The Ascension Parish project: An Environmental Scan

Prepared for:
Fr. Michael O'Connell, Pastor
Patricia Stromen, Administrator
Melissa Streit, Director of Development

Prepared by:
Marketing Research Class
University of St. Thomas

December 10, 2002
With Special Thanks for Support From...

The Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest
The Aquinas Foundation
Minnesota Campus Compact
The Bush Foundation
Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences,
University of St. Thomas
Background

• Changes at Ascension
  • 1960’s - 1,800 families and 1,200 students
  • Today - 400 families and 270 students

• Our Goals
  • Learn about the past
  • Determine who makes up current parish community
  • Predict what may happen to Ascension in the future
Focus Areas

• Housing Stock in North Minneapolis
• Services available to Children and the Elderly
• Major Businesses in the area and changes they have encountered
• Economics of Neighborhood Households
• Specific Parish Demographics
Housing

• 55411 zip code - 6.7% housing vacancy rate (9,339/10,011 occupied)

• 55411 = 51% owner-occupied
• Twin Cities Area = 71% owner-occupied
Housing, continued

• Affordable Housing Availability
  • 2.5% vacancy for $500 to $600/mo.
  • 10.5% vacancy for $1,400 - plus/mo.

• 91 Total Section 8 vacancies as of 10/23/02
Services for Children

• North side population of children 0-18 increased 111% since 1990

• Increase in non-traditional household structures
Services for Children

• There are services available for children, including:
  • Recreational activities
  • Childcare
  • After-school programs
  • Counseling and support services
  • Services for teen parents
Services for the Elderly

- Elderly increasing as a whole in Minnesota
- Elderly population of North Minneapolis decreasing
Services for the Elderly

• Services currently available to the elderly include:
  • Meal delivery
  • Training and part-time employment
  • Long-term nursing care and short-term rehabilitation
  • Recreational activities
  • Transportation
Area Businesses

- Area was once a prominent area for conducting business
- Few businesses survived changes during the 1960’s
  - Employment declined
  - Economy of the North Side declined as a whole
Economics

- Population Comparisons 2000 to 2006
  - White decrease from 19% to 13%
  - Black increase from 56% to 60%
  - Asian/Pacific increase from 15% to 16%
  - Hispanic increase from 5% to 7%
## North Minneapolis vs. Hennepin County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Near North</th>
<th>Hennepin County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American</strong></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian/Pacific Islander</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanics</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.censtats.census.gov/data/mn/05027053.pdf
Income Levels

- North Minneapolis decrease from $25,100 in 2000 to $23,600 in 2006
- Hennepin County median = $46,600
## Demographic Comparison (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Near North</th>
<th>Hennepin County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under age 44</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-headed household</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Children</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Conclusions

- The population of North Minneapolis is predominately:
  - African American
  - Poor
  - Less educated
Methodology - Quantitative

- Survey administered October 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th}
  - Saturday Mass
  - 2 Sunday Masses

- Spanish translation available
  - Back-translated for accuracy
Methodology - Qualitative

- Secondary research analyzed
- Lists of potential interviewees created
- 40: government, housing, services, businesses
- Questionnaires designed
- Interviewees contacted and interviews scheduled
- Interviews conducted, tape-recorded, and then transcribed
Results: Ascension
Parishioner Demographics

- Race
- Language
- Income
- Zip Code
- Education
- Home Ownership
- Occupation
Results: Housing

- Vacancy Rates
- Dream Homes
- Maintaining Housing
- Predatory Lending
Results: Services for Children and the Elderly

- Programs
- Funding
- Constituencies Served
- Program Awareness and Involvement
- Transportation
- Volunteers
- Other Organizations
Results: Businesses

- Business Outlook
- Crime
- Security Presence
- Level of Education of Employees
- Future Training
- Employee Commute
- Vicious Cycle
Results: Economics, Ethnicity and Religious Institutions

- Economics
  - Positive Attitudes
  - Job Opportunities
  - Mental Health Issues
  - Welfare Restrictions

- Ethnic Diversity
  - DIVERSE!

- Religious Groups
  - Cooperation of different congregations.
Conclusions

- Change in demographics of worshippers
  - White Irish to Latino
  - Over half Latino: 54%
  - Few Latino members
    - Only 15% of current members are Latino
  - Most have no college education: 80%
    - About 20% do not have high school diploma
  - Most have low annual incomes of under $35,000

- Majority travel short distances
  - 75% travel 10 or fewer miles
Conclusions from masses

- Saturday afternoon mass demographics
  - 80% Caucasian
  - 11% African-American
  - 5% Latino
  - Over 50% are elderly
  - English is primary household language
  - Majority make between $35,000 and $50,000
  - Primary occupations: professional/technical/clerical
  - Average household size: 1-2
Conclusions from masses

- Sunday 9:30am mass demographics
  - 60% Caucasian
  - 20% African-American
  - 11% Latino
  - English is primary household language
  - Over half make $50,000 or more
  - Primary occupations: professional/technical/clerical
  - Average household size: 1-2
Conclusions from masses

- Sunday 11:30am Spanish mass demographics
  - 95% Latino
  - Spanish is primary household language
  - Over half make $20,000 or less
  - Primary occupations: service/industrial labor
  - Average household size: 4 or more
  - Most are married
  - Most rent their homes
Comparison of masses

2 distinct populations

- Differences by:
  - Race
  - Language
  - Education
  - Profession
  - Income
  - Household size
Conclusions

- Call to support programs
  - Mental health
  - Children and Elderly

- Programs need more resources
  - Volunteers
  - Funding
  - Transportation

- Housing in North Minneapolis
  - High percentage of rental units
  - Corporate/Government subsidies down
  - Redlining, predatory lending, flipping

- Call for Laddered housing
Conclusions

- Ethnic/Religious diversity continues to increase with influx of immigrants
- High concentration of affordable housing
  - Never-ending poverty cycle
- Lack of for-profit businesses to help end poverty cycle
  - Solution:
    - businesses=jobs=less poverty=economic growth
Conclusions

- Call for change in area businesses
  - Larger businesses with internal promotion opportunities
- Business relations with Ascension
  - Should be connection between faith and business community
- Call to work together to strengthen community
  - “If people perceive an area as dangerous or that it will affect their children, they’ll flee and hurt businesses. So the churches and social services are what can tie the community together and make it more stable.” [Mr. Delmore of Gearty-Delmore Funeral Parlor (11/14/02)]
Recommendations

- Join with community leaders, non-profits, and local businesses
  - Inform parishioners of available resources
  - Obtain financial and human resources to expand programs and services
    - Fundraising
    - Create volunteer programs/clubs
    - Tap into talents of parishioners
Recommendations

- **Fundraising**
  - Work together with community leaders, non-profits and local businesses
  - Grant writing
    - Catholic Campaign for Human Development
    - *2000 Religious Funding Resource Guide*
    - *2000 Guide to Religious Community Development Investment Funds*
Recommendations

- Offer programs/services: use parishioner and community expertise
  - English classes
  - Night classes for GED preparation
  - Job training seminars – partner with businesses
  - Daycare – weekday and during mass
  - Workshops for first-time homebuyers and renters/subsidy dwellers in English and Spanish
    - Information on how to buy a house
    - Home-maintenance issues
    - Renters’ rights
Recommendations

- Immigrant immersion program
- Increase publicity of events/programs
  - Newsletters: target non-members
  - Information cards at Mass
  - Announcements during Mass
  - Information board with announcements
- Membership drive: 56% interested
  - “Rally Sunday” to promote membership
  - “We’ve missed you” postcards
Recommendations

● Social events to unite community
  – Clean up community: Leaf-raking day
  – Family carnival/fun day
  – Provide facility for monthly gatherings
  – Cookie-cart for all masses
  – Bake sales, ice-cream socials, raffles, and cook-outs

● Continue to offer an outstanding education for students at Ascension school

● Air-conditioning and more parking
Quantitative Survey
Limitations

Administrative Issues:

• Incomplete information for language and job status

• Potentially inaccurate information for income

• Incomplete instructions

• Possible response bias
Qualitative Interview Limitations

**Sampling Issues:**
- Lack of access to some key experts

**Administrative Issues:**
- Response bias
The Current Situation

- $4.5 billion state deficit
- Possible budget cuts in…
  - K-12 education
  - Health care for low-income individuals
  - Aid to local governments
  - Human services (Welfare and Social Assistance)
- Opportunity for Ascension and other community organizations to try and minimize the effects of this deficit on North Minneapolis.