



Dear Julia,

For 50 years, WSCO has been organizing for a more equitable West Side. In the spirit of that work, we are excited to celebrate Black History Month this February with all of you. Black West Siders and Black Minnesotans help form and shape the rich tapestry of our collective story, in struggle and in progress, in challenging times and in joyous times.

In the areas of the West Side with the highest number of Black residents, between 1 in 5 and 1 in 6 neighbors identified as African American in the Census. Black History is American History, and Black History is West Side History, too. This is a time to reflect on and learn about the past as well as a time to center present Black voices and experiences, while imagining Black futures.

To kick us off - join us for two upcoming events:

**PAINT & SIP
@ PAPA LEGBA'S**

FEBRUARY 14 | 7PM - 9PM
202 CESAR CHAVEZ STREET

Get cozy and creative with us as we celebrate Black History Month on the West Side at Papa Legba's Crossroads Lounge. Bring friends, family, or even a valentine.

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH • SUPPORTING BLACK BUSINESS

Lean into love, joy, and community with our Paint & Sip hosted by Papa Legba's Lounge (Black owned and on the West side) for Valentine's day! RSVP required, more info here: https://www.wSCO.org/paint_sip

WAKANDA FOREVER
AT WELLSTONE CENTER

FEBRUARY 18 | 12PM-3:30PM
FREE & FOR ALL AGES

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH WSCO Neighborhood House

Watch "Wakanda Forever" at Wellstone center on February 18 (movie starts at 12pm). This all ages event is free to attend and open to the public. Get tickets here: https://www.wSCO.org/wakanda_forever

RSVP, get tickets, and share about these events!

Finally, welcome to our new Executive Team members: Myisha Holley (Chair) and GillEtté Kinnon-Williams (Vice-Chair)!

GillEtté Kinnon-Williams (Vice-Chair) and Myisha Holley (Chair)

**HELP US TELL THE FULL
STORY OF THE WESTSIDE**

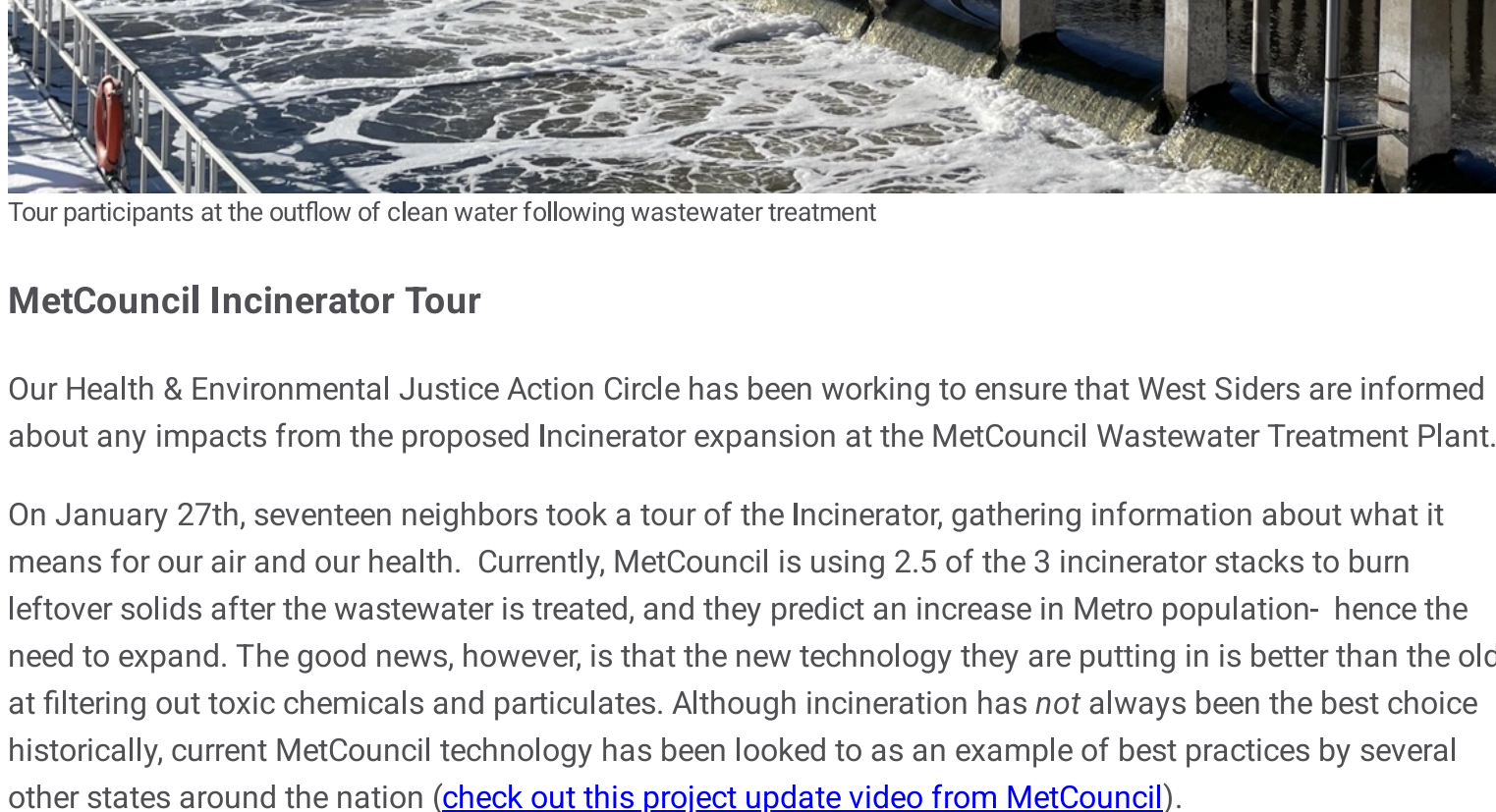
**JOIN THE WEST SIDE COMMUNITY
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

APPLY BY FEB. 14TH

Research in Action - story gathering begins!

WSCO invites you to join the West Side Community Advisory Council to support the following:

- Telling the full story of economic, social, and cultural displacement on the West Side.
- Identifying reparative solutions that provide direct support to impacted community members.

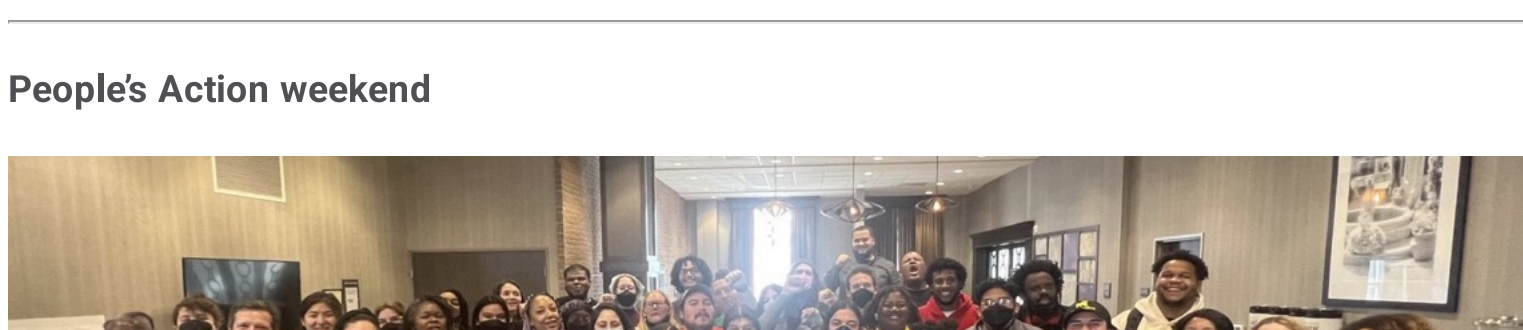


In the last year, the West Side Community Organization (WSCO) has conducted a series of historical interviews on the displacement from the West Side Flats in the early 1960s to begin the work of telling the communities story. In addition, WSCO has partnered with Research in Action (RIA), a social benefit company created to reclaim the power of research by centering community expertise.

RIA will work with the WSCO team to support the West Side Community Advisory Council in painting a fuller picture of the current state of the West Side neighborhoods for the purpose of **identifying what reparative solutions the community seek in order to restore and heal itself.**

[More info here](#)

[Please complete the survey by February 14th!](#)



Tour participants at the outflow of clean water following wastewater treatment

MetCouncil Incinerator Tour

Our Health & Environmental Justice Action Circle has been working to ensure that West Siders are informed about any impacts from the proposed Incinerator expansion at the MetCouncil Wastewater Treatment Plant.

On January 27th, seventeen neighbors took a tour of the Incinerator, gathering information about what it means for our air and our health. Currently, MetCouncil is using 2.5 of the 3 incinerator stacks to burn leftover solids after the wastewater is treated, and they predict an increase in Metro population- hence the need to expand. The good news, however, is that the new technology they are putting in is better than the old at filtering out toxic chemicals and particulates. Although incineration has *not* always been the best choice historically, current MetCouncil incineration has been looked to as an example of best practices by several other states around the nation ([check out this project update video from MetCouncil](#)).

Look for an **issue summary and plan for next steps** on our blog soon, and as always, if you're interested in getting involved with air pollution work on the West Side, contact Ellie at ellie@wSCO.org.



West Siders and East Siders taking a tour of the Wastewater Treatment plant and Incinerator

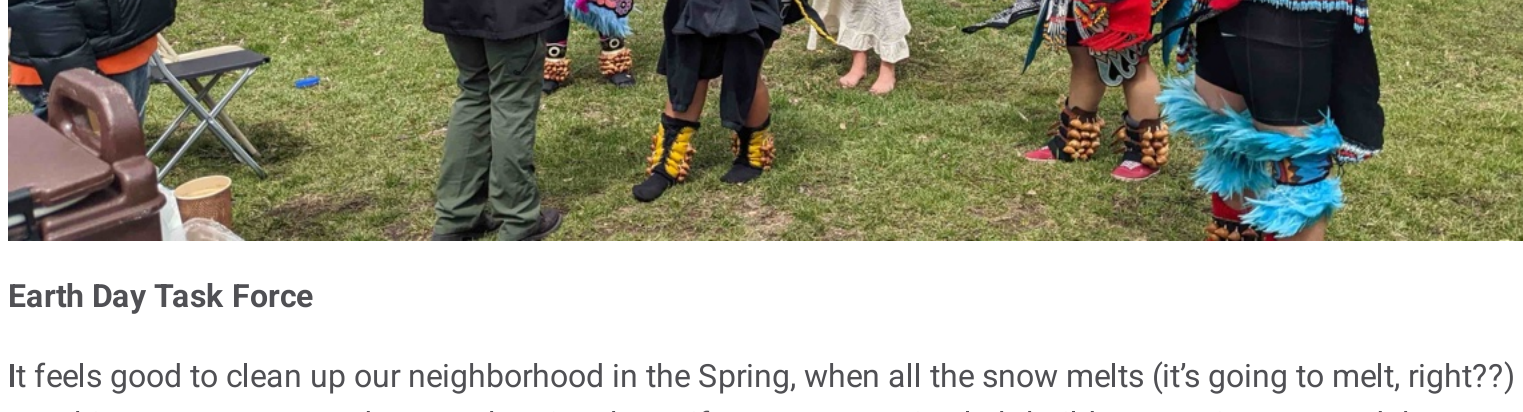
People's Action weekend



Housing Justice Organizers Joshua Toor and Mayra Avila recently traveled to Kansas City, MO for a training on organizing tenants and tenant rights. Mayra, who was helping evaluate the trainers there, said that 11 states were represented. They got grounded on tenant leadership development, learned of ways other groups are organizing, and "got nitty-gritty with strategy," said Joshua. "It was a powerful space with tenant unions from across the country... [discussing] how we can fight for change in our community so we can change the housing system nationally."

Are you a renter on the West Side? Join with other renters and take action to improve living conditions in our neighborhood!

Come to the next [West Side Tenant Union meeting](#), Wednesday, February 8th from 6-7:30pm at our offices at 209 Page St. West



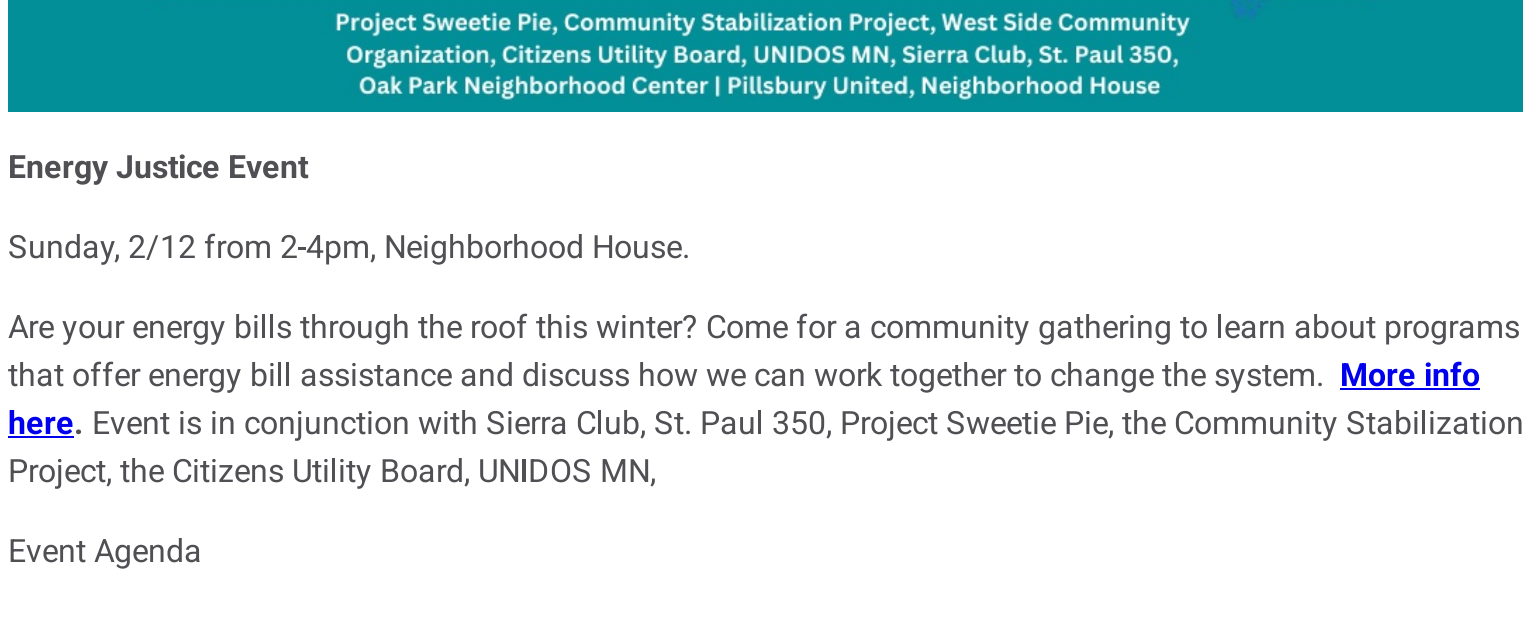
Visions for Our Collective Future

On January 22, over 35 neighbors gathered for the second part in our shared education series, Visions for Our Collective Future, led by Genesia Williams and Kai Anderson.

We took a deeper dive into Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) cooperatives, community ownership, and community land trusts. Special guests include Mikeya Griffin from the Rondo Community Land Trust, and Roberto de la Riva from InquilinXs UnidXs Por la Justicia (Renters United for Justice).

"Hearing about examples of what's really happening at Rondo Community Land Trust and InquilinXs UnidXs was something that really energized people," said Kai, our Equitable Development Director. "It got ideas flowing about actualizing community ownership and different pathways for the West Side."

Join us for the third workshop in the series on Sunday, February 26th, from 1:30-4pm. [See more details and RSVP here.](#) (Participation in the first two workshops is not required for the third.)



Community Announcements



Earth Day Task Force

It feels good to clean up our neighborhood in the Spring, when all the snow melts (it's going to melt, right??) But this year we want to do more than just beautify our community- let's build connections around the environment and justice... Let's bring together resources for clean air, water, and food for the PEOPLE living in our environment. Help us shape this April 22nd event... join the Earth Day planning committee by emailing ellie@wSCO.org.

**WEST SIDE
TRANS AND QUEER
COMMUNITY**

TAQC Schedule for the year

The Trans and Queer Community group has made some plans for 2023, and we hope you can join! The group meets every fourth Saturday of the month at the Riverview Library from 2-4pm, and occasionally outside of the library. [Go here to see our schedule](#), including medical and legal advice clinics, medicinal herb planting, teaching each other fiber arts, and more!

West Side Voices

Interested in getting involved in the community? Don't know where to start? [Join us at the West Side Voices forum!](#)

Be a part of building and carrying out solutions to benefit our neighborhood. Everyone's input is requested and welcome for discussions!

Our next West Side Voices Forum will be held on Tuesday, February 21st, from 6:00pm-8:00pm here at the West Side Community Organization office, 209 Page. St. W. in Saint Paul.

Climate Justice Advisory Board openings

Want to work towards climate justice and sustainability within the city of Saint Paul? The city's Climate Justice Advisory Board has several openings for board positions. This board was formed to work on behalf of the city and the mayor. The board started in 2021 dedicated to advising on sustainability issues, climate and social justice. <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/mayors-office/committees-boards-and-commissions/climate-justice-advisory-board>