of persons with compromised lung capacity/conditions (COPD, on oxygen, etc.).
- Well-staffed District Councils are key to community R and R (planning/coordinating at block club and organizational level, information dissemination, and implementation).

INSIGHTS:

- Individuals are resourceful and have unique ways of being involved, visible + “looked after” in community. Their patterns of behavior are well developed and if they do not show up at normal place/time someone may check on them.
- Some elderly neighbors feel isolated + dependent on their own veracity and skills for emergency + other needs.
- Neighbors have met with both challenges and success in organizing neighbors for events/communication. Results and how neighborhoods operate are idiosyncratic and not replicable neighborhood to neighborhood.
- Some elders living alone do not feel they have the support of neighbors and/or community.
- Building trust is important - do not be discouraged and give up if initial attempts are challenging. Trust takes time + is built slowly + by experience. Start “small + slow” (shoveling a neighbor’s walkway, delivering a pot of soup).
- Walking a dog is an excellent way to build community/neighborhood relationships and support
- Schools and churches and other organizations are ‘untapped’ resources for R and R.
- Immigrant experiences need to be considered and respected when addressing emergency response (negative experience with government, lack of resources, etc. inform people’s actions and reactions). Be non-judgmental.

PLANS:

- Generate political will and support for R and R at District level that would manifest into \$\$ for support + implementation.
- Individuals at meeting will watch out more for neighbors. Pay attention to the patterns of behavior and check if something seems amiss (lights out for extended period, etc.).
- Make use of com
- Begin to better know neighbors + talk to people in community – including strangers.
- Resource assessment that supports the community.

SNELLING CAFÉ, Nov. 17, 2015

IDEAS:

- Solutions to making creating a R and R community include dividing the neighborhood into quadrants or smaller chunks to develop communication and R and R planning at a smaller level than Hamline Midway as a whole.
- Learn if businesses have special resources that might be an asset to the neighborhood.
- Consider the immigrant experience an asset that can be tapped in to for resourcefulness.

INSIGHTS:

- Knock down barriers to community connections because it's hard to find the time to make connections or hard to know where to start
- More opportunities to know each other enriches our relationship to the individuals and the community
- Lots of elderly adults in the area who are susceptible to a multitude of problems and need help shoveling snow or keeping the A/C running (HME helps out in this realm)
- Watch for patterns especially for the elderly so you know when something might be wrong
- Realize that each resident, block and neighborhood within Hamline Midway is unique. Responses and plans need to be 'grass roots' and ideas come from the people.

- Realize each resident is a resource with a skill +/- tool(s) +/- or intrinsic characteristics that are needed by the community.

PLANS:

- Address the possibility of incorporating block clubs + smaller geographic areas to build communication between neighbors.
- Use maps of Hamline Midway to ID potential community buildings/institutions that could be useful in emergency (public spaces).
- Create ‘interest groups’ that neighbors can join to build capacity and tap areas of individual interest and skills/gaps: Rail Emergency, Skills/Resource Directory, Neighborhood Events/Block Clubs, Emergency Action Plans. (already in motion – attendees chose categories and signed themselves up).

Each meeting was unique and reflected the experience, concerns and interest of the attendees. The meetings drew a combined total of 30 - 35 people. Below is a list of consistent themes across the meetings and an outline from the Snelling Café, Nov. 17th meeting that captures the depth and breadth of this particular discussion. It is indicative of the richness of the meetings.

CONSISTENT THEMES ACROSS MEETINGS:

Develop and nurture relationships – organizing to get people out and get to know each other takes a conscious effort. Neighbors know each other and “habits and patterns” to know if something is out of order.

Community Resources + Neighborhood Connections - Formal and Informal:

- Weekly potlucks
- Paint the Pavement
- Block Clubs

- Midway Progressive Women
- Ice Cream Socials – churches, neighbors, Hamline Midway Elders
- HMC Spring Festival
- Hamline Park “Meet the Police” and other activities
- Hamline Midway Environmental Group
- Share neighbors phone numbers and email addresses to keep in touch
- Friends of Horton Park and Hamline Park
- National Night Out
- Alley Cats fundraiser for “A Family Place”
- Hamline Methodist Barn Dances
- Faith communities, physical church spaces to shelter and feed people if needed.
- Crime and Safety meetings with SPPD.
- Helping to shovel sidewalks and crosswalks.
- Hamline Midway Health Movement
- Neighbors for Peace (contact via Hamline-Midway FB page for info on potluck events)
- Hamline-Midway Neighbors Facebook page
- Hamline-Midway-Frogstown Barter Exchange Facebook page
- Block-wide email lists
- Hamline-Midway Elders

SPECIFIC INSIGHTS/QUESTIONS from Snelling Café meeting:

How to increase trust and communications face to face with neighbors?

- National Night Out
- Start an event that brings neighbors out of their houses (block raking day, garage sales, compost runs, etc.)
- Keep an open mind
- Finding a reason to connect with people unlike yourself

How do people connect in the neighborhood?

- Shopping locally
- Shoveling snow
- Walking dogs or just walking in general

- Gardening
- Little Free Libraries
- Put out magnetic poetry
- Grow raspberries in the alley and “help yourself” sign
- School/bus stops
- Share extra food with neighbors
- Put placards in the window “we are safe,” “children/pets are here,” etc.

What are characteristics of resilience?

- Positive attitude and willingness to share stories
- Connected community
- Building relationships
- Willingness to share resources, time, space, ideas
- Willingness & ability to help those you don’t know
- Problem-solving
- Communication, working together

How can you increase readiness and resilience in your community?

- Get to know neighbors
- Have an email/phone list
- Adopt a storm drain
- Build a community center
- Support events like this to pull in key community leaders
- Host an event to bring neighbors out—especially in the winter
- Sharing garden resources—you grow a couple of items and share with neighbors growing a different crop
- Learn first aid—host a workshop?
- Build a directory of skillsets within the neighborhood—draw others out, value them for their skills

What already exists in Hamline-Midway to build readiness and resilience?

- Hamline-Midway Elders groups
- Community bonfires
- Skills-building for children—how they contribute to a response?
- Getting information to parents through their school-aged children
- Bloodmobile
- Hamline University

What are the challenges to building resilience?

- Fear of walking into the unknown
- Fear of introducing ourselves to one another
- Too busy to chat
- Everyone has earphones in nowadays
- Too easy to hide behind social media mask
- Language and cultural barriers
- Many of these challenges are personal/social—and easy to correct!
- Not everyone is outgoing and social, personal barriers contribute to isolation

How to disseminate information?

- Hamline University all-mail e-blast for emergency situations
- Church networks
- Elementary schools—send home information
- Block Club Leaders
- Midway Monitors
- African Economic Development Organization—has lots of media contacts

Objective 2: Engage with Hamline Midway block clubs to increase climate change awareness and readiness on a block-by-block (neighbor-to-neighbor) basis.

Outcomes:

- Meetings have been held to discuss the role HMEG will play at a Block Club Leaders meeting to introduce this project and climate change ready and resilient concepts.
- A volunteer is reviewing the current Block Club Handbook and is formulating language to be included on this topic to encourage block club-level actions.
- A Block Club Leader meeting scheduled for December 2015 has been postponed to early 2016 at which time members of the HMEG Ready and Resilient Team will present on this topic and encourage action at the block club level.
- Ideas on how to implement a “neighbor buddy” system, within a block club network or otherwise, are being developed.

Notes: A few points regarding process of grant implementation, what was learned, + follow-up.

- Was unable to fully develop relationships and ‘youth volunteer’ component of project. Began relationships for future/ongoing R and R community work with: LEAP School, Great River Montessori Charter School, and Hamline students.
- Heard current community concerns (anecdotal) from Snelling business people: unruly gangs of youth causing mayhem and committing crimes. Ages middle school to high school.
- Many people are interested in R nd R issues and community building. Multiple pathways are currently bringing people together (formal and informal). Multiple pathways (yet to be made) can continue to bring people together.
- There is no recipe for community. Following a recipe and expecting results could be disastrous. Community connections are often as idiosyncratic, individual and ‘serendipitous’ as are people.
- Including youth in future R and R could be part of addressing youth concerns in n’hood. To this end I am beginning to make connections of interested parties for community conversation about youth.

- We have a wealth of knowledge and energy in this neighborhood. People care.
- I offer to host a few monthly Saturday morning sessions at my house to follow-up with interested parties (eg. Those who signed up at Snelling Café event for specific areas of interest to address). Will offer this space and time for people to come together and amongst themselves discern future direction/action.