



ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE AWARDS: 2015 FINALIST

This project has been selected as a finalist in the Sustainable Business category:

TINY DINER

Project Summary

The Tiny Diner is a restaurant with a dedicated-structure solar array covered patio surrounded by permaculture designed gardens. It also operates a production garden & classroom/community space at 3957 42nd Avenue South.

Project Website

www.tinydiner.com

Project Partners

- Sundial Solar
- 10k Solar
- Ecological Gardens
- Permaculture Institute - cold climate
- Terrapin Landscape
- EDS Builders - Doc Smith
- Minnehaha Watershed District
- Master Water Stewards
- Powderhorn Neighborhood
- Bancroft Neighborhood

How did the project partners work together?

For the dedicated-structure solar array, Jon Kramer from Sundial Solar was very helpful in making the solar array possible. First in that he didn't think we were crazy to want to build such a thing, and second in putting the plans for the structure and the array with translucent reflector panels together. 10k worked closely with Mr. Kramer in designing the support structure.

We capture 100% of the rainwater on site. Paula Westmoreland, who was the Executive Director of Permaculture Research Institute-cold climate at the time, and is the designer/owner of Ecological Gardens, worked with Tom Peluf, Minnehaha Watershed District, and our Urban Farm Manager Koby Jescheit-Hagen to design and install the variety of food production, gardens, rain garden, and rain catchments.

We teach classes, such as watershed 101, introduction to mycology, bees & seeds, seed saving, landscaping advice for small business, and indoor composting and vermiculture. We are partnering with people who know the subjects and the communities of people in the neighborhood and at large who are

interested in stewardship, climate change and food security.

How is the project groundbreaking?

Use of solar—this project was an innovative use of new solar technology, solar incentives, design, and has a significant impact on the climate footprint of the restaurant.

Soil fertility—we have remediated two former urban blighted properties into being productive, beautiful food production and education spaces.

Demonstration Gardens and water catchment systems—this project is a dramatic example of what can be accomplished in an urban setting in terms of water catchment, food production, perennials, pollinator protection, and soil amendment. We are literally showing the connections between energy use & production, food production and consumption, and urban agriculture in terms of landscape and stewardship.

Urban farming connections to restaurants and our food supply—we operate our production gardens and classroom space over by the river and deliver by bicycle. Our staff and customers are encouraged to engage in both spaces.

Educational classes and urban farming connections—we teach classes

The project was innovative on many levels, and has resulted in an 'Excellence in Development' award from the Minnehaha Watershed, a grant from Hennepin County for recycling & composting, and presentation invitations including the Knight Foundation's Urban Innovation Exchange and the Clean Water Summit organized by the University of Minnesota. The restaurant was built in the manner of Kim Bartmann's previous 2 LEED certified projects, and uses energy and water-saving technologies.

What are the project goals?

Demonstration of environmental stewardship by a business, and reducing the climate footprint of the business. Visibility & Education in the areas of climate change, food security, and land stewardship.

The goal of this project was to put a Tiny Diner with big ideas in the Powderhorn neighborhood of Minneapolis. To surround a solar-covered patio with permaculture-designed gardens. This big, visible solar array in the heart of Minneapolis shows people that solar is possible, educates them about energy production, and generally gives people hope. The gardens are stunning, and show a variety of things people can do environmentally on a 'domestic' scale—restaurants are able to show people what can be done in the context of their homes, because they're a small business that is close to being like their homes.

What are the project outcomes?

- People are engaged daily in conversation about the solar array, energy production, and climate.
- The climate footprint of the business is reduced by the solar array and the construction techniques, nergy and water saving technology, and materials selection.
- Customers are educated about climate change, food production, land and water stewardship.
- The business is thriving.