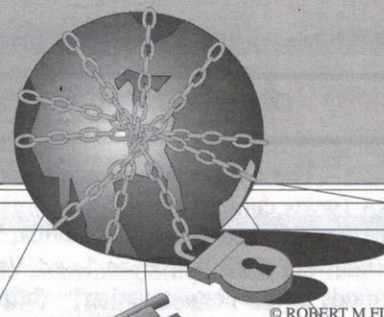


# GROUND SWELL

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF  
COMMON GROUND-USA



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015 / \$3.00

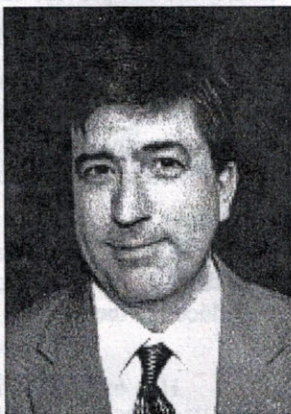
VOLUME 28, No. 1

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## TWIN CITIES CHAPTER CAMPAIGNS FOR LAND VALUE TAX DISTRICTS

by Rich Nymoen, St. Paul, MN

We formed our chapter following the CGO conference that took place here in 2011, hoping to capitalize on the relationship that formed with the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School that co-sponsored it. We decided our chapter would be action oriented and thus meet in person only when some ally or public official was involved. Chapter communication and decision making is done largely through e-mail and Survey Monkey.



In 2012, we decided to focus on trying to have Minnesota cities put on their legislative agendas legislation that would allow them to create Land Value Tax Districts for neighborhoods or corridors. We chose this strategy for a number of reasons. First, a nationwide group based in Minnesota called Strong Towns (whose director, Chuck Marohn, spoke at our 2013 Annual Public Event) blogged about such a proposal and it was circulated among some allied groups in the state. Second, University of Minnesota researchers published a journal article in 2012 that modeled city-wide LVT shifts for the cities of Minneapolis, Richfield and Bloomington (first and second ring suburbs), giving us an entree to discussing the idea with officials of those cities. These discussions started by us meeting with Minneapolis Councilmember Elizabeth Glidden because one of our chapter members was her constituent. Happily we learned she chaired the city's committee that set its legislative agenda. Then in 2013, when Connecticut enacted its LVT pilot project legislation, we were able to present that enactment as a template for Minnesota legislation.

But most of our chapter members live in St. Paul so we also met with all but one of its city councilmembers. We were fortunate that councilmember Amy Brendmoen took an active interest in the idea and began championing it with the council president, her state senator, the deputy mayor, and the county assessor's office. All showed varying levels of interest in the idea but wanted to know in more detail what it would mean for constituents of certain neighborhoods or corridors of interest.

This required hiring an intern to conduct studies similar to what the Center for the Study of Economics does for the cities with which it consults. Fortunately, Common Ground USA's board awarded us a \$1000 grant to hire an intern from the Humphrey School, which has access to data that our chapter does not. The Humphrey School's Professor Jerry Zhao, who spoke at

the 2011 CGO Conference, has been helping the intern with the project.

After receiving the CGUSA funding in November, 2014, we e-mailed all the officials and allies with whom we had been discussing the idea, asked them to suggest corridors and neighborhoods for our intern to model, and received 38 suggestions. In addition to responding to our request with a suggested neighborhood, Minneapolis councilmember Glidden asked us to present to her committee in January so other councilmembers could also suggest areas to model. When a Minneapolis reporter wrote an article about our presentation, it was read by blogger Matt Leichter (who recently moved back to Minnesota from New York City where he had been in relationship to the Henry George School) and he contacted us about our efforts. After meeting for happy hour and filling him in, he eventually became a chapter member.

In February, 2015, we signed a contract with Humphrey School intern, Hilary Lovelace, who will do the modelling. We will be inviting those who suggested areas to model to our chapter's Annual Public Event in April, 2015, where she will present her results. Also presenting will be Maya Batres, a student of the William Mitchell Law School, who will present her research on another of our initiatives, Rent-sharing Farm Trusts, which we wrote about in the January 12, 2015 edition of The Progress Report.

We hope that momentum will continue to build after our April event and we will keep Groundswell readers updated on our efforts.

(Rich Nymoen is president of the Twin Cities chapter of Common Ground USA. He may be emailed at [rnymoen@aol.com](mailto:rnymoen@aol.com)) <<

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### BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In 2013, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a provision from the MORE commission that would permit three municipalities to enact a land value taxation pilot program, be it citywide or in a specially chosen district. Unfortunately, the guidelines set down by (continued on page 2)