



A Newsletter from the City of Minneapolis

Working together to build a better future for the Northside

Inside this newsletter

- Economic development
- Northside Food Project
- Summer safety initiatives
- Coming events

About this newsletter

The Northforce Newsletter, launched in May 2007, highlights some of the City's efforts to improve livability in north Minneapolis.

To subscribe to this newsletter, visit the City's Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/subscriptions and click on "Northforce." To view past newsletters online, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/residents/north.

About Northforce

Northforce is the City's coordinated strategy to address the challenges facing the Northside and integrates the work of City departments and community partners to address safety, health, housing, economic and infrastructure issues.

This coordinated strategy builds on the resources already being deployed on the Northside and uses new and creative ways to improve livability in north Minneapolis.

To learn more about Northforce, visit the City's Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/residents/north.

Many efforts under way to reduce the number of home foreclosures

Foreclosure is a national problem, and Minneapolis has not been immune. Faced with a record number of foreclosures, the City of Minneapolis, the Family Housing Fund and our private sector partners have mobilized to aggressively address the problem. These efforts are especially crucial to the Northside, which has more than half of the city's foreclosures.

A regional Foreclosure Prevention Funders Council was organized in January and has been addressing predatory lending practices. The council is also working to expand existing efforts to educate people about mortgage products before they purchase or refinance a home, and to provide tools and financing to help homeowners who are at risk of foreclosure.

The State of Minnesota recognized the City's innovative approach and strong implementation partnerships with a \$10 million loan to help Minneapolis neighborhoods destabilized by foreclosure. This money — the largest award that Minnesota Housing has ever provided to a single community — will allow the City to work with the Family Housing Fund and the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation to acquire vacant properties in key areas (clusters), rehabilitate those homes, and put them in the hands of stable homeowners. In the meantime, the City monitors vacant buildings weekly to verify they're secure. If they're not, the homes are boarded up to prevent trespassers from entering. To reduce blight, the City also mows the grass and picks up debris.

Additionally, the City takes an innovative approach to help the hardest-hit neighborhoods on the Northside. Since 2005, the City has been working with community organizations through the Northside Home Fund to revitalize small housing clusters that, once redeveloped, can spur positive change on adjacent blocks. Six housing clusters are being revitalized in the Hawthorne, Jordan, McKinley, and Willard-Hay neighborhoods. The Hawthorne cluster recently received a \$500,000 Home Depot Foundation grant to help fund its energy-efficient building techniques and environmentally friendly urban design.

The City also helps Minneapolis homeowners in danger of foreclosure by connecting them with agencies that can provide advice and help. To take advantage of this free referral service, simply call 311 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. or e-mail minneapolis311@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Home & Business Initiatives

An update on efforts aimed at attracting new businesses, preventing foreclosure, and building or renovating homes and apartments...

Livability Efforts

An update on efforts aimed at curbing loitering, improving health, stopping graffiti, reducing blight, and addressing nuisances...

City commits more than \$6 million toward Northside redevelopment

To encourage collaboration and maximize chances for success, the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) established criteria to evaluate Northside economic development investments:

1. Target developers with successful track records in challenged areas,
2. Maximize social and financial capital leverage with diverse partners,
3. Invest in areas near recent public improvements,
4. Place priority on projects with the greatest transformative potential.

Employing these criteria, the City of Minneapolis has committed more than \$6 million since 2005 for commercial and housing developments that total more than \$110 million in four priority districts: Penn/Lowry, Penn/West Broadway, Penn/Plymouth, and West Broadway between Fremont and Interstate 94.

Thanks to strong partnerships with business groups, community organizations, entrepreneurs, developers, financial institutions, government agencies and non-profits, the Northside has seen significant improvements.

Now a unique community gathering spot, the Bean Scene coffee shop on West Broadway is an example of the transformative potential of a development.

The Ackerberg Group continues to make an exceptional commitment to the Northside. As the development partner for the Cottage Park Cluster in the Jordan neighborhood, Ackerberg built two new homes and the firm and its partners also donated \$100,000 for park and streetscape improvements. Its \$4 million project at 1101 West Broadway, developed with the City-County Federal Credit Union, Emerge Community Development and Welsh Companies, recently opened. Ackerberg will soon open its \$2 million redevelopment at Penn and West Broadway. Its proposal to redevelop the Delisi building at 2119 West Broadway could lead to a permanent home for KMOJ Radio.

Also on the horizon: Wellington Management is building a new grocery store on Lowry Avenue, and the American Indian Neighborhood Development Corp. is beginning a capital campaign for its plan to build a new YWCA on the site of a former Northside car dealership.

Project aims to improve nutrition information and access to fresh food

Recognizing the connection between nutrition and health, the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support sought grants to support community nutrition initiatives. The department received Steps funding which aims to reduce the burden of diabetes, obesity and asthma and address the risk behaviors of poor nutrition, physical inactivity and tobacco use.

The Steps project is helping the Northside Food Project increase residents' access to fresh produce and expand their knowledge about healthy eating. The Food Project sees a connection between the Northside's limited access to nutritious food and the fact that north Minneapolis residents have some of the highest rates of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease in the city. A lack of convenient transportation keeps 40 percent of the Northside's residents from getting to the only full-service grocery store in north Minneapolis. One way to increase access to quality food is to institutionalize community gardens and neighborhood farmers' markets.

Last year, the Northside Food Project launched a community garden project at Cityview School in cooperation with the McKinley neighborhood association. A garden manager taught children how to grow tomatoes, herbs, greens and other produce which was sold at a new mini-farmers' market located near The Center for Families. The market was held on Sunday afternoons; unsold produce was donated to food shelves.

Plans are underway for a similar project at Lucy Laney and Kwanzaa Freedom Schools. By late July, it expects to open two mini-farmers' markets: one at Penn and Lowry and another at Plymouth and Penn. The markets will be open this summer on Fridays and Sundays.

To make it easier for folks to integrate fresh fruits and vegetables into their meals, the Food Project gives out recipes and nutritional information. It also offers classes on cooking produce and preparing healthy meals from items commonly found at food shelves. There are also classes for kids on how to safely prepare healthy meals for themselves when they're home alone.

For more information about gardens or classes, contact the Northside Food Project at (612) 276-1571, extension 224, or www.northsideproject.org.

Safety Initiatives

An update on efforts aimed at preventing fires, curbing crime, and improving housing safety...

Working together to make this a safe summer for kids and neighborhoods

Minneapolis is working with other government agencies and community partners to ensure our city is a safe place for kids, and everyone else, to enjoy the summer.

Increasing Police Visibility

The Police Department has a larger, more visible police force than last summer, with new officers in every police precinct, more investigators, improved downtown police visibility and an expanded mounted patrol.

Concerted efforts are showing results. Year-to-date statistics for the 4th Precinct show that rapes are down by 52 percent, robbery is down by 23 percent, and aggravated assault is down by 20 percent. The only increase in Part One crime has been in homicides, a tragic problem the department is striving to address.

An additional \$750,000 has been authorized to pay for more police overtime in downtown as well as at all police precincts. This spring, ShotSpotter gunfire detection equipment was installed in a 4-square mile area of north Minneapolis. The technology pinpoints the location of gunshots and immediately alerts 911 operators. Most ShotSpotter dispatches are made in less than one minute after the shot is detected.

Preventing Youth Violence

Given the serious nature of youth violence, the Police Department has been taking an aggressive stance on enforcing curfews and making sure kids are off the streets at night. In 2006, the department created a Juvenile Unit and a Juvenile Criminal Arrest Team to provide swift apprehension, investigation and petitioning of juvenile offenders. As a result of their efforts, violent juvenile crime is down by nearly 5 percent.

The department is also working to make it easier to ensure that low-level juvenile offenders are getting the help they need. By fall, the department will finish moving its Curfew and Truancy Center into City Hall's MPD Juvenile Unit. Centralizing all juvenile services will make it easier for police to assess kids' problems and get them appropriate intervention services.

The Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Services provides grants to organizations working to reduce youth violence. Thanks to the grants, at-risk kids receive help from youth workers who identify their interests and connect them with positive activities.

Grants have also been used to help fund a teen Connection Café at 2100 Emerson Ave. N., enable the Broadway School to offer social skills and anger management groups, and help the Plymouth Christian Youth Center offer performance arts activities.

In November 2006, the City Council and Mayor approved a resolution recognizing youth violence as a public health issue and establishing a committee to develop a long-term plan for steering kids away from gangs and crime. The Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee is also working to coordinate City and County youth violence prevention efforts and identify gaps in services, policies and funding that affect juvenile crime. The 33-member committee expects to issue its recommendations in July.

Offering Recreational Opportunities

Another way to keep our neighborhoods safer this summer is to provide positive activities for our youth. Minneapolis' young people have more than 750 activities and programs to choose from this summer, including opportunities in sports, arts, learning, outdoor recreation, leadership and volunteering. Learn more by calling the What's Up? youth information line at (612) 399-9999 or visiting www.whatsup.org.

Starting June 18, recreation centers at 10 Minneapolis parks — including Creekview, Farview, Folwell and North Commons — will stay open for teen activities until 10 or 11 p.m., three to six days a week.

That same day, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board will begin operating circulating buses to ensure young people have safe transportation to recreation centers, libraries, parks, Boys and Girls Clubs, Police Activities League and other places in the community. Two buses—one on the Northside and one on the Southside—will run 40-minute continuous loops on weekdays from noon to 8 p.m.; a youth outreach worker will be on the bus at all times. For a list of stops or to find locations to register for a free bus card, visit www.ycb.org or call (612) 673-2060.

Providing Jobs for Teens

More than 600 jobs have been added to the City's STEP-UP summer program for teens, raising the total to 2,000. STEP-UP is operated by Achieve! Minneapolis in affiliation with the Mayor's and City Council's "Close the Gap" campaign. STEP-UP recruits, trains and places Minneapolis high school students in meaningful jobs made possible by more than 140 participating employers. STEP-UP students are competitively selected and complete a rigorous work readiness training program certified by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Coming Up

Here's an update on upcoming events and opportunities for involvement...

Hawthorne Huddle

- **Thursday, June 7**

7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.

Farview Park, 621 29th Ave. N.

This month's meeting will feature presentations from the Mayor and City staff members on the City's efforts to improve livability on the Northside. Hawthorne Huddle meetings, chaired by the executive director of the General Mills Foundation, focus on topics of interest to the Northside such as education, race relations, housing and crime prevention. Meetings are open to the public.

JACC Open House

- **Saturday, June 9**

Noon to 5 p.m.

2009 James Ave. N.

Stop by to tour this newly constructed home and meet the members of the Jordan Area Community Council (JACC). This three-bedroom home is the second new home built in the Cottage Park Cluster and eventually will be sold to a new homeowner. Until then, it is housing JACC offices to bolster efforts to reinvigorate block clubs and improve residents' access to neighborhood resources. For information, call Jerry Moore at (612) 886-3202.

4th Precinct Advisory Council

- **Tuesday, June 19**

6:30 p.m. - meet and greet / 7 p.m. - meeting

1925 Plymouth Ave. N.

Northside residents and businesspeople are invited to meet officers and hear an update on precinct activity. Attendees may also bring addresses of problem properties. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. For an agenda, contact Mary Rainville at (612) 673-2947 or mary.rainville@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

West Broadway Alive! meeting

- **Tuesday, July 17**

West Broadway Alive! is a planning process aimed at laying the groundwork for revitalizing West Broadway through north Minneapolis. At this meeting, attendees celebrate the end of the planning process and outline implementation strategies. After this meeting, the plan will be refined and forwarded to the Planning Commission and the City Council for adoption later this fall. The time and location of the meeting was not available at press time, but it will be posted on <http://wbalive.info/> in the coming weeks.

You Can Help

City workers can't do it alone! Here are some ways you can help us be more effective.

Don't Open Fire Hydrants

Opening up a fire hydrant may seem like a good way to cool off on a hot day, but it's a bad idea and it's illegal.

Improperly opening a hydrant can damage the valve making it impossible for firefighters to hook a hose to the hydrant to put out a fire. An open fire hydrant can also release thousands of gallons of water in a very short time causing water pressure problems that hamper firefighting and make it difficult for nearby residents to shower or do the laundry. The spray from the hydrant may also block drivers' ability to see kids playing in the street.

It's time to plan your block party

Anticipating more than 1,000 National Night Out block parties on August 7, the Police Department has set aside June 17 to 24 as the week for block clubs to plan activities and divide up tasks. Planning pointers and block party applications are located at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno. Block party organizers can also call 311 or (612) 673-3000 for assistance. People who register their party before July 24 can get their street closure permit for free. (After this date, a street closure costs \$100.)

Blocks that held parties within the last two years and newly organized block clubs will receive a mailing from the Police Department in early June. If your block doesn't have a block club and you'd like to organize a National Night Out block party, call John Baumann, Police Department, at (612) 673-3447.

National Night Out provides an opportunity for neighbors to get to know each other. When people know and watch out for each other, neighborhoods become safer and more pleasant places to live.

NORTHforce

June - July 2007

Volume 1, Issue 2

Northforce is published bimonthly by the City of Minneapolis Communications Department, Room 301M, 350 South 5th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415-1300. 612-673-2491.