



January 28, 2008

CPED markets north side to U graduates

A plan was presented to University officials on restoring the north side's housing market.

By Joy Petersen

When senior nursing major Brittany Rall went on a scavenger hunt in north Minneapolis for a health care class, she said she didn't get a good "vibe" about the area.

Rall said she is moving to Uptown upon her May graduation, and hadn't given any thought to living on the city's north side.

"I hear a lot of bad things about crime," she said. "It doesn't seem like a very safe place to live."

The city of Minneapolis, however, is working to change that perception by restoring the housing market in north Minneapolis in a "Five-Point Strategy" - one part being attracting stable residents.

Mike Christenson, director of the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development, presented the city's plan to University officials and community members Friday at the University's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. It was hosted by the University's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

Christenson said the city would like to attract University graduates to the neighborhoods to promote a more stable community.

In 2007, 2,895 city buildings were foreclosed. The rate of foreclosure has more than doubled since 2006, which saw 1,651 foreclosures, according to city of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development research.

Many of these foreclosures occurred in north Minneapolis neighborhoods.

Christenson outlined five strategies that the city, community organizations, housing developers, funders, lenders and government are hoping to enforce within the next three years.

The strategies include preventing foreclosures, property boarding and vacancy, rehabilitating already boarded buildings, promoting reinvestment and attracting new residents, including University graduates.

Despite the city's excitement about north Minneapolis, Rall said it's natural for students to move from the Southeast Como and Dinkytown areas to Uptown because of the availability of housing and the location.

She said she feels safe in Uptown, and north Minneapolis would have to clean up and provide better security for students to want to live there.