

Key Points

The University Northside Partnership Community Meeting
May 9, 2006 - 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Lucy Laney Elementary School

The information on the next 6 pages is from consultants' notes. Much of it is paraphrased and intended to represent the intent of what was said rather than the exact comments. No attempts have been made to validate the information.

Summary

The May 9, 2006 information meeting presented an opportunity for Northside residents to learn more about the University of Minnesota's Northside Partnership (UNP). It was the first of four UNP informational meetings hosted by Northway Community Trust and NRRC (Northside Residents Redevelopment Council). The additional meetings will be held on May 13 (Rainbow Terrace), May 16 (North Commons Park) and May 25 (Northway). Approximately 80 people attended the forum. Opening comments included a welcome by the host organizations, information regarding the University's history in North Minneapolis and University educational, entrepreneurial and other opportunities available to the Northside community. Reasons that the University is interested in having a visible presence on the Northside were also noted. The remaining portion of the meeting included audience comments, questions, and an explanation of NRRC's work with community residents and organizations to design a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) that will be negotiated with the university of Minnesota.

Presentation

The opening comments included the following:

University Vision, Interest, and Opportunities

- Acknowledgment of . . .
 - The University's long and varied history with North Minneapolis (mistakes have been made in University collaborations with the community).
 - The University's new leadership which has placed increased emphasis on establishing stronger partnerships with the community, including partnerships of mutual interests and benefits; shared responsibility and accountability; shared visions; and commitments to long-term, sustainable University resources in the community.
 - Some of the key institutional and community partners involved in the UNP process, including the city of Minneapolis, NorthPoint Health and Wellness, and the Coalition of Black Churches.
 - Some of the ways the community can access University programs, scholarships, and professional development opportunities (Example: The Founders Opportunity Scholarship).
- Numerous handouts on University programs related to the UNP were available for the meeting audience.

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NRRC and Coalition of Black Churches Support

- NRRC (Northside Residents Redevelopment Council) values the economic and community development opportunities that are possible through a University partnership with the North Minneapolis community. (North Minneapolis has fewer jobs than other parts of the city and the poverty rate in Minneapolis needs to be addressed through jobs, educational access, and other services that can be provided by the University which is a land grant institution. Land grant universities were designated by state legislatures or Congress to teach courses so that members of the working classes can obtain an education.)
- The Coalition of Black Churches expressed support for the UNP because of the opportunities available for economic development for African Americans, the ability for the community to claim Broadway, and sign off on a Community Benefits Agreement with the University. (The CBA allows the community to maintain oversight and monitoring of whatever the community agrees to that is included in the CBA such as the number of jobs created, targeted hiring, using contractors of color, etc.)

Business, Community and Economic Development Opportunities

- The Office of Business, Community and Economic Development (BCED), University of Minnesota can bring . . .
 - A comprehensive economic development strategy to North Minneapolis to help the community become a stronger, healthier, more vibrant, safer place for children to live and grow up.
 - The BCED office can partner with the community to develop a business incubator and a student entrepreneurs program.
 - The BCED office can provide technical assistance to nonprofits in the community, facilitate linkages to the Construction Trades Apprenticeship Program, and bring Extension classes in business and nonprofit management to the community.

Center for Early Education and Development Opportunities

- The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED), University of Minnesota helps promote school readiness through active partnerships in the community.
- The CEED focuses on children zero to kindergarten by offering teaching, research, and service and is especially interested in new ways language and literacy development can be promoted in home and child care environments.
- The CEED has assessment tools and tests for establishing baselines for early language, literacy and social development.
- The CEED's ability to host teaching and research sharing sessions benefits communities.

Family Center Opportunities

- Elements of the Mt. Hope Family Center in Rochester, New York were described and it is hoped that similar work can be accomplished in the Twin Cities, including:
 - The use of "evidence based treatment that works," and
 - A "reduction in the percentage of out-of-home placements for children and families.

- Mt. Hope Family Center has provided long-term support for after-school and community programs, summer camps, and professionals. The Center has held summer youth camps for 24 years.

Comments and Questions

One-hour was devoted to comments and questions from the audience. More questions were raised than comments. The comments included statements about research, business, real estate, and accountability. In some cases, issues were raised followed by suggestions about ways to garner community support. In other cases, members of the audience were not supportive of the UNP. The paraphrased comments are organized according to three headings: Research; Partnerships, Business Opportunities, and Real Estate; and Broken Promises, Accountability, and Funding.

Research

- African American researchers must be involved in any research-based process initiated in the North Minneapolis community. (African American children and youth learn differently and it would be easy to misjudge their behavior. Including African American researchers in the process can improve the credibility of the analysis and conclusions. "If you're going to analyze us make sure it's done right.")
- Research done well can be helpful to the broader community and even to other states, if the research is transferable. (The African American Men's Project (AAMP) began with research and there was a lot of "drama" around the idea of completing research in the African American community. Eventually the community came to realize the benefits of research and the work of AAMP has helped numerous communities outside of Minneapolis, including other states.)

Partnerships, Business Opportunities, and Real Estate

- A number of people are very interested in the UNP and would like to connect to the University staff that is leading the effort. There is particular interest in the UNP's programming being "therapy-based" and not including drugs.
- Any partnership has to address the history of slavery for African Americans and the "residual racism" that permeates the community.
- There is a need for children and family related businesses in the community, not adult related businesses like coffee houses. (There are a lot of children in North Minneapolis. We need a skating rink, a Chuck E. Cheese, a high school and a two-year college. The businesses that have been developed in the community are not family friendly.)
- There should be more jobs available for the people who live here (Jobs have left the community).
- Three hundred jobs and 8-10 businesses in a business incubator will not have a serious impact on economic development in this community.

- North Minneapolis real estate is becoming increasingly valuable – if the stadium is built downtown this land may become some of the most valuable in the city. (We have to give that serious consideration. If something sounds too good to be true it usually is.)

Broken Promises, Accountability, and Funding

- Education, economic, and social service promises have been broken (Example: Heritage Park. We haven't been as responsible as we should be for the mental health of our children and families and we cannot afford to experience any broken promises related to the mental health of our families).
- Promises have been broken from the "1800s to 2005" and its important to know what has happened throughout history that's related to experimentation on poor people and people of color (African Americans have been denied opportunities to serve African Americans. Some community members have a plan that includes having African Americans in control of any research done in North Minneapolis. Documentation on the history of experimentation was available).
- A project such as the UNP needs to provide more time for people in the impacted community to speak. (Hear from the community, if you want to partner with the community, provide full disclosure to the community such as who's getting paid as a community steward. There is concern about "Who's been bought?")
- It's difficult to hold institutions accountable for what they promise (If we allow this program into the community we will be supporting an entity that owes no allegiance to anyone – an entity that will have no accountability).
- Having Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis involved does not make this a community plan. (There has been a failure of leadership in North Minneapolis.)
- There is no help for nonprofits. (A 501 C-3 organization in North Minneapolis cannot get any funds from institutions. Money has to come directly out of a person's pocket to help the children in this community.)
- Billions of dollars in federal funds are allocated to organizations, state mandated processes, and programs that support out-of-home placements, until this financial support is addressed - change will be difficult.

Questions

Eighteen questions were raised about the Family Center, economic development, the Center for Early Education and Development, and the cost of the University Northside Partnership. Time restraints did not permit responses. The questions were:

Family Center

- How many African Americans were treated at the Mt. Hope Family Center?
- How is the Rochester, New York (Mt. Hope Family Center) African American population comparable to Minnesota?
- What is “research-based treatment” in terms a lay person can understand?
 - Who are the “subjects” of the treatment?
- What is “evidence-based treatment” in understandable terms?
- How will UNP research be different (There’s already a lot of research going on in the community)?
- Who is getting the research data and what will be done with it?
- How will this effort be more effective than what already exists (There are already a lot of ineffective nonprofits addressing poverty in North Minneapolis)?
- How will the UNP process involve the University of Minnesota’s African American students, sororities, fraternities, and others?

Jobs/Economic Development

- How many of the 300 jobs that the University says it’s bringing into the community will actually be available to people in the community?
 - What types of jobs will be available?
 - Will a Ph.D. or other graduate degree be needed to get such jobs?
 - Will the jobs that are available to community members be low-end, dead-end jobs?
- Regarding the Management and Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) for Nonprofits in the BCED office, why should a fee be required for University services when the UNP is supposedly bringing services into the community (There is promise of financial and management support for nonprofits but the brochure says the organization will have to pay a participation fee)?

Center for Early Education Development

- Where can a person get a sample of the “tests” that were referred to in the presentation?
- How are CEED programs and testing different than those required by *No Child Left Behind*?
- In terms of language and literacy, why aren’t Somali and other African languages incorporated into school curricula and programming like Spanish?
 - How can we help African families maintain their native languages?

Cost

- How much will the UNP cost?
- Where is the documentation associated with the UNP costs?

Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) Process

The Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) process for North Minneapolis includes community information meetings; a community review and recommendation meeting (community votes) to be convened by the NRRC Residential Commercial Task Force and held on July 10; and a final NRRC Board meeting July 17th to make recommendations to the City Council. The four community meetings scheduled in May are part of the information sharing phase for the CBA and they allow community members to ask questions and think about the recommendations they want to make regarding the development of property prior to the City Council vote. The process includes recording discussions and posting the results in places that are accessible to community residents.

For the University Northside Partnership, information will be available:

- On NRCC's website
- On Northway's website
- Mailed to anyone who doesn't have computer access
- Available in a file in the NRCC office if anyone wants to drop by