

Williams/St. Mary's

A cooperative effort to improve the visual environment on the street in a public housing area, and to support engaging residents in gardening activities.



The Challenge: An Overlooked Streetscape

Prospect Park, a comfortable, progressive mixed income neighborhood on a hill in southeast Minneapolis, has winding streets which result in triangles, cul-de-sacs, and other odd-shaped small parcels of land adjoining the streets. Minneapolis Public Works is responsible for maintenance of these small parcels, but lack of resources make it difficult to carry out even basic maintenance. Over the years, most triangles have been “adopted” by neighbors and planted with bushes and flowers so that they do not become neglected “orphan” sites.



The triangle at the intersection of Williams and St. Mary's streets was an exception. Instead of being surrounded by single family, mainly owner-occupied houses, this intersection was bordered by Glendale Terrace family public housing, other residential rental property, and industry. Before 2006, it had not been adopted by anyone, and it had no plantings at all — just grass and two lonely stones.



Project Features:

A Groundwork Minneapolis-sponsored Americorps NCCC team assisted Public Works in maintaining Prospect Park triangles and other sites, and in identifying neighbors who were available to help maintain the planted sites on an ongoing basis. In the case of the Williams/St. Mary's Triangle, however, Groundwork approached public housing staff to see if they would be interested in both beautifying and maintaining the site.



Public Housing had a new VISTA volunteer to help Glendale Terrace residents with gardening projects, and this was a good first project. Public Works moved decorative rocks to the site, a volunteer master gardener designed a planting plan for donated plants, and the NCCC team prepared and planted the site. Residents provided water and weeding.



Partners:

Minneapolis Public Works, Minneapolis Public Housing Agency, Glendale Terrace Residents' Council, Americorps (both NCCC and VISTA programs), Hennepin County Master Gardeners, Minnesota Green, and Groundwork Minneapolis.



Next Steps:

Replant for 2007 and maintain the site.

