

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Hawthorne Eco-Village: Rebuilding a Sense of Community

Hawthorne neighborhood's Eco-Village in Minneapolis is committed not only to rebuilding the community, but to incorporating a sustainable and affordable lifestyle for its residents. An Eco-Village is a type of community that intentionally integrates ecological, economic, social, and cultural aspects, to create a healthy, sustainable, and natural environment. Before the Eco-Village project began, the neighborhood was struggling—from rampant crime to high foreclosure rates—it was time for a change. Economic downturn and disinvestment in the area pushed the City and the community to work together to develop a plan that would foster development, rebuild, and revitalize one of the City's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

The Eco-Village began with **four city blocks** in Hawthorne neighborhood. From the beginning, Hawthorne experienced a great transformation: violent crime rates decreased by 73% between 2007 and 2009, homeownership rates doubled between 2007 and 2012, and many community efforts have also changed the character and landscape of the neighborhood.

Results include the construction 16 new homes and a number of rehabilitated ones a majority of which are owner-occupied. Since most of the properties had been foreclosed or tax-forfeited, residents were not displaced by this work. Many of the homes now are energy efficient and meet nationally recognized sustainability standards. Zoning is primarily residential, with office-residential on Lowry Svenue west of 6th Street. The land use guidance for the area could allow changes in zoning for some neighborhood-serving commercial at Lowry and Lyndale. For next steps, the neighborhood hopes to add multi-family apartments, townhomes, and continue to work with the vacant lots—so long they still have the resources and support required. Their vision is to eventually become a vibrant neighborhood that can provide a diverse range of quality housing and healthy living.

WHAT MAY HELP OTHER COMMUNITIES?

Think Big, Start Small

The City and developers uniquely employed a “**cluster concept**”—meaning that they would focus their efforts on a geographically small area, while making big, impactful changes. The Eco-Village created an ambitious, long-term vision that incorporates immediate milestones and visible signs of progress. With the continued success of

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

COUNTY: Hennepin
POPULATION: 382,578

Minneapolis:

- Hawthorne neighborhood is located in north Minneapolis, named after Nathaniel Hawthorne.
- City staff worked with developers and neighborhood activists to build a sustainable environment. Hawthorne EcoVillage project reduced crime and increased homeownership in the area.
- Hawthorne EcoVillage implemented a cluster concept to tackle a small area with the largest impacts.
- The City has been working with the neighborhood and other partners to incorporate more community-driven changes.

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OTHER RESOURCES:

- Project for Pride in Living (PPL)
- Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity



The red house to the right contains solar panels, supporting the community's efforts in becoming more sustainable.



The Demonstrations Garden is a sustainable landscaping effort that consists of plants native to Minnesota.



PPL Rehab Homes are homes that have been rehabilitated to become more livable for their residents. They are renovated with energy saving features.

Hawthorne's Eco-Village, the community has expanded their project and sustainable planning efforts to other housing redevelopments, such as the Eco-Village Apartments which opened in July of 2016.

Beyond the initial goal of stabilizing a vulnerable neighborhood, the City aims to create a sustainable model that can be catalyzed or applied toward future urban redevelopment elsewhere in the city.

Collaboration and Partnerships

The successes and outcomes of the Eco-Village would have not been possible without a network of partners who all share the same vision and goals. Close collaboration with [Project for Pride in Living](#) (PPL) and the [Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity](#) played a key role in the design and development of the Eco-Village. Both organizations have remained involved with the community. Other vital partners included multiple City departments, housing developers, residents, and funders who dedicated their time in bringing support, creativity, and resources into the area. And most importantly, a community needs to have deeply committed residents who are willing to step up and act as leaders on local projects.

The [Hawthorne Neighborhood Council](#) is another important organization that collaborates with residents, local businesses and funding agencies to provide resources and empower residents.

Neighborhood Strategies

With committed residents come supported strategies that intend to sustain the livelihood, relationship, and connection to place. Eco-Village residents have developed strategies with project partners to build in existing social ties in the neighborhood. Strategies include design workshops, harvest dinners, street parties, and other community-building events.

One effective strategy is implementing community gardens that encourage sustainable living through native landscaping and utilizing vacant land in a productive and green way. The Eco-Village's [Tree Nursery](#), [Demonstration Garden](#), and [Boulevard Garden](#) not only brought the community together to create them, but added a positive, environmentally friendly presence to the neighborhood.

Five-Point Strategy

It was also important for the City to develop a plan that would foster development in the neighborhood. The [Five-Point Strategy](#) developed by the Northside Home Fund—an initiative created by the City in response to the 2005-2006 housing market—thought out ways to promote home ownership. Their strategy focused on the prevention of foreclosure, vacancies, rehabilitation of vacant buildings, promoting investment and environmental stability, and how to attract and retain a healthy mix of residents. By looking at market indicators and analyzing which communities the City should focus their efforts on, they targeted north Minneapolis, and have been specifically working on Hawthorne neighborhood's Eco-Village ever since. Overall in 2016, north Minneapolis's housing market is recovering, as the existing vacant land is intended for future development.



The community garden provides a space for residents to come together and grow various plants. It is owned and maintained by the community, promoting a sustainable lifestyle.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- [2010 MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership](#)