

## Serious crime in north Minneapolis falls 15%

**Mounting a challenge to the area's bad reputation, north Minneapolis leaders are pointing to the parks, the businesses, the neighborhood groups -- the good.**

By [Steve Brandt](#), Star Tribune

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Think of the North Side of Minneapolis and what comes to mind? Crime and foreclosures? Or parks, clubs and gathering spots?

A new marketing strategy for north Minneapolis is designed to get you to think more of the latter.

The strategy has been rolled out for North Side community leaders. Organizers plan to launch their marketing push more broadly by March after seeking business, foundation and public money to finance it. A campaign incorporating a website, street signs, brochures, postcards and print ads is planned. The budget is still undetermined.

The campaign focuses on four strengths -- consultants called them chest-pounding topics.

Those selling points, identified in meetings with residents: the area's breadth of community organizations, its varied businesses, a solid housing stock and an abundance of opportunities for recreation.

Marketing consultant Gabe Castaneda said the campaign is designed to attract people to north Minneapolis because they sense community support, they believe there's a community organization that suits them, and it's an exciting, creative area.

The campaign is the culmination of years of work, starting in the Camden community, toward trying to change perceptions toward the city's most-maligned area.

"It's changing a mindset, and it doesn't happen overnight," said Kurt Lawrason, a Cleveland neighborhood resident who has worked to improve the area's reputation.

One issue is crime. But serious crime incidents in the North Side precinct are down about 15 percent this year. The North Side has accounted for about 21 percent of the city's serious incidents this year, with 17.5 percent of its population. The North Side also leads the metro area in housing foreclosures.

"Nobody's being Pollyanna and saying that nothing goes wrong here, but we also want people to say when things go right," said Allan Malkis, who worked with a group of neighborhood activists elected at a community meeting last spring that supervised the shaping of the plan.

One small example of the right things that happen is recounted by longtime resident Buzzy Bohn. A year or two ago, she slipped one night on a Plymouth Avenue sidewalk after dark. She couldn't get up. She spotted three young people heading down the walk toward her. They got her righted.

North Siders can cite lots of things going right in their community: Patrick Henry High School regularly ranks among the nation's most academically rigorous; the area's schools are getting more money and attention this year; Coloplast is planning its North American headquarters on the riverfront; a new set of riverside trails is nearing completion, and the annual Holiday on 44th event is coming up on Dec. 7 at Henry and nearby 44th Avenue N.

When the marketing strategy was rolled out Saturday, Council Member Don Samuels provided the rhetorical flourishes for North Siders.

"Look out. In a few years you might not be able to buy your house again, and it won't be because we've squeezed anybody out but because we've squeezed people in," he said.

Citing the area's diversity of races and immigrants, he added: "This is where America is happening. This is the front edge of the American dream."

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