

Hopkins Urban Heat Island Engagement Summary

Over the course of the project, team members engaged with residents, local government, and large property owners to hear how they address extreme heat events and to gather feedback on strategies the city could take to minimize the impact of such events. The following summarizes the outcome of each engagement activity and the recommended strategies that emerged.

Residential Engagement

Residents were engaged at four separate events: National Night Out, the Farmers Market, a community meeting at Blake and Excelsior, and a community meeting at Dow Towers. In total, **more than 100 residents participated in conversations** regarding the urban heat island effect and extreme heat events. Each event is summarized below.

National Night Out Intercept Survey

Audiences engaged: residents living along the corridors

Estimate of residents engaged: 23 across three locations

On National Night Out, city staff and consultants attended three block party events in Hopkins to hear from residents about their ideas for minimizing urban heat island effect and staying safe in extreme heat events. Across the events, 23 people responded to an in-person survey about extreme heat. Those who completed the survey expressed concern about their neighbors, friends, and family members who did not have access to air conditioning during heat waves. Some had concerns paying for electricity during high heat events. Most said that they sought indoor air-conditioning when it is hot outside. The complete summary can be found [here](#).

Residents suggested the following strategies for the city to address urban heat island and extreme heat:

- Access to a cooling center
- Ensure common access to air conditioning in common spaces such as apartment building lobbies. Many apartment residents only had a single window ac unit that is insufficient to cool their entire apartment.
- More public pools
- Assistance on utility bills
- More clean, reliable back-up power
- Tree planting, especially where trees are at risk for disease
- Welfare checks for vulnerable residents

Community Dinner

Audiences engaged: residents

Estimate of residents engaged: 30-40

Hopkins residents gathered at a site near the Blake Road and Excelsior intersection to learn about climate change, the urban heat island effect, and share their ideas for addressing heat outside. People who joined talked with city staff and consultants about strategies to stay safe in extreme heat. Using a bean counter, residents were asked to share their preferences for street design, how cities can support residents in times of extreme heat, and what concerns they have during extreme heat events. The complete summary can be found [here](#).

Residents shared the following:

- Most supported a community cooling center
- Tree-lined streets and the existing street design was preferred
- There was particular concern for children playing outside during extreme heat
- There was concern generally about rising energy costs

Dow Towers

Audiences engaged: residents

Estimate of residents engaged: 20-30

The City of Hopkins Housing and Redevelopment Authority manages the Dow Tower, a subsidized high-rise near downtown that provides rental apartments for income-qualified residents. The City hosted a conversation with residents to discuss the resilience project and get input on how residents respond to high heat events.

Residents shared:

- Nearly all participants said that air conditioning was necessary in the summer and they would give up other expenses to pay for it, if needed
- Several participants mentioned clothing and hydration were important personal cool practices when outdoors
- A few residents mentioned that they would ride the bus to stay cool, though many noted the stops lacked shade
- There were suggestions for more shade, access to drinking water, and public seating

Farmers Market

Audiences engaged: residents

Estimate of residents engaged: 20-30

At the Hopkins Farmers Market, city staff and consultants hosted a table to share information on climate change, urban heat island effect in Hopkins and who will be most

impacted, and some ideas on what we can do to address the issue. Using a bean counter, participants shared their preferences for street design and how the city could support residents during times of extreme heat. The complete summary can be found [here](#).

Residents shared the following:

- Preference for tree-lined and green streets
- None of the residents preferred the existing conditions example
- Some concern about maintenance of green streets
- Some inquiries about how white pavement impacts snow melt
- Questions about salt tolerance of vegetation
- Residents supported community cooling centers

Summary of Residential Recommendations:

- Increase tree canopy and green infrastructure, while maintaining some of the street character
- Identify existing community assets that can serve as community cooling centers; if none are available, consider how new development could incorporate cooling centers
- Ensure street improvements don't result in significantly higher costs for tax payers
- Consider how residents can be involved in maintaining some of the green infrastructure installations
- Conduct resident welfare checks and/or encourage residents to check on their neighbors

Local Government Engagement

Audiences engaged: peer group – local governments

Local governments engaged: 5, Metropolitan Council, St. Louis Park, Hennepin County, Nine Mile Creek, Minnehaha Watershed District

The City of Hopkins hosted a conversation with local and regional government staff to discuss urban heat island resources and strategies. The purpose of the meeting was to share an overview of the project and updates with participants and hear from them about the tools, best practices, and programs they are utilizing and implementing to address warmer temperatures and/or stormwater management, and discuss opportunities for collaboration going forward.

The local government participants shared resources and discussed strategies to address urban heat island effect. The Metropolitan Council shared the Growing Shade tool that maps tree canopies across the region and pairs the tree canopy coverage with demographic information. This tool can help local governments understand what areas and which residents might have less access to shade during extreme heat events. Nine Mile Creek shared information on natural solutions for stormwater management that can also reduce the impact of urban heat island effect. St. Louis Park shared a new program that offers incentives and reimbursements for green infrastructure projects, including those that include depaving. Hennepin County

discussed a program planting trees along county roads. In a separate conversation, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) shared its work to improve water quality through better stormwater management practices that will also reduce urban heat island effect. MCWD does not explicitly address heat, but acknowledges that there are many overlaps.

For future ideas, local government staff suggested continuing these conversations on best practices, sharing ideas for solutions with businesses in their cities, and events sharing tools with one another. All participants were interested in collaborating on future projects. A complete summary can be found [here](#).

Summary of Local Government Recommendations:

- Look to long-range planning for opportunities to shrink paving on roads
- Share best practices among local governments as much as possible
- Host a symposium on Growing Shade or addressing heat generally in the metro area
- Share best practices and guidance with businesses and residents, not just funding
- Identify funding opportunities that are available through the watershed districts, the Council, and/or the state

Large Property Owner Engagement

Large property owners make up the majority of the land use along the project corridors. The City of Hopkins reached out to several of these large property owners to better understand current site maintenance and landscaping practices and to identify opportunities to partner with the City to help reduce urban heat island effect. Project team members hosted one-on-one conversations with representatives of Citrus Systems, UNFI, and the developers of the 325 Blake Road site. [Surveys](#) were also sent to several large property owners and responses were received by UNFI.

Feedback from large property owners varied. On the one hand, developers at 325 Blake Road are constructing the site that incorporates sustainability and site plans were developed in partnership with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. The site will feature smart-growth principles, limit surface parking, maximize tree plantings, and have a large stormwater capture and filtering system.

Citrus Systems is located on Excelsior Boulevard on a site that features two large, flat-roof buildings and substantial

asphalt parking areas. The company does not own the building and faces barriers to making changes to the site. They would be interested in learning more about options to improve site conditions and partner with the city.

UNFI has similar site conditions and barriers to Citrus Systems. They need to improve efficiency to support refrigeration and could benefit from cooler ambient temperatures outside. They would be interested in learning more about the efficiency benefits of green infrastructure. Notes from these conversations can be found [here](#).

Summary of Large Property Owners Recommendations:

- There is a general willingness to learn more about green infrastructure practices
- There are barriers to making changes due to ownership structures and maintenance practices
- New developments offer opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure practices into site plans

National Night Out Full Summary

On August 2nd, 2022, the City of Hopkins hosted their National Night Out, an event designed to increase crime and drug prevention awareness and to promote police-community partnership. Residents in neighborhoods throughout Hopkins hosted their own block parties, cookouts, ice cream socials, potlucks and games.

We gathered stories from community members in three different locations in Hopkins about heat waves with a short survey. We visited three locations: the Ramsgate Apartments at 421 Van Buren Ave N, Westside Apartments at 101 Blake Road N, and 1426 Cambridge Street. In total we collected about 23 survey responses.

At the first location (*Ramsgate Apartments*) 6 residents took the survey. They all answered that they were residents of the apartments. All residents mentioned they did have air conditioning and all described it to be a window AC. When asked about their concerns about major heat waves affecting their life or of someone they know, half of the residents said no and the others mentioned that their concerns were from maybe not having AC, cancellation of plans, and health concerns such as heatstroke, eye and skin sensitivity. When asked about examples where major heat events have caused change of plans, the majority said they just stay inside, go to indoor locations with AC or go to the pool. When asked about choosing between cooling costs and other expenses in their life, the majority said yes, this was due to increase of rent and other utility bills, for example some residents try their best to not use the AC when they aren't home to avoid increasing their electricity bill. Lastly we asked residents what they would like to see from the city to keep residents safe during heat events, the suggestions were ensuring everyone has access to air conditioning, cooling center, air conditioning in common spaces in apartment buildings like the halls, more public pools/indoor pools and assistance on utility bills.

Our second location (*Westside Apartments*) 8 residents took the survey. All but two residents lived in Hopkins at the apartments. All residents stated they do have air

conditioning, and when asked about how concerned they are about major heat waves affecting their life or someone they know, those that answered yes mentioned, they worry about family members that are sensitive to heat, and they worry about certain areas of their apartment that don't get maintained to cool because they tend to be far from the window AC. One resident shared a story about her mother who lost power during a heat wave in New Orleans. She kept cool by using the bathtub, wet towels, and a fan. Similar to the first location when asked about how major heat events change their plans or daily activities they all mentioned they stay inside and a couple mentioned how they really have to decide on whether they want to go outside and walk with their kids. We didn't receive a clear answer when asking about choosing between cooling costs and other expenses. When asked about what they would want to see from the city they stated, assistance in electricity bill, swimming pool, AC inside buildings, and the need for efficient energy, cleaner and more reliable power.

The last location was at 1426 Cambridge Street; 8 residents took the survey. All residents lived in a single family home in Hopkins. All have air-conditioning and all mentioned they aren't considered about major heat waves affecting their life or someone they know. Rather a resident mentioned their worry for those who do get affected like those who live in apartment buildings that don't have air conditioning. One resident mentioned concern for an elderly neighbor who had just lost her husband — suggested welfare checks by city staff and community members. When asking about how major heat events change their plans or daily activities, the residents stated they stay inside, go to the swimming pool or beach, or spend time in their basement. Lastly, when asked what they would like to see from the city to keep residents safe during heat events residents suggested tree planting, waterpark in Hopkins, an emergency line for residents that are in urgent need of help during heat events. Residents expressed concern specifically about Oak wilt and would like to the city offer support for diseased trees.

Community Dinner Full Summary

Location: Sambusa King parking lot at Blake and Excelsior

Date: September 29, 2022

Summary

Residents were invited to attend an event in the Sambusa King parking lot to engage in art activities, learn about urban heat island effect, and have the chance to win free bicycles. LHB and LCS staff hosted a table to provide information about urban heat island effect and gather feedback from residents about their preferences for addressing heat.

Posters were displayed with the following information about how climate change is impacting Minnesota and what the urban heat island effect is.

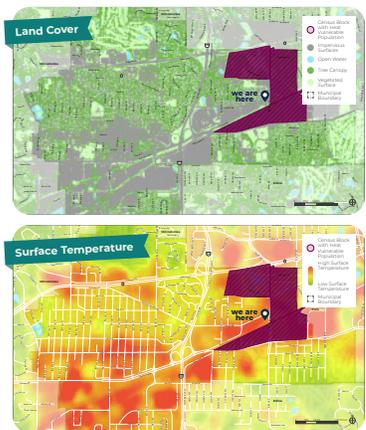
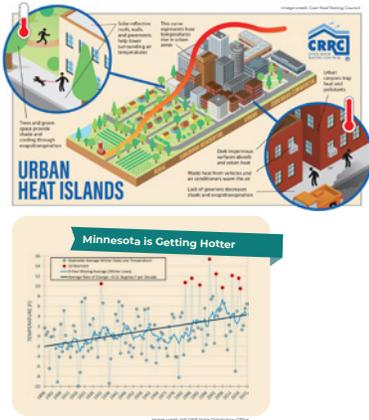
The Blake Road and Excelsior corridors are particularly susceptible to urban heat island effect due to the high ratio of impervious surfaces to natural areas. The poster images below highlight the difference in surface temperatures between areas of the community that have a vegetative land cover and those that are predominantly hard and dark surfaces.

Urban Heat Island

Minnesota is getting hotter. Through a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Hopkins is working preemptively to understand how heat impacts people who live in the city and how to keep people safe. The City is focusing especially on the Blake Road and Excelsior Boulevard Corridors.

To plan for community safety in the heat, the City is working to understand how people in Hopkins currently handle the heat, what strategies people can use to stay safe during heat waves and how the City can help people stay safe in the heat. Throughout this project, the City is speaking with residents and business owners, as well as looking to other cities to better understand what can be done to stay safe and keep others safe in extreme heat.

During heat waves, cities are hotter than other areas because of the **urban heat island effect**, which is explained in the graphic to the right.



Why is the Excelsior/Blake Road corridor so hot?

The land surface temperature is determined by a ratio of heat generating and heat absorbing land covers.

Currently, the project area is primarily composed of heat-generating surface types (i.e. buildings, roads/paved surfaces, etc.), which greatly contributes to the area's high land surface temperature.

A large swath of land is currently under construction for the **Green Line LRT Extension**, which will impact the surface conditions within the project area.

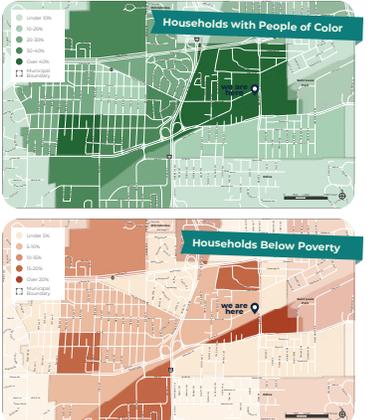
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE | HOPKINS MN

Information was also shared about the demographics of the community and what that means in terms of who is most affected by extreme heat events.

Who does heat affect the most?

Heat is dangerous for all of us, but it is especially dangerous for some groups more than others:

- People who work or live outside experience the heat the most. This includes people experiencing homelessness.
- People without access to air conditioning, especially in their homes, are vulnerable to heat.
- Heat strokes and other health impacts from heat are most dangerous and prevalent in older people and people with preexisting health issues.
- Historic underinvestment in greenspaces and trees in communities of color and low-income communities has resulted in these communities having hotter temperatures than others.
- Areas with a lot of pavement and buildings.



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The project team asked participants to identify which strategies were preferred to address heat using dot voting on the poster below.

What can we do about it?

There are **four main things** that cities and communities can do to **make heat less dangerous**.

- Increase Natural & Green Spaces**
 - Plant trees and vegetation
 - Replace existing concrete with surfaces that can absorb water
 - Increase green spaces like parks
 - Make sure that water bodies, like Minnehaha Creek, are safe to wade & swim in when it is hot
- Change the Way we Build**
 - Use cool pavements that are a lighter color so that they reflect heat
 - Replace pavement that are unused with vegetation
 - Replace traditional roofs with green roofs or cool roofs that are light in color to reflect heat
 - Improve the energy efficiency of buildings to keep buildings cool and costs low
 - Build more awnings that provide shade for people to use when it is hot
- Improve Social Connection**
 - Building relationships with neighbors and communities is important for support during a heat emergency
 - Provide resources and alerts about hot weather in multiple languages
 - Make sure everyone can access cool places when it's hot. That may include businesses, public cooling centers, or a neighbor's house. It also may include outdoor splash pads or wading pools in parks.
 - Neighbors should check in on one another during heat waves to make sure we have what we need to stay safe.
- Ensure Access to Reliable, Clean Power**
 - Air conditioning is an important tool to avoid the heat. Air conditioning uses electricity, so it is important that the electric system can provide the energy needed to keep them running during a heat wave
 - Micro-grids can run through solar energy and batteries to store the energy
 - Back-up power systems can be placed at community centers or public spaces like libraries to make sure that people have electricity access during heat waves.

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Community Dinner Full Summary

Residents were also asked to share their preferences using a bean counter in response to the three questions below.

Results from the bean-counting activity are inconclusive, due to indiscriminate placing of beans in jars by some of the smaller children. However, based on conversations, many participants expressed that they are most concerned about children playing outside and would like to see a community

cooling center. Many participants also demonstrated a preference for the tree-lined street and complete green street image. However, a number of participants also expressed that they like the current condition of the street.

Which heat-related concerns affect you?

Place a bean in the associated jar of the following concerns that you have experienced

Paying the electric bill for air conditioning

Children playing outside when it is very hot

Health of yourself or a close friend/family member when it is very hot

Changing outdoor plans when it is very hot

Working outside when it is very hot

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE
Hopkins Heat Vulnerability Study

September 28, 2022 **HOPKINS MN**

Which landscape do you prefer?

Place a bean in the associated jar of the following landscapes that you would like to see in Hopkins



Current Condition



Tree-Lined Street



Awnings/ Umbrellas



Complete Street



Complete Green Street

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE
Hopkins Heat Vulnerability Study

September 28, 2022 **HOPKINS MN**

Which service should Hopkins provide?

Place a bean in the associated jar of the service you would like to see provided by the City

Community Cooling Center

Heatwave Warning System

Welfare Checks for Vulnerable Residents

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE
Hopkins Heat Vulnerability Study

September 28, 2022 **HOPKINS MN**

Farmers Market Full Summary

Location: Farmers Market

Date: October 15, 2022

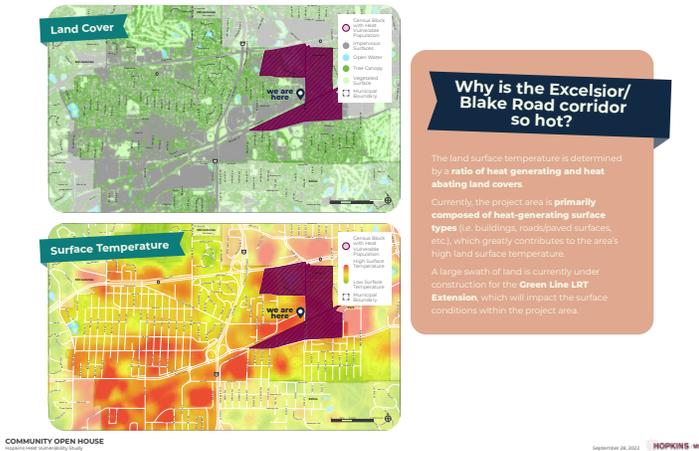
Summary

City of Hopkins staff and one consultant hosted a table at the Hopkins Farmers market to engage residents in the urban heat island project. The event ran from 7:30 AM to 12:00 PM. Due to the late season and a cold morning, foot traffic was less than expected at the market. Nonetheless, an estimated 20-30 people engaged in conversation.

The table included posters that shared information about the project and rising temperatures due to climate change. The Blake Road and Excelsior corridors are particularly susceptible to urban heat island effect due to the high ratio of impervious surfaces to natural areas. The poster images below highlight the difference in surface temperatures between areas of the community that have a vegetative land cover and those that are predominantly hard and dark surfaces.

The table also included examples of street treatments that address urban heat island effect, and asked what city services people would like to see.

Participants were also asked to share their preferences using a bean counter in response to these questions. Many participants preferred tree-lined streets and streets with more vegetation. Some residents expressed concern over maintenance costs. Others wondered if lighter street material would impact snow and ice melt in the winter and how plants might be affected by salt. None of the participants preferred the existing condition example.



City of Hopkins Urban Heat Island Resilience Project Local Government Focus Group Discussion

October 7, 2022

1:00 to 2:30 PM

Meeting Summary

The City of Hopkins hosted a conversation with local and regional government staff to discuss urban heat island resources and strategies. Hopkins received a resilience grant from the Minnesota Pollution control agency to identify strategies to increase climate resiliency in areas of extreme heat concern.

This project includes completing a literature review of how other cities have experienced and responded to extreme heat events, an assessment of current physical and social conditions of the project area, and engagement of residents, large property owners, and local entities. The project team will complete a final report with strategy recommendations and a StoryMap that informs community members about the dangers of extreme heat, indexes vulnerabilities, and shares the recommended strategies to mitigate the impact of extreme heat.

The purpose of this meeting was to share an overview of the project and updates, hear from local government representatives about tools, best practices, and programs they are utilizing and implementing to address urban heat

island effect and/or stormwater management, and discuss opportunities for collaboration going forward. Below is a summary of the meeting.

Attendees

- Erica Sniegowski - Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
- Emily Ziring - St. Louis Park
- Annie Pottorff - St. Louis Park
- Brett Eidem - Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
- David Schuett - Hennepin County
- Eric Wojchik - Met Council

Project Team

- PeggySue Imihy Bean, City of Hopkins
- Abby Finis, Local Climate Solutions
- Jenna Greene, Local Climate Solution
- Jess Vetrano, LHB

Questions, discussion

- Are white roofs effective in cold climates?
 - Generally, yes, white roofs can be beneficial both in terms of reducing urban heat island effect and increasing the longevity of the roof.
- Is the StoryMap intended to be an internal or external resource?
 - Both. The information will be helpful to support internal decisions as well and provide a useful

community engagement tool, and hopefully be replicated.

- Recommendation to lead with stories about what it's like to live without AC, to live in a heat wave, etc.
- Can it be used as a tool for advocacy, e.g., for better outdoor worker protections. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/09/climate-change-heat-workers/>

Local Government Resource Sharing

- Met Council: Growing Shade tool. Met Council is also working with MURP students from U of MN about what extreme heat feels like. Tree advocates noted that the biggest difficulty right now is with privately held land.
 - Uses the example of SLP using a cost share model for tree planting
 - In Richfield, using the tool to understand where Ash are
- Nine Mile Creek: Shared programs and grant funding. Spoke to the importance of natural solutions to treat and manage stormwater. Natural solutions for stormwater management are often the same as those that address urban heat island effect.
- Saint Louis Park: Shared parking lot greening/ beautification program that was inspired by Portland examples of depaving. The city offers different incentive levels and encourages competition. Open to creativity from applicants, but generally accepting applications for rain gardens, trees, native plantings, etc. (*not furniture, gravel conversion, hardscaping etc*). Different reimbursement rates by project. Funded through the General Climate Investment Fund. Also helps with shading.
- Hennepin County discussed tree planting along county roads. Have run into barriers on private properties or non-county jurisdictions. The city cohort program has not moved forward at this point. May be opportunities for future collaboration.

Opportunities for Collaboration

- Brett recommends working with cities on long-term planning. For example, can we shrink paving with roads that are already on the agenda to be redone? Greening Minneapolis is looking to fund tree planting, carbon credits.
- Emily recommends sharing best practices as much as possible (*could be through GreenSteps*)
- Eric suggests holding a symposium on Growing Shade or addressing extreme heat in the metropolitan area
- PeggySue recommends that sometimes stakeholders want ideas for solutions, things they can do to make the climate better, not always just money.

Action Items

- Send meeting summary
- Share final report from Hopkins and storymap
- Continue to find collaboration opportunities

Large Property Owners Survey

The City of Hopkins received a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to identify strategies to increase climate resiliency in areas of extreme heat concern which tend to disproportionately affect residents of color and low-income residents.

The Blake Road and Excelsior Boulevard corridors have been identified by the Metropolitan Council as areas that are extremely vulnerable to extreme heat events due to a lack of trees and extensive impervious and heat-absorbing surfaces. These corridors are also home to a large majority of the City's rental housing stock, as well as many immigrant, BIPOC, and low-income renters.

Urban heat islands happen because of the way cities are built — materials like asphalt absorb and retain heat from the sun, which warms the surrounding area and makes it harder to cool off at night. Urban areas with low vegetation and high impervious surfaces can be up to 15 degrees hotter than surrounding areas.

As part of this project, we are reaching out to large property owners along these corridors to better understand current site maintenance and landscaping practices and to identify opportunities to partner with the City to help reduce urban heat island effect.

Please help us with this project by completing the following survey with your company's buildings and facilities in mind.

- Q1. Who makes decisions about grounds maintenance and facilities?
- Q2. Is outdoor heat a consideration when making grounds and facilities improvements?
- Q3. What, if any, considerations about heat, shade, and stormwater management are relevant to grounds and facilities improvements?
- Q4. Has your company implemented any of the following strategies to reduce urban heat? Select all that apply.
 - Installed a cool roof (e.g., white membrane, or green roof)
 - Installed cool pavement (e.g., lighter colored concrete)
 - Planted trees to provide shade
 - Installed awnings to provide shade
 - Planted vegetation to reduce impervious cover
- Q5. Is your company interested in partnering with the City of Hopkins to help reduce urban heat island effect?
- Q6. What would be helpful for your organization to implement strategies that reduce urban heat island effect?

Large Property Owners Full Summary

Citrus Systems

- Process heat
- Barriers to changing processes (*food safety first consideration*)
- Duke realty sold it, don't know who the new owners are
- Not making a lot of changes to the facility
- Would work with management
- Boulevard, could be an opportunity to
- Could be opportunities, facility owners
- Not known who owns property line between citrus and luther

Are you interested in making connections with other companies:

- Willing to ask

Who does the landscaping?

- Goes through company that owns

Is there interest in partnering with the city?

- Yes, not necessarily capable
- Most of the decisions are based on pest control for food safety

Are you interested in solar?

- Will look into it

325 Blake Road

Comment: spend more time heating than cooling. Might create larger cool. Send study about this.

- Discuss planned elements that address heat and stormwater

How were decisions made to incorporate these elements into the development?

- The city of hopkins and mcwd guided developers toward sustainable project and encouraging them to present designs that meet climate goals. Want multimodal access to the creek. And to create a green and park-like development. Hopkins wrote some of the specific proposed sustainability features. Two regulatory means by which the development picked up sustainability features. Alatus has a good reputation of designing leed certified. Value of the company.
- Involved early on with architects, working with the watershed districts with the idea of creating a water-centric development of the heart. Alatus added in smart-growth, design feature - walkable, bikeable, live there without owning a car. Will collect stormwater and clean it on-site. There will be a

water cascade feature that will help clean and have a cooling effect on the surrounding area. As much as they can, the have incorporated permeability surfaces. Limited surface parking. Maximized tree planting. Incorporating amenity decks on top of the building. Goals are to create a sustainable development and capitalize on location.

- Treat about 230 acres before it goes to the creek - site is only 16 acres.
- Compact, high-density, mixed-use development.
- MCWD will maintain stormwater pond.

How can the city encourage other large property owners to incorporate similar elements into their sites?

- If there are specific sustainability elements a city wants to see, they should state it and make it more likely that they are going to get those responses.
- Extensive community engagement effort. A lot of the input is really integrated into the plan. People will be able to access creek through development.

UNFI

Are you interested in making connections with other companies?

- Willing to ask

Who does the landscaping?

- Goes through company that owns

Is there interest in partnering with the city?

- Yes, not necessarily capable
- Most of the decisions are based on pest control for food safety

Are you interested in solar?

- Yes, but there are limitations on the size and they would like to capture more of the rooftop resource.