



**DEMYSTIFYING
POLITICS:
EARTH DAY
EDITION**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY ASIAN AMERICAN ORGANIZING PROJECT!

[GLOSSARY]

WASTE AUDIT: a formal, structured process used to quantify the amount and types of wastes being generated by an organization, home, business, etc.

RESIN CODE: the number you find on plastic items that looks like a recycling symbol.

COMPOSTING: microbial process that converts kitchen and yard waste into nutrient-rich soil or mulch.

POLLUTION: the introduction of harmful materials (pollutants) into the environment causing damage and reducing the quality of our land, water, and air.

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM: a form of institutional racism leading to landfills, incinerators, hazardous waste disposal and other polluting sites being disproportionately placed in low-income and communities of color.

ARSENIC: naturally occurring, semi-metallic element widely distributed in the Earth's crust that is often found in water, air and soil. Long-term exposure to arsenic from drinking-water and food can cause cancer and skin lesions. It has also been associated with cardiovascular disease and diabetes. In utero and early childhood exposure has been linked to negative impacts on cognitive development and increased deaths in young adults.

URBAN FARM: the practice of cultivating crops, livestock, or types of food in an urban environment

E-WASTE: any working or broken electrical or electronic equipment that's been discarded. E-waste is particularly dangerous as it contributes to e-pollution, in which toxic chemicals from within these products are released into their environments when not properly disposed of or recycled.

GREENHOUSE GAS: gases in the atmosphere that raise the surface temperature of planets. These gases absorb the wavelengths of radiation that a planet emits, resulting in the greenhouse effect. The different types of greenhouse gases include: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and fluorinated gases.

TREE CANOPY + URBAN FOREST (urban tree canopy): measurement which encompasses the layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that shelter the ground when viewed from above. This measurement is expressed as a percentage of ground area that is covered by tree crowns (the branches, leaves and reproductive structures extending from the trunk or main stems), and relates to the branching spread of the trees in an urban forest.

RENEWABLE ENERGY: energy derived from natural sources that are replenished at a higher rate than they are consumed. Some examples include solar, wind, geothermal, and hydropower.

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES: fossil fuels, like coal, oil, and gas, are non-renewable resources that take hundreds of millions of years to form. When burned to produce energy, these release harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

CARBON-FREE ENERGY: energy produced by a resource that generates no carbon emissions, some examples include nuclear and large hydroelectric.

GREEN ZONES: communities that have been deeply affected by pollution, racism and other factors.

A BRIEF MESSAGE FROM ASIAN AMERICAN ORGANIZING PROJECT

If you weren't already aware of global warming, then it was probably hard to miss during our record high temperatures this winter (and with the lack of snow). Earth Day is April 22, however, this shouldn't be the only day that we are kind and thankful to the land that we live on and continue to harness our resources from. When using and taking resources, majority of humans unfortunately have not established sustainable, restorative practices to increase the longevity of life and land for all. Though, this is an interconnected issue with many individuals involved, and so we should recognize in which ways we have control and can contribute (even if it's in small ways) but also acknowledge the fact that this is not a consumer-only problem nor should it be presented as such.

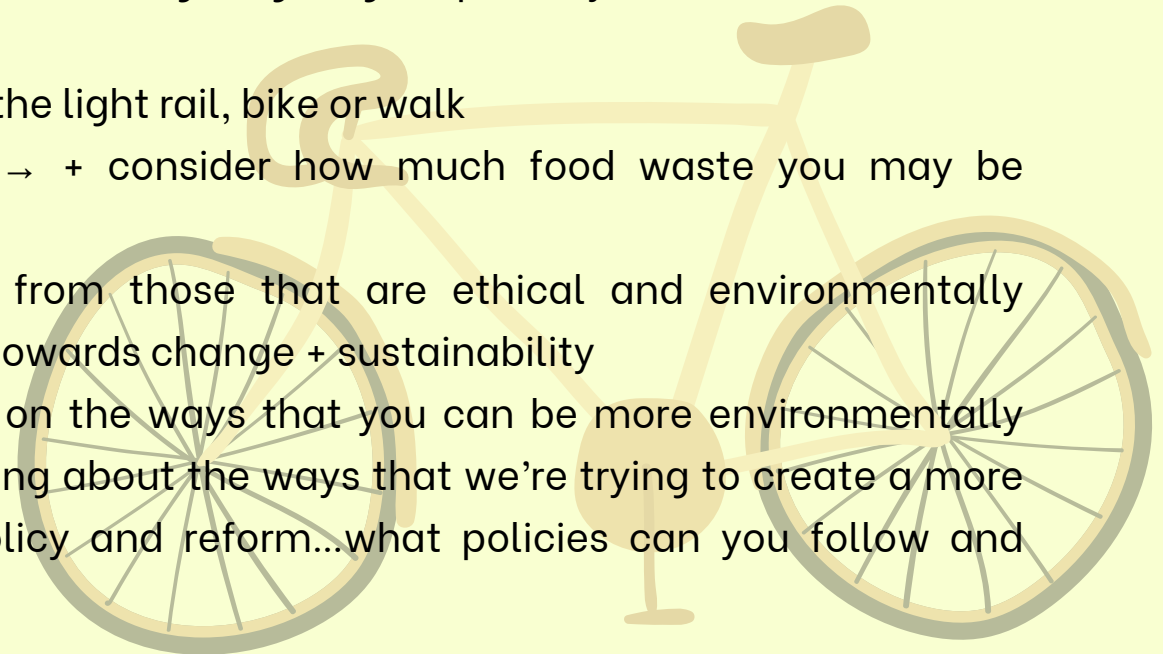


Every individual that is involved has a responsibility to this planet and the land that we live on, from community members to large corporations to government officials. Read on to learn more about the declining health of our planet and how we can try to combat it together ♡

WAYS FOR YOU TO BE MORE GREEN IN YOUR DAILY LIFE



1. **DITCH SINGLE-USE** → reusable (bags, water bottles, zero-waste bulk buy, jars, menstrual products)
2. **DISPOSE OF IT PROPERLY** → whether that's recycling, electronics + other hazardous waste, composting etc.
3. **DITCH FAST FASHION** → invest in more environmentally friendly clothing options
4. **SIMPLIFY YOUR HOLIDAYS** → rethink gift giving...especially when it comes to packaging
5. **DRIVE LESS** → ride the bus, take the light rail, bike or walk
6. **MAKE WISER FOOD CHOICES** → + consider how much food waste you may be accumulating
7. **MAKE YOUR \$ COUNT** → buy from those that are ethical and environmentally conscious that are taking steps towards change + sustainability
8. **GOOGLE IT** → educate yourself on the ways that you can be more environmentally friendly, but also consider learning about the ways that we're trying to create a more sustainable system through policy and reform...what policies can you follow and support?



NEED SOME INSPIRATION? LET'S DIG A LITTLE DEEPER...

DISPOSE OF PROPERLY

It's actually helpful to conduct a waste audit for your household first to gain better insights on the type of waste one generates before learning important steps in reducing, while also providing a baseline to measure progress towards zero-waste living. To conduct a waste audit, take note of the contents in your waste containers (or you can do a full-scale waste sort).



RECYCLING 101

Minnesota state law requires that materials are properly recycled as long as those materials are accepted in your area and prepared properly. There are seven different types of plastic and packaging materials. The number you find on plastic items that looks like a recycling symbol is called the *resin code*. **Typically you can recycle plastic bottles, jugs, cups, and containers that are #1, 2, and 5 that are not black and have not held hazardous materials.** It's important to remember, *“when in doubt, throw it out,”* to ensure that the right materials are entering recycling facilities in your local area.

THINGS TO RECYCLE:

- Paper
- Boxes
- Cartons
- Glass
- Plastic
- Bottles and jugs
- Cups and containers
- Metal



THINGS TO KEEP OUT OF RECYCLING:

- Plastic bags (including bags of recycling)
- Metal tools + products (pots, pans, hangers, pipes, tools)
- Pressurized tanks
- Single-use utensils + straws
- Black plastic
- Paper plates, cups, and takeout containers
- Electronics + batteries
- Cords + string lights
- Needles + sharp objects



****If you'd like to learn more about what you can't recycle or how to properly prepare your recycling, go to page 5 of [this guide](#).**



COMPOSTING + ORGANICS RECYCLING 101

Composting is a microbial process that converts kitchen and yard waste into nutrient-rich soil or mulch. If you reside in Hennepin County, backyard composting and organics recycling are two ways that you can start composting. Note that each includes different material wastes, so research and determine which one is best for your household!

WHAT TO COMPOST?

- **YARD WASTE** – plant trimmings, leaves, weeds without seeds, pine needles
- **KITCHEN WASTE** – fruit and veggie scraps, coffee grounds, paper tea bags, egg shells
- **MATERIALS THAT ADD NUTRITIVE VALUE** – blood and bone meal, cotton seed meal, aquatic plants
- **SMALL AMOUNTS OF** sawdust, wood chips, small sticks
- **WOOD ASHES** – add in small amounts, ashes act as lime source and affect the pH of your compost

WHAT NOT TO COMPOST?

- **MEAT AND DAIRY** – meat pieces, dairy products, bones, fish scraps, raw eggs
- **FATS** – cooking oil, drippings and grease
- **SYNTHETICS** – motor oil, glass, plastic, styrofoam, polyester
- **FECES** from dogs, cats and humans
- **WEEDS with seeds**
- **LARGE PIECES OF WOOD**



**If you'd like to learn more about the different types of composting and how to do them, benefits of using compost, or how to build your own backyard compost, start on page 9 of [this guide](#).

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF HOUSEHOLD ELECTRONICS + HAZARDOUS WASTES

There are also many products you should keep out of your trash, recycling, and composting. **Generally, you'll want to keep electronics, medicines, and sharp objects out of your waste.** Hennepin county has multiple drop-off facilities where you can dispose of your electronics + hazardous waste. Visit page 16 on [this guide](#) to learn more. Ramsey County also offers [free household hazardous waste collection](#).



**** If you don't want to drop-off your electronics at a disposal facility, here are other ways you can dispose of your electronics:**

GIVE AWAY OR SELL

If the electronic item still works, give it away or sell it. Fix-it clinics are available to repair electronics too.

RECYCLE

Electronics are accepted for recycling by some manufacturers and retailers, including [Best Buy](#), [Recycle Technologies](#), [Repowered](#), and [Staples](#). Some recycling fees may apply.



**DRIVE
LESS,
CONSIDER
PUBLIC
TRANSPORT**

TWIN CITIES DRIVING ALTERNATIVES:

- Biking [Greenway, trails around the lakes, bike routes thru the UofM]
- Bus [[several bus lines](#) that run through the Twin Cities]
- Lightrail [[blue line](#) runs from MOA to Target field, [green line](#) runs from DTWN MPLS to the UofM to DTWN STP, the city is working on [extending both lines](#) to increase accessibility]
- Carpool
- Electric Scooters

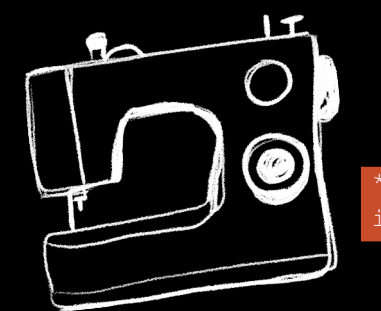
DITCH FAST FASHION

ALTERNATIVES TO FAST FASHION:

- Buy high quality clothing that is more versatile + durable
- Shop used
- Extend life of wardrobe with mending/repurposing
- Buy clothes from ethical and sustainable brands
- Consider making your own clothes
- Support local artists + designers



[learn mending, sewing, alterations + upcycling at RETHINK \(mpls\)](#)



****Fix It Clinics in MPLS**

[+ classes offered at the Textile Center \(mpls\)](#)

[Patagonia Care and Repair + DIY videos](#)



[NPR's guide to mending your own clothes](#)

SO WHO ARE OUR BIGGEST ENEMIES (POLLUTERS)?

Pollution is the introduction of harmful materials (pollutants) into the environment causing damage and reducing the quality of our land, water, and air. Oftentimes when we hear the word “pollution” we may think of air pollution, however, there are many other different types of pollution and they can show up in many different ways. For example, hazardous waste and chemicals polluting our water, plastics (including microplastics) engulfing our land and water, soil pollution, and light pollution just to name a few.

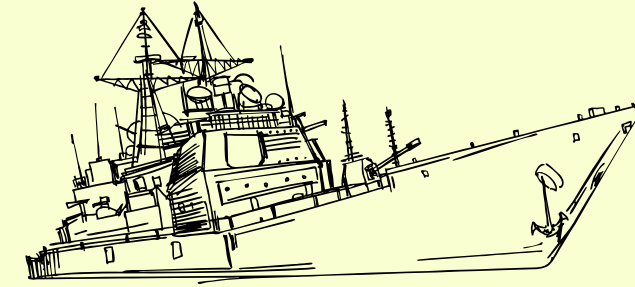
There are several major industries that continue to contribute to global warming. **Energy, which looks at fossil fuel consumption to generate electricity and heat, is the largest polluting sector in the world.** This is because the burning of fossil fuels releases large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere which is only more detrimental when looking at how much we rely on energy to do things throughout our daily lives (heat our homes, charge our phones, cook food). Other big polluters are *transportation, manufacturing and construction, agriculture, fashion, and technology.*

****Data from IPCC (2022); Based on global emissions from 2019, details on the sectors and individual contributing sources can be found in the Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Mitigation of Climate Change, Chapter 2.**

BUILDINGS: Greenhouse gas emissions from this sector arise from **onsite energy generation and burning fuels for heat in buildings or cooking in homes.** ****NOTE - emissions from this sector are 16% when electricity use in buildings is included here instead of the energy sector**

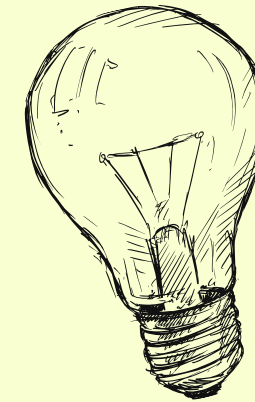


BUILDINGS
5.9%



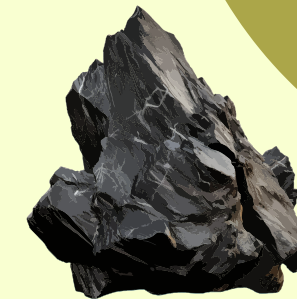
TRANSPORTATION
14.9%

TRANSPORTATION: Greenhouse gas emissions from this sector primarily involve **fossil fuels burned for road, rail, air, and marine transportation.** Almost all of the world’s transportation energy comes from petroleum-based fuels, largely gasoline and diesel.



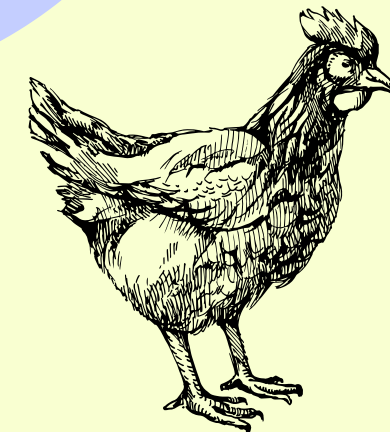
ENERGY
33.7%

ELECTRICITY + HEAT PRODUCTION: the burning of coal, natural gas, and oil for electricity and heat is the largest single source of global greenhouse gas emissions



INDUSTRY
23.8%

INDUSTRY: Greenhouse gas emissions from industry primarily involve **fossil fuels burned on site at facilities for energy.** This sector also includes emissions from **chemical, metals, and mineral transformation processes** not associated with energy consumption and emissions from waste management activities. ****NOTE - emissions from industrial electricity use are excluded and are instead covered in the Electricity and Heat Production sector**



AFOLU
21.8%

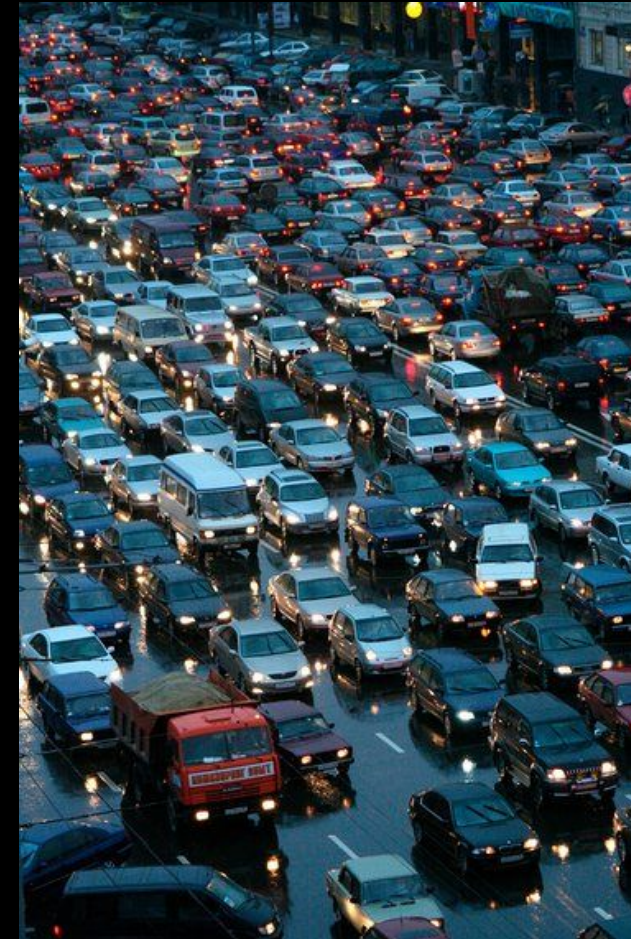
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND OTHER LAND USE: Greenhouse gas emissions from this sector **come mostly from agriculture (cultivating of crops and livestock) and deforestation.** This estimate does not include the CO2 that ecosystems remove from the atmosphere (this is a process known as sequestering carbon)



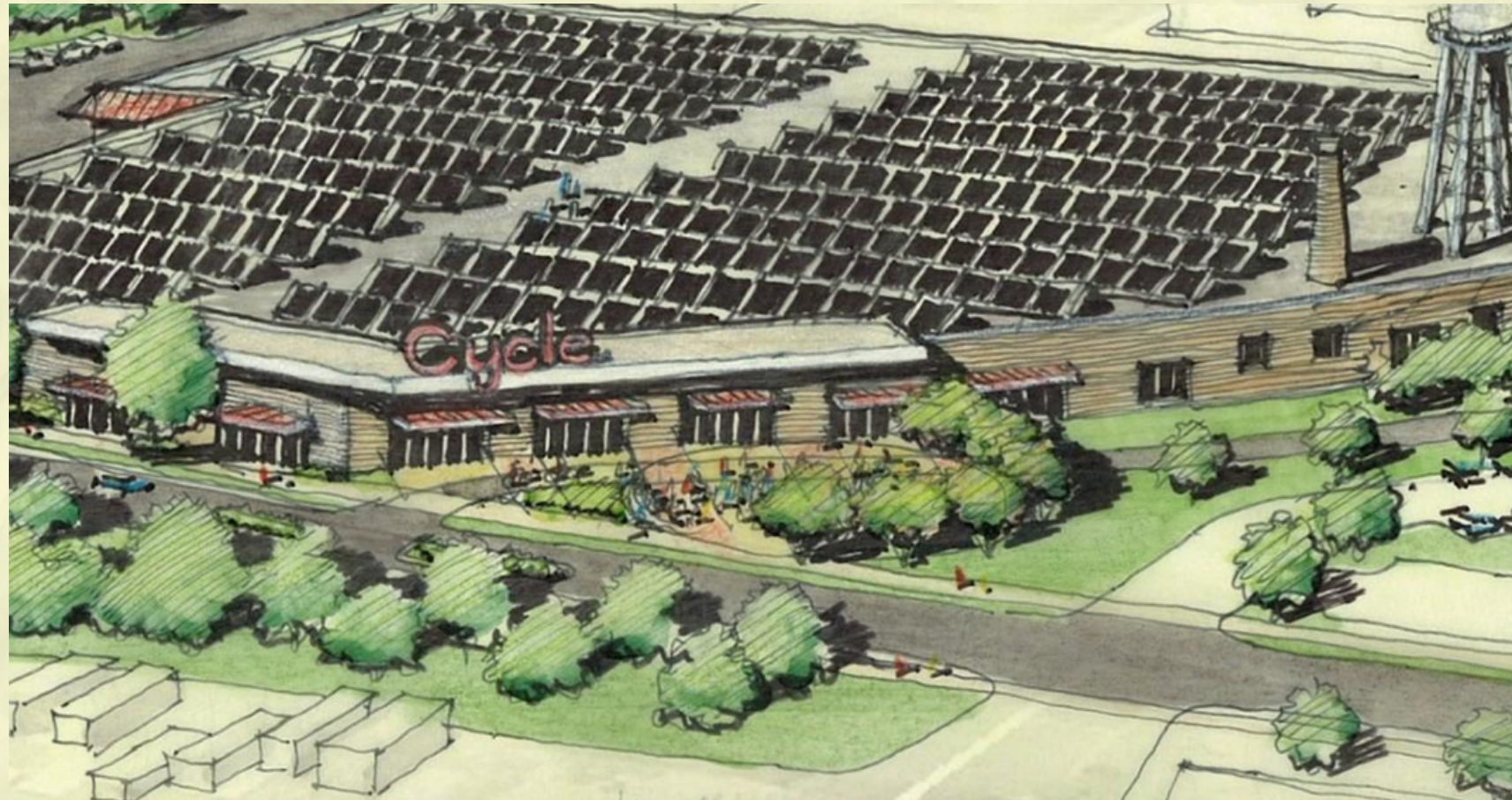
AND HOW ARE THEY COMING FOR US?

Ultimately, when our environments are being polluted by natural causes and human-activity, this harms our land, air, and water by reducing their overall quality *and* the quality of life for those living in these places. In recent years, we've already seen the detrimental ripple effects of global warming. We are witnesses to how an increase in global temperatures affects weather and natural disasters all around the world. Warmer temperatures may alter our agriculture and land use with soil no longer being viable for good crop yields or killing off our ocean's ecosystem to an increase in frequency and intensity in heat waves posing health risks, particularly for the young and elderly.

Though climate change affects all communities, **it disproportionately impacts BIPOC and low-income communities**, this is known as *environmental racism*. Oftentimes, it's these communities, through government policies, rules, and regulations, that are forced to live near toxic waste and pollution, like factories, landfills, major roadways/highways, and other sources of pollution.



A recent example was the fight over the *Roof Depot* site located in the East Phillips neighborhood in Minneapolis just off of Hiawatha Avenue. The city was hoping to expand the neighboring existing public works yard onto this site since our current waterworks yard in the Marcy Holmes neighborhood is aging. **The local community thought the demolition of the site posed environmental and health risks to the neighborhood.** It was found that “the soil underneath the warehouse still contains toxic arsenic from a long-shuttered pesticide factory,” (The long).





This concerned (rightfully so) community had a different idea...to create a space by and for the community. In 2015, leaders of the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute developed a plan to build an urban farm in the old warehouse. Their intent was to create a new economic hub for a low-income, majority-BIPOC neighborhood. This battle between the city and the local community surrounding this site shed light on the toxic backstory of how it came to be and how environmental racism continues to persist and thrive in these vulnerable communities.

Dean Dovolis, the board president of the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute, said that the city's initiative would deny them a lot of future economic activity on top of the cost of the pollution that would come with it. Looking at this project, you'll find that it perpetuates the cycle of environmental racism when you consider the fact that this community has not had equal opportunities to land uses in the past. But rather, they are often given what no one else wants, therefore projects like these end up in the poorest communities where they are not equipped to defend themselves despite their community being the one directly impacted by these decisions made from those not living in the neighborhood.



FIG. 1 From the series *The Hell of Copper (L'Enfer du Cuivre)*, by Nyaba Leon Ouedraogo. 2008.



FIG. 3 *Untitled, Agbogbloshie Market, Accra, Ghana* from the series *Permanent Error*, by Pieter Hugo. 2010.

Though this is a localized example, there are many similar experiences being lived out all around the world. Communities throughout India do not have access to clean water as they are experiencing contamination in their local waterways from the dumping of toxic waste from polluting industries like fashion and textiles. There are areas in Africa that are experiencing e-pollution, which stems from the dumping of hazardous electronic waste that pollutes and contaminates the environment through the toxic substances these products contain.

When talking about the impacts of climate change, **it's important to make the distinction of how these government policies and guidelines continue to disproportionately exacerbate the quality of life in low-income and communities of color.** Oftentimes these communities do not have a seat at the table and are not included in these conversations that directly affect their health and lifestyles. **Those in power have intentionally established these processes to make it easier and more convenient to continue to oppress and exploit vulnerable groups of people.** That's why stories like the Roof Depot are inspiring because it shows that communities are able to come together to fight for their rights and the common good for everyone living there. However, that comes with several components that made it possible for this community to mobilize and speak up for their wants and needs. To start, it's important to acknowledge and be aware that environmental racism does exist in order to strategically and intentionally plan next steps on how to combat it, especially when you are seeing and experiencing it first hand in your community.

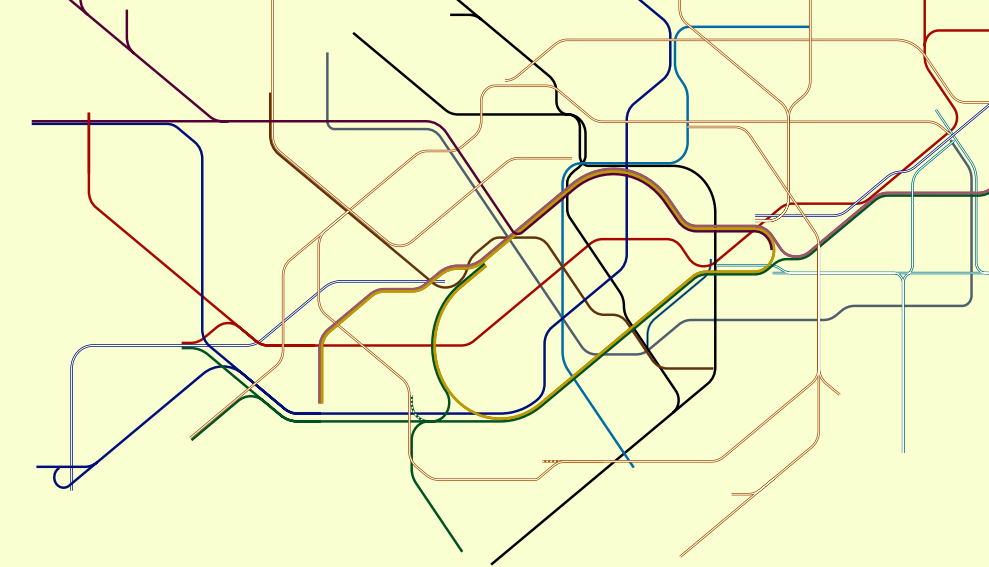


AND HOW ARE WE TRYING TO COMBAT THESE POLLUTING PRACTICES?

The city of Minneapolis is currently working on implementing more green initiatives to make the city more sustainable, energy-efficient and environmentally conscious. Minneapolis City Council has adopted 2040 goals to set a clear plan and strategy for implementing these projects alongside working on policies that support at least one of the goals listed. **Two goals that relate to climate include: (1) *climate change resilience*, and (2) *clean environment*.** Our city wants to be resilient to the impacts of climate change and to be on track with achieving 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in hopes to have healthy air, clean water, and a vibrant ecosystem.

There are 30 policies that relate to both of these goals that include:

1. Energy Efficient and Sustainable Buildings
2. Environmental Impacts of Transportation
3. Complete Streets
4. Pedestrians
5. Transit
6. Bicycling
7. Access to Commercial Goods and Services
8. Downtown Transportation
9. Development Near METRO Stations
10. Public Realm
11. Open Spaces in New Development
12. Landscaping
13. Tree Canopy and Urban Forest
14. Air Quality
15. Climate Resilient Communities



16. Renewable and Carbon-Free Energy
17. Sustainable Water System Management
18. Stormwater Management
19. Integration of Water Management into Development
20. Freeway Remediation
21. Innovation Districts
22. Environmental Justice and Green Zones
23. Production and Processing
24. Contaminated Sites
25. Ecology and Habitat
26. Soil Health
27. Urban Agriculture and Food Production
28. Waste Reduction
29. Northside
30. Preserving and Enhancing Public Lakes and Waterways

****If you want more in-depth information on each of these policies, visit [Minneapolis 2040 policies](#).**



looking a little closer at a couple of these...

TRANSPORTATION AND EQUITY

The city developed a **20-Year Street Funding Plan** in April of 2016. The purpose of this project is to allocate funding and define the methodology towards street projects with a focus on racial and economic equity. In order to measure the current state of streets and where improvements can be made research is done on the physical conditions of the street while also accounting for the demographics of the area and what transportation needs there may be along each street. **The objective is to create transportation networks in the city that allow fair and just access to employment, goods and services, nature and recreation, and to participate in social and civic life for all individuals belonging to the community.**

NOW LET'S HAVE A REAL-TIME CHECK IN ON THIS POLICY:

The city is currently working on multiple transit constructions projects. One of them being the B Line and Lake Street improvements. Prior to construction, station locations needed approval so they could be designed before actual construction. This 12-mile rapid bus transit would connect neighborhoods in Minneapolis and St. Paul with stops along Lagoon Ave. and Lake St. in Minneapolis and Marshall Ave, Selby Ave, and John Ireland Blvd. in St. Paul. During construction, this will include utility work, pavement and intersection improvements, traffic signal changes, and resurfacing of pavement along Lake Street. Construction continues and the city is anticipating that B Line service would begin June of 2025. To learn more about other transit improvements, visit [Metro Transit](#).





RENEWABLE AND CARBON-FREE ENERGY

Minneapolis' 2040 Energy Vision foresees that by 2040, the city will have an energy system that will provide reliable, affordable, local and clean energy services for homes, businesses and institutions that will ultimately sustain the city's economy and environment. It's important to ensure that these changes are benefitting the whole community, especially creating opportunities for communities to build equity where they have historically been underrepresented in the energy industry. **Minneapolis' Climate Action Plan** that was adopted in June of 2013, defines the energy goals for the city and outlines the strategies (developing policies) that the city will implement to work towards these goals. Some of the strategies include identifying Green Zones throughout the city to determine what communities need an increase in energy efficiency and options for renewable energy installation, and building more energy efficient buildings.

NOW LET'S HAVE A REAL-TIME CHECK IN ON THIS POLICY:

Governor Walz signed a legislative bill into law last year (2023) to move Minnesota towards 100% Clean Energy by 2040. This law establishes a Minnesota carbon-free electricity standard that has steps to work towards lowering greenhouse gas emissions, combating climate change, and creating new clean energy jobs to support the local economy as well. The goal is to ensure that everyone will have access to reliable, affordable, and safe energy resources. For more information on the bill that was signed into law, visit [this digital update](#).

[RESOURCES TO USE]

[Minneapolis Disposal Guide](#)

[Drop-off Locations for Hazardous Waste + Electronics](#)

[Drop-off Locations FAQ](#)

[Zero Waste Guide](#)

[Ways to Encourage Reuse in Your Community](#)

[20 Reusable Everyday Items](#)

[SOURCES]

[12 WAYS TO LIVE MORE SUSTAINABLY](#)

[THIS INTERACTIVE CHART SHOWS CHANGES IN THE WORLD'S TOP 10 EMITTERS](#)

[THE TOP 7 MOST POLLUTING INDUSTRIES IN 2024](#)

[POLLUTION](#)

[IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE](#)

[ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE 101](#)

[THE LONG, BITTER FIGHT OVER MINNEAPOLIS' ROOF DEPOT SITE, EXPLAINED](#)

[ELECTRONIC WASTE \(E-WASTE\)](#)

[PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER DISCARD STUDIES: THE CASE OF AGBOGBLOSHIE](#)

[WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE ROOF DEPOT SITE](#)

[20 YEAR STREETS FUNDING PLAN](#)

[TRANSPORTATION AND EQUITY](#)

[MINNEAPOLIS CLIMATE ACTION PLAN](#)

[GOVERNOR WALZ SIGNS BILL MOVING MINNESOTA TO 100 PERCENT CLEAN ENERGY BY 2040](#)

[FOSSIL FUELS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: THE FACTS](#)

[2019 REPORT: THE PRODUCTION GAP](#)

[GLOBAL GREENHOUSE GAS OVERVIEW](#)

[INVENTORY OF US GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND SINKS](#)

[RENEWABLE ENERGY - POWERING A SAFER FUTURE](#)

[WHAT IS CARBON SEQUESTRATION?](#)