



Phillips Neighborhood Businesses



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Company Background

Hope Community is a non-profit organization located in Phillips Community; a diverse and low-wealth area comprised of four neighborhoods in south Minneapolis. Dedicated to providing an alternative to gentrification, Hope works to improve the community through access to affordable housing and leadership development programs. The vibrant cultural corridors, thriving Midtown Global Market, and renovations of Peavey Park are symbols of the strength and resiliency of Phillips and the result of 40 years of revitalization work.



"I enjoyed working on this project because it allowed me to combine analytical and communication skills to make an impact on the community. Although small businesses usually don't have the time or resources to put into environmental projects, I was impressed by business owners' willingness to change their cleaning processes to improve worker and community health. It allowed me to sharpen my project management skills, learn how to effectively structure an outreach program, and coordinate with multiple people to accomplish tasks." ~ EW

Project Background

The objective of this project was to promote and support the adoption of safer janitorial products at a variety of buildings in Phillips, including apartment complexes, small businesses, and office buildings. The first phase of the project was to construct an outreach program, spread awareness about the project, and connect with interested business and property owners. Outreach was conducted to 37 business and housing complexes, with 15 businesses participating in the project. The second phase was an assessment of the cleaning products currently used in these facilities, followed by research and identifying safer alternatives. The third phase was a trial period for the businesses, during which time MnTAP provided free samples of the alternative products for maintenance staff to test, to make sure they meet the buildings' cleaning needs. Finally, to promote the use of safer products, MnTAP provided the first case of the new product to aid in the transition.

Incentives To Change

Intertwined with social and economic challenges are environmental ones. Land-use decisions have put Phillips residents at a higher risk for experiencing the adverse effects of poor air quality. Small businesses and housing complexes in Phillips had the opportunity to switch

to safer janitorial products to improve air quality and community health. Although the emissions of hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are lower in janitorial products than in other industrial products, they can still generate ozone that degrades local air quality and contain chemicals hazardous to human health. Small businesses and housing complexes typically do not have the time or resources to put towards environmental projects, but when given an opportunity to address the issue of air quality in an accessible and affordable way, many were interested in improving their cleaning processes to improve worker and community health.

"2018 was Hope's second year hosting a MnTAP summer intern and we could not have been happier with the results. Emily took a project that was only an idea and created her own road map, engaging lots of neighborhood housing owners and businesses and piecing together a very useful understanding of how decisions around cleaning products get made."

*~ Will Delaney
Associate Director, Hope Community, Inc.*

Solutions



products will lead to annual air emissions reductions of 105 pounds of HAPs, 155 lbs of VOC, with the potential to generate 385 lbs of ground level ozone.

The products most commonly replaced with safer alternatives were toilet cleaners, glass cleaners, and bleach. Toilet cleaners were often found to contain hydrochloric acid, which is a HAP. Manufacturers of many glass cleaners do not disclose the ingredients on the safety data sheet, which may hide unsafe materials. Bleach is a common disinfectant that is a TRI reportable chemical and linked to asthma.

In addition to working with businesses, MnTAP also prepared informational handouts in both English and Spanish to raise awareness of safer cleaning products and where to buy them among consumers in the Phillips Community. These were distributed to the public by apartment managers, community organizations, and through a booth at the Lake Street Open Streets event. Information about the project was also shared through articles in *The Alley* community newspaper.

MnTAP assessed the janitorial products used in each building and provided recommendations for alternatives when a product did not meet the criteria to qualify as a safer product, which was determined using MnTAP's Safer Janitorial Products flowchart. Reputable third-party certifications such as Green Seal, EcoLogo, and EPA Safer Choice signify that a product is not hazardous to environmental and/or human health. Non-certified products are considered environmentally safer if they contain no HAPs and generate less than 0.5 pounds of potential ozone per pound of product. Additionally, a chemical is not considered a threat to human health if it is classified as a best available chemical per the EPA's Safer Chemical Ingredients List, or if it is not a Chemical of Concern, Toxics Release Inventory Reportable, or Green Seal Prohibited substance.

Of the 133 total janitorial products analyzed at businesses in the Phillips neighborhoods, 84 met MnTAP's criteria for safer products. After testing and approving samples of alternative products, 26 substitutions were made, which will result in a replacement of 2,700 lbs of cleaning product with safer alternatives annually. Replacing these



Recommendation	Product	VOC Reduction	HAP Reduction	Status
Switch to safer janitorial products	2,700 lbs	105 lbs	155 lbs	Implemented

MnTAP Advisor: Jane Paulson, Senior Engineer