

## Are foreclosures helping to improve Minneapolis' North Side?



MinnPost photo by Karlee Weinmann Pam Patrek's bungalow: It's the only house standing on her block.

**By Karlee Weinmann and Andy Mannix | Tuesday, February 3, 2009**

In 1967, a long-escalating racial tension in north Minneapolis neighborhoods culminated in violent riots that left Plymouth Avenue N. in flames. Many residents say the communities affected were unable to fully recover, fueling the high crime rates and economic hardships that would define the area in decades to come.

Forty years later, politicians and residents alike share a sense of optimism that the North Side is changing for the better. City Council member Don Samuels, whose ward covers the bulk of the North Side, attributes some of this change to the housing foreclosure crisis displacing problem residents. Much is also being done on the part of local investors, community activists and the city to aid these troubled communities.

The city attributes recent decreases in crime in part to concerted efforts to stave off illicit activities. Samuels touts the Northforce, a group of multiple city departments formed in 2006

that meets monthly to discuss trends and strategies to mitigate problematic parts of the North Side.

More than \$1 million has been invested in crime-detering technology such as ShotSpotter transmitters, which alert police to gunfire and pinpoint exact locations where shots are fired. In the most crime-ridden areas, the city has also installed cameras, which Samuels says have acted as a preventative measure in Minneapolis' mission to reduce North Side crime.

After years of intractable poverty and violence, weary residents have adapted to a culture of broken promises and skepticism. But today, with this technology as a manifestation of a larger effort to combat problems, the notorious North Side could overcome its long-held stigma.

"I think we've hit a bottom in terms of what the self-concept of Minneapolis would allow, and the question was simply how long would we allow this part of the city to stay at the bottom. And I think that over the last few years the effort has been to lift Minneapolis from this bottom," Samuels said. "I think the conscience of the community has been pricked, to some degree."

### **Hawthorne Eco-Village**

Today, Pam Patrek's small bungalow is the only house standing on her block. But it wasn't always this way.

When Patrek's uncle first built the house in the 1950s, the four-block Hawthorne neighborhood project now known as the Eco-Village thrived with an influx of Polish immigrants. After inheriting the property in the mid-1980s, Patrek watched as the once-wholesome neighborhood slowly transformed into one of the worst parts of the city.

Slum lords bought up the houses surrounding Patrek's and rented them to prostitutes and gang members. She recalls with a casual tone the open-air crack deals, police chases and dead bodies she witnessed regularly from her living-room window. Patrek, like many other long-standing north Minneapolis residents, found herself stuck in a house that no honest person would consider buying, in the middle of a neighborhood nothing in her life had prepared her for.



Courtesy of John Hoff This apartment complex was purchased by Minneapolis in 2008 and eventually demolished.

"It wasn't a question of if we were going to die," Patrek says, recalling a conversation with one of the few other Polish residents still in the community, "it was a question of when we were going to die."

But Patrek doesn't feel stuck anymore. In fact, she says she no longer thinks about moving.

Beginning in 2005, there has been a combined effort from the city and neighborhood organizations to boost the quality of life on the North Side, including razing and rehabilitating problem properties. Since the city destroyed Patrek's last direct neighbor — a high-crime apartment complex that stood mere feet from her house — in early November, she says the daily calls to the police and weekly calls to the mayor's office have nearly ceased.

The Eco-Village is a \$30 million project that aims to transform the four blocks surrounding 31st Avenue and Sixth Street N. into a livable and environmentally friendly community. In the next few years, the plan is to add 30 to 40 affordable rental units and dozens of for-sale townhome and condo units. This area has been one of the most prominent epicenters of crime on the North Side for more than 10 years, and many see the progress already made — in terms of knocked-down problem properties — as empirical evidence that Minneapolis' most stigmatized area is finally changing.

Hawthorne Area Community Council (HACC) Chairman Peter Teachout says the destruction of certain problem houses in the Eco-Village, specifically the apartments that neighbored Patrek's home, served as the "catalyst" for a social revolution in the neighborhood.

"From that point onward, [problem residents] knew we were gunning for them," Teachout says.

### **Side effects of foreclosure**

In 2005, the housing-foreclosure crisis hit north Minneapolis. Even before the epidemic was nationally recognized, Samuels says it was detectable on the North Side.

But unlike most parts of the nation, many think the crisis has had a positive impact on north Minneapolis communities.

Samuels says the "resilience" north Minneapolis has shown in terms of the foreclosure crisis is evidence that it is one of the "most unusual inner-city neighborhoods in the country."

"In the typical American city it has exacerbated the crime problem," Samuels said. "But in Minneapolis, certainly north Minneapolis, the foreclosure crisis has improved the safety situation."

Though Samuels' logic may seem counter-intuitive, he's not the only one who sees a rebirth happening in the face of foreclosures. Amid the crisis, many problem property owners and their seedy renters are gone.

Jeff Skrenes, HACC housing director, says he has seen positive outcomes of the foreclosure crisis as well. He cited newfound partnerships with community councils, revitalization efforts from developers and the opportunity to reform problem areas.

"There are a lot of houses that are beyond redemption," Skrenes said.

However, Skrenes said the foreclosure crisis has bred new crime, pointing to copper stripping and looting from boarded-up houses.

Hawthorne resident and HACC board member Bryan Thao Worra also says he has seen a negative impact from the foreclosure crisis. Though optimistic that north Minneapolis is on

the verge of change, he is skeptical that foreclosures have driven problem residents out of the community.

"Foreclosed properties make me uneasy," Thao Worra said. "When we know where the trouble is, we could be prepared for it there. But when we're just trying to displace it without a solution, that should make everyone uncomfortable."

Following the foreclosure crisis, many types of crime quickly increased in north Minneapolis neighborhoods, but have since dropped dramatically.

For example, reported robberies in neighborhoods in the Camden and Near North areas increased slightly, from about 375 in the last half of 2006 to nearly 475 in the first half of 2007, according to Codefor statistics maintained by Minneapolis police, one way the city tracks crime in its neighborhoods. In the first six months of 2008, less than 225 robberies were reported.

By June of 2007, more than 900 thefts were reported in these same neighborhoods. In the duration of the year, about 575 were reported. This number stayed consistent into 2008, according to Codefor statistics.

Both of these decreases came around the time the Minneapolis police implemented ShotSpotter and increased surveillance measures.

### **City pushes for change**

Minneapolis Regulatory Services organized a sweep in 2005 across the North Side, with curb-to-alley inspections of each house's exterior, as well as indoor checks to make sure each building met codes.

While the intent was to help rid the area of its blight, some residents felt they were more affected by the initiative because they had a greater stake in the community than irresponsible property owners. Some residents found themselves responsible for making city-sanctioned expensive improvements they felt were unnecessary, especially when run-down buildings littered the neighborhood.

But overall, Samuels called the effort a success.

The push was designed to hold property owners accountable for sub-standard conditions. And since houses connected to crime typically are poorly maintained, it was also an initiative to drive bad landlords and their tenants out, Samuels said.

So-called "crime houses" tend to be rental properties, he said, and slum lords and tenants follow an agreed-upon code of silence.

"They had a symbiotic relationship where 'you don't tell on me, I don't tell on you,'" Samuels said.

At first, the fines for disrepair were low enough that, in some cases, it wasn't worth making the fix. For example, if a fine was \$30 and a repair cost about the same, it wasn't worth it for landlords to make the improvement, Samuels said.

So the city upped its charges. Fines increased and penalties would double if problems went unfixed for too long.

"It became impossible for a slum lord to own a property and not take care of it," Samuels said.

The city's assault on problem landlords intensified when it began aggressively revoking rental licenses based on a failure to address the poor condition of the property, unsavory conduct there and chronic reported problems.

Without a license to lease their houses, the slum lords would need to sell their properties.

Plus, when a property owner loses two of his or her rental licenses, he or she must forfeit any other properties.

These efforts cut down on crime, Samuels said.

"The landlords now had to be responsive because it was just not that you would get a slap on the wrist," he said. "You would actually lose your license to rent a building and you'd have to sell the building."

Many irresponsible landlords at first balked at the city's efforts, Samuels said.

"We have been so tolerant for so long that they did not believe that we would [revoke licenses]," he said. "Several of them took us all the way and then became very upset when they realized they had lost their investment."

Over time, many properties once shabbily maintained fall into abandoned disrepair. The number of properties on the city's vacant building registration list has grown since 2004, in conjunction with the foreclosure crisis. In that year, just 207 properties comprised the list, with 104 of them on the North Side.

But marked increases in 2007 and 2008 (through November) show 915 properties citywide now on the list, and 502 — more than half — are in north Minneapolis, according to the Northforce December report.

To combat the rise in boarded-up properties, the city has increased its annual fee for being on the list from \$2,000 to \$6,000. Additionally, a property owner can postpone payment if he or she enters a restoration agreement with the city, which requires bringing the property up to code within a certain timeframe. As of the Dec. 9 Northforce numbers, there are 26 such agreements in progress.

But without that sort of deal, the city decides whether to demolish the property or rehabilitate it for future use.

Properties deemed risks to public safety are demolished. If a property is simply declared a nuisance, the city decides whether rehabilitation or demolition is more appropriate.

Both property rehabilitations and demolitions have grown in number since 2005. The biggest year-over-year increase, from 2007 to 2008 (through November), brought the number of rehabilitations from 66 throughout the city to 132. The rehabilitations on the North Side, though, increased 189 percent from 28 to 81.

City-sanctioned demolitions saw a similar increase in that two-year span when citywide, demolitions spiked from 97 to 140. North Side properties followed suit, jumping from 66 demolished in 2007 to 110 torn down so far in 2008 — up 66 percent.

Prior to 2005, Minneapolis averaged two city-sanctioned demolitions a year. But with the

continuing foreclosure crisis and increased pressure from the city looming over many property owners, Regulatory Services had demolished 96 properties year-to-date, as of Oct. 31.

The city's target for 2008 was 50 buildings demolished and 10 rehabilitated.

Because the city specifically targeted problem properties, this unprecedented initiative to better the neighborhood led to an influx in rehabilitations and demolitions that weeded out many high-crime landmarks in the community. The long-term effects are yet to be seen.

### **Convenience store crackdown**

In 2005, according to Northforce numbers, there were 2,530 police calls to grocery stores across the city.

Of those, a steep 79.6 percent — 2,014 calls — were to convenience stores in north Minneapolis, popular drug-selling havens that attracted violence.

Eight of the 15 most crime-ridden stores in the city had been on the North Side, until a specialized task force charged with policing these crime hotspots formed in 2006.

Figures from December 2008 indicate the crackdown on illicit convenience store activity has worked. There have been just 30 police calls relating to grocery stores to date in 2008, less than 2 percent of calls received just three years ago.

The task force pressured store owners to cooperate and threatened them with license revocation, Samuels said. About a dozen stores were shuttered, and other store owners agreed to cooperate with the city.

Big Stop, the store police were most frequently called to, was located at 26th and Knox avenues N. The city bought the store Jan. 1 and closed it.

The second-most called to store, Wafana's, was located at 26th Street and Lyndale Avenue N. The city has also shut that market's doors.

Beyond being known drug-trafficking stops, the stores also attracted other crime. Inside the Big Stop, a man was shot to death. A number of shootings dot the history of Wafana's.

In March, Minneapolis officials turned down an investor's application to re-open Wafana's under new ownership. Resident backlash contributed, Thao Worra said.

Seeing the shop stay closed, he said, encouraged him that the city was taking charge.

### **Private developers in north Minneapolis**

Various groups have committed to developing parts of the North Side, including the Minneapolis-based Ackerberg Group, led by Stuart Ackerberg.

In 2003, Ackerberg drove through north Minneapolis on a wintry day and noticed a stark difference from his more affluent neighborhood in the southern part of the city. The roads on the North Side weren't plowed as carefully as the ones near where he lived, Ackerberg said.

Intrigued by the apparent disparity between the conditions of different parts of the city, Ackerberg frequently drove through north Minneapolis to get to know the area, to understand it. He saw an obvious difference in the quality of life there compared to his home neighborhood on the other end of the city.

"After a while, I just couldn't get the North Side stuff out of my head," he said. "It just disturbed my peace. It wasn't right, it wasn't fair, it wasn't just."

That's when he decided to apply his real estate development expertise to revitalizing the area.

Now, Ackerberg is in the fourth year of a 15-year commitment to better the area. He's in the midst of launching a nonprofit, Catalyst Community Partners, to take over the endeavor and effectively eliminate the appearance of self-interest in the project.

"It's very intentional that I will not own anything in north Minneapolis," he said. "It's about the community. It's about doing what's right."

In fact, the work Ackerberg is doing doesn't make financial sense, he said. The North Side is an economically depressed area and pouring so much into it doesn't guarantee a rejuvenated community.

But based on his work so far, Ackerberg remains optimistic and committed. The first development, a 24-hour daycare, has been a successful and important asset to the community, he said.

Additionally, the successful redevelopment of a building at West Broadway and Emerson avenues that was vacant for nearly 20 years into a credit union and coffee shop has bolstered the community's image.

Ackerberg noted the credit union purposely has no glass separating tellers from customers, so as to reinforce respect for the customers and heighten community pride.

At the KFC just a few blocks from the credit union, he pointed out, thick bulletproof glass divides patrons and workers and prohibits any direct contact between the two.

"What message are you sending there versus at the bank?" Ackerberg said.

And just off West Broadway Avenue, a small community refurbished by Ackerberg sits.

A few obviously redone houses line the road in Cottage Park, across the street from a new-looking playground that Ackerberg helped install with help from a foundation.

Ackerberg bought the lots where the houses now stand and rebuilt them before selling them to residents he believed shared his goal to spark change on the North Side.

The Jordan Area Community Council, the neighborhood group, calls one of the houses its headquarters.

"Today I can safely say you really don't see any drug dealing in Cottage Park," Ackerberg said. "It is a much different environment in Cottage Park today than it was a few years ago when we started."

And while the residential development is key to bettering the community, Ackerberg said he believes commercial development is at least equally important.

The goal is to attract outside business owners to set up shop on the North Side, Ackerberg said, as well as to inspire community members to pursue their own entrepreneurial interests

— specifically on the North Side's main commercial thoroughfare, West Broadway Avenue.

"We need to get vibrant business conducting business on that corridor," Ackerberg said, noting the absence of common everyday conveniences like hardware and sporting goods stores and sit-down restaurants.

Drawing these business people would give the community a facelift and in turn make it a more desirable place to be, Ackerberg said.

"We need to create that momentum that people think it will be different this time," he said, referring to past revitalization efforts and broken promises of positive change.

And while the city's been doing what it can, Ackerberg said his vision could provoke a real transformation.

"They've been helpful but I don't think they have the ability to effect huge change on their own," he said.

The investment made thus far by Ackerberg is notable and unmatched, Samuels said.

"This is the first time private developers have come into north Minneapolis without any subsidy at all and invested millions of dollars," Samuels said.

Ackerberg's ambitious plan involves specific focuses on developing sections of West Broadway to meet certain community needs. For example, near West Broadway and James avenues would be youth-focused. Near Fremont and Emerson avenues, there'd be heavy commerce. Further east, near the already-standing Cub Foods, would be a place where residents could run their errands.

"A lot of people just don't have the ability to visualize what's possible," he said. And until his vision is realized, Ackerberg says his nonprofit, designed to work only on North Side initiatives, will be around.

When the job's done, he'd be happy to see his organization go under.

"At the end of the day, Catalyst is going to go somewhere else or hopefully go out of

business because it's not needed," Ackerberg said.

### **Creeping upward**

The day the city demolished Patrek's last-remaining neighboring property, she took the day off of work to celebrate. She and her friends bought a bottle of champagne, and toasted over the rubble to a welcome change.

Patrek no longer has to be what she and other community members call "basement dwellers," hiding from the unknown but ever-present threats that for years prevented her from inviting family and friends to her home.

Samuels, like Patrek, also believes the quality of life in north Minneapolis is creeping upward.

"I don't think North Minneapolis has had a mayor that has been as enthusiastic about turnaround and as deliberate, nor have they seen a council where the South Side members have been willing to be patient and let North Minneapolis get a lion's share of resources," he said.

Because of those resources, Patrek believes the change will last.

"It can't go back," she said. "Physically, the place has changed so much that it just can't go back."

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### **North Side timeline**

**By Alleen Brown**

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Though north Minneapolis has always been a place that attracts minorities, immigrants and people of limited economic means, it did not always have the stigma it does today.

Kenny Fosberg recalls growing up in the Mississippi Courts housing development — a time in the 1940s and 1950s that included baseball, sledding, dances and a tight-knit, community feel. The Courts was eventually torn down after it became some of the cheapest housing in the city and, Kenny said, home to many drug dealers.

Buzzy Bohn remembers a similar small-town feel growing up on Fremont Avenue N. in the 1950s and 1960s. "When we were kids you did something wrong and every adult in the neighborhood would be on your butt, haul you back home," she said. "Whereas, now everyone turns a blind eye."

Bohn and Fosberg are members of the Camden Historical Society. They blame neighborhood problems on a shift in family values, a perception problem fed by the 1967 riots and, more than anything else, the profit in street crime.

Here's a timeline of North Side history:

**1805:** Zebulon M. Pike negotiates a treaty with the Dakota tribe, establishing Fort Snelling Military Reservation. The site includes present-day downtown and north Minneapolis.

**1852:** Military reservation land on the Mississippi River's west bank opens to settlers. The first settlers are East Coast businessmen who bring their Protestant culture and a desire to promote the socio-cultural norms of the East.

**1856:** The first steam-powered sawmill on the west bank is built by J.B. Bassett at the mouth of Bassett's Creek near Seventh Avenue N. It marks the birth of an industry that will shape the neighborhood. The mill burns down in 1859; another sawmill burns on the same site in 1872.

Minneapolis becomes a city.

**1865:** Eight sawmills are operating on the west bank. There is no public transportation, so unskilled workers settle near the river, within walking distance from work. The area remains

isolated from the fastest-growing parts of the city, to the southwest. Wealthy city residents have no reason to pass through the area, since the richest farmland is located south of Minneapolis.

**1867:** The St. Paul and Pacific Railroad builds a bridge across the Mississippi between Bassett's Creek and the Hennepin Avenue suspension bridge.

**1870s:** Several subdivisions are laid out, ensuring that housing will be small and crowded. The area eventually deteriorates and becomes the city's worst slum.

**1872:** Minneapolis and St. Anthony merge.

**1874:** The Plymouth Avenue bridge is completed, leading to the development a commercial district.

**1875:** The first horsecar lines are established in Minneapolis – one goes down Washington Avenue to Plymouth Avenue, reaching north Minneapolis.

The saloon is the most common type of business listing in north Minneapolis. Many are affiliated with one of the 13 hotels in the area.

The Minneapolis Knitting Mills open. Several brickyards also provide jobs nearby.

**1880s:** Minneapolis' population triples between 1880 and 1890, from 46,887 residents to 164,738.

The movement of sawmills north of St. Anthony Falls, the expansion of streetcar lines and the development of parks and boulevards encourage settlement in much of north Minneapolis. Still, the area between Plymouth and Christmas (now West Broadway) avenues remains mostly country, composed of dairy farms and market gardens.

All railroads except the Milwaukee use the St. Paul and Pacific terminal at Washington and Fourth avenues N. for passenger traffic. Railroads fill the area west of Hennepin Avenue, near the river, up to Bassett's Creek.

The development of the warehouse district creates a barrier between north Minneapolis and

downtown and provides jobs. The residential area nearest the river and downtown houses the newest immigrants, who move west of the river as their economic situation improves. Housing is generally substandard. Since demand is constant, landlords have little incentive to make structural improvements.

While much of north Minneapolis was designed for the working class (small, crowded lots near industrial areas), the Oak Lake Addition is intended for upper-middle-class residents. As it becomes surrounded by industry, Jewish residents move in. A sociological article from the time characterized the change as "the invasion of an exclusive residential community by alien cultural and racial groups of low economic and social status." By 1920, it is a largely black neighborhood.

**1882:** Six hundred Jewish refugees arrive in Minneapolis from Eastern Europe. They settle around Washington Avenue and Fifth Street N. Gangs of Irish and German youth enforce the neighborhood's "borders." Established German Jewish immigrants offer little assistance because of perceived cultural differences. Although intolerance, discriminatory housing restrictions, low access to employment and bans on joining social and civic organizations exist, the situation is better than the discrimination many refugees left in Europe. Many male immigrants arrive in Minneapolis to peddle household items, rags and miscellaneous items until they save enough to send for their families and eventually start businesses.

**1885:** The names of churches indicate the mostly northern European makeup of the North Side, which includes old-stock Americans, Germans, Scandinavians and Norwegians. Most northern Europeans arrive in the area before 1900.

**1886:** The City Work House is built on 46th Street and Lyndale Avenue.

**1887:** Rail yards expand north of Bassett's Creek.

**Early 1900s:** More eastern European Jews begin arriving in north Minneapolis. The area becomes the largest Jewish community in the city and remains so until the 1960s. Early Jewish communities are associated with the oldest, poorest housing in the city.

**1910s:** The black population grows 51 percent as people leave southern states in response to social conditions and the collapse of the cotton market. They remain in the poorest neighborhoods along Sixth Avenue N. A smaller, slightly better-off black community develops

in the Shingle Creek neighborhood, which remains rural until the late 1940s.

**1912:** Hopewell Hospital opens for tuberculosis patients. It later becomes Parkview charity hospital, then a retirement home.

**1914:** The North Side streetcar station is built in north Minneapolis.

The Committee on Housing releases a report advocating for housing reform, especially in the growing Jewish community, saying: "They have succeeded in making it the worst district of dwelling houses which Minneapolis has at present. Stables, rag-picking sheds, piles of junk, tenement dwellings, and ill-smelling outhouses, fight for the ground."

**1916:** The North Side Improvement Federation requests the extension of Seventh Street and the creation of a parkway. Supporters say, "North Minneapolis is not an outlying district, except as it has been made so by the neglect of the city in providing commodious highways for it."



**1917:** The United States enters World War I. Wartime nationalism feeds xenophobia, and eastern European Jews are a target. Job and housing discrimination increases.

**1919:** The last sawmill closes, ending one of the main economic pull factors for movement

into north Minneapolis. The area near the river becomes vacant land, railroad yards and salvage yards.

**1920s:** North Minneapolis is looked upon as an ethnic neighborhood with cheap housing. Developers over estimated the need for housing and built more than was probably necessary. This, combined with rapid expansion west of the river, contributes to quick devaluation of housing and maintains the neighborhood's working-class, ethnic identity.

**1920s:** Housing options for Jewish and black people are limited to certain areas of the city, including the North Side. Segregation is legally enforced through restrictive housing covenants. The covenants are agreements that a home buyer signs, promising they will not sell the house to people of certain ethnicities, most often Jewish or black people. Legal restrictions are not always necessary. A 1946 poll of Minneapolis residents reveals that 63 percent of respondents would not sell their home to a black buyer, even if they offered the highest price.

20th Avenue N. and Crystal Lake Road are renamed West Broadway. The street develops into the center of the community because of its proximity to major churches, North High School, transportation lines and nice residential neighborhoods.

**1921:** Victory Memorial Drive is completed. It is significant because before this the park board concentrated most of its efforts in south Minneapolis.

**1924:** The Phyllis Wheatley House opens, offering recreation programs and social services to black community members. Included are rooms for rent to black visitors and students, since hotels and university dorms would not house them. Some Minneapolis residents worry that the house will attract black people to the area. The Phyllis Wheatley House's all-white board calms concerns in a "Q & A" flier saying, "Do negroes ever write the settlement asking whether conditions here are good for them? They do, and are always given negative replies."

**1936:** Sixth Avenue N is reconstructed as Floyd B. Olson Memorial highway -- named after the governor who grew up in north Minneapolis.

**1937-38:** Sumner Field Homes, a federally funded housing project, is constructed from Olson Memorial Highway to 11th Avenue N. — between Aldrich and Emerson avenues N. — replacing existing dilapidated housing.

**1938:** The Sixth Avenue N. (Olson Memorial Highway) streetcar line is converted to a bus station.

**1946:** A journalist labels Minneapolis "the capitol of anti-Semitism."

**1950:** The City Planning Commission proposes a plan for redevelopment and rehabilitation of three areas: around Sumner Field Homes, the Glenwood area south of Olson Memorial Highway and around Franklin Junior High School.

**1967:** Civil disturbances destroy the Plymouth Avenue business district, forcing attention on redevelopment in north Minneapolis and speeding up a trend of out-movement of the Jewish community. The riots begin with a fight between two black women at the Aquatennial Torchlight Parade and eventually spread to the North Side. Rioters break windows and set fire to Jewish-owned businesses along Plymouth. The unrest lasts several days, ending in two dozen injuries, more than 75 people arrested and \$4.2 million in damages. By 1971, only 424 Jewish residents remained in north Minneapolis of a community that once numbered

21,600. Most move to St. Louis Park, which had previously not allowed Jewish residents.

An Urban Renewal Plan focuses on the area between Plymouth and 19th avenues N. and the proposed I-94 right-of-way. The plan includes a new Franklin Junior High School, a park, a new North High School, improvement of more than 500 substandard buildings, a shopping center on Plymouth Avenue and an assembly plant.

**1970s:** The Near North community takes on a suburban feel with the development of the West Broadway commercial corridor and the Lyn Park community – a housing development with a suburban design and cul-de-sacs.

**1980s:** A Southeast Asian community develops.

**1981:** The section of I-94 from Highway 12 to Dowling Avenue opens. It is built on the former location of 156 businesses, 11 acres of parkland and 112 residential structures. It separates residential areas from the industrial zone and the Mississippi River.

**1987:** Although Chief of Police Tony Bouza maintains that Minneapolis does not have a gang problem, he gives in to public pressure and forms a small gang unit. The unit is formed partly in response to the release of Vice Lords gang leader Willie Earl Lloyd, whose family has had a role in the north Minneapolis drug trade since the 1970s.

Crack houses begin to appear on the streets of Minneapolis. Since the drug can be sold for almost twice as much on the streets of Minneapolis as in cities like New York, gangs see the city as an attractive business opportunity, calling it "Moneyapolis."

**1995:** Because its murder rate skyrocketed to the all-time high of 97 this year, The New York Times dubbed the city "Murderapolis." A surge in gang violence, split between the north and south parts of Minneapolis, was largely behind the marked increase in homicides that drew national attention.

**2000:** An 11-year-old boy is caught in the crossfire of two men fighting over a dice game. He is shot three times and killed. His death, combined with the death of a newborn after his mother delivered him in a grocery store bathroom and abandoned him, spurs a highly publicized community demand for justice, offering hefty rewards for information leading to the arrests of the murderers.

**2002:** Community members lash out violently against Minneapolis police after an officer's stray bullet hits an 11-year-old boy. Newspapers call it a "melee," though many involved, including journalists who were severely beaten while covering the incident, call it a riot.

**2008:** In April, the City of Minneapolis and three north Minneapolis neighborhoods (Folwell, Webber-Camden and McKinley) file suit against lender TJ Waconia, which purportedly schemed to turn owner-occupied homes on the North Side into rental units – most of which had been foreclosed or left vacant, in disrepair. From 2003-2006, according to the city, TJ Waconia purchased and converted 140 North Side homes. Of those, 108 were vacant and 89 had been sold through foreclosure as of April.