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STABLE, UNIFIED  
METROPOLITAN  
REGION

SPRING  
2008

## VICTORY! Transit Advocates Secure Regional Transit System Funding

By Katie Eukel, *Transit for Livable Communities*

**T**he 2008 legislative session started off with a bang for transit advocates. Over Governor Pawlenty's veto, the Minnesota legislature passed a transportation bill that included a significant, dedicated source of transit funding. The new revenue will help Minnesota construct eight new dedicated transitways (i.e., light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit); double bus ridership by 2020; create better transit facilities and new Park & Ride capacity; provide revenue to local governments for bicycle and pedestrian projects; and expand transit in Greater Minnesota.

Behind the obvious victory lies an even greater one—a story about how grassroots advocacy can make real change in Minnesota.

Twelve years ago, Barb Thoman and John DeWitt were two concerned residents who gathered several of their friends and neighbors together to discuss the state of transit funding in the Twin Cities region. The group discussed how many regions with successful transit systems also had successful transit advocacy organizations. So they decided to start See **VICTORY! Transit Advocates Secure Funding**, page 5

## Longfellow Community Council Completes Historic CBA



**T**he Longfellow Community Council became the first community-based organization in the Twin Cities to complete a community benefits agreement when it signed a contract with developer Capital Growth Real Estate on February 27.

The CBA will ensure that redevelopment of the Purina Mills site, just east of Hiawatha Avenue on 38th Street in Minneapolis, will provide lasting benefits to the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. The site has been slated for redevelopment since 2005, when Capital Growth contacted the city and Longfellow Community Council about its idea to transform the abandoned property into a model of See **Longfellow CC Completes Historic CBA**, page 4



Photo: Metro Transit

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The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition that links faith-based, social justice and environmental organizations to address the issues of economic development, fair and affordable housing, transit, and the environmental consequences of sprawling growth. The Alliance engages communities in eliminating racial and economic disparities in growth and development patterns in the Twin Cities region.

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*From the Director's Desk*

## Grassroots Organizing Set the Foundation for Transit Victory

Much has been written this month about the passage of the historic transportation investment bill. A host of editorials and letters to the editor rightly gave credit to a variety of elected officials and business leaders who helped ensure the bill's passage.

But there's another story that needs to be told: the long struggle by nonprofit advocacy groups and ordinary citizens to advance transit to the top of the legislature's agenda. These transit advocates will not likely be remembered by the media or other political commentators because their grassroots efforts operated at a lower altitude in the public arena. But they didn't toil for transit to grab news headlines—they did so because it was in the public interest.

**Transit for Livable Communities** was the pivotal organization that brought everyone together to talk about the need for investment in public transit in Minnesota. Started more than 10 years ago by a group of concerned bus riders and rail advocates, TLC quickly became the go-to group for sound research and strong testimony at legislative hearings. But TLC quickly realized it wasn't enough to be equipped with good facts and figures—they needed an army of transit supporters clamoring for bus and rail investments. In 2000, they chose a brilliant but simple organizing strategy: target suburban districts with popular Park & Ride lots.

They went to these transit stations and signed up bus riders. They attended dozens of hearings during the years of transit cutbacks and signed up more riders. They tabled at the opening of the Hiawatha light rail line and they reached out to allied groups. In a few short years, they had organized more than 9,000 people who had a stake in the transit system and who could be counted on to contact their local officials, state legislators and the governor.

This allowed TLC and its allies to target suburban decision-makers who didn't understand that residents of their own districts had a need for and a stake in a better regional transit system.

Then Transit for Livable Communities reached out to other allies to build their ranks, forming the **Transit Partners** coalition with the goal of securing a permanent, dedicated funding source for transit. A stable stream of funding had long been the top priority for transit organizers and the coalition pursued this goal with tenacity.

The faith-based organization **ISAIAH** was a key partner. They had thousands of members who were active in more than 90 congregations in the metro region and St. Cloud. ISAIAH brought with them a flair for engaging the media, the ability to turnout hundreds of members on short notice, and a reputation for disciplined and energetic organizing. These congregant leaders were like bulldogs—never letting go of their moral vision to wield state investments for the common good.

**The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy**, a respected policy

and research organization, was also an important and trusted ally. They helped reveal the inconsistencies of our state's transportation financing system, provided comparative analysis of other metro regions, and built new relationships with business leaders.

Groups like the **Sierra Club** also signed on. With well over 10,000 members in the metro region, the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club brought with it a formidable membership base of suburban volunteers. Over the weekend preceding the recent showdown, the Sierra Club generated more than 1,000 local constituent calls to the four metro-area Republican House members, asking them to stand their ground and override the governor's veto.

Rounding out the Transit Partners coalition were advocacy groups like the **Minnesota Senior Federation**, **Fresh Energy**, the **Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005**, the **Alliance for Metropolitan Stability**, and several key coalitions: the **Minnesota Transportation Alliance**, the **Minnesota Public Transit Association**, and the **Minnesota Environmental Partnership**.

As light rail evolved from a controversial idea to a proven success along Hiawatha Avenue and Park & Ride lots continued to overflow with commuters, the political debate started to give way. Yearly public opinion surveys by the Met Council revealed that citizens were becoming more impatient with increasingly congested roads. Passage of the motor vehicle sales tax referendum in 2006 proved that transportation was a high public priority across the state. And future historians will no doubt point to the tragic collapse of the I-35W bridge as the crucial tipping point that motivated a veto-proof majority in the State Legislature to do the right thing.

The transportation bill will yield roughly \$5.5 billion to fix our state's neglected road and bridge infrastructure. It also secured, at long last, approximately \$1.1 billion to expand



*Volunteers from ISAIAH, TLC and the Sierra Club ask the Legislature to be like Honest Abe when they make decisions about transportation funding.*

*Everyone in this state deserves access to safe roads and bridges, a world-class public transit system, and greater access to the many economic opportunities our region provides.*

the state's public transit system. This money will help to:

- Construct eight new dedicated transitways (light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit)
- Double bus ridership by 2020
- Create better transit facilities and new Park & Ride capacity
- Provide revenue to local governments for bicycle and pedestrian projects
- Expand transit in Greater Minnesota

The landmark veto override was made possible, in large part, by the foundation laid by community activists and citizen leaders. As a contributing partner in this campaign, the Alliance has been privileged to

watch what was once a small grassroots effort grow into a statewide movement.

It has also been gratifying to see years of coalition-building come to fruition to the benefit of not only the Twin Cities region, but also the entire state of Minnesota. It is the perfect example of a progressive, investment-driven vision in action. Organizers and ordinary citizens from all different sectors, with different agendas, coming together to advocate for something that we all believe in: that everyone in this state deserves access to safe roads and bridges, a world-class public transit system, and greater access to the many amenities and economic opportunities our region provides.

The transportation bill override was one of many recent victories for the Alliance and our coalition of grassroots organizations. You'll also read in this issue of the Common Ground about the power of grassroots organizing to reduce disparities in light rail planning, to demand citizen participation in road expansion projects, to preserve affordable housing and more. I hope it inspires you to continue to fight for racial and economic justice—and to support the organizations that are doing this work every day.

—Russ Adams, *Executive Director*



## Longfellow CC Completes Historic CBA *continued from page 1*

transit-oriented development.

Despite the developer's forward-thinking approach to the project, LCC knew it could be better.

"We wanted to support the developer's vision, but we also believed the community had a right to participate in the visioning process," said LCC volunteer Ralph Wyman.

So LCC began talking to Capital Growth about the possibility of entering into a CBA—a legal contract that binds the developer to meeting specific community expectations while committing the community group to supporting the project. CBAs have been used around the country to overcome community opposition to new developments by ensuring they provide tangible outcomes for the neighborhoods they affect.

Among the benefits the Longfellow CBA will produce are affordable housing assurances and support for local businesses and community groups. The site, which will boast 197 housing units and 40,000 square feet of retail and parking, will exceed the city's requirements for affordable housing and reserve 30 percent of commercial space for local businesses.

While these are fairly typical CBA features, LCC also negotiated for some more creative additions. The developer agreed to use green design and construction techniques, sell transit passes to residents, include storage space for bikes, and participate in a community-based car-sharing program. To mitigate community members' concerns about the new development's connection to the community, Capital Growth agreed to improve access for walkers and bikers between the site and the Hiawatha light rail line's nearby 38th Street station.

The completion of the city's first community-based CBA is historic not only because of the unique features it will produce for the Longfellow neighborhood, but because it sets a precedent for community involvement in land-use planning.

"An active dialogue with the community is so important in preserving cultural integrity, especially of older neighborhoods such as Longfellow," said Sarah Nassif, chair of the CBA effort. "I believe that collaborative efforts between communities and developers will result in more successful developments while giving citizens a greater sense of ownership in change around the city."



**LCC Executive Director Melanie Majors and developer Dale Joel sign the historic CBA agreement.**



**Standing, left to right: Bev Connerton and Ralph Wyman, LCC lead CBA negotiators, Bob Franzen, partner Capitol Growth Real Estate. Seated: Melanie Majors, LCC executive director, Dale Joel, partner Capitol Growth. Photos: Longfellow Community Council**

*The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability recently released a report on community benefits agreements to further develop local understanding of the CBA model's potential to yield significant, community-desired results from large-scale redevelopments and other projects. More and more organizations and coalitions are turning to CBAs to produce meaningful—and, perhaps more importantly, enforceable—outcomes for low-income people and communities of color.*

Contact Tracy Nordquist at [tracy@metrostability.org](mailto:tracy@metrostability.org) to request a copy of the report, or download the report at [www.metrostability.org](http://www.metrostability.org).



## VICTORY! Transit Advocates Secure Funding *continued from page 1*

their own advocacy organization—Transit for Livable Communities. The organization was designed to use advocacy, grassroots organizing, and research to promote a more balanced transportation system.

### TRANSPORTATION CHOICES NETWORK HELPS PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN DECISION PROCESS

In the early 2000s, Transit for Livable Communities developed the Transportation Choices 2020 vision. With one million people moving to Minnesota in upcoming decades, the state desperately needed a transportation system that provided alternatives to driving. Rather than fully funding a healthy transit system, the Legislature took a piecemeal approach, funding one new transit line at a time. Nor was there reliable funding for operating existing buses and rail lines; transit service was most vulnerable during economic downturns when many transit users needed reliable service the most.

After developing the Transportation Choices 2020 vision, Transit for Livable Communities initiated a campaign to support it: securing a dedicated, reliable source of funding to build out a transit system. To achieve this, TLC first created a broad-based, grassroots network of residents who were committed to take action on transportation decisions that would impact their communities. Today, this network includes nearly 10,000 people who support more transit, walking, bicycling and thoughtful development in Minnesota. Most of these people are current transit users.

"When we started the Transportation Choices Network, we really wanted to refocus transportation priorities toward people by helping more people participate in transportation and development decisions," says Lea Schuster, executive director for Transit for Livable Communities.

Transit for Livable Communities also convened the Transit Partners coalition, which now includes transit, environmental, labor, community and faith-based organizations. This coalition has been the advocacy base to secure reliable transit funding in Minnesota, with each organization bringing different skill sets to the table. Some organizations work directly with state legislators, providing strong research and

education about the benefits of a region-wide transit system. Others work closely on messaging and media strategies, developing media-friendly frames, messages, and stories about transit. Many also mobilize their members to take action during key parts of the legislative session, and others work closely with volunteers, helping them build valuable skills in talking with legislators, planning events, and becoming more effective advocates in their communities. Key coalition support was provided by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, which expanded organizing capacity within the coalition.



**Volunteers serve coffee to suburban transit riders as thanks for supporting the transportation bill. Photos: Transit for Livable Communities**

In 2004, Transportation Choices 2020 was introduced at the State Legislature. Using examples of similar initiatives across the country, Transit for Livable Communities suggested a region-wide sales tax to fully fund the transit system upfront with a dedicated source of funding. This goal was achieved during the 2008 legislative session, a mere four years after the idea was initially proposed.

A key challenge for Transit for Livable Communities and its

Transit Partners coalition was working with a larger coalition dedicated to securing funding for roads, bridges, and transit, with enormous pressure to fund roads and bridges across the state. The Transit Partners coalition helped protect and shape the transit section of the bill, ensuring that people who can't or don't drive could also reach their destinations. The 2008 transportation bill will generate approximately \$117 million per year for transit needs across Minnesota. Ultimately, transit needs an estimated \$235 million per year to fully leverage federal matching funds that currently go to other states, but this bill is a good step forward.

"This bill could not have been achieved without strong grassroots support from across the state," notes Schuster. "One of Transit for Livable Communities' biggest goals is to engage people in transportation decisions, so that community voices are well represented and heard by decision-makers. Minnesota is renowned for residents who care about the future of their communities, and this bill represents thousands of people who asked for better transit in our region. Their activism made this historic step forward for transit possible."



# Central Corridor Communities Continue Battle for LRT Stops

The Metropolitan Council voted on February 27 for a Central Corridor light rail transit line that includes funding to “rough in” community-supported stops at the intersections of University Avenue with Western Avenue, Hamline Avenue and Victoria Street. The vote means that, unless something changes, the line will open in 2014 without stops at those intersections, but with the underground engineering in place to build out those stops as demand for the line grows.

The Met Council vote followed weeks of heavy pressure mounted by residents and organizations participating in the Stops for Us campaign. Stops for Us has been calling on city, county and Met Council leaders to add stops at Hamline, Western and Victoria, intersections which cut through some of the most transit-dependent neighborhoods in the city.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS RALLY AROUND CAMPAIGN FOR ADDITIONAL STOPS

The Stops for Us campaign was conceived of by community groups that have been working to instill racial and economic equity into the planning for the high profile transit corridor. After two years of advocating for transit-oriented development, living-wage jobs and affordable housing along the avenue, the coalition turned its eyes to advocating for three additional stops this summer.

Currently, LRT stops are planned for Snelling, Lexington and Dale, but the design layout bypasses neighborhoods that are important for existing residents, including large populations of Hmong and African American people. Without additional stops, many residents would have to walk up to a mile in order to access the rail line. For the elderly, the disabled and people with small children, that walk may prevent people who need transit from using it.

Meanwhile, the Met Council intends to dramatically reduce current service levels on the #16 bus line that runs along University. This could mean that some residents will actually have less access to transit than they did before LRT construction.

“The Met Council’s current plan presents barriers to transit access for low-income people and people of color,” says Alliance Coalition Organizer Joan Vanhala. “Many of the people cut out of the plan are transit-dependent, and this will negatively impact their access to jobs and retail, educational facilities, and health care

services. That’s why we’re asking for more stops—to make sure people have transit access where they already live, work, go to school and do business.”

## ADDITIONAL STOPS ENDORSED BY CITY AND COUNTY

Campaign partners organized local residents to lobby the Met Council, the city of St. Paul, and Ramsey County to demand the additional stops. Supporters of the campaign have turned out in large numbers to voice their support at public meetings—and it seems people have been listening.

Both the St. Paul City Council and the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners voted to endorse the three additional stops. Those endorsements of the stops were significant because they came at a time when the Met Council was asking partner agencies to reduce what they were asking for. If all the parties involved got exactly what they wanted, the project budget would increase to \$1.25 billion, far exceeding the target budget of roughly \$900 million necessary to receive federal funding. Both St. Paul and Ramsey County gave up pieces of their preferred plans to reduce project costs, yet supported the Stops for Us plan at an additional cost of \$5.5 million per stop.

## MET COUNCIL APPROVES THE PLAN

Dozens of community leaders turned out on February 27 to hear the Met Council approve preliminary engineering on three additional stops in the Central Corridor plan.

The Stops for Us coalition has convinced decision-makers to lay the foundation for additional stops, but the vote was only a partial victory. The Met Council noted in their meeting minutes that their first priority if “more money is made available” is to build at least one additional station. This keeps the door open to continue to advocate for community-supported stops.

*“Many of the people cut out of the plan are transit-dependent, and this will negatively impact their access to jobs and retail, educational facilities, and health care services.”*

— Joan Vanhala, Alliance Coalition organizer



Stops For Us members are committed to doing just that, both to ensure light rail access and to compel the Met Council to think more about racial and economic justice. There is concern in the community that omitting important stops reflects that the line is being planned to attract new, higher-wealth people to the neighborhoods rather than serving people who already live along University Avenue, many of whom are low-income people and people of color. An additional consideration involves where—and for whom—the redevelopment opportunities that frequently accompany light rail stops will occur.

“This is a quality of life issue for our community,” said Community Stabilization Project Organizer Metric Giles about the vote. “The Met Council promised to listen to the community for input on their decision. This promise was an illusion of providing the community with influence, however, despite our overwhelming testimony, it resulted in no stations being built in the plan. I believe that this decision is a continuation of the use of mass transit as a tool of racism that is perpetrated on economically marginalized communities of color. Yet we also believe it is not too late to set our own agenda, continue to build community power and get the stations built.”

Currently the Alliance is helping the Stops For Us coalition solicit comments for a supplemental draft environmental impact statement; arrange meetings with federal, state, and county public officials; and organize a community meeting to report on the Met Council’s decisions. Check out [www.stopsforus.com](http://www.stopsforus.com) for the latest news and information on how you can support this effort.

## Success Story: Transit Stop Victory Secured for Low-Income Chicago Community

Other communities around the nation have successfully secured transit stations to serve low-income communities. In the early 1990s, the Chicago Transit Authority threatened to close the rail lines that served the West Chicago neighborhood of Garfield Park. Without the line, Garfield Park residents would have had great difficulty in getting to jobs downtown and throughout the city. Community groups, led by the nonprofit Bethel New Life, joined forces to fight to keep the stop open.

In 1995, the CTA committed to rebuilding the lines that served the station and Bethel New Life opened the Bethel Center, a commercial and community center that models the type of transit-oriented development rail stations can support. The 23,000-square-foot Bethel Center is now a hub of activity in the community, offering employment services, an in-house day care center, Head Start classes, a bank, a dry cleaner and a sandwich shop.

Aligning the project with the rail station was key, says Mary Nelson, CEO of Bethel New Life. In Garfield Park, only about 35 percent of residents have cars, so public transit is a way of life for most. “We see this building, at this transit stop, as an anchor,” says Nelson. “We’ve built at least 50 new housing units within walking distance as a part of the transit-oriented development. This new building is just the first step, a wonderful stepping stone to revitalizing the area.”

(Source, PCA web-site)



# Governor Vetoes Central Corridor Funding from Bonding Bill

Many of the immediate next steps envisioned for the Central Corridor were contingent on one decision—the Legislature’s appropriation of \$70 million in state funding necessary to secure federal funding of more than \$450 million for the project. Governor Tim Pawlenty had promised city and county officials that if they devised a plan that met federal expectations for the project budget and came to an agreement on the line’s alignment, they could count on the state for the necessary funding. The Legislature did recommend \$70 million for the Central Corridor in the bonding bill that passed in early April, but Governor Pawlenty struck that line-item from the bill on April 8. Without state funding, there are two options: either the metropolitan counties will have to come up with that amount (a prospect county officials have rejected so far), or the project will be delayed by at least a year.

It is still possible for this funding to be appropriated again before legislative session ends in May. Until then, many of the decisions made on the Central Corridor and additional stops will be up in the air. Visit [www.metrostability.org](http://www.metrostability.org) for the latest news on Central Corridor as it happens.



# Community Remains Vigilant in Battle to Save Homes



*City of Arden Hills considers road expansion plan that could wipe out more of an endangered species: affordable suburban home ownership*

By Russ Adams, *Alliance for Metropolitan Stability* executive director

An outstanding organizing campaign, led by manufactured-home-park resident-advocacy group *All Parks Alliance for Change* and supported by the *Alliance for Metropolitan Stability*, has entered into a new phase at the beginning of 2008. The campaign has been marked by hundreds of residents and their allies packing city council meetings and demanding that local officials listen to their concerns and act on their behalf. So far, the residents have succeeded in derailing an ill-conceived plan that would demolish a large portion of the city's most affordable housing stock, but the road expansion plan keeps resurfacing on short notice.

A divisive road expansion plan for Highway 10 and County Road 96 threatens to displace more than 100 people in Arden Hills and has sparked a minor rebellion among citizens of the north metro suburb. At stake are millions of county and state dollars that would realign the two major arterial roads in the heart of the city and open the door for a massive-scale redevelopment of the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (called TCAAP) across the street.

Homeowners living near the roads, congregation members of nearby churches, and manufactured-home-park residents have repeatedly made their way to city hall in an effort to preserve their own—and their neighbors'—homes and community. These community leaders have defeated several motions to pass a concept plan that would open the door for the city to approach the state legislature for an estimated \$24 million in bonding support for the road project.

## PROMISES TO PROTECT RESIDENTS, BUT NO BINDING AGREEMENT

Despite the resounding and unified voice of opposition, the mayor of Arden Hills, city staff and county engineers—aided by MnDOT officials and Ryan Companies, the developer—pressed the city council to accept a concept plan by the end of February 2008 in order to position the city to go after state funding. Legislative funds would allow work to proceed in planning and constructing the large intersection bordering the park's eastern perimeter—thus creating a prime entry point into the TCAAP site. Without

the state funding, the road project cannot proceed and no homes will be displaced.

At a pivotal Jan. 28 hearing, residents from Arden Manor presented the council with a petition signed by 190 people from the 280-unit park. The petition was in support of a draft resolution calling on the council to enter into a binding agreement with All Parks Alliance for Change to guarantee that no more than 2 percent of the homes in Arden Manor would be displaced, that displaced residents would be guaranteed a right to return to Arden Hills in new housing at the TCAAP site, and that comparable housing would be available on the new site (meaning that their current monthly housing cost, including monthly mortgage and lot rent, would be the same at the new site).

The hearing turned out to be a pivotal moment in the Arden Manor saga. The city council was poised to approve a plan that would have eliminated 48 homes to make way for the road expansion. At least 125 residents sat in as the council reviewed the plan and disputed whether staff had taken any measures to mitigate the impact on park residents, as they had been instructed to do the last time the same plan was defeated in May 2007.

As the evening wore on, it became clear that one of the biggest sticking points was MnDOT's refusal to accept any major modifications to the highway intersection. Their inflexibility—coupled with the dismissive attitude of county officials—frustrated the city council members who were



Nearly 70 Arden Hills residents braved sub-zero temperatures to tell the Senate Capital Investment Committee they oppose housing displacement without replacement.

still trying to decide what to make of the plan before them. Slowly, the tide began to turn in Arden Manor's favor.

At the end of the meeting, the mayor made a motion to accept the concept plan. After much deliberation, it was defeated by a 4–1 vote of the full council.

After the council's vote Kristy Effinger, a resident of Arden Manor for 28 years, was interviewed by the local community newspaper, *The Bulletin*. She spoke for many of the APAC leaders when she observed:

"We're all very happy. I thought it was a pretty big victory for us. [But] we realize our battle isn't over; it's just one phase," she said "They're going to be coming up with another concept plan."

## NEW THREATS ON THE HORIZON

And indeed, the reprieve for the residents was short-lived. The council met again just two weeks later to discuss a new plan. This slightly improved plan threatens 36 homes rather than 48. And although the city council was unable to come to an agreement on the plan, Mayor Stan Harpstead made a somewhat unconventional proposal: pass a conceptual plan that favors developing the new intersection without a map or visual document detailing how the plan would be implemented. Those details, the mayor said, could be determined during the preliminary design phase of the project.

The council members agreed, and they passed a resolution allowing the road project to move forward.

## RESIDENTS: WE SHOULD COME FIRST

With Arden Hills moving ahead before finalizing critical details like the exact route of the right-of-way boundaries, residents are convinced that the city staff, and their colleagues at MnDOT and Ramsey County, are putting the developer's interests ahead of the residents. As Arden Manor resident Cheryl Fish said in written comments submitted to the city council: "City staff are not who you have to answer to. They should be doing more to answer your concerns and see that your criteria [to mitigate the impact on park residents] is adhered to."

Another Arden Hills resident, Patrick Haik of the nearby Briar Knoll subdivision, pressed the council at the Jan. 28 hearing not to acquiesce to the TCAAP developer's wishes at the expense of the citizenry, "I think this whole process...got flipped around. We're worried about what the developer says, what MnDOT wants, but the residents are being asked to take a back seat."

## What assurances are Arden Manor residents seeking?

- A new concept plan for road expansion.
- Timely resident notification of city meetings.
- Inclusion of Arden Manor residents association in the planning process.
- Binding agreement with the city to protect homes.
- Postponement of bonding request to the legislature until the binding resolution is passed by the city council.

## What does a binding housing agreement with the city look like?

- One-for-one affordable home replacement policy.
- Comparable monthly housing payments for displaced residents.
- Right-of-first-return for displaced residents to stay in Arden Hills.
- Stronger housing affordability goals for TCAAP site, aligned with regional housing goal obligations.

## How are residents building power?

- Residents will contact all members of Senate and House Capital Investment committee members to comment on city plans.
- Residents will actively seek to defeat the city's request for bonding if outstanding issues are left unresolved by Arden Hills (road intrusion plan, excessive housing dislocation, failure to address comparable housing goals for displaced residents, etc.).
- APAC will introduce a bill to require MnDOT to pay full housing compensation costs for any resident of a manufactured home park displaced by a state highway expansion, repair project or realignment.

What can you do to help?  
Call Ned Moore at APAC, 651-644-5525.



# Spotlight on Racial Equity in Minnesota

## An excerpt from the Organizing Apprenticeship Project's 2nd Minnesota Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity

By Jermaine Toney, OAP lead researcher

A little over a year ago, the Organizing Apprenticeship Project and partners released the first ever *Minnesota Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity* that looked at the state legislature's and governor's support for state policies that strengthen racial equity, opportunity and American Indian tribal sovereignty.

Since that time, over 1,200 Minnesotans—legislative leaders, communities of color, American Indian communities, business leaders, youth, researchers and educators—have been briefed on last year's report card. These individuals and groups have all struggled with taking public leadership on issues of race.

As a community, we are facing tough questions. What do Minnesota's documented and stark racial disparities in such important indicators as health, economic status and education say about us, our values and our institutions? What do our state's demographic changes mean for not just Minnesotans of color, who will represent 22.5 percent of the population in 2030, but for all of us? What would it mean to hold ourselves accountable to promoting equity and opportunity as a core value, an imperative and a real possibility for Minnesota?

### RACIAL FAULT LINE IN MINNESOTA

There is a growing racial fault line running through our state—a fault line that is undermining our future. Minnesota leads the nation in key quality-of-life indicators. Taken as a whole, we are one of the healthiest, wealthiest and best educated. At the same time, there are growing disparities between whites and Minnesotans of color, racial disparities that in some cases are among the worst in the nation.

- Although 94 percent of white students graduate from high school, only about three-fourths (71 percent) of blacks and two-thirds (66 percent) of American Indians and Latinos graduate. While 90 percent of Asian-Pacific Islanders graduate, only 40 percent of Hmong adults in the Twin Cities possess a high school diploma.

- While only 5.9 percent of whites lack health insurance, Latinos have an uninsurance rate that is nearly six times higher (34 percent) and blacks two times higher (12.8 percent). Twenty-one percent of American Indians and 9.8 percent of Asian-Pacific Islanders are uninsured.

- More than one-third of Minnesota's black children, 18 percent of Latino and American Indian children and 13 percent of Asian-Pacific Islander children are raised in poverty, yet only 4 percent of white children face poverty.

- And, in a disparity that severely impacts the life chances of communities of color, but is not even noted as a standard-of-living indicator for whites, blacks are arrested at a rate 817 percent higher than whites, yet their reported overall drug use is at a rate 66 percent higher than whites (largely due to usage of marijuana). What is more, blacks comprise roughly one-third (31.7 percent) of the prison population yet they make up only 4 percent of the state's population.

These disparities are not accidents of individual behavior. They are grounded in our history, in our public decisions and institutions. The wealth and prosperity in Minnesota today grew from a strong progressive tradition that worked to create bridges to opportunity for many of us, no matter how poor our parents or grandparents once were. Our historic public investments in economic and workforce development, in our education system and in health care helped make us one of the most prosperous states in the country, and helped generations of white immigrants move from poverty to wealth.

They did not, however, create the same bridge to opportunity for Minnesotans of color and American Indians in our state. Communities of color were often excluded, by policy and practice, intentionally and unintentionally, from access to the good life.

Today, as Minnesota becomes more racially diverse, our investment in institutions and policies that promote equity and opportunity for all has declined, eroding our values, our sense of the common good and our future prosperity.



### RACE AND DISMANTLING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

In separate studies of the Twin Cities metropolitan region and the Midwest as a whole, the Brookings Institution points out that racial disparities and the failure to consider key long-term infrastructure needs like education, economic and workforce development, and health care will ultimately undermine future economic growth. Racial equity and investments in the infrastructure are directly related. In other words, we have to make strategic race-conscious investments in the current infrastructure to have continued wealth and prosperity.

Lately, we have all wrestled with the consequences of the decline in public investment in libraries, public schools, transit and bridges—all universally known to promote opportunity and economic growth. However, what is rarely talked about or looked at is the link between that public investment and changing demographics.

Whether intended or not, the decline in public investment in equity and opportunity is directly aligned with the rise in racial diversity in the state. This is not unique to us. Nationally, economists and social scientists have documented a strong relationship between diversifying communities and shifts in public spending. Simply put, “as diversity rises, public spending falls—of all types, including education, health care, roads or welfare programs.” Taking a look at state budgets enacted from fiscal year 1994-95 to 2008-09, here is how this trend is playing out in Minnesota:

- Between 1994-95, students of color reached 17 percent of the K-12 population and between 2008-09, they are projected to surpass one-fourth of the K-12 population. At the same time, per pupil spending increased from \$3,205 to \$5,124. But this increase hides the fact that the state's commitment to funding education declined while requirements for public schools expanded. According to

the Minnesota Department of Finance, between 1995 and 2000, state spending for education increased by 41 percent, yet between 2005 and 2009, state spending is projected to increase by only 12 percent. Some of those requirements are testing, unfunded mandates like special education, increased standards and transportation. In other words, as the proportion of students of color increases, the state's commitment to funding Minnesota's schools is decreasing.

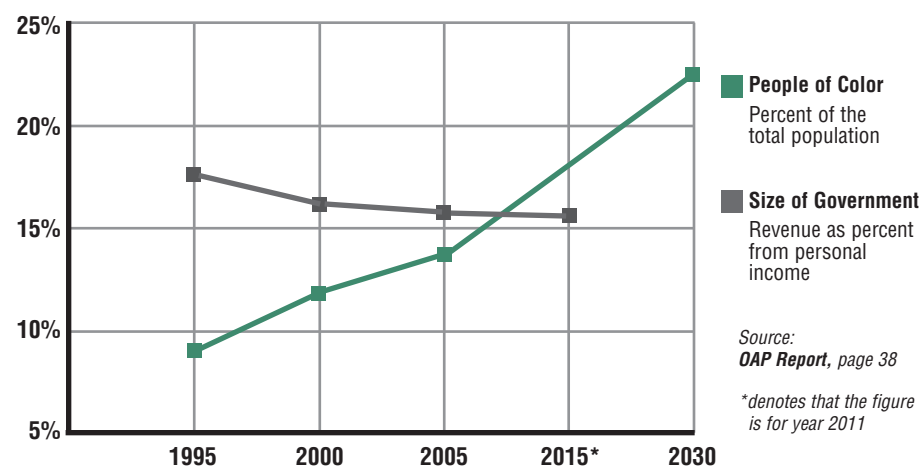
- Between 1995 and 2000, funding for economic and workforce development increased by 77 percent; between 2005 and 2009, it will increase by merely five percent.
- Between 2000 and 2005, spending for health care increased by 42 percent; between 2005 and 2009, it is projected to increase by only 34 percent.
- There is one exception. Public spending for public safety and corrections may not go down. Between 2005 and 2009, spending increases in public safety and corrections will actually outpace education by 15 percent and economic development by 22 percent. This is not an investment in a smart, sustainable and equitable common good. It hurts us all, particularly communities of color and American Indian communities.

Undermining public investment in education, workforce development and health care is a sign that our infrastructure is being dismantled, which means that our future prosperity is at stake. We are failing to defend and expand the good life for all of our communities, particularly our growing communities of color. Clearly, without explicit attention and commitment to racial equity, state spending will not only fail to strengthen the institutions that we all need for shared prosperity. It will also fail to anticipate unequal outcomes and actually reinforce the racial fault line.

Given Minnesota's values, history, resources and reputation as a leader in work for building bridges to opportunity, we are well positioned to lead and shape equitable institutions and policies. Yet to realize this vision, racial justice has to be at our core. We have to make racial equity a top state priority. Our leaders and institutions have to step up, act and be held accountable for investing in and strengthening the infrastructure, forwarding policies that promote equity and opportunity in our state.

The Minnesota Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity can be downloaded at <http://www.oaproject.org/>. For more information, contact Jermaine Toney at 612-746-4224 or [toney@oaproject.org](mailto:toney@oaproject.org).

### AS DIVERSITY RISES, THE INFRASTRUCTURE DISMANTLES IN MINNESOTA





# Regional Equity and the Quest for Full Inclusion

*PolicyLink, a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity, recently held its biannual Regional Equity conference in New Orleans, LA. The biannual conference, attended by more than 1,800 people, is the most prominent national gathering of equitable development, social justice and smart growth practitioners. Below are excerpts from its conference framing paper, Regional Equity and the Quest for Full Inclusion, is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity.*

**R**egional equity is a framework for social change that is nestled within, and inseparable from, the quest for economic and social justice in America. Regional equity brings a unique perspective to the broader equity movement: a deep understanding of how metropolitan development patterns structure the life chances and social and economic opportunities of residents, and the ways in which uneven spatial development reinforces old racial and class divides, while creating new ones. The goal is to ensure that everyone—regardless of the neighborhood in which they live—has access to essential ingredients for economic and social success: living-wage jobs, viable housing choices, public transportation, good schools, strong social networks, safe and walkable streets, services, parks, access to healthy food and so on.

The regional equity concept emerged in the late 1990s as social justice advocates recognized the role of metropolitan development patterns in maintaining and exacerbating racial and economic disparities in income, wealth, health and opportunity. Fifty years of post World War II sprawl—the movement of jobs, people, investment, infrastructure, and tax base away from central cities toward the farthest edges of metropolitan regions—left cities without needed investment while consuming exorbitant amounts of land and resources. As opportunity shifted to the suburbs, communities of color were almost completely left behind in isolated, distressed inner-city neighborhoods or rural communities.

## TWIN PILLARS OF THE EQUITY VISION

In the twenty-first century, the well-being of our nation will depend on ensuring that everyone—including low-income people and people of color—participates in economic, social and political life, and focuses on guaranteeing the sustainability of our economy and natural resource base.

Full inclusion begins with principles of fairness and justice and is sustained by attention not only to the process used to

engage communities and residents but especially to outcomes achieved. Achieving full inclusion requires conducting an equity analysis at the front-end of decision-making processes—asking the questions: Who benefits? Who decides? Who pays? And it means making choices and building systems and structures that do the most for those traditionally left behind.

Sustainability is based on principles of land and resource stewardship, energy efficiency and waste and pollution reduction. It means preserving our environment for future generations through innovative solutions and conscious action. Realizing this vision will require reconfiguring our economy and renewing our democracy. Shared economic prosperity and participatory democracy should be our overarching goals.

**Shared economic prosperity.** High levels of inequality and poverty conflict with American values, strain our social fabric, and are fundamentally bad for the economy as they undermine regional (and thus national) growth and competitiveness. We must increase inclusion to be competitive and prosperous in the global economy. Everyone living in the United States should have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the economy and contribute to regional and national economic prosperity. An agenda for shared prosperity would integrate all groups into the economy, reduce income disparities across racial/ ethnic groups and expand the middle class. Our public policies, investments and entrepreneurial efforts must be aligned toward this goal. Key elements of this agenda include:

- **Grow a sustainable, high-road economy that produces jobs with family-supporting wages and career ladders.**
- **Fix our crumbling roads, bridges, and other public infrastructure.**
- **Invest in human development.**
- **Increase the economic security of working families.**



- **Manage the downside risks of globalization.**

**Participatory democracy.** We must renew and strengthen democracy in the context of difference and the political complexities that have come with globalization. The democratic ideals of popular sovereignty, individual freedom and equality were formulated in much more homogenous and less complex societies. These concepts need to be rethought to work in a country that is increasingly diverse and affected by forces operating outside the realm of national politics. For everyone to have the opportunity to participate in the political and institutional decision-making processes that affect their lives, the nation must commit to eliminating structural racism—the embedded inequality flowing from centuries of racism, neglect and institutional favoritism.

An agenda to expand American democracy would include:

- **Increased participation and representation.**
- **Community building.**
- **Global citizenship.**

The regional equity movement has invaluable contributions to make to realizing this vision and planning the agenda for full inclusion and sustainability. Its framework offers a critical new perspective on the root causes of inequality and the methods for creating more equitable and inclusive communities. The understanding of the role of metropolitan development patterns and the role of community in shaping social and economic opportunities are absent from most current social change efforts and policy agendas. Regional equity embraces the understanding that where people live determines their opportunities for health and well-being, economic success, and civic/political participation. The framework is established upon the principle that to increase equity we must strengthen communities physically, economically, and politically.

## ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

Regional equity is part of a broad and hopeful vision for full inclusion and sustainability. But vision alone will not suffice. Our vision must be backed by a concrete plan of action. To realize the vision of full inclusion and sustainability, we need to craft a compelling national agenda infused by our collective wisdom, knowledge and creativity. This agenda must articulate principles and policy proposals that have the power to transform the political debate in the media, in legislatures, in boardrooms, in the streets and in living rooms.

While the focus of the agenda should be on policy change, it must be backed by an explanation of what is needed to make these changes occur. Experience, time and reflection have taught us that community engagement and empowerment lead to stronger, more meaningful policy reform and social change. It is only from that place of authentic wrestling with issues of diversity and difference that we can incubate

new solutions to disseminate far and wide. All residents must feel that the endeavor for change enhances rather than compromises their political power, social cohesion and sense of place—particularly those communities that historically have been excluded from participation in decision-making.

This agenda does not need to be drafted from scratch. Many of its elements are in motion, being carried out by leaders in hundreds of communities, institutions and agencies across the country. The examples, practices, models and insights highlighted in this paper reflect the strategy, depth and momentum required to spur the movement forward. Our activities already add up to much more than the sum of our individual efforts.

To read *Regional Equity and the Quest for Full Inclusion* in its entirety, visit [www.regionalequity08.org/](http://www.regionalequity08.org/).

## Large Minnesota Delegation Attends Regional Equity '08

About 70 leaders from Minnesota traveled together to New Orleans to attend the **Regional Equity '08** conference. Leaders from Minnesota were able to hear the latest research and grassroots efforts about how to build a movement for equity, connect with their peers from around the nation—and come home renewed in their determination to effect change at home. Members of the Minnesota delegation enjoyed a reception hosted by the McKnight Foundation.



From left: Mari Lecours, Julia Althoff, Julia Freeman, Rachel Dykoski, Georgia Giles and Caty Royce.  
Photos: Katie Thering



From left: Fred Byron and Boise Jones.



# New Life for the Ford Plant?

*The Ford Motor Company plant based in St. Paul may soon be facing a makeover.*

The plant, situated on 136 acres of riverfront land in the Highland Park neighborhood, is scheduled to close in late 2009. The date of the closing keeps getting pushed back—a good thing for the more than 900 union workers who are still employed there—and it's still not clear what will happen to the site after Ford vacates the property. The site's large size, proximity to the river, and location in a vibrant urban neighborhood make it an exciting opportunity to consider innovative redesign options that preserve jobs, offer affordable housing, integrate with local transit hubs and minimize the carbon footprint of the new development.

Recognizing these opportunities, the city of St. Paul appointed a Ford Site Planning Task Force to consider redevelopment options for the site. The task force is comprised of residents, business-owners, environmental and labor representatives, and the Ford Land Company (a subsidiary of Ford Motor Company), and according to the city's web site, is charged to "prepare for consideration by the planning commission, city council and mayor a development framework for a mixed-use development that will represent a fitting legacy for both the Ford Motor Company and the city of Saint Paul."

## 5 REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

The task force spent much of 2007 gathering stakeholder input and setting forth goals for the final development scenario. Based on this process, the task force has put together five redevelopment scenarios that it believes meet its goals to promote and preserve neighborhood character, access to community amenities and open space, economic vitality, appropriate land use, city- and community-desired features, sustainability and transit integration:

- Reuse for industry
- Mixed-use light industrial
- Mixed-use office/institutional campus
- Mixed-use urban village
- High-density urban transit village

These plans are being evaluated by the task force for economic and environmental viability, which will eventually lead to a recommendation to the city planning commission. Yet despite the city's power over zoning of the site, its reuse is ultimately in the hands of Ford, which has control over sale of the land.

With the task force's work well underway, the delay of the plant closing slightly confuses this planning scenario. It is unclear whether the task force will make a recommendation in 2008 as planned, or whether that decision will be put off until 2009.

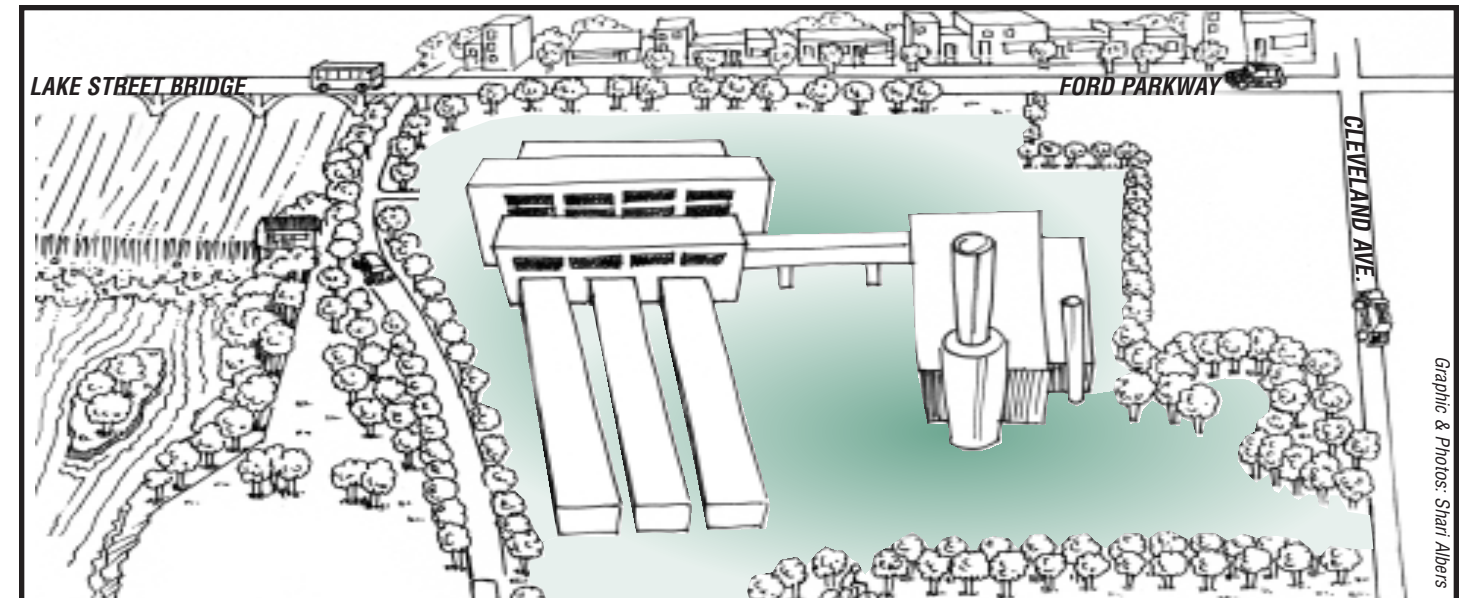
What is clear is that the city will hold at least one more public meeting this year to present its findings from the environmental review of the site. The Alliance and our partner organizations will monitor the process as it unfolds.

## COALITION ENVISIONS FORMER FORD PLANT SITE AS MODEL OF GREEN REINDUSTRIALIZATION

The delay of the plant closing opens an opportunity for community groups to organize concerned citizens to affect the Ford Site Planning Task Force's recommendation to the St. Paul Planning Commission, and eventually the full city council. The Alliance has been convening a coalition of labor, environmental, transit and community organizations that are pressuring city officials to support a plan that

*"There is no better site in the Twin Cities to attract green manufacturing and model low-carbon, mixed-use development with good jobs at its core."*

— Lynn Hinkle, retired United Auto Workers leader



Graphic & Photos: Shari Albers

supports our vision for the development to be a model of green reindustrialization—providing thousands of living-wage jobs, while manufacturing green products and reducing the carbon footprint of the site. "The best-case scenario would be for the plant to stay open," says Alliance Executive Director Russ Adams. "But if it does close, we want the community to have a say in how the site is reused. We need to organize now to make sure that can happen."

## ST. PAUL TO BE CENTER FOR GREEN MANUFACTURING

"The city has set a goal to make St. Paul a center for green manufacturing," said retired United Auto Workers leader Lynn Hinkle. "While we hate to see the Ford plant go, we see this as a major opportunity. There is no better site in the Twin Cities to attract green manufacturing and model low-carbon, mixed-use development with good jobs at its core."

## COMMUNITY FORUM PLANNED FOR SPRING 2008

The coalition is planning its own community forum this spring, which will offer an alternative scenario featuring green and equitable development principles.

Information about the forum will be posted on our Ford community blog at <http://stpaulfordplantsite.typepad.com/highland/>. For more information on the Ford site project, see the city's web site at <http://www.stpaul.gov/depts/ped/fordsite/index.html>.

*Ford site coalition members are represented by leaders from:*

- Alliance For Metropolitan Stability
- Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota
- Fresh Energy
- ISAIAH
- Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing
- The Sierra Club, North Star Chapter
- Student activists from Macalester College
- Transit For Livable Communities
- United Auto Workers Local 879
- United Food & Commercial Workers Local 789
- University United



# Bridges and Homes

By Chip Halbach, *executive director of Minnesota Housing Partnership*

**M**y concern with the catastrophe of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis may have been heightened by the fact that I drove under the bridge only an hour prior to its collapse. But as a housing advocate, I also am struck by the connection between that incident and our country's failure to address the deterioration of public housing.

The most direct connection between the I-35W bridge and affordable housing is that this bridge has frequently been used as a refuge by homeless individuals. Patrick Wood, with the Minnesota Coalition of the Homeless, assures us that due to the time of day of the collapse and because of recent city and state efforts to keep the homeless from using bridges for shelter, it is unlikely that any homeless people were injured.

But I also view public housing, like bridges, as a vital element of America's infrastructure designed to serve our communities. The media rightly publicizes the failure of government to maintain the country's transportation infrastructure. The disinvestment in public housing provides a story line similar to that for transportation. While hopefully we won't see headlines describing a building's collapse, there is a real risk to the well-being of residents, if not their safety.

Much of Minnesota's public housing, like the I-35W bridge, was built in the 1960s. And, just like for our nation's aging bridges, there is inadequate attention to the aging public housing stock. Just in the Minneapolis neighborhoods near the bridge, the backlog of public housing repairs amounts to \$200 million. Due to the federal government's continued under-funding, the financing needed for repairs and improvements to the nation's public housing is estimated to be \$20 billion and growing.

Public housing repair needs, such as replacement of roofs, elevators and boilers, do not appear as immediately life threatening as those for bridges ...but then again, before August 1, no one thought the delayed repairs to the I-35W bridge were a matter of life and death either.

While Minnesota does invest in preservation of its public housing, the current level of investment is nowhere near what's needed to arrest the mounting physical deterioration of these buildings—which are home to many of the state's low-wage workers, retirees and people with disabilities.

For the sake of our communities, I hope that the nation's leaders get the message. The tragic bridge collapse in Minneapolis must not be repeated; the preservation of our nation's infrastructure, including its public housing, must be a priority.

*The Minnesota Housing Partnership is one of Minnesota's leading statewide affordable housing nonprofits. MHP promotes homes for all Minnesotans and assists Minnesota communities in the creation and preservation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people. For more information, visit [www.mhponline.org](http://www.mhponline.org).*



## POLICYLINK'S PRINCIPLES OF INFRASTRUCTURE EQUITY

The process for making decisions about infrastructure—what will be built or repaired, where it will happen, and how it will be paid for—should benefit broad constituencies, and the employment opportunities created as a result of infrastructure decisions should be available to people of color and residents of low-income communities. These goals—achieving equity for both people and places—inform the following principles. Taken together, they comprise a checklist to guide public decision-making to ensure that everyone benefits from infrastructure investments.

**PRINCIPLE 1:** Infrastructure decisions have widespread impact on housing, development, investment patterns, and quality of life, and the outcomes of those decisions must be fair and beneficial to all.

**PRINCIPLE 2:** Infrastructure plans should not have to compete with health, education, and human service needs, but should be recognized as equally critical governmental and societal responsibilities that produce equitable results.

**PRINCIPLE 3:** Budget priorities within infrastructure areas (for example, repairing levees vs. restoring wetlands to ensure storm protection; more buses vs. new rail systems to improve transportation options; building hospitals vs. community clinics to address community health needs) should be thoroughly assessed using an equity lens.

**PRINCIPLE 4:** Services and opportunities created by infrastructure decisions should be available and accessible to everyone in all types of communities.

**PRINCIPLE 5:** Employment and economic benefits associated with building and maintaining infrastructure should be shared throughout the region.

**PRINCIPLE 6:** The means for collecting revenues to support infrastructure improvements should be determined and applied in ways that are fair and do not disproportionately burden those with lower incomes.

**PRINCIPLE 7:** Infrastructure decision-making should be transparent and include mechanisms for everyone to contribute to the planning and policy-making process.

*PolicyLink is a national research and action institute that works collaboratively to develop and implement local, state, and federal policies to achieve economic and social equity. Visit [www.policylink.org](http://www.policylink.org) for more information.*

# ISAIAH Works with Allies to Develop Affordable Housing in Northwestern Suburbs

By Tim Brausen, *ISAIAH Northwest Caucus co-chair*

## ISAIAH is a non-partisan ecumenical organization

of nearly 100 churches in the metropolitan area that work together to promote a vision: that we act out of hope, not fear; that we move from isolation to community; that we reject the myth of scarcity and recognize God's abundance provides for all of our needs; and that we must move toward greater racial, economic and social justice for all. We embrace a vision of a metropolitan region that values and provides for all people equally. Working in cities like Maple Grove, Robbinsdale, and Brooklyn Park, ISAIAH's Northwest Caucus is helping communities to recognize our collective interest in providing stable, affordable workforce housing for our neighbors, as part of healthy communities.

## VICTORIES IN MAPLE GROVE, ROBBINSDALE

Maple Grove, a northwest suburb that straddles Interstates 494, 694 and 94, has grown tremendously in the past 20 years, with high-end single-family housing and substantial retail development. The supply of workforce housing has not kept pace, and teachers, firefighters, retail employees and others now struggle to afford to live in the community in which they work. Part of the battle to maintain affordability in communities like Maple Grove is that developers often encounter resistance when they propose multi-family housing projects.

Recently, Sand Companies proposed a 102-unit affordable rental apartment complex, known as Maple Village. Some residents of Maple Grove opposed the development, raising concerns about noise and safety issues. Housing for All, a collection of interested citizens and housing advocates (including ISAIAH and MICAH), supported the developer and organized citizens and business allies to attend numerous public meetings and council proceedings. After repeated delays, the Maple Grove City Council unanimously approved the development in January 2008. As a result,

working people and families in Maple Grove will have additional housing available to them in the next year.

In Robbinsdale, ISAIAH and CommonBond Properties have been instrumental in assisting the members of Faith Lilac Way Church to create a new 36-unit affordable senior rental complex. Property adjoining Faith Lilac Way Church had been condemned in the 1990s as part of the reconstruction and expansion of Highway 100 and was never redeveloped. ISAIAH was involved in creating a vision for affordable senior housing for the site. We took part in negotiations for the property to be sold to the city, which in turn agreed to sell it to CommonBond at a reduced market rate. After lobbying our federal representatives, a commitment for HUD Section 202 funding was confirmed this past October. Now it is anticipated that Robbins Way Seniors Community will break ground this fall, with occupancy by seniors occurring by March 2009.

## ONGOING WORK

ISAIAH also continues a campaign to promote municipal adoption of mandatory inclusionary zoning in suburban cities' updated comprehensive plans. Further, ISAIAH, along with others including the African American Action Committee, the Housing Preservation Project, Community Stabilization Project and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, is actively involved in educating cities and citizens about the necessity to increase and expand workforce housing in our suburbs. We are active with the Building Our Community Coalition (BOCC) in Brooklyn Park, trying to include affordable housing in Target Corporation's proposed expansion of its northwest campus.

*We welcome any and all allies to join us in promoting the cause of affordable housing and healthy communities. For more information, visit Isaiah's web site at <http://www.gamaliel.org/ISAIAH/default.htm>.*







# Smart Growth Sampler

## RACE MATTERS: RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

TODAY, MANY RACIALLY INEQUITABLE IMPACTS ARE PRODUCED INADVERTENTLY, through process and choices that may not even explicitly address race, may appear race neutral, or may even be offered to address racial disparities. That's why the Annie E. Casey Foundation has published a short primer on assessing policies, programs and practices for racial equity. The tool provides a set of guiding questions to determine if existing and proposed policies will help close the racial disparities gap. The five questions are:

- Who are the racial/ethnic groups in the area? For this policy/program/practice, what results are desired and how will each group be affected?
- Do current disparities exist by race/ethnicity around this issue? How did they get that way? How will they be affected by this policy/program/practice?
- For this policy/program/practice, what strategies are being used, and how will they be perceived by each group?
- Are the voices of all groups affected by the action at the table?
- Do the answers to questions 1-4 work to close the gaps in racial disparities in culturally appropriate ways? If not, how should the policy/program/practice be revised? If so, how can the policy/program/practice offer a model for others?

To download the foundation's fact sheet, visit [http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/racial\\_equity\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/racial_equity_analysis.pdf).

## 2008 STATE OF THE REGION ADDRESS

Metropolitan Council Chairman Peter Bill delivered the annual state of the region address in February with the declaration that 2008 was a year of progress for the agency. Among the achievements he cited were securing federal funding to begin construction of the Northstar commuter rail line, plans to move forward with the Central Corridor light rail line, a federal grant to improve transit and ease traffic congestion and the largest increase in transit ridership since 1982.

Chairman Bell also noted several negative trends affecting the region, most notably a lack of new job and housing creation. He called for four strategies the council will pursue to improve the Twin Cities region:

- Improving the transportation system, increasing transit ridership, and slowing traffic congestion growth
- Accommodating regional growth in an orderly, economical manner
- Maximizing the effectiveness of regional services, infrastructure and investments
- Protecting and enhancing the region's natural assets

The Met Council also released its 2007 survey of Twin Cities residents, which showed transportation, crime and social issues as community members' top priorities. It also noted that while 94 percent of residents believe the Twin Cities is a better place to live than other regions, 34 percent believe our quality of life is worse than it was a year ago. To download a copy of the report summary, go to <http://www.metrocouncil.org/metroarea/SurveyHighlights2007.pdf>.

## FIRST \$200,000 AWARDED TO CLOSE MINNEAPOLIS' DIGITAL DIVIDE

The city of Minneapolis' Digital Inclusion Fund, created as part of the community benefits negotiated during the contracting process for the city's wireless services, awarded its first round of grants in February. These grants went to nine different organizations, all aimed at improving technology access for low-income families, immigrants and other underserved populations.

The Digital Inclusion Fund received and evaluated 45 different project proposals designed to increase access to technology and technology education. The entities funded in this first round include: The Bridge for Runaway Youth, Patchwork Digital Divide, Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, Plymouth Christian Youth Center, the Minneapolis Public Library, TVbyGirls, Project for Pride in Living, the St. Paul Neighborhood Network and the Twin Cities Media Alliance.

As part of its wireless contract with the city of Minneapolis, US Internet agreed to provide \$500,000 upfront and 5 percent of ongoing profits to fund projects which level the technological playing field. Additional proposals will be solicited and awards of the remaining \$300,000 in upfront investment are expected later this year, after the network is completely operational. The fund is expected to grow to at least \$11 million over the 10-year span of the contract.

## WORDS THAT WORK: COMMUNICATIONS MESSAGING FOR COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKING FAMILIES RECENTLY RELEASED WORDS THAT WORK, a new report that teaches organizers how to successfully communicate about community benefits agreements. The report gives advocates, grassroots organizers, policy experts and community leaders the tools they need to shape public opinion through effective framing, messaging and other communications techniques.

Advocates across the nation must describe complex growth and development issues using simple language and concepts to influence the terms of debate. This toolkit can help practitioners find those messages and incorporate a proactive communications and media component into their CBA campaigns. The report is also written for community members who need communications resources to tell their stories, to illustrate the dramatic effect of rampant and ineffective development in their lives and to describe a positive vision of the community in which they want to live.

Download a copy of the report at [www.communitybenefits.org](http://www.communitybenefits.org) or request a copy by calling 303-727-8088.

## Joan Vanhala Joins the Alliance

Joan Vanhala joined the Alliance in February as a coalition organizer. A recent graduate of the Metropolitan State University individualized major program, Joan was able to apply her years of experience in community organizing and nonprofit program management to her degree focus "Community Organizing, Leadership Development: Methods and Practices."



Joan has an accomplished career that includes: expertise in community organizing to achieve lasting results through effective partnerships; leadership development to sustain organizing efforts for long-term community strength; and the inclusion of racial equity as a necessary component of grassroots community development. Her work in leadership development includes creating curriculum and leading classes in organizing, conducting community best practices workshops, and providing one-on-one technical support to community leaders.

Before coming to the Alliance, Joan worked for the Seward and Longfellow neighborhoods to develop and implement restorative justice programs for juveniles. She previously worked as the Native American Educational Services college campus director and a program manager for the Community Leadership Development Program at Family & Children's Service. As a community organizer for the Phillips neighborhood, Joan led several successful campaigns that resulted in the Green Institute/ReUse Center, Midtown Greenway Coalition, Franklin Avenue revitalization, public art projects created by neighborhood youth, and an energized citizen participation process in neighborhood planning and development.

"I am honored to be a part of such a great team of people dedicated to community voice and power in promoting equitable development in the metro area," Joan said. Joan will be contributing to equitable development campaigns and leading organizer trainings at the Alliance.

*The Alliance said goodbye to two staff members at the end of 2007. Jo Haberman, left, pictured with board member Julia Freeman, is now a lead community organizer for Outfront Minnesota. Unny Nambudiripad, center in photo on right, pictured with Diane Dube and Eric Muschler, is now the development coordinator for Compassionate Action for Animals. Thanks to Unny and Jo for their years of service to the Alliance and dedication to social, environmental and economic justice.*

## The Alliance is pleased to welcome new board members Rachel Dykoski and Flo Golod.

Rachel Dykoski is a mother of two, a concerned citizen and a burgeoning community activist. Rachel has worn many hats professionally; as a communication consultant for Hewitt Associates outside Chicago, as a public affairs director for a rock station in Minneapolis and most recently, as a development associate for a consulting firm serving nonprofits. She has returned to school and will complete her certification coursework in nonprofit management from the University of Illinois-Chicago in the summer of 2008.



As a person living with disability, Rachel is active as a public speaker and volunteer in the National MS Society Minnesota chapter's speakers bureau. Rachel represents Ward 6 on the Minneapolis Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. She has enjoyed joining and volunteering at St. Stephen's Catholic Church and was recently appointed to Environmental Justice Advocates

of Minnesota working group on global warming steering committee.

Flo Golod combines a life-long commitment to progressive social change with more than two decades of experience in fund development in the Twin Cities. In 2001, Flo Golod began consulting as Flo Golod & Associates in the areas of development, planning and management. She has worked with more than 25 organizations on annual campaigns, capital campaigns, development strategies and start-up efforts.



Before launching her consulting practice, Flo was the executive director of the award-winning Southside Family School for 20 years. She has served on several nonprofit boards and also provides board training. Flo received the McKnight Award for Community Service in 1985 and was recognized as an outstanding graduate at Metropolitan University in 1992.

