Health equity strategies at the Van White station area

The Van White station area is at a complex intersection of jurisdictions that includes the city of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Department of Transportation. Considering the future infrastructure commitments by these agencies, a demonstration project site was selected at a popular community amenity – the Hennepin County Sumner Library at Van White and Olson Memorial Highway in north Minneapolis. Health equity strategies from Van White station area plans call for:

- New bicycle facilities
- Public art
- Bicycle parking at key neighborhood destinations

Bikes and Sumner Library

Working with Sumner Library librarians, Bottineau Community Works staff talked through the possible bike improvements and public art elements at this historically significant building. In addition, adjacent community organizations were consulted and supportive of the concept. This engagement identified that:

- Biking to the library is a common form of transportation for neighborhood youth.
- Bike locks are available to check out at the library but during the summer they often run out of bike locks to lend.
- One of the major reasons community members don’t use their bikes is because of flat tires.

Based on this input, the project installed a permanent bike repair station next to the library and adjacent to the Van White bike boulevard.

Bike repair clinic

Venture North, a social enterprise project of Redeemer Center for Life, set up a bike repair clinic on two weekends. This free service provided 56 community members with:

- Bike safety tune-ups including, inflating tires, fixing flat tires, tightening and oiling chains, etc.
- Bike repair lessons including how-to fix a flat
- Basic safe riding techniques

Bike and pedestrian demonstration projects

Making it easier for residents to get to future Bottineau LRT (METRO Blue Line extension) stations by walking, biking, and rolling is one focus of the Hennepin County Bottineau Community Works program.

Bottineau Community Works staff worked with Bottineau Corridor city and community partners to implement bicycle and pedestrian demonstration projects in five future station areas, including one in each city. These projects demonstrate health equity strategies identified in the Bottineau station area plans.

Funding support came from the Center for Prevention, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership from the Minnesota Department of Health.
Community designed cultural wayfinding

The last component of this demonstration project was a community inspired sign (pictured right) reflecting North Minneapolis culture. Working with Juxtaposition Arts staff and eight youth apprentices, library staff:

- Engaged over 100 community members for input on designs and concepts
- Provided final design review boards to display for library staff and patrons
- Installed hoop sign with designs at the library

Van White station area community profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Half-mile station area</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
<th>Hennepin County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (2010)</td>
<td>4,576</td>
<td>382,578</td>
<td>1,152,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 18 years</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons over 65 years</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zero car households</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in poverty</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Life expectancy at station zip code: 73 years; Hennepin County: 81 years.

Contact

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