

## Working together to build a better future for the Northside

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#### **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 <a href="https://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/subscriptions">www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/subscriptions</a> and click on "Northforce." To view past newsletters online, go to <a href="https://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/residents/north.">www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/residents/north.</a>

#### **About Northforce**

Northforce is the City's coordinated strategy to address the challenges facing the Northside. It 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.

### **Nearly 1,000 northsiders help plan** the revitalization of West Broadway

Over the past 11 months, nearly 1,000 Northside residents and businesspeople participated in five community meetings or heard presentations about the West Broadway Alive revitalization plan at churches, neighborhood events and business meetings.

The public engagement process — one of the largest in the last decade — enabled stakeholders to comment on the City's plan for returning West Broadway to its once cherished status as north Minneapolis' main street for commercial and community activity. To spread the word about the West Broadway Alive plan, City staffers placed poster boards at local businesses, met with neighborhood groups, placed ads on local radio stations and in neighborhood newspapers, and promoted the project on local radio shows.

The fifth community meeting was held on July 17 at Shiloh Temple where nearly 150 attendees heard strategies for implementing the plan's recommendations and celebrated the conclusion of the community input process with music and a barbecue. City staff noted that the plan has benefited greatly from the active involvement of so many residents and businesses.

City staffers are now revising the draft plan to incorporate what was learned from the public input process. The process included five major public meetings, neighborhood meetings, surveys and focus groups. The updated draft plan will be completed in September and posted on the City's Web site at <a href="http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/west-broadway.asp">http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/west-broadway.asp</a>

After a 45 day public comment period, the plan will be reviewed by the City Planning Commission and then considered by the City Council. Adoption of the plan is expected in early 2008.

West Broadway Alive is an action plan that outlines steps the City and its partners can take to revitalize West Broadway to make commercial and residential development more viable. Recommended action steps include: offering corridor-specific financing, assembling development sites, expanding sidewalks along storefront businesses, and installing decorative lighting and landscaping to unify and beautify the corridor.

### **Home & Business Initiatives**

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

# Tougher regulations will help curb convenience store problems

Hoping to increase the likelihood that trouble-prone convenience stores can become better Northside neighbors, the Grocery Store Task Force proposed several ordinance changes aimed at increasing the City's ability to regulate or close down problem-prone stores.

The new measures include -

- Requiring that the property exterior be cleaned on a daily basis to prevent litter accumulation.
- Requiring cleanup of graffiti within seven days.
- Giving the City the ability to revoke a business license if taxes, fees or fines have not been paid.
- Requiring the store to post any special operating restrictions imposed on the business by the City.
   That way, police and customers can be sure the business is meeting these obligations.
- Requiring that either a manager or owner live within 75 miles of Minneapolis so emergencies can be addressed in a timely manner.

Prior to a review before the City Council's Public Safety and Regulatory Services (PSRS) Committee Aug. 22, City staff met with convenience store owners and industry representatives to address their concerns about the stricter regulations. The public safety committee forwarded the ordinance changes to the full City Council, which approved them at its Aug. 31 meeting.

An additional convenience store regulation concerning a requirement to stock staple food items is tentatively scheduled to be considered by the committee at its September 26 meeting. The committee asked City staff to research the feasibility of requiring some stores to stock a minimum amount of food products used for meal preparation. These include protein, fruits, vegetables, bread and dairy products. Council members expressed concern about the poor availability of fresh, healthful food in neighborhoods served only by small stores that predominately stock snack foods and tobacco products.

The Grocery Store Task Force was organized in January 2006 in an effort to rein in a handful of out-of-control convenience stores that were responsible for a high number of police calls. The task force was asked to find new ways to reduce loitering, drug dealing and assaults at some of the most troubled convenience stores in Minneapolis.

The task force is comprised of representatives from the City Attorney's Office and the Regulatory Services, Fire and Police departments. It meets frequently to ensure better coordination of the monitoring and enforcement efforts handled by separate City departments.

Of the approximately 400 convenience stores in Minneapolis, 36 are currently being monitored by the task force.

After identifying the stores that generate the highest number of police calls, the task force meets with the store owner to point out what changes are needed to reduce crime and neighborhood livability problems. Required changes can include ceasing to sell single cigars and other items used by street-level drug dealers, repairing torn fences, fixing or installing security cameras, removing litter and graffiti, increasing store security staff, and closing earlier in the evening.

A store that is being monitored is visited regularly by police, its zoning and business license requirements are examined, and inspectors visit to check food product expiration dates, overall cleanliness and the condition of food storage equipment. Store owners who don't make corrections face fines and progressive discipline that can lead to license revocation.

# Uncle Bill's Market building is condemned and boarded up

Uncle Bill's Food Market, one of the businesses once under scrutiny by the Grocery Store Task Force, is now closed. Additionally, the building that housed the troubled store has been condemned by the Minneapolis Fire Marshal and boarded up.

After the building owner lost in court and in an administrative appeal, the only options for the building's future are demolition or costly structural repairs to bring the building up to code. With the building owner in foreclosure, renovation appears unlikely.

The City initiated steps to revoke Uncle Bill's business license in 2006 and the business closed June 27, 2007. Located at 2426 Plymouth Ave. N., Uncle Bill's was the site of loitering, drug dealing, fights and other problems that generated 112 police calls in 2006.

The appeal of Uncle Bill's business license revocation is pending. Should the revocation be set aside, the store owner could buy and repair the building or open a store at a new location. However, the convenience store's troubled history would make it likely that any future license would be granted only with stringent conditions and strict monitoring. The public could also comment on whether a new license should be granted.

### **Livability Efforts**

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

### Safe summer transportation for kids



Free circulating buses helped kids get to libraries, parks, and recreation centers this summer. Managed by the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (YCB), the service was funded by the City of Minneapolis, YCB and the Minneapolis Empowerment Zone. The bus averaged more than 100 trips per day, and an outreach worker was aboard at all times to help riders feel safe and give kids contact with positive role models. Bus service for afterschool activities begins in October. To register for a free bus card, visit <a href="https://www.ycb.org">www.ycb.org</a> or call (612) 673-7271.

# City staff looks for creative ways to address property problems

While there are many knowledgeable renters who understand their rights and responsibilities, City staff members say there are too many times when they run across tenants whose lack of knowledge is jeopardizing their health or finances.

When responding to problem property complaints, City staff have found tenants living in apartments with exposed electrical wires, broken stairs or failed plumbing. Other tenants are being taken advantage of because of illegal rent schemes. Still others don't know they can ask for a rent receipt or a copy of their lease.

That's why City staff at the West Broadway Safety Center plan to offer a free class for renters beginning in October. The class will be taught by the problem properties officer, a paralegal, and a fire inspector. It will cover leases, tenants' rights, and renters' responsibilities to the landlord and the neighborhood.

Although the class is aimed primarily at people who are renting an apartment or home, landlords are welcome to participate. For more information, contact Ron McConnell, paralegal serving the 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct at the West Broadway Safety Center, at (612) 521-9035.

### **Safety Initiatives**

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

# West Broadway Safety Center offers wide range of services

The Minneapolis Police Department's West Broadway Safety Center, 1011 West Broadway, is more than a police substation: it's also a neighborhood resource.

Northside residents are welcome to stop by the center to file a police report, pick up "no trespassing" signs, or meet with City staff to talk about crime prevention, landlord/tenant problems, safety concerns, or problem property issues. To ensure the person you want to see is available, please call Rowena Holmes, safety center manager, at (612) 767-2154 before stopping in.

Fifth Ward residents can also schedule an appointment to see City Council Member Don Samuels on Mondays at the safety center. Call his associate, Monique Cuff, at (612) 673-2205 to make an appointment.

The safety center is also a community gathering place. Block clubs, parenting groups, grief support groups, and school, business and neighborhood organizations hold their meetings at the center. Social service agencies use the center to meet with visitors about issues surrounding housing, jobs and domestic abuse. An art crawl recently brought 150 visitors to the center. Classes on starting a business and bidding on construction contracts will also be held at the center. Additionally, the center will soon house an office for Project for Pride in Living. For more information about these services, call (612) 767-2154.

### Northsiders participate in 176 National Night Out block parties

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct, northsiders participated in 176 National Night Out block parties on Aug. 7. On the Northside alone, more than 10,000 people attended National Night Out gatherings with many observing a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the I-35W Bridge collapse.

National Night Out is a crime prevention effort that aims to reduce crime by encouraging neighbors to get to know one another. When people know one another, police say they are more likely to watch out for one another and call police about suspicious activity. Minneapolis has ranked first in the nation among large cities in the quality of National Night Out participation four times in the past six years.

### Reaching out to neighborhood kids



Officers from the Fourth Precinct served lemonade and casual banter on a hot July afternoon. They also gave away sidewalk chalk and bubbles to neighborhood children. The stand was set up to provide non-threatening opportunities for kids and cops to meet one another. Police hope these and other efforts aimed at young people will help build mutual trust and respect. It is hoped that connections built today will help kids make safe, smart choices in the future and avoid trouble with the law.

### **Coming Up**

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

### Cops 'n Kids Car Show

Saturday, Sept. 8

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Parade Stadium, 400 Kenwood Parkway
The Police Activities League and the Cops 'n Rodders
Car Club are hosting their first annual Cops 'n Kids Car
Show to give kids an opportunity to meet police officers
and get an up-close look at antique cars, hot rods,
antique military vehicles and modern police vehicles.
Admission is free. A raffle and silent auction will be
held to raise money for the Minneapolis Police Activities
League, which offers recreational opportunities to
Minneapolis young people. For more information about
the Police Athletic League, visit
<a href="http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/about/pal/">http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/about/pal/</a>.

### 4th Precinct Advisory Council

■ Tuesday, Sept. 18 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.

### You Can Help

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

### Volunteer to help the 4th Precinct

The 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct Advisory Council (4PAC) is looking for volunteers to help in their efforts to make the Northside a safer, more pleasant place. 4PAC is an all-volunteer community organization that promotes cooperation between the police and the community on law enforcement issues, crime prevention strategies, community problems and criminal justice issues. 4PAC also works to educate residents about the important role they play in preventing crime and improving police services.

If you live in the 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct and want to help represent the diverse interests of the Northside, please attend a 4PAC meeting. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Food donations and serving help (11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or 6 to 9 p.m.) are also needed for 4PAC's September 22 barbecue recognizing 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct officers and staff. To volunteer, contact Joel Breeggemann, 4PAC special events chair, at (612) 481-5635 or 4pacmpls@gmail.com.

#### More McGruff houses needed

Kids are back in school, and the Northside needs more McGruff houses. McGruff houses are private homes where kids can get help if they're lost, locked out, followed by a stranger or in an emergency situation.

McGruff house volunteers should generally be at home in the morning or afternoon when many parents are at work. All potential McGruff household members ages 14 and older are subject to a criminal history check.

For more information or to volunteer, contact John Baumann at (612) 673-3447 or john.baumann@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

# NORTHforce

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