



Folwell Neighborhood Association

A Non-Profit Organization

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Board of Directors Meeting
Folwell Neighborhood Association
September 19, 2016

Approve Northside Demonstration Greenway Resolution

This is the statement that was used to describe the Northside Demonstration Greenway at the Pro Walk /Pro Bike Conference in Vancouver on September 13, 2016 by representatives from Minneapolis.

"The North Minneapolis Greenway is a unique, innovative proposal to convert more than three miles of low-traffic residential streets to a park-like trail and community space for residents to bike, walk, play, gather, garden, display art, and more. This project has invested in strong, equitable, and inclusive community engagement to ensure that the greenway is designed for the current residents of north Minneapolis -- a low-wealth, diverse community of about 50,000. After more than three years of community engagement, this project will be tested beginning in May 2016 by implementing a year-long, 5-block greenway demonstration that uses lighter, quicker, cheaper methods. These include placing materials such as planters, benches and adding creative paintings on the street. The presenters from the Minneapolis Health Department and the Northside Greenway Council (a community-based group) will discuss the greenway designs, the community engagement efforts and results, the greenway demonstration project design and evaluation, and the key lessons learned through this project."

This presentation statement bears little to no resemblance to the reality.

As the only recognized Citizen Participation organization in Folwell Neighborhood and on behalf of the residents of the Folwell Neighborhood the Board of Directors of the Folwell Neighborhood Association requests the immediate removal of the demonstration greenway from the Folwell Neighborhood from the blocks of 32nd Avenue North to 36th Avenue North on Irving Avenue because on the following:

1. The greenway project has successfully divided the 66 square blocks of Folwell Neighborhood physically into two parts with blocks now identified as east or west of the greenway which is on Irving Avenue North, the relative center of the neighborhood. And, the greenway has divided neighbors, throughout Folwell, into those for and those against the greenway disregarding the residents who live on the greenway. It has created a hostile environment among residents, owners and tenants, who live on the greenway, and who in some cases, no longer speak to their immediate neighbors. These may not have been intended outcomes of this project, but they are the reality!
2. The data, collected in a survey process, was misrepresented by the Health Department to the community and the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation, the primary funder, since the beginning of the project as indicating resident approval. The interpretation did not take into consideration both written and verbal comments at public meetings, in survey data and in social media to the contrary. The meetings were not widely attended. Only recently and since the greenway has been in place (May - 2016) has the Health Department responded to the real time problems residents are confronted with daily.
3. The imposition of the greenway has caused hardships for residents living along Irving Avenue by limiting or eliminating parking in front of their houses; it has caused a variety of other parking problems including the use of adjacent east and west streets encroaching on other residents. Regulatory Services Inspectors,

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City of Minneapolis has been required by ordinance, to write citations to residents who are parking on their own property, in their back yards on grass surfaces, due to the condition of alleys and garages. These same inspectors now walk the blocks of the greenway to access the houses in question which is not a safe practice.

4. Delivery Trucks and emergency service vehicles, including the Fire Department and Metro Mobility, have limited access to the residents on Irving Avenue North.
5. Folwell Neighborhood is an at risk neighborhood which has three criminal activity hotspots that are regularly patrolled by the Minneapolis Police Department for the purpose of prevention and intervention in criminal activity. These patrols are often required to cross the greenway at locations that do not permit easy access. The numbers of issues facing Folwell Neighborhood are exacerbated by the issues surrounding the greenway and far outweigh any contribution that the greenway might have provided.
6. Residents are concerned about the problems that will come with the impending arrival of winter including snow removal and alley plowing that is not a regular or reliable city service.

Unfortunately, this project was implemented in a diverse neighborhood both socially and economically. There has been the introduction of racial implications in both social media and verbal, personal confrontations. This project has been located in a neighborhood where all of the amenities, including parking, access to dwellings and neighbor to neighbor communication and interactions are very important.

The two examples of greenways most used as examples of success, the Midtown and Milwaukee Avenue have nothing in common with Folwell Neighborhood or North Minneapolis.

The **Milwaukee Avenue Historic District** is a [historic district in Minneapolis, Minnesota](#) in the [Seward neighborhood](#). The district comprises two city blocks of small homes on quarter-sized lots. These houses were built between 1884 and 1890 by William Ragan, a Minneapolis real estate speculator. Built for lower-income residents, the houses had deteriorated in condition by the end of [World War II](#), and by the 1970s, were planned for demolition. A group of residents and concerned citizens fought to save the houses, eventually leading to their inclusion on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) and the federal protection and rehabilitation that comes with the designation. Today, the houses sit along a [bike- and pedestrian-friendly mall](#) on which motor traffic is prohibited.

The **Midtown Greenway** lies in a former [Milwaukee Road](#) railroad corridor along 29th Street. This corridor had been abandoned west of [Hiawatha Avenue](#) but is still active east of Hiawatha as part of the [Minnesota Commercial Railway](#). The rail line was originally built between 1879 and 1881; however, as traffic increased, the city of Minneapolis mandated a trench be built between Hiawatha and Irving avenues in 1910.^[4] The trench, bridges and retaining walls were evaluated in 1989 as part of the [Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota MPS](#), and then listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) as the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Grade Separation.^[5] In 1993, the railroad property was purchased by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority.^[6] The first phase of the **Midtown Greenway** opened in August 2000, starting at the intersection of 31st Street and Chowen Avenue, just inside Minneapolis city limits.

Residents in Folwell have been told they will get used to the greenway, that they should use it, enjoy it and understand the benefits it provides. The demonstration project bears no resemblance to a green way. It is a painted asphalt street, littered with debris and abandoned toys.

Residents are not accepting this project as contributing anything of value. They are voicing their unhappiness with the project and the environment that its presence has created. That unhappiness is falling on deaf ears of the Health Department in its pursuit of data collection! As a result, this request, in the form of a Board Action, is for the immediate removal of the demonstration greenway project In Folwell Neighborhood.

Removal of this divisive installation and a cooling off period for the neighborhood and residents may also be the only hope for any possibility for future discussions in light of the City's current published interest in creating a 37 block greenway.

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- Moved
- Seconded
- Approved
- Not Approved

Signature

Title:


Chair