

North Minneapolis: Coming Together

Over the years, people have complained that organizations in North Minneapolis couldn't or wouldn't work collectively on neighborhood improvement. True or not, it's certainly no longer the case. The past several months have demonstrated how folks on the North Side are collaborating to help make a great neighborhood even better.

This new spirit of cooperation was evidenced by the coordinated response to a May tornado that ravaged parts of the area, leaving many residents homeless or with property damage. Everyone rallied to help; any turf battles that may have existed before just didn't matter. This same spirit of collaboration can be seen in the [North Minneapolis Comprehensive Community Development](#) (NoMi-CCD) effort.

NoMi-CCD, led by the [Northway Community Trust](#), has attracted a wide range of partners that includes Emerge Community Development, the North Side Economic Opportunity Network (NEON), the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition, Juxtaposition Arts, and the [North Side Achievement Zone](#) (NAZ)—with its own 60 organizational partners dedicated to raising the academic performance of children and youth. Together, this broad new alliance has begun to create an [action plan](#) to increase physical, economic, and social capital in north Minneapolis.

Three important economic development efforts led by NoMi-CCD partners were launched or given a boost following the Governor's March 2011 Economic Summit: the FastTrac job training program, the [North Side Economic Opportunity Network](#) (NEON), and the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) camp.

The State Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) provided \$300,000 in support for a "FastTrac" program. Emerge Community Development (a LISC COACTION grantee) is identifying the 100 unemployed and underemployed people in North Minneapolis who will receive immediate training and other help to prepare them for jobs

NEON, created in 2005 with leadership from Northway Community Trust (a LISC grantee), received \$200,000 from DEED to encourage business and job growth in a part of the Twin Cities that's long struggled with poverty and chronic unemployment. NEON partners will provide counseling, business planning and marketing, access to capital, cash flow management, and startup assistance to neighborhood businesses and entrepreneurs through mid-2012. All services provided under the program will be available at no cost to clients.



North Side Achievement Zone

Juxtaposition Arts (a LISC COACTION grantee) also received \$12,000 in DEED support to carry out a summer STEM camp—three weeks of hands-on training and mentorship for North Side youth in the fundamentals of design/architecture/landscape at the University of Minnesota’s College of Design.

Through the support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Twin Cities LISC is also funding a complementary effort by NAZ to increase economic opportunities for North Side residents. The effort links them to services provided by Emerge’s new Financial Opportunity Center (also funded by LISC through a federal grant from the Social Innovation Fund), by Twin Cities RISE’s empowerment training, and by other North Side job training providers.



FLOW art crawl on the North Side

Another sign of North Side vitality and cooperation was this summer’s [FLOW art crawl](#) down West Broadway, an annual event that went on despite the tornado damage. Sponsored by the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition, NAZ, the Northside Arts Collective, Twin Cities LISC, and nearly a dozen other businesses and nonprofits, the art crawl showcased local artists, musicians, dancers, photographers, and food vendors and attracted a large crowd.

“This is a vital community where great things happen,” said Dudley Voigt, the event’s artistic director. “FLOW is about shining light on all the

good things that happen every day in North Minneapolis. There are over 300 artists that we know of that live and work here. It’s about exposing people to another North Side.”

Among the highlights of this year’s event were murals, many painted by participants in Juxtaposition Arts youth programs, and a commemorative panorama photograph taken of all the volunteers who contributed to tornado relief earlier in the summer. The photo will be exhibited throughout the community as a tribute to the efforts of community members from across the region and as an invitation to all Twin Citians to stay engaged as the North Side moves forward...*together*.

LISC investments in the North Side (1988-2010): \$58.9 million invested; \$169.4 million leveraged