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# **Coming Together As a Community**

## **A Metro-Wide Conversation About The Challenges of Education, Housing and Segregation**

**Sponsored By:  
The Community Circle Collaborative  
and the  
Education and Housing Equity Project**

## **Introduction to The Community Circle Collaborative Process**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Community Circle Collaborative Process, a guided conversation focused on the challenges of Segregation, Housing and Education in the Twin Cities.

Across the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region, perhaps dozens of groups similar to yours will be conducting conversations about this issue. Your participation means that you are part of a small but significant community of people who are taking action to address this difficult and important issue.

For at least three sessions of two hours each -- over the course of three to five weeks -- you will gather with other members of your circle to share opinions, facts and perspectives. The goal of these sessions is to fully discuss the issue from many points of view and to develop solutions as you and members of your circle see fit. Eventually, we hope to share some of these solutions with public policy makers so that the entire region may benefit from this process.

Before you begin your conversation, please read this guidebook as completely and thoroughly as possible. While it does not cover every perspectives, the guidebook provides background that can help you more fully understand the issue and can assist you in discussing it more completely.

### **How The Circle Process Works**

In many cultures, circles are symbols of equality, fairness and completeness. The Community Circle Process has been designed with these qualities in mind. However, your cooperation is required if your Community Circle experience is to be satisfactory.

In the early days of American Democracy, communities held town hall meetings or sat around pot-bellied stoves or spinning wheels to discuss major issues. Communities were smaller and more homogenous, and the various members of the community usually knew each other well.

The pros and cons of those early American meetings were essentially the same: homogeneity bred greater agreement and

less conflict; however, other voices in the community -- those of women, slaves, Native Americans, the poor, and immigrants outside the mainstream -- were seldom heard.

As American Democracy has grown to include a wider variety of individuals, the need to broaden discussion about major issues affecting the nation has increased. Today, inclusivity is highly prized in such discussions because the Jeffersonian vision of "an informed citizenry," which is essential to a healthy democracy, cannot be fully realized without it.

The Community Circle Collaborative Process is one way to sample the broadest possible spectrum of opinion within a community. A similar process has been used in many parts of the nation to help create a public voice about major issues. The Community Circles themselves are a refreshing change from the narrow and often restrictive discussions of the past and the competitive debates used in present day political programs. In short, Community Circles are the wave of the future because they are cooperative, not competitive, in nature.

### Why a "Conversation" ?

Much of what we see in the media and in public meetings today cannot be called conversation for many reasons. Chief among them is the fact that advocacy of one point of view or another, at the expense of decorum, is an integral part of what is often called "positioning" or "posturing." This kind of communication has become an accepted fact in most of the media, but it ultimately leads to cynicism and withdrawal from the political process.

On the other hand, to "converse" means to "share words with others" and carries the implication of equality of opportunity and status. A "conversation" is a sharing of ideas, thoughts, and perspectives intended to lead to a understanding. Unity of purpose is inherent in the word; a conversation should clear the air by honestly reflecting differences and similarities.

Agreement, however, is not necessary in order to have a successful conversation. What is important is listening, reflecting and speaking from both the head and heart. Mutual respect and a belief in the healing nature of sharing ideas across boundaries

of ethnicity, geography, socioeconomics and even language differences can go a long way toward making a conversation satisfactory.

The goal of the sponsors of this program is to institutionalize the art of guided conversation in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region area. We sincerely believe that solutions to serious and often divisive issues can be found if we put aside our fears and prejudices and work together to realize our dreams.

### **What The Process Requires From You**

Your role as a participant in the Community Circle Collaborative Process includes the following requirements:

- A commitment to the entire 3-5-week meeting schedule
- A promise to share your thoughts honestly and respectfully
- A willingness to listen deeply to others
- A preference for collaboration rather than competition
- A desire to find common ground and creative solutions

### **What You Can Expect From The Process**

When you invest your time and effort in the Community Circle Collaborative Process, you will receive:

- The opportunity to be heard by others
- Challenges to some of your beliefs, attitudes and assumptions
- Moments of great insight and inspiration
- Feelings of confusion and, at times, alienation
- A sense of accomplishment

### **How To Begin**

1. Your facilitator has been trained to help your circle begin discussions. Please follow his/her guidelines as outlined at the beginning of each Community Circle meeting.
2. Read the materials in this guidebook before you begin discussions.
3. Please feel free to conduct your own research using the bibliography in the back or any other materials.

4. Please do not seek to dominate discussion or monopolize the floor at any time. Remember to be courteous.
5. Although the discussion period may vary depending on the size of each Community Circle, keep in mind that it is difficult to sustain sessions of more than two hours.

### **The Task Of The Community Circles**

The Community Circle Collaborative meetings are gathered to discuss the following two central questions:

1. *What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin City area children and families?*
2. *What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing and economic opportunities for all children in the Twin Cities area?*

These are important questions. The Twin Cities Metropolitan Region is moving toward a crossroads. We have a historic opportunity to confront many of the problems of urban decay that have already overwhelmed other metropolitan areas.

We hope that through conversations such as the one in which you are participating today, a greater understanding of these issues can emerge, along with new ideas for solutions.

## Part One: A Snapshot Of Where We Are Today

*"What is the relationship between -- and the impacts of -- existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin City area children?"*

Every year when the list of America's most livable cities is published, the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis are high on the list. The standards used to judge major metropolitan areas -- job growth, access to parks and recreation, good schools and social services, lower crime rates -- Minneapolis and St. Paul are superior to many other cities. In comparison to other areas, the Twin Cities is a wonderful place to live. Yet, we are not immune from the social problems that plague other cities.

This is particularly true of challenges related to segregation, poverty, housing and education:

### **Segregation & Poverty**

- The proportion of people of color who live in poverty is higher in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region than any other central city in the nation.
- In 1990, per capita income for the region's people of color averaged about \$8500, compared to nearly \$18,000 for whites.
- Less than half the jobs in Minneapolis pay what is considered a livable wage.
- Between 1980 and 1990, 67 percent of new jobs in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region were created in the suburbs.
- The poverty rate in Minneapolis is 18.5 percent; in St. Paul it is 16.7 percent; in the suburbs, it is 4.54 percent.
- Among African Americans, the poverty rate in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region is 37 percent, more than six times the rate for whites. For Native Americans, Asians, and Latinos, the rates are 40 percent, 32 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

- The highest poverty rate on a city-wide basis is among Asians living in St. Paul -- 6 out of every 10 lives in poverty.
- The United Way recently cited data revealing that the highest incidence of poverty in Minnesota occurs in specific neighborhoods of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The study concluded that a disproportionate number of those living in poverty are women and children and people of color.
- Between 1979 and 1989, the number of children living in poverty increased 4 percent, compared with a 1.4 percent increase in poverty in the general population.
- Over 73,000 people in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region suburbs currently live in poverty and the numbers are growing.
- About 60 percent of Minnesota families in poverty have at least one family member in the work force.

### **Housing**

- According to the 1989 American Housing Survey, over 37,000 household in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing. (The federal government considers 30 percent to be affordable.)
- The percent of poor households in the Twin Cities paying excessive amounts for housing is greater than the national average.

### **Please Note: More Housing Data Needed Here?**

### **Education**

- In Minneapolis, students of color make up 65 percent of the total student population; in St. Paul they are 60 percent.
- In the 1995-1996 school year, 85 percent of the students in the Minneapolis Public Schools were receiving free or reduced lunches. In St. Paul, 75 percent of students of color and 35 percent of white students received free or reduced lunches.

### **Please note: More Education Data Needed ?**

### **Legal Issues**

- A lawsuit filed by the Minneapolis chapter of the NAACP vs. the State of Minnesota alleges that schools in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region are "inadequate by design and chance."
- The St. Paul School District has also filed suit against the State of Minnesota alleging "inequity of resources" and unfair distribution of state funds for resources.
- Both of these lawsuits are likely to be settled out of court in favor of the plaintiffs because of the overwhelming evidence in their favor.

**Also, plug in table here: Comparison of school districts showing the numbers of students of color, students below the poverty line, and education achievement levels.**

The following charts, graphs and maps further illustrate the situation in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region today:

1. Distribution of Affordable Housing in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region Area
2. Distribution of persons below the poverty line and people of color in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region area.
3. Minneapolis Infant Mortality Rates by Race
4. Minnesota Life Expectancy in Years by Gender and Race, 1980-1990

## Questions For Discussion

1. What do you think are the most significant problems facing your immediate community? The broader community?
2. Looking at the bullet points and charts provided above, is there any data that surprises you?
3. Do you believe that the Twin Cities is racially and economically segregated? Do we have two (or more) separate societies? Why?
4. How does data about poverty, housing and communities of color relate to your neighborhood? Is it consistent with your experience?
5. What is the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region doing right? What is it doing wrong? Make two lists and compare them.
6. Do some people have more opportunities than others? Why?
7. Do you see life opportunities increasing or decreasing in your neighborhood?
8. What does racism mean to you? Do you believe the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region is a racist area?
9. What impact do you think personal racism has on the quality of life in the Twin Cities?
10. What impact do you think institutional racism has on the poverty, housing and education issues we are discussing?
11. What is your own neighborhood like in terms of race? Class? Ethnicity? National origin?

**12. If you were to think of this circle meeting as your community, what characteristics would you say unite you as a group? What expectations do you have of each other?**

## Part Two: Creating a Vision for Our Future

Now that we've taken a look at the way things are today in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region, it is time to consider our vision for the future. Each individual's vision may be different, but in approaching this exercise, we invite you to think broadly about the community. In fact, we invite you to dream a little about the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region could be like, what resources would be needed to realize the vision, and what policies or programs need to be changed.

The assumptions underlying this visioning process are simple:

1. All of us want the best for ourselves and each other.
2. Our success as a community depends on the success of most, if not all, others.
3. As a community, we have yet to realize our greatest aspirations and must work together to fulfill our potential.

### Questions To Facilitate Visioning Our Future

- What do you/we want the community to look and feel like five years from now? 10 years? 20 years?
- What are the underlying values that will be needed to sustain the community in the future?
- What do you need from your community? What does your community need from you?
- In what ways is your community tied to the well-being of other communities in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region?
- As a group, can you articulate a scenario of the future that meets the needs of everyone?

# Part Three: What Can We Do?

## Three Perspectives

*"What can we do, or should we do as individuals and as a community, to enhance the life opportunities (especially educational, housing and economic opportunities) for all children in the Twin Cities area?"*

In the pages that follow, three of the major perspectives on the above question are presented. These perspectives are in no way mutually exclusive; nor are they the only ones circulating in the marketplace of ideas. Our purpose in selecting them is to stimulate discussion and provide a framework for your conversation and deliberation.

### Perspective One **Strengthening The Core : Building From Within**

This perspective emphasizes the need to reinvest in the core city as a means of strengthening the entire Twin Cities Metropolitan Region. Through such reinvestment and a re-commitment to the core, issues such as poverty, education and housing will be ameliorated at the neighborhood level.

#### **Key Premises**

- Impoverished communities and schools are the result of unequal distribution of resources.
- Schools that are constituted around particular cultural identity by choice improve student self-esteem.
- It is not necessary for children of color to sit next to white children in order to academically achieve.

- Community schools are best equipped to reflect the cultural and community values of students and their parents.
- Neighborhood schools will enable more parent and community participation in the schools.
- Revitalizing the core -- through a reallocation of resources both public and private -- will improve the housing and economic opportunities for minorities and central city residents.
- Desegregation through busing erects significant barriers to a strong sense of community and involvement.

## Perspective One --

### Advocates Say...

- A stable core is key / essential for a stable region.
- If the region cooperates to improve schools, create jobs, and revitalize neighborhoods in the central cities, people will become more self-sufficient in the long run.
- Rather than spending millions to create new housing and duplicate existing infrastructure in the suburbs, we should use the tremendous human and economic resources in the central cities.
- If we help rebuild neighborhoods in the core, people of all income levels will have wider choices of where to live. This will help to attract and retain middle income people.
- People of color need to build a sense of community around their unique history and culture. Moreover, they need to maintain whatever political representation they have.
- Many people prefer to live in segregated neighborhoods and go to segregated schools as long as those neighborhoods and schools have equal resources.
- Parents, teachers, students and educators must build bridges that ensure the success of locally based schools.
- Hiring more teachers and staff of color who are from the community would help students feel a greater sense of self esteem and positively impact their academic performance.
- Neighborhood schools will help to stabilize education and retain the middle class tax base.

## Perspective One:

### Critics Say...

- Pumping money into the central cities is not the answer. Many of these neighborhoods are so impoverished that revitalization is all but impossible.
- In order to create more regional stability, our communities need to be more economically and racially diverse. Building up infrastructure in the cities will do little good if our communities are still divided along race and class lines.
- The only way to break down the racial hierarchy that currently exists is to integrate. People of color need to enter into the economic and social mainstream where they will have more access to good jobs and good schools. Equally important, whites must diversify and expand their understanding of people of color. If we continue to stay apart, racial stereotypes will fester.
- People need to have real choices about where they live. Since a majority of the new jobs are in the suburbs, and because we have limited mass transit in the region, more low-income housing should be developed in the suburbs.
- Creating "enterprise zones" is not an effective way to stimulate economic activity and create jobs in the urban core. They are not pro-labor or pro-community, but pro-business and pro-profit.
- Reinforcing existing, segregated communities will continue to perpetuate the cycle of socio-economic/racial isolation.

## **Perspective Two:** **Market Choice and Individual Responsibility**

This perspective emphasizes that it is not the job of government or institutions to improve life opportunities for citizens. It is up to individuals and families to determine their own future. Historically, families have thrived by creating self-sufficiency. Government intervention has tended to create debilitating dependencies.

### **Key Premises**

- We can create opportunities for people with limited resources by subsidizing low-income households with vouchers for education and housing.
- Promoting competition between schools will enhance educational achievement.
- Private institutions (churches, foundations, businesses) are better equipped than government to serve their local communities.
- In order to promote achievement, we must reward self-sufficiency and hard work.
- Public sector social welfare programs divert capital that could otherwise be invested in job creation in core communities.
- The breakdown of the family negatively impacts educational achievement and economic opportunity/advancement.
- A return to traditional values by communities of color would do more to restore their viability than any other single remedy.
- Encourage microenterprise and entrepreneurship.

## **Perspective Two:**

### **Advocates Say...**

- The private market system is faster, more creative and flexible than plodding bureaucratic government in responding to job, housing, and education markets.
- Local level communities are best equipped to answer the needs of their constituents.
- Parents are better equipped/should have ultimate control over their children's schooling (including where their children go to school)
- Public sector social welfare programs divert capital that could otherwise be invested in job creation in core communities.
- Allow the housing market to regulate itself; if demand is great enough, low-income housing will be developed by those who see economic opportunity in meeting these needs.
- Residence in the more affluent communities must be earned through merit and hard work and should not be granted by government fiat.
- Segregation and Intergation also both been tried and have failed because both involved too much government interference.

## Perspective Two

### Critics Say...

- Less than half of the jobs in Minnesota pay a livable wage. Over 60 percent of Minnesota's families in poverty have at least one person in the work force. If we want to create less dependency on the government, we have to create a market system that allows responsible people to sustain themselves.
- Discrimination remains a significant barrier for people of color, no matter how "responsible" they are.
- Poor people do not have the time or money to lobby for their interests and rights. The wealthy, on the other hand, abuse their power and continue to grow richer at the expense of the poor.
- Subsidies for middle and upper income people already exist. This perspective simply seeks to eliminate lower income families from public support.
- The problem with social welfare policies in this country is not that we've done too much -- creating dependency -- but that we've done too little.
- The private market system is not designed to accommodate the social welfare needs of people below the poverty line.
- Basic human rights, such as housing and education, cannot be left to the whim of the marketplace.
- Race and socioeconomic discrimination operate to eliminate the efficiency of free markets.

## **Perspective Three: Creating Opportunities Region-Wide**

**This perspective emphasizes dispersing poverty through Twin Cities Metropolitan Region-wide strategies for jobs, housing, transportation and education.**

### **Key Premises**

- The current concentration of poverty cannot be ameliorated without a more equitable distribution of affordable housing.
- Racial segregation results from a combination of lack of choice and racial discrimination in the housing markets.
- Segregated communities result in segregated schools, segregated churches, segregated work forces, and segregated social gatherings. Segregation does not further our objectives.
- Schools segregated by race and income negatively impact educational achievement.
- Residential segregation by race and income isolates communities from the opportunity structure.
- A Twin Cities Metropolitan Region-wide program for low- and moderate-income housing prevents the need for busing as a remedy for segregation.

## Perspective Three

### Advocates Say...

- Research shows that educational achievement and life opportunities for both white students and students of color improves in desegregated school settings.
- Achievement gains are strongest when desegregation begins in the early grades and is implemented under a Twin Cities Metropolitan Region-wide plan.
- People who live in economically and racially diverse areas better understand others who are unlike themselves and are better prepared to work and function in a diverse society. Lack of experience with the racial "other," in turn, contributes to the mystification of racial differences and the perpetuation of stereotypes, fears, and ignorance.
- The opportunity to live in integrated, middle-income neighborhoods appears to boost employment among adults and school performance among children.
- Given the location of most new jobs, economic opportunity would increase if low-income housing were more available in the suburbs.

## Perspective 3

### Critics Say...

- An influx of low-income families into suburbs could lead to increased crime and declining property values. Instead of creating problems for new neighborhoods, we need to concentrate on cleaning up the communities that need it.
- Efforts to desegregate neighborhoods and schools with high proportions of minorities assume that it is better to live and go to school in majority white settings. This is disrespectful of the strengths of communities of color.
- Because of institutional racism, people of color need to remain together in order to preserve their culture and maintain their political representation.
- "Mobility" as an option will take a long time to implement. It is a gradualistic approach and will do little to help the thousands of poor who need help *right now*. Furthermore, it is tokenistic. Past attempts to provide mobility to low-income families and people of color have been limited in scope, actually helping few people.
- Dispersing poverty may help the few, token families who are lucky enough to escape the ghettos, but it does little for the people, schools, and deteriorated neighborhoods that are left behind.
- Even if obstacles are removed and the poor are granted more mobility, the fact remains that there is a general mismatch between the skills of the poor and the skills required by the available jobs.

## Further Questions To Consider

As you move toward closure of your conversation, we'd like you to consider the following questions in relation to each of the three perspectives we have provided, as well as any you have developed:

- What is appealing about this perspective?
- What are the downsides of this perspective?
- Can you tell a story illustrating this perspective?
- Who is hurt by this perspective? Who is helped by it?
- What are the long-term costs and consequences of this perspective?

## Harvesting A Public Voice

In this concluding section, we ask you to recognize and articulate two things in order to move forward: *areas of continued difference*; and *areas of agreement*. Both are important aspects of harvesting a public voice. Policy makers need to know where conflict and agreement exists so that they may understand the boundaries and public sensitivities of an issue. To facilitate your deliberation, please consider the following:

### **1. What are the areas of tension or conflict that seem to be intractable when conversing about this issue?**

Please write down the issues where conflict has been unresolved. Be as thorough as you can about defining these areas of difference.

### **2. Are there areas of agreement on the issues themselves and on potential solutions?**

Please write down the issues where agreement exists. Be as thorough as you can about defining these areas of agreement.

At a public forum and citizen's summit scheduled in the near future, a representative from your community circle will be asked to share your findings and conclusions with decision makers from the region. In this way, you and your group will make a valuable contribution to evolving public policy on segregation, housing and education in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region.

Community Circles can add much to the quality of life by providing a framework for getting to know your neighbors and stimulating public and public involvement. In addition, Community Circles can be used as social laboratories for discovering the answer to the most important question of all: How Should We Live Together?

We sincerely hope you have enjoyed this process and that you will use it again.

# Discussion Guide

5/14/96 draft outline

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- Introduction to the study circle process
- Sharing of personal experiences

**Session 2** -- *What does residential segregation mean in the Twin Cities metropolitan area today?*

- Current metro housing patterns - by race & by income
- Presentation and exploration of different perspectives on the causes of residential segregation

**Session 3** -- *What is the state of educational opportunity and achievement in the Twin Cities today?*

- Current metro education patterns
  - Racial & socioeconomic makeup across different school districts
  - Achievement statistics across different school districts
  - Resources available across different school districts
- Presentation and exploration of various perspectives on these differences

**Session 4** -- *How is the composition of our communities affecting these differences in educational opportunity and achievement?*

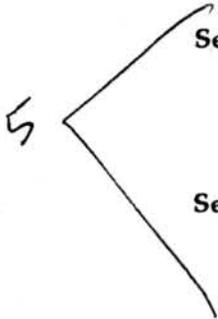
- Effects of residential segregation
  - Effects of concentrated poverty on schools
  - Need for busing/ desegregation
  - Differences in tax resources
  - Lack of interaction across races and classes
- Presentation and exploration of different perspectives on this connection and effects

**Session 5** -- *What can we do in our communities?*

- Presentation and exploration of different approaches and perspectives on what should be done
- Group development of strategies

**Session 6** -- *What larger policies are needed?*

- Presentation and exploration of different approaches and perspectives on what should be done
- Group development of strategies



- Combine sessions 3 + 4, +

# Discussion Guide

5/14/96 draft table

## Materials for each session

	Primary session question	Background information	Views to explore	Reading excerpts	Discussion questions	Additional readings
Session 1	<i>How does the community in which we live and our personal experiences as members of that community affect the education of our children?</i>	Introduction to study circle process	Sharing of personal experiences			
Session 2	<i>What does residential segregation mean in the Twin Cities metropolitan area today?</i>	Current metro housing patterns - by race & by income	Different perspectives on the causes of residential segregation			
Session 3	<i>What is the state of educational opportunity and achievement in the Twin Cities today?</i>	Current metro education patterns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Racial &amp; socioeconomic makeup across different school districts</li> <li>-- Achievement statistics across different school districts</li> <li>-- Resources available across different school districts</li> </ul>	Various perspectives on these differences			
Session 4	<i>How is the composition of our communities affecting these differences in educational opportunity and achievement?</i>	Effects of residential segregation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Effects of concentrated poverty on schools</li> <li>-- Need for busing/desegregation</li> <li>-- Differences in tax resources</li> <li>-- Lack of interaction across races and classes</li> </ul>	Different perspectives on this connection and the effects			
Session 5	<i>What can we do in our communities? &amp; when can we do it</i>	Summary of group's discussion thus far	Different approaches proposed		Group development of strategies	
Session 6	<i>What larger policies are needed?</i>	Summary of group's discussion thus far	Different approaches proposed; policy alternatives		Group development of strategies	

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**Note to discussion guide committee members:**

This is a very preliminary draft. There are many things I need to add yet, such as excerpts of books and articles as well as editorials and letters to the editor. I hope to be able to provide a variety of perspectives and opinions through these excerpts. I do have some things in mind, and I have contacted people at the Trib and the Pioneer Press to assist in looking for different viewpoints. If anyone knows of some particularly powerful or thought-provoking pieces, please make a note of it. I will also be adding an appendix of "additional readings."

I also am looking for some more precise information on the make-up of the student populations across the various Twin Cities districts, which I hope to get soon. I will also be adding information on the two adequacy suits here in the Twin Cities.

I have sometimes found myself "writing a paper"--arguing certain points or perspectives--which is obviously not my task. I would appreciate advice on how and where to eliminate the biases in the language I use as well as the biases of the content I have chosen to include. I also really have an overflow of information at points (primarily in the first three sections). I decided it was best to start out with too much and then downscale. Let me know what doesn't seem pertinent, or if there is a different way to structure the material so the numbers don't get so overwhelming.

Due to finals week, the last two sections did not receive as much attention yet as the first three. Just so you know, those are areas I will be working on in the next week as you read this first draft. I was having a bit of a problem with the 4th section, however. It seems nearly indistinguishable from the third session's topic. (To talk about educational opportunity and achievement in the Twin Cities *is* to talk about how the composition of our communities affect opportunity and achievement.) Perhaps Session 4 would be better spent exploring perspectives on busing, desegregation, and race relations?)

Format is a big question. The first two sections have outlines, but I haven't prepared any for the last three yet. Transitions from topics need to be very smooth and natural, so if anyone has suggestions or ideas.....

Finally, the lay out of the material will obviously be much more aesthetically pleasing when it's all said and done. The "Food for Thought" pieces and the quotes will not be so random. But compared to content, that's something that we probably don't need to worry about right now. Also, I realize my documentation is a bit sloppy. As I was writing, my main purpose was to just make sure I had the source and page number down for my own benefit. I will take care of this when editing.

That's it. Thanks!

## Forward

Every year Minneapolis and St. Paul are ranked high on the list of America's most livable cities. As Minnesotans, we pride ourselves on our progressiveness, our ingenuity and innovativeness, our great tolerance. We profess to believe deeply in equality of opportunity. But one must stop and consider, is the Twin Cities really a great place to live for *everyone*? And how hard to we work to guarantee equality of opportunity?

Compared to standards used to judge major urban centers across the nation--job growth, low crime rates, good schools and social services, access to lakes and parks--the Twin Cities *is* a good place to live. We are, however, not without serious and growing regional problems. The Twin Cities is now beginning to struggle with many of the same problems in its core that have led to severe urban decay in other American metropolitan areas. And as experience shows, as these problems become entrenched, they become increasingly difficult to dismantle. While we still have time to reverse the trends that are beginning to tear apart our communities, that time is rapidly fading as our window of opportunity grows smaller and smaller. As a community, it seems prudent that we deal with these issues *before* they reach crisis--and irreversible--proportions.

Unemployment, poverty, homelessness, inadequate educational opportunities, and crime are not the sole province of the central cities, although they are indeed--for the moment--concentrated there. There is nothing, however, preventing such problems from spreading outward from the core to the adjacent suburbs. In fact, if current trends continue, this is exactly what *will* happen. Once poverty becomes concentrated, deterioration and disinvestment of neighborhoods are inevitable results which culminate in an endless downward spiral. This occurs simultaneously with the increased demand for services, leading ultimately to abandonment and the subsequent spread of such problems to adjacent areas. We are beginning to see this happening now in the "inner-ring" suburbs surrounding Minneapolis and St. Paul.

For many Minnesotans, the issues of poverty and its concentration may seem like new problems. But they are not; policymakers and poor families alike have been struggling with them for decades. But as a *community*, we can no longer afford to ignore these problems. We can no longer turn a blind eye nor can we continue to run. Racism and classism, whether conscious or not, remain significant factors in the disparities that exist between communities. Although these things are difficult to discuss, we can't get past them until we get *to* them. And that is the purpose of this study circle. It is time to go beyond that "Minnesota nice" which somehow equates politeness with tolerance and harmony. It is time to engage in some honest, thoughtful discussion. It is time to start addressing reality.

Many people might be skeptical. "Talk is cheap," so the saying goes. Others might be thinking, "We've tried this before." Perhaps. But we cannot afford to give up until a solution is found. Particularly those who live in poverty--and those who live on the edge of it--cannot afford apathy. Talking naturally proceeds action, and we cannot move forward until we have reached common ground. And while it may not be hard to find consensus that problems do exist, agreeing on *why* those problems exist can be very difficult. Depending on their own experiences, people perceive things in different ways. What constitutes reality is different for each one of us. The Twin Cities may be a great place to live for some people, but for others, it is undoubtedly a cold and unforgiving place. Only by talking can we understand how segregation affects *each* of us.

From the onset, we have to realize that solutions do not lie in pointing fingers and placing blame. We need to avoid the isolationist approach which assigns fault solely to the people or neighborhoods where the problems have materialized and realize that the problems are the result of numerous, complex factors--factors in which nearly everyone has played a part. The key, then, is to strive for understanding. Only then can we put together the kind of *regional* collaborative effort that is needed to tackle these problems..

In a recent Star and Tribune editorial, Susan Berkson said, "Any suburb that thinks it is an island is mistaken. The central region is key to the health of the entire region. When businesses think of coming to the metro area, they look at the central city. Many suburbanites work in the city. The most important cultural institutions are in the city. Without the city, there would be no suburbs."<sup>1</sup> Susan is right. We're in this together.

### **Session 1—How does the community in which we live and our personal experiences as members of that community affect the education of our children?**

#### **I. Welcome & Introduction to the Community Circle Collaborative**

#### **II. Introductions...who are you, where are you from, why are you concerned about this issue...**

#### **III. The Study Circle Process**

- Brief Overview (Readings: *The Role of the Participant* and *Comparison of Dialogue and Debate*)
- Revisions/agreement to the ground rules

#### **IV. Sharing of personal experiences**

- Think back. How did the community(ies) in which you grew up affect your education and opportunities?
- Think about the neighborhood you live in now. Is it largely homogenous or are there a variety of people who live around you? People of color, whites, singles, families, students, elderly?
- What are the schools like in your neighborhood?

#### **V. Discussion (See *The Faces of the Region*)**

- Do these statistics fit with your perceptions and/or experiences?
- How have your own experiences and concerns influenced your opinions and perceptions?

#### **VI. Summary**

- Do you view these issues differently as a result of considering others' views and experiences?
- What, if any, common concerns emerged?

## *The Faces of the Region*

Over the last few decades, poverty has concentrated in the core area of Minneapolis and St. Paul. In 1990, central city had 28% of the region's population but 60% of it's poor. Just as concentrated in the core are poor *children*: 45% percent of children who live in Minneapolis and St. Paul live in poverty. Throughout the 1980s, the core gained 30,000 poor people, while the its total population grew by less than 10,000 people. This most likely means a combination of things. First, people who at one point were above the poverty line slipped below it during years of wage erosion and a stagnant economy. Second, once individuals reach a certain income level, they are "pulled" out to the suburbs, where there is more space, bigger and newer houses, lower crime rates, lower taxes, and better services. Meanwhile, low-income families are more or less forced to live in the central cities due to limited transportation in the Twin Cities and to a lack of affordable housing in the suburbs. This phenomenon is further illustrated by the fact that the rest of the region grew by more than 293,000 persons, only 7.5% of which are poor.

It is not just that poverty is concentrated in the core that we should be concerned, but that the poverty rate is growing and that poverty is spreading. In 1979, 11 census tracts that had a lower poverty rate in earlier years saw 25% or more of their population sink below the poverty line. In the 80s, the spread of poverty accelerated sharply. Thirty-eight more tracts in the core area reached the 25% level. As Figure 1 shows, this doubled the poverty both in terms of population and area involved. Out of 121 census tracts in the core area, 105 saw their poverty rates increase.<sup>2</sup> This trend has continued. Today it is not just the central cities that are affected. Poverty and disinvestment are beginning to spread into inner-ring suburbs such as Richfield, Brooklyn Center, and St. Louis Park.

While over two-thirds of the people living in poverty are white, it is very clear that people of color are the hardest hit. Absolute numbers belie reality for people of color because they still make up such a small percentage of Minnesota's total population. While the region's minority populations grew by 81% during the 1980s, they still constitute only 9.3% of the region's total population--65% of which live in the central cities.<sup>3</sup> In the last decade, the poverty rate in Minneapolis rose from 13.5 percent to 18.5 percent; in St. Paul it went from 10.9 percent to 16.7 percent.<sup>4</sup> In the core area of the central city, however, poverty rates for African Americans (44%), American Indians (56%), Asians (62%), and Hispanic residents (31%) were dramatically higher than poverty rates for whites (18%).<sup>5</sup> Figures 2 and 3 reveal that the region becomes increasingly whiter and wealthier as you move beyond the core.

Finally, it should be noted that what constitutes "poverty" by federal or state definitions is but one point on an income continuum, as shown by the federal poverty thresholds below (Figure 4). Poverty rates thus do not take into account people who are making \$100 or even \$1000 above a certain poverty threshold and thus may actually understate the scale of the problem. People who live paycheck to paycheck can be financially devastated by a medical emergency, a fire, car or housing repairs, or even winter heating bills. Not surprising, the percentage of *near-poor* people is also substantially higher in the core than in other parts of the region, being home to 48% of the region's "near-poor."

Figure 1  
 Twin Cities Metropolitan Area  
 Census Tracts With More Than 25 Percent of Persons Below Poverty  
 1970, 1980, and 1990

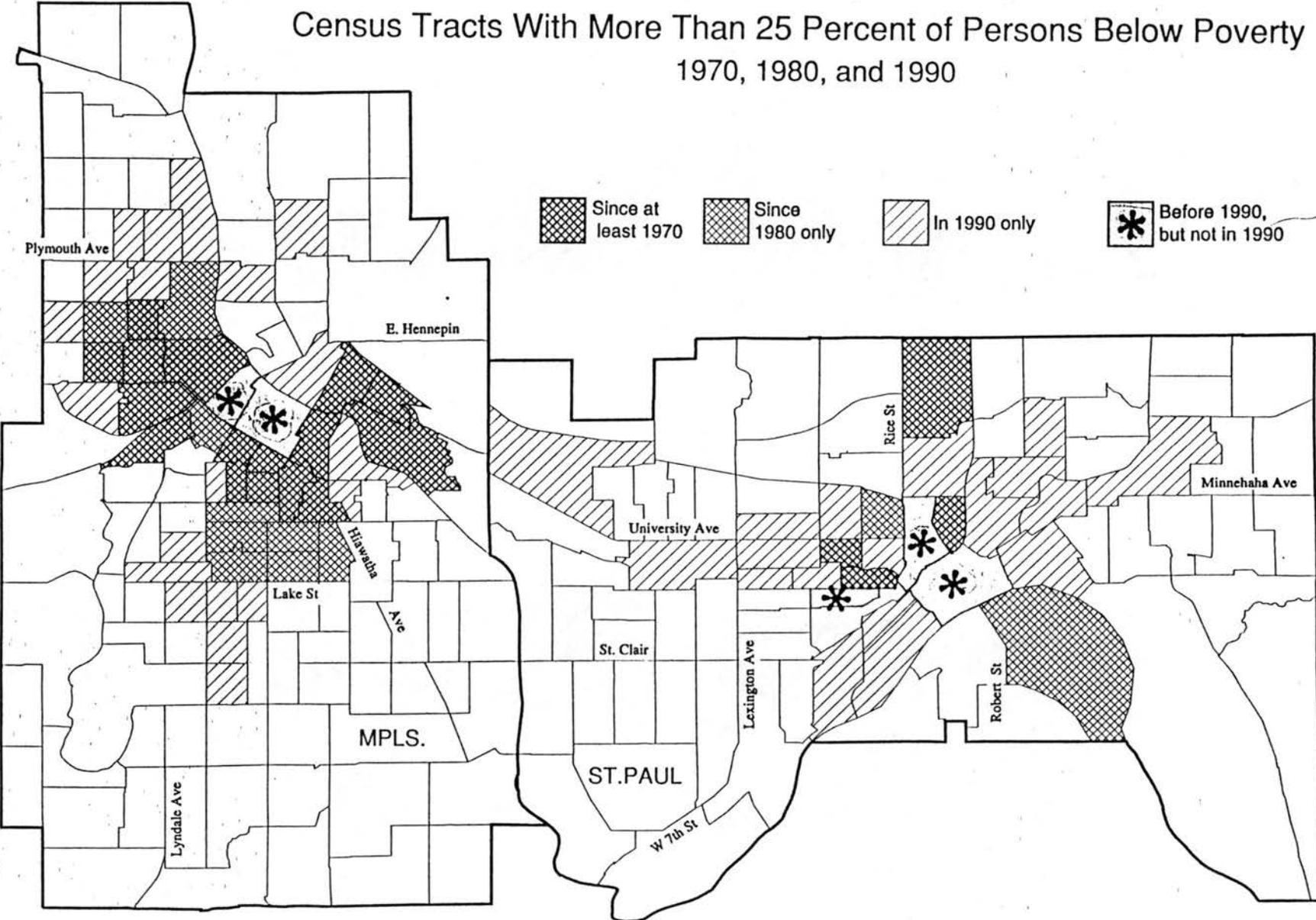
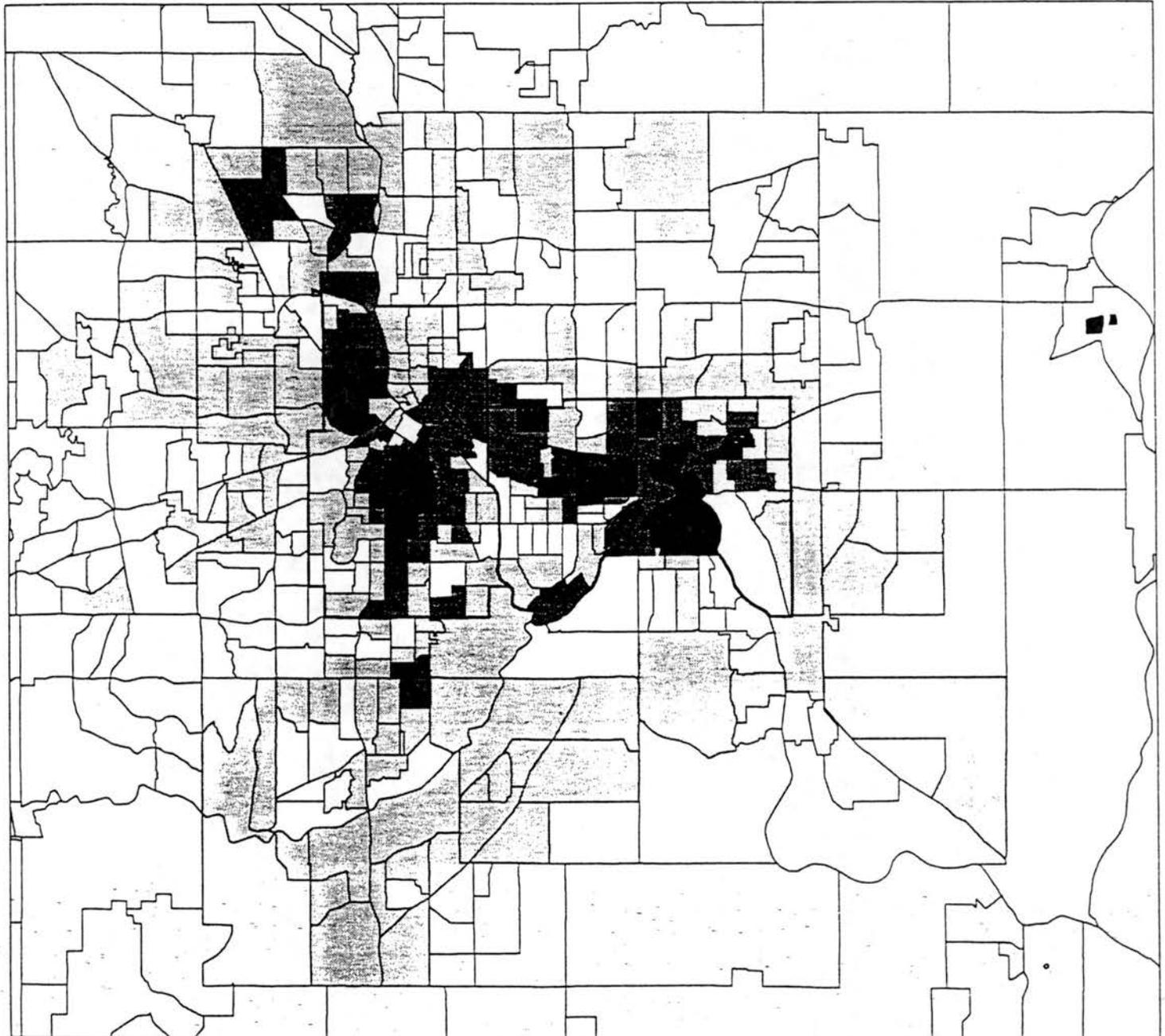


FIGURE 2

# Detail: Percentage Minorities in Seven County Metropolitan Area by Census Tract

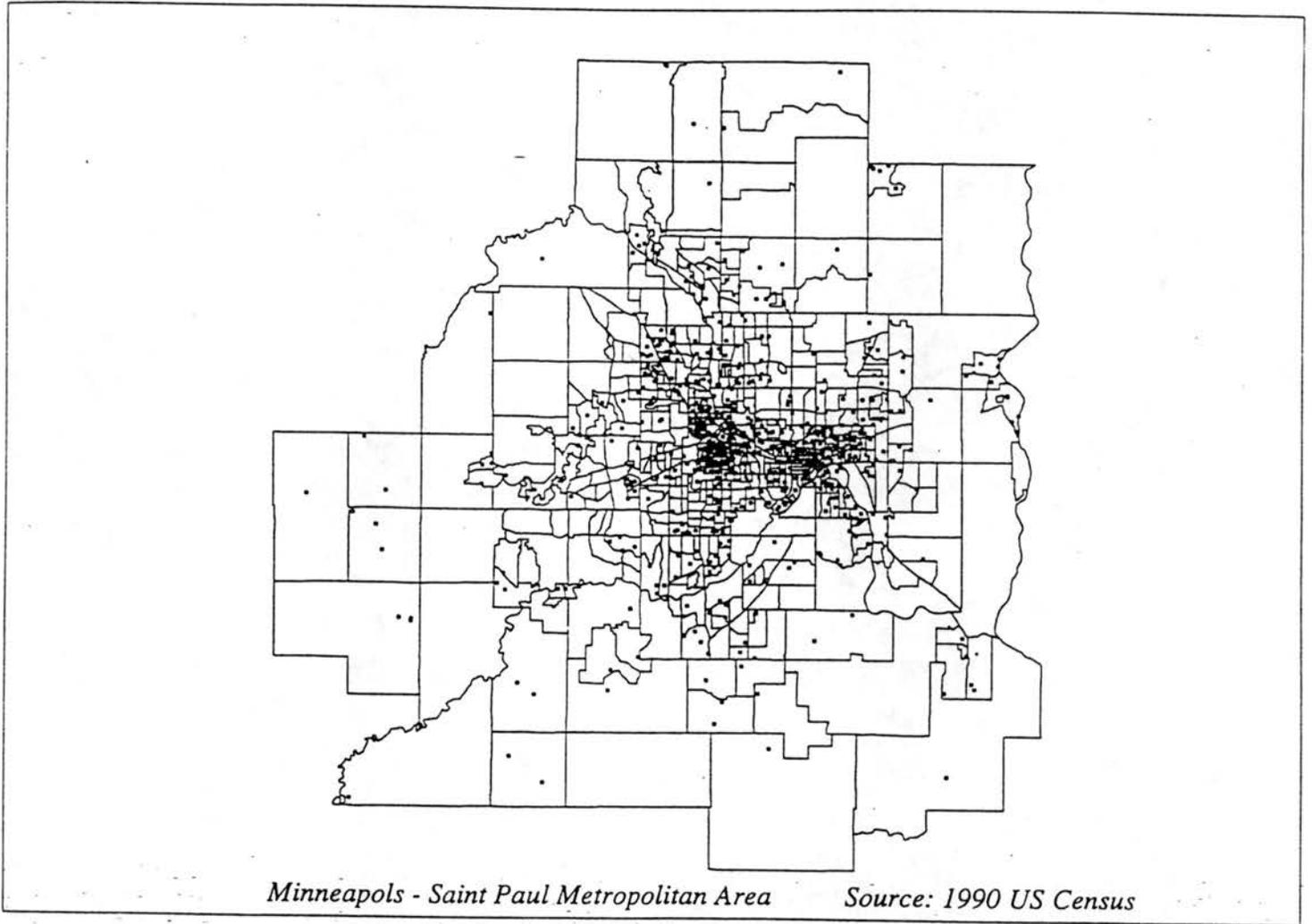


Source: 1990 US Census

Percent Minorities		
■	53.2 - 93.7	(32)
■	27.3 - 51.9	(29)
■	11.3 - 27.2	(75)
□	5.0 - 11.2	(182)
□	0.0 - 4.9	(287)

FIGURE 3

*Total Families Below Poverty Level*



Total Families Below Poverty  
1 Dot = 50

**Figure 4.****Federal Poverty Thresholds, 1990 <sup>6</sup>**

Family size	Annual Income
2	\$8076
3	\$9,885
4	\$12,674
5	\$14,990
6	\$16,921

Finally, as the Figures 5 and 6 illustrate, income disparities in the central cities and the suburbs increased throughout the 1980s. Per capita income in the suburbs was higher than in the central cities to begin with, and then increased at a faster rate throughout the decade. Areas outside of the central cities experiences a 21% increase in average per capita income, while average per capita income in Minneapolis and St. Paul went up about 12% and 7%, respectively. More striking, however, is the difference in per capita income between whites and minorities. As Figure 6 reveals, average per capita income for African Americans and Asians actually decreased throughout the decade.

**Figure 5****Per Capita Income, by Race and Hispanic Origin, 1990 Census<sup>7</sup>  
(in \$1,000s)**

	7 County Region	Minneapolis	St. Paul	Suburbs
Average	\$14.5	\$13.3	\$12.9	\$15.0
White	\$14.8	\$14.1	\$13.5	\$15.1
African Am.	\$9.1	\$8.4	\$8.2	\$13.1
Am. Indian	\$6.8	\$5.9	\$6.2	\$8.6
Asian	\$9.4	\$6.9	\$5.5	\$11.9
Hispanic	\$8.4	\$7.5	\$7.3	\$9.7

**Figure 6. Percent Change in Per Capita Income, By Race and Hispanic Origin, 1979-1989<sup>8</sup>**  
**(1989 dollars)**

	Region	Minneapolis	St. Paul	Suburbs
Average	18.4%	11.5%	6.5%	20.9%
White	21.3%	20.1%	13.9%	21.9%
African Am.	-3.5%	-7.5%	-5.0%	-8.1%
Am. Indian	20.1%	-5.7%	4.9%	56.8%
Asian	-12.1%	-11.6%	-25.1%	1.8%
Hispanic	8.4%	14.9%	-2.3%	10.5%

**Session 2: What does residential segregation mean in the Twin Cities metropolitan area today?**

1. Describe the community where you live. What do you value about your community? Do you value diversity? What are the challenges your community faces?
2. Think about different types of communities . . . what comes to mind?
  - inner city neighborhood
  - suburban neighborhood
3. Our communities are reflecting greater concentrations of wealth and poverty. Some possible explanations:
  - Elimination of low-skilled manufacturing jobs in the inner city.
  - Movement of jobs to the suburbs
  - Freeway system and limited mass transit
  - Concentration of subsidized housing in the inner city
  - Racism and discrimination
  - Choice -- people choose where they want to live
  - Lack of affordable housing in the suburbs
  - High crime rates in the inner city
  - High property taxes in the inner city
  - Low quality of schools and services in the city

Which of these possible causes do you think impacts this region the most?

4. Do your perceptions reflect reality? What things surprised you? (See *Barriers to Economic Opportunity in the Twin Cities*)

## *Barriers to Economic Opportunity in the Twin Cities*

Housing is a basic human need that changes with people's age and economic condition. Over their lifespan, people's needs change in respect to housing type, size, price, and location. As a result, it is important for communities to provide housing choices. Imbedded in our sub-conscious is a feeling that low-income housing automatically attracts the deviants of society. In reality, however, a variety of people need low-income housing. As people grow older and find themselves on fixed budgets, they no longer need or can afford the large homes they once had. The young man or woman who just graduated from college and got an entry level position teaching at the local school needs that low-cost housing. The clerk at the gas station down the block surely needs that housing. It is simply the people who are willing to work for the lowest wages the economy has to offer that need affordable housing. It is not automatic that drugs, crime, and gangs follow low-income housing. Our fears are driven by ignorance. Luckily, ignorance is one thing we *can* change.

### **Important Definitions:**

**What is "affordable housing"?** Under standards established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing is affordable if it consumes no more than 30% of a household's income.<sup>9</sup> Housing that exceeds 50% of income is defined as a severe cost burden.

### **What types of housing assistance does the government provide?**

The federal government has two main types of housing assistance programs. The first and more well-know is "project-based." This is publicly-owned housing rented at below-market rates. The second is "tenant-based" where funds are channeled to individuals rather than locations. The most common type is "Section 8" assistance. Under Section 8, a low-income household pays 30% of income for rent and utilities, and the government then pays the difference between that amount and the "Fair Market Rent" determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Until 1987, Section 8 recipients did not have the right to move outside of the city where the certificates were issued. As a result, it was an ineffective method of relieving economic and racial isolation. Nowadays, Section 8 recipients *can* use their vouchers anywhere. However, while the number of families eligible for vouchers far exceeds the number who actually receive them, Section 8 vouchers go unused in many cities because renters cannot find suitable housing outside of the ghettos.

### **Food For Thought:**

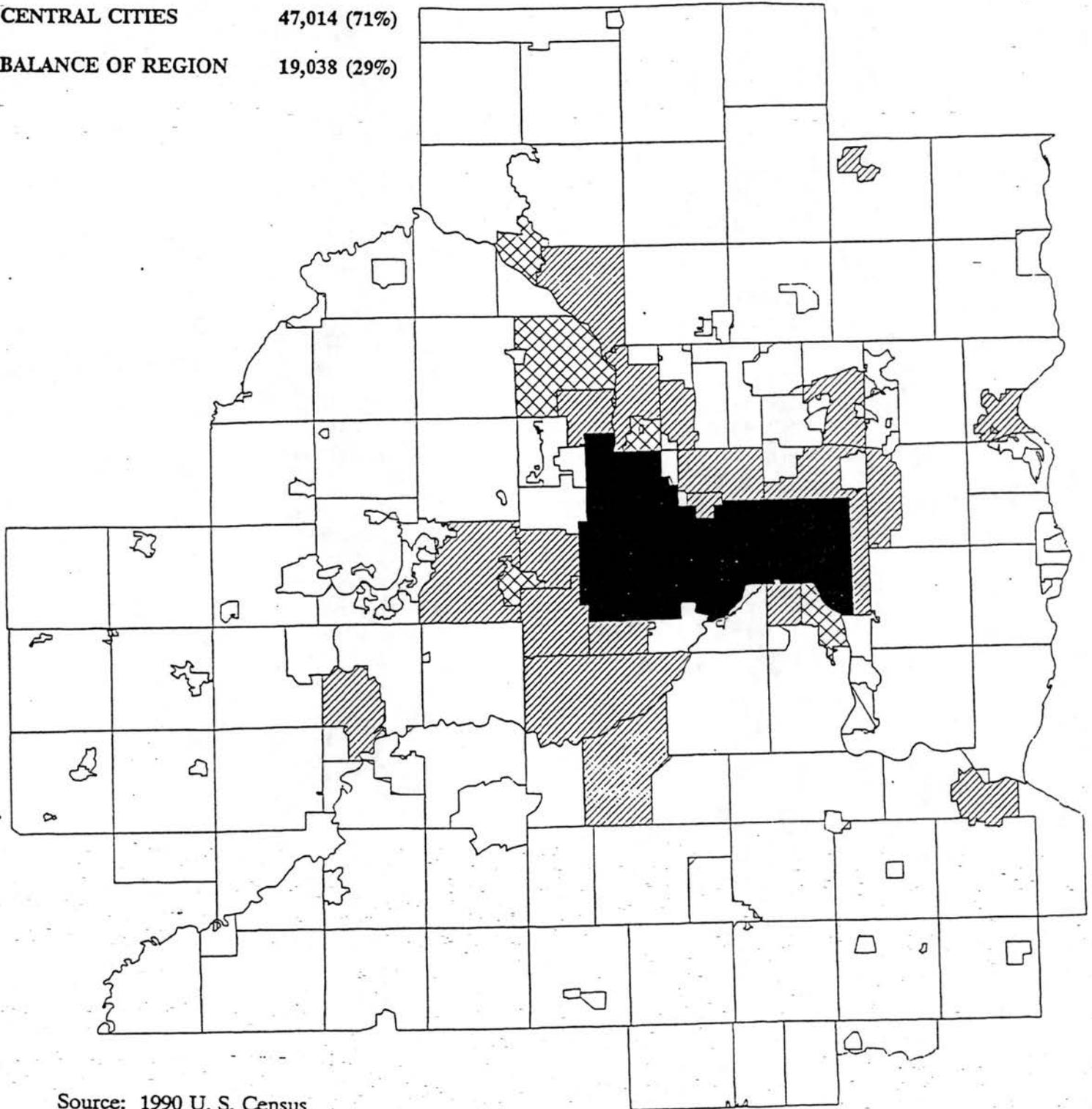
The Federal Government spends \$66 billion a year on mortgage-interest and property tax deductions. These subsidies to wealthy homeowners are more than *four times* as much as is spent on low-income housing. In fact, two-thirds of it goes to families with incomes over \$75,000.<sup>10</sup> Is there a difference between receiving a tax deduction and receiving a rent voucher to lessen housing costs?

NUMBER OF UNITS RENTING  
FOR LESS THAN \$350/MO  
METRO AREA - 1990

FIGURE 7

TOTAL UNITS: 66,052

CENTRAL CITIES 47,014 (71%)  
BALANCE OF REGION 19,038 (29%)



Source: 1990 U. S. Census

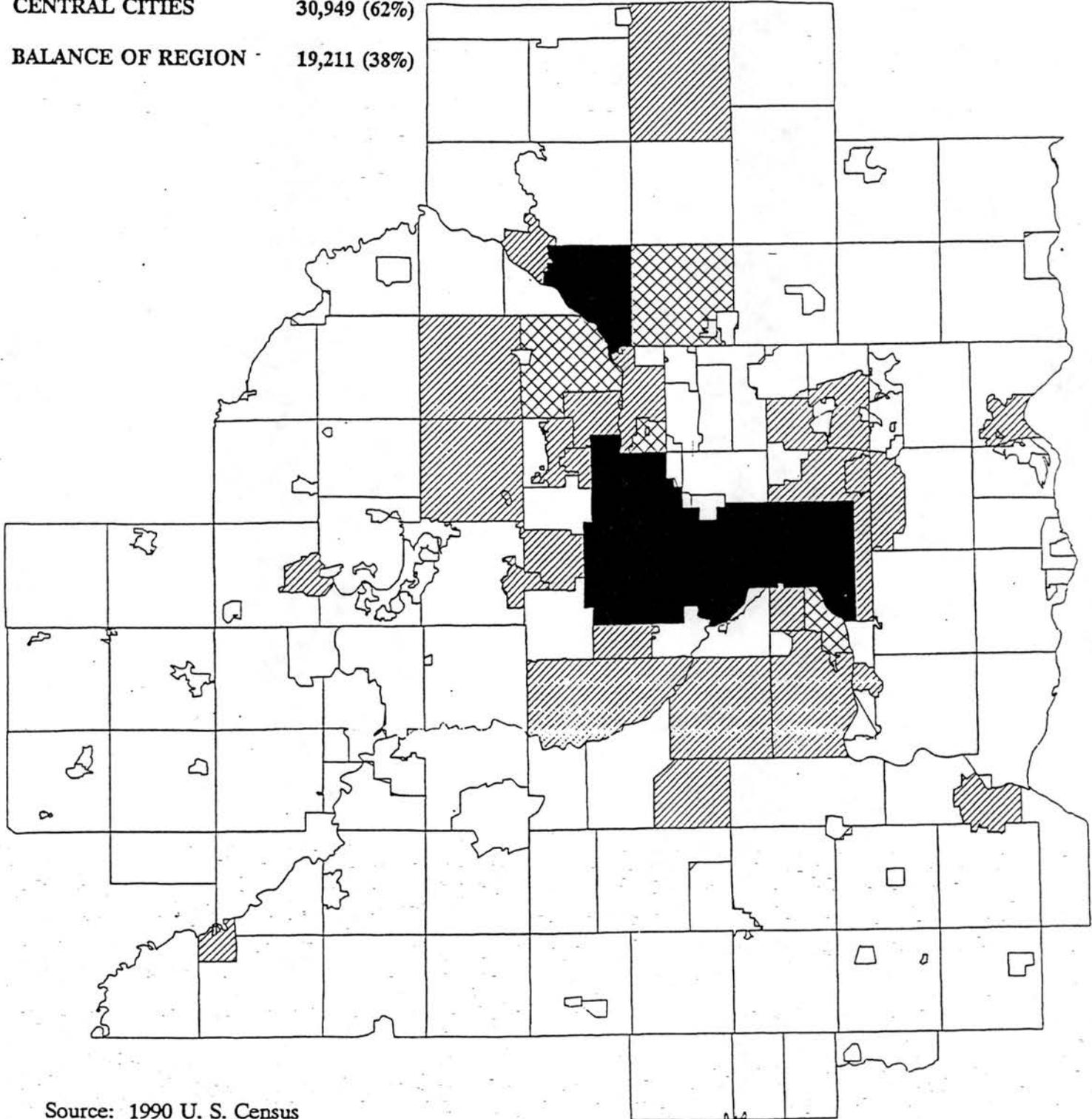
UNITS    <300    301-600    601-1000    >1000

NUMBER OF HOMES VALUED  
AT LESS THAN \$60,000  
METRO AREA - 1990

FIGURE 8

TOTAL UNITS: 50,160

CENTRAL CITIES 30,949 (62%)  
BALANCE OF REGION 19,211 (38%)



Source: 1990 U. S. Census

UNITS     <200     200-599     600-999     >1000

### What is "exclusionary zoning"?

In suburbs, "exclusionary zoning" laws prohibit the construction of low- and middle-income housing units. Exclusionary zoning occurs when municipalities increase the required standards of housing quality beyond those necessary for healthy and safety standards. Examples include specifications of minimum square footage for new homes and lots, prohibitions on multi-family housing units, maximum densities, and two-car garage requirements.

Furthermore, because of the high property values (and thus large tax base), people in the suburbs face lower tax rates than those in the city. As a result of the lower tax rates, suburbs attract new homeowners and businesses, which consequently increases the tax base. It is a cycle which provides incentives for suburban communities to keep low-income housing (and its corresponding low property values) out of their neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the central cities are faced with a steady erosion of their tax base, while the demands on their community increase due to the relatively higher proportion of poor families needing services.

### Food for Thought: Lenders just say No. . .

In 1994, Twin City lenders rejected mortgage applications from blacks at a 3 to 1 ratio compared to whites. This was the second highest disparity among the nation's 40 largest metropolitan areas.<sup>11</sup>

### There is a concentration of low-income and subsidized housing in the central cities and inner-ring suburbs:<sup>12</sup>

- In 1990, 71% of the rental units affordable to very low-income renters (those at 30% of the median income) and nearly two-thirds of the homes valued at \$60,000 or less were located in Minneapolis and St. Paul. (See Figures 7 and 8.)
- Not surprisingly, the central city and the inner-ring suburbs possess a majority of the region's subsidized housing. While the central cities' share of all subsidized housing in the region has declined from 90% in the early 1970s to 65% today, the fact remains that low-income families looking for low-cost housing still have a limited number of choices of where to live.
- The region's 45,000 subsidized rental units make up only five percent of the region's total housing stock and 15% of the rental housing.

**Figure 9. Distribution of Subsidized Housing Units, July 1992<sup>13</sup>**

	Number of Units	Percent of Total
Central Cities	26,237	57.6%
Minneapolis	14,733	32.3%
St. Paul	11,504	25.3%
Fully Developed Suburbs	7,855	17.2%
Developing Area	9,290	20.4%
Remainder of Region	2,167	4.8%
Region Total	45,549	100.0%

When low-income housing is *concentrated* into certain neighborhoods and communities, the tax base is invariably smaller than in neighborhoods where wealth is concentrated, thus affecting the tax revenues for the local government. At the same time, the concentration of low-income housing means that the demand for services and investments increase: free school lunches, specialized teaching resources, AFDC dependency, policy protection, and neighborhood revitalization programs. As Figure 10 illustrates, the demand for services in the central cities is much greater than in the suburbs. With a smaller tax base, tax *rates* are necessarily higher.

**Figure 10. Municipal Expenditures Per Household, 1980 and 1990<sup>14</sup>**

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>
Central Cities	\$2,376	\$3,025
Minneapolis	\$2,538	\$3,169
St. Paul	\$2,130	\$2,184
Fully Developed Suburbs	\$1,262	\$1,613
Developing Area	\$1,508	\$1,668

\*All dollars are 1990 dollars

### **Food for Thought:**

Outer-ring suburbs experienced a greater than 200% increase in commercial-industrial valuations over the decade. "To illustrate the economic strength of the southwestern suburbs, Eden Prairie and Minnetonka together had the same commercial-industrial tax base as St. Paul (\$1.5 billion), yet have only one-third as many residents and, unlike St. Paul, virtually no poor people."<sup>15</sup> Consider the demand on St. Paul's budget versus the demand in a community like Minnetonka. How does this affect education opportunities in each community?

### **Housing Cost Burdens on Poor Households:**

Based on the 1990 Census, the region faces a serious need for affordable housing. There is currently a shortage of over 35,000 units which would be considered affordable to low-income renters at the 30% benchmark. This shortage may even be understated as it fails to consider the current mismatch between low-income households and affordable housing units. Many of the units deemed affordable for low-income households are actually occupied by households with higher incomes. As a result, large percentages of the Minneapolis and St. Paul poor face severe housing cost burdens:<sup>16</sup>

- In 1990, over 110,000 households (39%) of the region's renter households were classified as low-income (earning 50% or less of the region's median income). Of these households, 76% (84,000) paid 30% or more for rent.
- Even more serious, 43% of low-income households (approximately 48,000) paid over 50% of their income for rent.

### **Food for Thought: Families must choose whether to “heat or eat”...**

A pediatrician in Boston studied the impact of rent burdens and found an association between high rents and inadequate nutrition. In a study of 200 poor children, only 3% of the children whose families got housing assistance were underweight for their age. But of children whose families were on the housing waiting list, 22% were underweight. And, after studying the records of 11,000 children, he found that they were most likely to be underweight in the 90 days after the coldest month of the year.<sup>17</sup>

### **Aging of Housing Stock**

When households are forced to spend such large proportions of their income on housing, there is little if any left over to invest in home maintenance or repair. Housing in a state of disrepair contributes significantly to disinvestment and deterioration of a neighborhood and erodes a municipality's tax base. Not surprisingly, a majority of the region's older housing stock is located in the central cities; over 75% of which was built prior to 1940. Many of the cities within the inner ring suburbs now (or soon will) have housing stock over 30 years old--the time when significant investment in maintenance needs to be made. These cities, however, have limited resources for dealing with redevelopment compared to Minneapolis and St. Paul.<sup>18</sup>

### **Economic Trends are Reinforcing Poverty:**

- The economy of the region (like that of the nation as a whole) has become increasingly based on services and trade activity and proportionately less on manufacturing. Two-thirds of all the region's new jobs in the last decade were in the services and trade sectors. These jobs (largely in retail) generally have lower wage rates than jobs in manufacturing. Moreover, technological gains in efficiency and productivity have helped make corporations more competitive and profitable, but have resulted in layoffs and dislocation for tens of thousands of employees.
- Less than half of the jobs in Minnesota pay a livable wage. To illustrate this fact, 61% of Minnesota's 85,348 families in poverty have at least one person in the work force.<sup>19</sup>
- Net job growth in the last decade was in the developing suburbs, not the central cities where the highest percentage of the region's poor--and unemployed--live. While the region gained 255,000 jobs in the 1980s, only 5,400 went to the central cities. This trend is projected to continue, as Figure 11 illustrates.

**Figure 11****EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS<sup>20</sup>**

	Central Cities	Fully Developed Suburbs	Developing Suburbs	Total
1980	445,371	324,437	216,560	1,040,011
1990	450,818	376,674	377,292	1,293,121
2000	459,000	426,075	501,576	1,498,891
2010	463,500	446,355	567,926	1,602,961

- Even though net job growth is in the central cities, over a third (37%) of the regions job are located in Minneapolis and St. Paul. However, a major proportion of those jobs are held by non-central city resident. For example, residents of Minneapolis hold only 40% of the jobs in the city.<sup>21</sup> This highlights the mismatch between skills and knowledge of low-income core residents and job requirements.
- While most new jobs in the region are located in the developing suburbs, a high percentage of poor and near-poor people live in the central cities--without vehicle. In 1990, there were 82,867 households without vehicles in the seven-county region--56,847 (69%) of which are in the central cities. These households depend largely on public transit, and since there is limited services out to the suburbs, the distance between jobs and people's homes has become a huge barrier of economic opportunity.
- The situation in Plymouth illustrates the problem. While they gained over 10,000 new jobs paying more than \$10.00 per hour in the last decade, there are only 200 low-cost units there available to rent. (Yusef)

**Crime: Perceptions and Reality**

In the minds of most Minnesotans, crime has become the Twin Cities' most serious problem. Many residents flee the inner city largely for that reason. But how closely do our perceptions match up with reality? Figure 12 shows crime rates in 1985 and 1990. Contrary to what the media typically portrays, rates really have not change that much. In fact, some rates--such as violent crime rates in Minneapolis--actually decreased during that period. It is true, however, that crime rates between the central cities and the suburbs do differ. Overall crimes rates range from two or three to one and violent crime rates vary as much as ten to one. But to look at how low the rates actually are in the Twin Cities helps to put things in perspective.

**Figure 12.****Twin Cities Area Crime Rates, 1985 and 1990<sup>22</sup>**

(Expressed as a percent of population)

Area	1985				1990			
	Total Crime Rate	Violent Crime Rate (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault)	Property Crime (burglary, car theft, arson)	Larceny (shop-lifting, theft by check and fraud)	Total Crime Rate	Violent Crime	Property Crime	Larceny
Mpls.	10.4%	1.4%	4.0%	5.0%	11.4%	1.3%	4.0%	6.2%
St. Paul	7.8%	.8%	3.0%	4.0%	8.2%	1.0%	2.8%	4.4%
Remainder	4.0%	.12%	1.1%	2.8%	4.3%	.16%	1.1%	3.1%
Regional Total	5.6%	.4%	1.9%	3.4%	5.9%	.4%	1.7%	3.7%

**Recent Actions in Minnesota**

In 1995, minority residents of public housing in Minneapolis filed a lawsuit against the Department of Housing and Urban Development (*Hollman vs. Cisneros*), claiming that HUD had administered the public housing programs in a manner that perpetuated existing patterns of racial segregation. They also claimed that the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority managed Section 8 so that low income, minority participants were concentrated in a few segregated neighborhoods in Minneapolis. The consent decree from the settlement mandates HUD replace old housing units with new ones in locations that have neither high concentrations of poverty nor minorities. HUD will also provide funding for 900 Section 8 subsidies and will provide recipients with counseling for locating housing in the private housing market.

On other fronts, in 1993 and 1994, Representative Myron Orfield proposed legislation requiring suburbs to provide their "fair share" of affordable housing. The legislation gradually won support but was vetoed by Governor Arne Carlson. In 1995, the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act was authored by Senator Ted Mondale and Met Council Chair Curt Johnson. This proposal left out the mandatory nature and penalties of Orfield's bill, and instead provided incentives for communities to remove barriers and build affordable housing. The legislation became law in 1995. As of yet, the bill seems to have had little effect on the amount of affordable housing available in the suburbs.

### Session 3. What is the state of educational opportunity and achievement in the Twin Cities today?

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Think about where your kids--or the kids in your neighborhood--go to school. Do you think they receive a good education? Why or why not?
2. What factors do you feel influence learning the most?
3. What is equal educational opportunity? How do we measure it . . . through inputs (such as spending per pupil) or outcomes (achievement scores, graduation rates, college acceptance rates, etc.)?
4. Should socioeconomic background be considered an "input" which has the potential of affecting educational outcomes? In other words, why might a child who comes from a poor household have a more difficult time learning than children who come from wealthy homes?
5. Do you consider education to be a "right"?
6. Do all children deserve equal educational opportunity?
7. What happens if we fail to guarantee a decent education to all children? Does it affect only those children or does it affect all of society?
8. Do children realize when they are being treated unfairly? By allowing such discrepancies in our education system, what message are we giving children about their worth?
9. Do you think high drop-out rates and deficient educations are correlated with the amount of public revenue invested in health, welfare, and the penal system?

#### The Use of Property Taxes in Funding Education

Over the past decade, local contributions to education funding as a percentage of total education expenditures has increased. If this trend continues, we are likely to see more disparities across districts as some 99% of local revenue for education is acquired through property taxes.<sup>23</sup> A funding system so heavily dependent on property taxes has led to a situation where a child's educational opportunities are clearly related not only to his family's income, but also to the economic value of property in the district in which he lives. Wealthy suburbs such as Minnetonka and Eden Prairie have a larger tax base with which to draw in proportion to its student population than a city occupied by thousands of poor people.

The use of property taxes in funding necessary services such as education is very problematic for poor communities. Without a substantial tax base from which to draw (relative to the large demand for services), poor communities must set their rates higher. However, not only do higher rates discourage businesses and prospective homeowners from locating there, they also cause the capital already located there to migrate to areas where tax rates are lower.

The discrepancies between city schools and suburbs are further intensified by the number of

entirely tax-free institutions--colleges, hospitals, and museums for example--that are located within the larger cities. As much as 30% of the potential tax base is exempt from taxes, compared to as little as 3% in adjacent suburbs.<sup>24</sup>

In 1980, the total tax base for the developing suburbs was roughly comparable to that of the central cities and fully developed suburbs. But by 1990, the developing suburbs' tax base was 40% bigger than that of the central cities. Meanwhile, the demands on the central cities' budget, in terms of municipal expenditures, rose twice as fast as those of developing suburbs.<sup>25</sup>

### **Educational Achievement in the Twin Cities**

Schools are often blamed for society's ills and students' shortcomings. They are the target of much negativity and doubt, particularly when taxpayers are asked to dedicate more funds to what they believe are inefficient efforts. Per pupil spending in the United States has increased 205% over the past three decades (after adjusting for inflation).<sup>26</sup> Many people feel that we have gotten little in return for this investment, and thus argue that money is not the key to student achievement. Figure 13 seems to support this theory. Minneapolis public schools had the lowest percentage of eighth graders passing the Basic Skills Test out of all the districts in the region--42% passed the math test and 37% passed the reading test.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Minneapolis schools had the highest total per pupil spending among all the districts--\$9,136.

Before we chastise Minneapolis schools too loudly, however, we must consider the extra demands facing the schools in the central cities. Schools, after all, are no longer *just* places to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic; they are also, for example, health clinics and counseling centers. Schools are assigned the enormous responsibilities of not only teaching children, but raising them, disciplining them, and protecting them too. And while wealthy districts and poor districts face these tasks alike, the reality is that schools in poor neighborhoods are likely to have a far greater percentages of disadvantaged and special need students requiring these "extra" services. As a result, increases in spending often get channeled towards things such as security, free and reduced lunch programs, special education services, and bilingual education. These services are vitally important to children from poor households, but they are also very costly. The bottom line, then, is that we need to know what our money buys. Bruce S. Cooper, a professor of education administration at Fordham University, found what he considers a direct correlation between spending and test scores. In analyzing financial data from 84 high schools in New York City, he discovered that each additional \$100 spend on classroom instruction raised math and verbal SAT scores by 18 point. "The model suggests that per pupil dollars spend on direct instruction have a significant impact on academic achievement," Cooper wrote.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Under the Minnesota graduation rule, students must pass basic skills tests in reading and math to graduate by the year 2000. This past spring, approximately 80,000 Minnesota eight grade students took the tests and were required to score about 70% or higher to pass. Students who failed the test will be required to take the test again next year and will be required to score 75% or better. The year after, the bar raises to 80%.

Figure 13.

**Basic Skills Test Scores and Spending Levels, By District, 1996<sup>28</sup>**

District	Percent Passing:			Per Pupil Spending:		
	Math	Reading	Poverty	Enrollment	Gen. Fund	Total
Anoka-Hennepin	70	52	15	38,670	\$4,668	\$5,826
Bloomington	79	65	16	11,371	\$5,210	\$6,034
Brooklyn Center	64	53	44	1,650	\$4,856	\$6,707
Burnsville	74	65	13	11,195	\$5,427	\$6,541
Columbia Heights	70	57	31	2,987	\$6,328	\$7,259
Eden Prairie	91	79	4	9,198	\$4,709	\$6,495
Edina	95	88	2	6,181	\$5,583	\$7,081
Farmington	79	66	18	3,400	\$4,550	\$6,649
Forest Lake	81	65	15	7,867	\$4,367	\$5,597
Fridley	75	71	24	2,607	\$5,950	\$6,723
Hastings	84	65	13	5,119	\$4,615	\$5,617
Hopkins	88	81	10	8,029	\$6,132	\$7,743
Inver Grove Heights	74	69	18	4,005	\$5,014	\$6,101
Lakeville	82	73	5	7,319	\$4,472	\$7,237
Mahtomedi	90	78	6	2,670	\$4,562	\$5,854
Minneapolis	42	37	61	46,151	\$7,115	\$9,136
Minnetonka	90	83	4	7,235	\$5,714	\$7,440
Mounds View	86	71	10	12,043	\$5,142	\$6,220
North St. Paul-- Maplewood--Oakdale	73	61	17	10,600	\$4,909	\$5,835
Orono	90	87	4	2,576	\$5,037	\$6,298
Osseo	81	65	14	21,280	\$4,877	\$6,454
Prior Lake	87	76	8	3,859	\$4,387	\$5,775
Randolph	78	62	8	473	\$5,250	\$5,972
Richfield	71	62	22	4,343	\$5,848	\$7,020

Robbinsdale	71	N/A	22	13,507	\$5,490	\$6,460
Roseville	80	72	18	6,772	\$6,102	\$7,377
Rosemount-- Apple Valley--Eagan	78	68	9	25,554	\$4,210	\$5,691
St. Anthony-- New Brighton	78	71	10	1,255	\$5,833	\$6,401
St. Louis Park	76	66	22	4,285	\$6,597	\$7,816
St. Paul	51	44	56	42,046	\$6,017	\$7,095
Shakopee	68	61	15	3,011	\$5,437	\$6,577
Spring Lake Park	82	64	20	4,181	\$4,975	\$5,989
South St. Paul	65	60	24	3,562	\$497	\$6,179
South Washington Co.	84	71	12	13,886	\$4,245	\$5,666
Stillwater	83	73	7	9,063	\$4,992	\$6,342
Wayzata	87	71	7	8,046	\$5,106	\$6,688
West St. Paul-- Mendota Hts--Eagan	67	61	16	4,787	\$5,014	\$7,781
Westonka	78	72	14	2,364	\$5,417	\$6,854
White Bear Lake	84	70	12	9,610	\$4,944	\$61

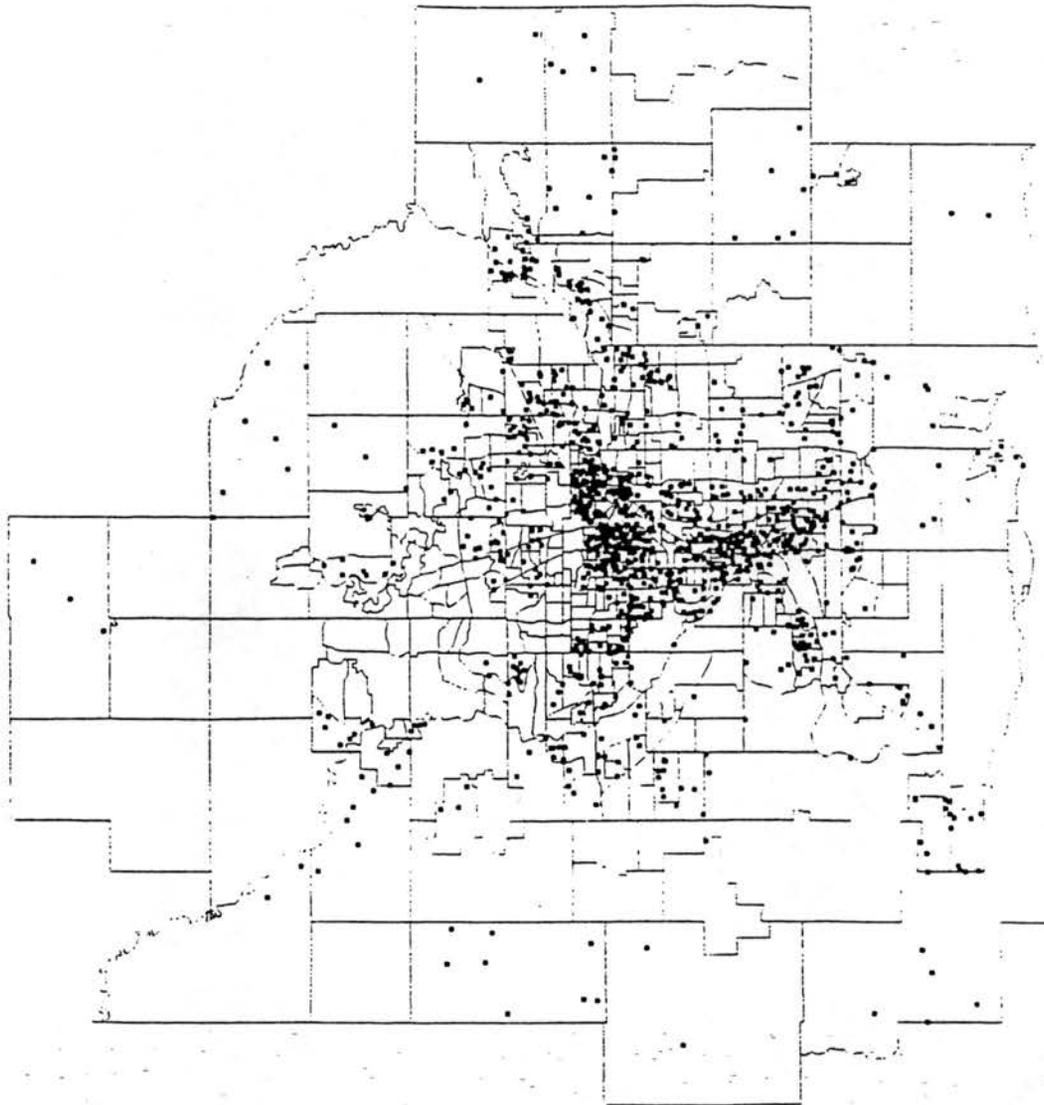
Consider Minneapolis schools again. While Minneapolis has the highest spending per pupil, they also have the highest student poverty rate among all the districts in the region. St. Paul schools have the second lowest percentage of students passing the basics tests, and perhaps not coincidentally, have the second highest poverty rate. Approximately 60% of the students in each district are receiving free or reduced-price lunches, a federal program available for children in families below the poverty line.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, while the core area is still more than two-thirds white, and although minorities account for less than 13% of Minnesota's K-12 population, they make up 63% of Minneapolis' student body.<sup>30</sup> Figures 12 and 13 illustrate the degree to which children of color and poor children are concentrated in the core. Thus, while schools in Minnetonka and Eden Prairie can use increases in funding for new computers or new equipment for their chemistry labs, schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul are paying for interpreters, special education teachers, and security. Minneapolis Roosevelt, for example, has a student body which speaks approximately 40 different languages. Juxtaposed to the largely Anglo student population at a school in the suburbs, the differences become glaring.

### Food For Thought

Some people feel that too much emphasis is placed on race and socioeconomic status, creating a scapegoat and self-fulfilling prophecy for schools to allow children of color to fail. Do you agree?

FIGURE 12

# Twin Cities Metro Area: Distribution of Non-White School Age Children in Poverty by Tract

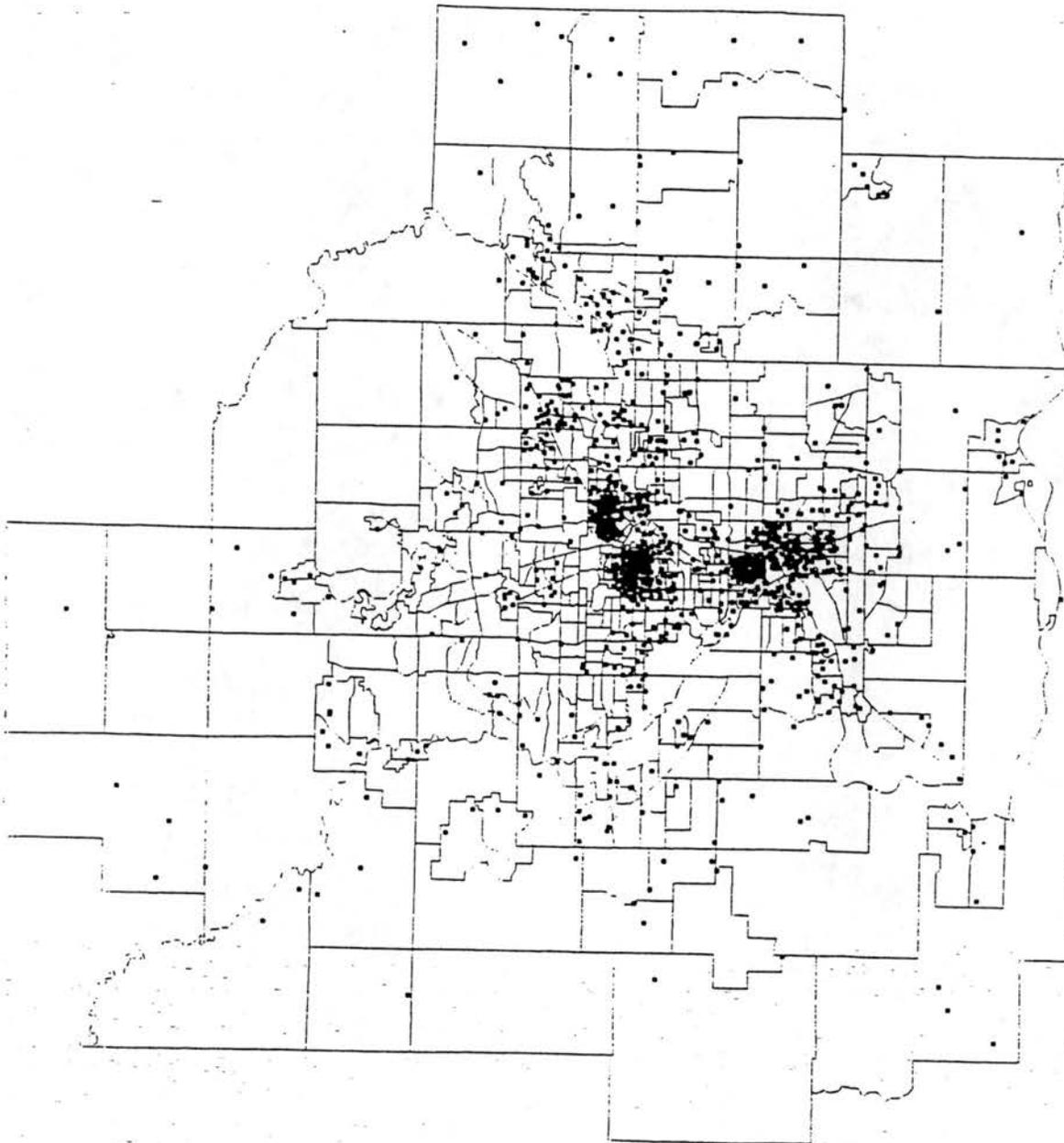


Non-White School Age Children in Pove  
1 Dot = 1

Source: 1990 US CENSUS

FIGURE 13

# Twin Cities Metro Area: Distribution of Children in Poverty



Twin Cities Metro Area  
Children in Poverty

1 Dot = 40

Source: 1990 US Census

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“In today’s world, a youngster who leaves school unable to read, write, and do simple arithmetic faces a bleak future. When a substantial portion of boys and girls leave school uneducated, the rest of us face a bleak future.”

--Lisabeth Schorr, *Within Our Reach*

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“Would any management worth a damn put most of its dollars into its weakest divisions and starve the promising ones of capital? Not and live for long. But that’s just what the U.S. is doing in education.

--Peter Brimelow,

*Disadvantaging the Advantaged*, Forbes

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“Our unwillingness to provide for the education needs of children will lead to massive problems of law, order, peace, and justice . . . and we will pay to correct that situation. We will pay those costs after the fact.”

---Susan Dunn, Oregon teacher

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### **Food for Thought**

- Statewide dropout rates for students of color are approximately two and a half times higher than those for whites<sup>31</sup>
- Dropouts are six times as likely as graduates to be unwed parents, and seven and a half times as likely to be dependent on welfare.<sup>32</sup>
- In a study on the effects of dropping out, Stanford education economist Henry Levin estimated that between 25 and 50% of the costs associated with crime are attributable to inadequate education.<sup>33</sup>

#### Session 4: How is the composition of our communities affecting these differences in educational opportunity and achievement?

##### Discussion Questions:

1. Does desegregation in schools contribute to a more multi-cultural learning environment and thus a more tolerant and understanding society, or does it simply strip minority children of their cultural heritage and make them feel alienated?
2. Do you think a black child who living in a predominantly white neighborhood would have a different experience in a predominantly white school than would a child who lived in a poor, minority neighborhood and was bused into that school?
3. Why do we say a school is segregated if it composed largely of minority children but not if it is composed largely of white children?
4. Is busing the only way to achieve desegregation?
5. Can separate schools ever be equal? How does society lose when schools are segregated, even if they are equal?

Segregated housing not only means segregated schools, it also means unequal schools, given the way we fund education in the United States. For more than 30 years now, cities across America have engaged in extensive busing efforts to create more culturally and economically diverse classrooms. The results have been costly and largely ineffective.

Many educators involved in busing efforts believe that the primary impact on young people of color has been a debilitating loss of cultural confidence and community support--not increased achievement. Does this mean it's time dismantle busing efforts and go back to neighborhood schools? Is busing the only way to achieve desegregated classrooms? Is desegregation even what we want?

##### *Perspectives:*

- "I will venture and offer my humble opinion (as a non-educator) on the issue of busing as a tool to improve educational achievement among "minority" children. As a product of a public school system with 100% Latino students (Puerto Rico), I find it hard to believe that "minority" kids need to sit side-by-side with white kids in order to learn!
- "Frankly, I find most arguments FOR busing self-defeating, in the sense that by busing kids we seem to imply to our kids that 'whites are smarter and maybe their 'smarts' will rub off on you' by attending mostly-white schools! Also, busing is a cheap way out for those in power to claim that they are doing something to improve education in ghettos and barrios, instead of adopting the right (but politically unpopular approach of providing more resources to the neighborhood schools and the "minority" community in general.
- "As a parent, I see no intrinsic value in having my daughter travel for hours to a far away school, potentially risking harassment by white kids because of her Latino heritage, in order

to get an education. She should be entitled to a perfectly good education right at her neighborhood public school!"

- "Going to a school with more white students has long-term benefits for minority students when it's time to look for a college, a job, or a place to live. A suburban high school has more status in this society than an inner-city school with all black kids. It's very different to be in a suburban school where everyone goes to college than an urban, inner-city high school with a 50% drop out rate. It sets up a whole different set of expectations."
- "I don't believe the object of busing is to place minority children next to 'smarter' white children . . . Having grown up during the civil right movement, I am all too aware of the purposes behind busing. In the United States, the vast majority of wealth is held by white folks and they will spend more of said wealth on education of their children. This had resulted in unequal dual educational systems, i.e., better ones for white kids and poorer ones for non-white kids. In the 40s and 50s and even into the 60s, minority children learned that they were not worth as much as white children were because of these wealth differentials. Busing was one method to achieve full integration, so that children received benefit from the wealth of society. It was really that simple. Now, I was schooled on an Indian reservation and in a city system (Milwaukee) and I personally attest to the vast differentials between the two systems."
- "While the call for neighborhood schools may sound reasonable, the effect of such a move would be a disaster. It is not because neighborhood schools are inherently bad. There is nothing wrong with neighborhood schools unless there is something wrong with the neighborhoods. And our neighborhoods are segregated by race and class, making us the sixth most racially segregated region in the country."
- "Segregation will always exist because people of color *choose* to live among other people of color, just as whites choose to live among whites. After all, poor white people often manage to escape from inner city neighborhoods. If blacks or Latinos or Asians or anyone else really wanted to, they could move also."

### **Food For Thought:**

In 1964, John Hopkins sociologist James Coleman conducted an extensive study of equality of education opportunity in the United States. Coleman expected to find a strong correlation between inadequate educational inputs and low student achievement. Instead, he found that neither white, black, Hispanic, Native American, nor any other group from a specific socioeconomic class did any better in schools with high inputs. In other words, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds--regardless of race--improved when studying along side of children from a mixture of social classes. "The crucial point, according to Coleman, is that *schools have little influence on a youngster's achievement that is independent of his social, economic, and cultural background.*"<sup>34</sup>

## Session 5--What can we do?

It is painfully clear that residential segregation is inextricably tied to educational segregation, and therefore, to opportunity. Despite the Brown case, America may be even more segregated today than it was 30 years ago. Busing has had little positive effect on race relations or educational achievement. Should that come as a surprise? After all, a "quick-fix" approach to problems rarely works. Indeed, it appears that the answer to the "learning gap" lies beyond busing. So what's next?

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is our objective? What kind of society do we want to live in?
2. What are the values that underlie each of the various proposals?
3. What are the pros and cons of each proposal?

## Policy Alternatives

*#1.--Deconcentration:* This policy is based on the assumption that poverty isn't the problem so much as the concentration of poverty. When poverty is concentrated, it perpetuates a myriad of other social problems--disinvestment in neighborhoods and tax base erosion, poor schools, crime, and racial tensions. For example, when poor people are "dispersed" throughout the region as opposed to being concentrated, a poor child will be more likely to attend a school with adequate resources and be able to have his or her individual needs met.

*How can it be accomplished?* Deconcentration depends largely on creating available housing in areas outside of the core. This could be accomplished in numerous ways.

1. Establish incentives for suburban communities to provide their "fair share" of affordable housing. (We have tried this, however, and incentives simply do not seem to be strong enough to overpower NIMBY--Not In My Back Yard--sentiments).
2. Mandate communities to provide their "fair share," and establish punitive measures for communities who fail to comply. This is a difficult proposal as it is extremely politically unpopular.
3. A more demand-side approach involves using housing vouchers and expanding loan and grant programs to enhance the buying power of low-income households. This approach is greatly hampered by discrimination in lending and realty markets.

Deconcentration would most likely involve a combination of methods. While it seems like a good policy option, it is not without its drawbacks. As some critics claim, "The solution to pollution is not dilution." After all, spreading poverty around doesn't get rid of it--it just makes it less noticeable. And while it might help specific communities significantly by lessening the burdens on their public budget, it does little to help specific families--at least in the short run. Because poverty is often the result of an inadequate

education or possessing few marketable skills, moving to a new area isn't an instant cure for poverty. Furthermore, dispersing poverty does nothing for the people, the schools, and the neighborhoods that are left behind.

**#2--Invest in the Cities:** The assumption behind this policy is that poverty is the result of an unequal distribution of resources. This is basically the antithesis of the deconcentration proposal. By investing in the cities--improving the schools, creating jobs, reducing crime, etc.--we strengthen the core and thus the stability of the entire region.

*What will it take?* Strengthening the core means investing in job training and skill development programs for adults, it means substantial investments in schools to assure that all children receive adequate educations, and it means promoting and supporting housing maintenance and revitalization of neighborhoods in the core. It means investing more in police protection to reduce violence and crime. It means providing health care to workers. (Approximately 400,000 Minnesotan's lack health coverage--72% of which are in the work force.<sup>35</sup>) In other words, it means a massive influx of dollars into the core. And because federal aid to state and local governments has waned in recent years, the revenue needed for such a task would likely come through increased state and local taxes.

Besides being prohibitively expensive, strengthening the core would be a tough policy option because it's benefits are farther in the future while its costs are immediate. Moreover, it would do little to end segregation.

**#3--Laissez Faire--**The third policy is a governmental "hands-off" policy. Big government is bad government. The central cities are responsible for providing for their citizens' needs--not the suburbs. Policies like "fair share" housing interfere with personal freedoms to decide where to live and who to live next to. Moreover, government assistance has created a dysfunctional dependency which promotes a poor work ethic, laziness, and defective values. A "tough love" policy is the only way to teach people responsibility.

**#4--Continue efforts to desegregate schools--** (Open Enrollment, Vouchers, School Choice, Magnet Schools).....

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DICK  
LITTLE  
DRAFT

To: Dick Little 871-8984 (FAX)  
From: Syl Jones  
Re: Conversation Guide Materials  
Date: April 2, 1997

FOR =  
NAME  
ADDRESS

Dick, I have completed my compilation of the materials you have provided and have written some of my own.

Please pay close attention to "gaps of understanding" as we transition from one section to another. Also note that I did not use some of the materials you provided because they tended to clutter certain sections. For readability sake, we should reduce the number of bullets under each of the premises where possible.

I put in the "positions/actions" materials you provided for the second perspective so you could see it. Generally, I don't think it a good idea to

*include a description of the potential actions of each position. I'd like to see your actions because they don't seem to be based on the right what I hope you can provide us tomorrow, so I can complete groups to this version of the document about the possible outcomes or the version of the document, is: Let the groups come to their conclusions about the possible*

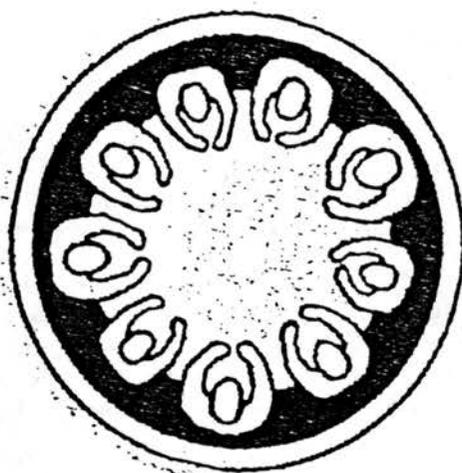
- Specific notes on any changes
- A manuscript that is marked with insertion points
- Edited copy that reflect's the Board's final say on this version

To facilitate changes, you may want to fax to me tomorrow copies on any pages that need to be altered. I will then attempt to provide you with the finished manuscript on disk.

Please keep in mind that the number of sections and items within each section have made it difficult to judge the flow of these materials. I hope that in your review, you will be able to suggest alterations that clarify the intent of this document and make it easier to use.

# **CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY**

*A REGIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT THE  
CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION,  
HOUSING AND SEGREGATION  
IN THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA*



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**COMPILED BY**

**THE COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE**

**AND**

**THE EDUCATION AND HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT**

1997

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**BEYOND BUSING:**  
A Metrowide Dialogue on the Challenges of  
Education and Housing Segregation

# **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

***DRAFT***

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# DISCUSSION GUIDE

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# INTRODUCTION

## A Changing Region

Every year, the Twin Cities are ranked high on the list of America's most livable cities. Compared to standards used to judge major urban centers across the nation--job growth, low crime rates, good schools and social services, access to lakes and parks--the Twin Cities region is a good place to live. We are not, however, without serious and growing problems. The Twin Cities is now beginning to struggle with many of the same problems that have led to severe urban decay in other major metropolitan centers across America. Deepening poverty, an aging housing stock, overburdened schools, and fear of crime are rapidly changing our region's landscape. And while it is easy to believe that these problems are unique to the central cities, they are not.

Contrasts image of Twin Cities with Reality

Over the last few decades, poverty has concentrated in the core of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Throughout the 1980s, the core gained 30,000 poor people, while its total population grew by less than 10,000 people. This suggests several things. First, people who were above the poverty line slipped below it during years of wage erosion and a stagnant economy. Second, once individuals reach a certain income level, they are often -- and understandably -- "pulled" out to the suburbs, where there is more space, bigger and newer houses, lower property taxes, lower crime rates, and better schools. Meanwhile, low-income families have few choices but to locate in the central cities, particularly given the limited public transportation in the region and a lack of affordable housing in the suburbs. This shift is further illustrated by the fact that the rest of the region grew by more 293,000 persons, only 7.5% of whom are poor. According to the 1990 census, the central cities had 28% of the region's population but 60% of its poor.

Growing poor in central city - growth outstripping population

It is not just because poverty has concentrated in the core that we should be concerned, however. The poverty rate is growing and spreading. In 1979, 11 Twin Cities census tracts with a lower poverty rate in earlier years saw 25% or more of their populations sink below the poverty line. In the 80s, the spread of poverty accelerated sharply. Thirty-eight more tracts in the core area reached the 25% level. This doubled the poverty both in terms of population and area involved. Out of 121 census tracts in the core area, 105 saw their poverty rates increase.<sup>1</sup> This trend has continued. Today it is not just the central cities that are affected. Poverty and disinvestment are beginning to spread into inner-ring suburbs, too.

Poverty now growing in suburbs too

While over two-thirds of the people living in poverty are white, it is very clear that people of color are the hardest hit. Absolute numbers often mask this reality for people of color because they still constitute such a small percentage of Minnesota's total population. While the region's minority population grew by 81% during the 1980s, they still constitute only 9.3% of the region's total population--65% of which live in the central cities.<sup>2</sup> In the core area of the central city, however, poverty rates for African Americans (44%), American Indians (56%), Asians (62%) and Hispanic residents (31%) were dramatically higher than poverty rates for whites (18%).<sup>3</sup>

People of color hardest hit. (So?)

## The Impact on Schools

Perhaps nowhere is this racial and economic isolation more evident than in the public schools. The table below gives the percentage of students passing the 1996 Minnesota Basic Skills Test for all districts in the seven-country region. While test scores may be a crude measure

Assumes racial & economic isolation links it to educational achievement

<sup>1</sup>Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress*. November 1992. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>United Way Minneapolis Area. *The Face of the Twin Cities: Another Look*. 1995. p.8.

<sup>3</sup>Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress*. November 1992. p. 14.

of achievement, they do provide some insight on how various communities are doing in relationship to one another. Furthermore, many believe that the scores act as a proxy to the opportunities that are available to students in each community. As illustrated below, Minneapolis schools rank the lowest with only 42% of its students passing the math test and 37% passing the reading test. Minneapolis schools do have the highest per pupil expenditures (\$9,136) within the seven county region, but they also have the highest percentage of students living in poverty. Approximately 60% of students in the district are receiving free or reduced-price lunches--a federal program available for children in families below the poverty line. Furthermore, 63% of Minneapolis' student body are children of color.

Explores link between socioeconomic and race & student resources

As a result, it only makes sense that Minneapolis schools are spending more. Children who come to school hungry, chronically sick, emotionally starved, and mentally fatigued will have a far more difficult time concentrating and learning than children who do not face the constant worries and pressures of living in poverty. As a result, resources in poor districts often get diverted toward things such as free and reduced lunch programs, special education services, and bilingual education. While these services are vitally important to children from poor households, they are also very costly. When schools must spend significant proportions of their budgets on simply getting their students to the "starting line," they often fall short of the finish line.

Links behavior of kids in school w/ poverty & educational dip function.

### What is Our Mandate For Public Schools?

We proclaim to be a nation founded on the principle of equality of opportunity. But for this to be a reality, don't we first have to assure equality of educational opportunity? Since its inception, the public school has been thought of as a major instrument through which equality of opportunity would be ensured. One of the most persuasive arguments for the establishment of public schools was that such schooling "would open a gateway to opportunity that would otherwise be closed to many youngsters, and that education would eliminate or dwarf the social inequities which plague other nations."<sup>4</sup> Public schools in America were chartered to do the important work of American society. They were established to create and maintain a nation dedicated to certain shared principles and values--things such as individual freedom and justice. They were established to develop a citizenry capable of self-government and to ensure social unity and order. What happened to these ideals? Have we given up on them or are they no longer appropriate? Without equal educational opportunities, are we acquiescing to a society in which economic privilege and political power are determined by heredity? To a society in which the children of the rich are inherit advantage?

Whether public schools? Not really. Ideals of public education

Quality public schools and equality of educational opportunity are essential in providing information and developing skills essential to both individual economic enterprise and general prosperity. At the beginning of the century, dropping out and low educational attainment were not necessarily problems as there were other paths to self-sufficiency. Today, however, the world we live in is much different. Advances in technology and shifts in the labor market have largely eliminated the need for unskilled labor. In order to maintain a productive and profitable economy, as well as to be able to compete globally, there is a greater need for all individuals to become more literate and for a larger proportion to develop advanced skills. Yet so often we seem to live in a myopic society, and perhaps nowhere is this short-sightedness costing us more than with our indifference towards the education of other people's children. By limiting the resources available to schools, we are putting the future of this nation at risk by literally ensuring that large numbers of children leave school uneducated and unprepared to be productive members of society. The population of white Minnesotans between the ages of 15-19 is projected to decrease by 6% between 1995 and 2015. For African Americans, it is projected that the same population will

Changing world does not allow for lack of education anymore

Editorial comments above

<sup>4</sup> Tesconi, Jr., Charles A. and Emanuel Hurwitz, Jr. Education for Whom? NY: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1974. p 15

increase by 187%, while American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic/Latino Americans will increase by 61%, 111%, and 128%, respectively. This averages out to be an increase of 122% for communities of color.<sup>5</sup> If the quality of education that we offer to poor children and children of color do not change within the next twenty years, will these student be prepared to enter the work force and become productive members of society? *does* *If they are unprepared, how will our quality of life be affected?*

### The Search For Solutions

*are various views of the reasons for*  
There is considerable evidence that the differences between white people and people of color in school performance and economic prosperity are remnants of past and present segregation. The economic and racial polarization of our communities puts the health and stability of the entire region at risk. Although there is widespread agreement that something ought to be done, there is little agreement about what that "something" is. People advocate different strategies or solutions depending on how they perceive or "diagnose" the problem.

Economic and racial isolation is an "octopus" of a problem that will have to be approached from many different angles. No one policy or solution is broad enough to tackle all of its complex components. In the pages that follow are three perspectives on economic and racial isolation, each of which leads to a different prescription about what should be done. The perspectives are in no way mutually exclusive; indeed, different perspectives have different merits and elements of several approaches may be needed. Furthermore, these perspectives are not the only perspectives on the topic. Rather, they are intended simply to function as a framework for discussion.

If we are to halt the increasing polarization of this region before it is too late, we must begin by finding common ground. Which diagnosis of the problem is most accurate? What prescriptions are most promising? And perhaps most importantly, which costs and consequences are we willing to accept?

*"In today's world, a youngster who leaves school unable to read, write, and do simple arithmetic faces a bleak future.*

*When a substantial portion of boys and girls leave school uneducated, the rest of us face a bleak future."*

*--Lisabeth Schorr, Within Our Reach*

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<sup>5</sup>Urban Coalition. *Statement from Citizen's League Communities of Color*. 13 December 1996.

## Building Communities: Enrichment and Revitalization

### *Separate But Equal or Separate But Unequal?*

Can separate be equal? In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court declared in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, that “in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place.” Forty three years have passed since then, and America is now beginning to rethink that precept. Familiar remedies to discrimination and segregation--busing, affirmative action, specially drawn voting districts, and mobility programs--are beginning to draw fire. Today, then, there is a new twist to an old question: if separate really *is* equal, is it wrong?

“The practical barriers to desegregation are in many places so high that the moral clarity promised by *Brown*--a simple choice between segregation and integration, between racism and justice--has blurred.”<sup>1</sup> Many of the simple assumptions undergirding the civil-rights movement have been eroded. For years segregated neighborhoods and schools were protested as cruel and unjust. The *Brown* Court in fact found that segregation conferred an ineradicable stigma of inferiority on black children. Today, however, many people of color feel this assumption is *in itself* condescending and racist. After all, you never hear an all-white neighborhood or school being referred to as “segregated.” As well, it is never assumed that white children *must* go to school with children of color or it will damage their self-esteem.

Indeed, what exactly is right and wrong nowadays is no longer clear. Justice has become a matter of interpretation. In the words of Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, “Better for African-Americans to spend the millions in (busing) transportation money improving inner-city schools. Better to build affordable housing throughout Minneapolis. Better to rely on ‘children going to school in their own neighborhoods. If that means fewer integrated classrooms, so be it.”<sup>2</sup>

Why does the mayor--and so many other people of color--feel this way? Perhaps because, as a nation, we have never truly embraced *integration*. We have attempted *desegregation*--through court-ordered mandates--but the two are not synonymous. Desegregation implies a lack of choice--a “forced” integration. And that very likely *is* damaging to people’s confidence and self-esteem. Underneath it all, efforts to desegregate neighborhoods and schools with high proportions of minorities assumes that it is better to live and go to school in majority white settings. It is not a matter of multiculturalism but of assimilation. This is disrespectful of the strengths of communities of colors.

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<sup>1</sup>Traub, James. *Can Separate Be Equal?* Harper’s Magazine. June 1994. p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Fineman, Howard. *Redrawing the Color Lines*. Newsweek. 29 April 1996. p. 34.

## Segregation and Schools

The battle over “separate but equal” has most clearly manifested itself in the public schools. For more than 30 years now, cities across America have engaged in extensive busing efforts to create more culturally and economically diverse classrooms. The results have been costly and largely ineffective, and many feel that it has outlived its usefulness.

Why has busing been so ineffective? Largely because it has been done for the wrong reasons. After all, if one goes back to the initial concern of the black community, it was not about being with white people. It was about quality education. Former Atlanta mayor Andrew Young explains, “It was really the integration of the money to provide a quality education for all children that was black folks’ goal. Racial balance was a means for achieving that goal.”<sup>3</sup>

One *could* argue that busing has given some poor, minority children access to the opportunities that white students have. Never mind, however, that children--once “integrated” by schools--are often resegregated by a tracking system which assigns minority children to the least challenging, least interesting classes, often taught by the least experienced or least motivated teachers. Never mind the limited expectations for minority children, culturally biased instructional methods, and stereotyping and ability grouping. Indeed, under these circumstances, never mind busing at all.

Moreover, the busing efforts undertaken in American cities have placed an unfair burden on black communities. Not only is there a disproportional busing of black children, but the widespread use of busing has led to the demise of many neighborhood schools, which some African-Americans view as a root cause of the destruction of their communities. Schools serve as a hub for communication, interaction, and activities within a community. Desegregation efforts (through busing) have stripped many communities of this vital interaction and communication. It has dismantled community support and parental involvement for many black children. When children are bused out to the suburbs, many inner-city parents have commented that they cannot find public transportation to attend parent-teacher conferences and other school events. People often blame “unsupportive, uncaring parents” for the demise of public schools, complaining that parents no longer engage in their child’s education. But when government policies create huge barriers for parents to hurdle, can we truly blame them?

Finally, busing has failed to assist people of color in securing adequate educational opportunities for their children largely because most desegregation plans have been crafted and carried out by the white community with minimal black influence. As a superintendent of a Chicago school district commented, “It’s always been on someone else’s terms.”

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<sup>3</sup>Traub, James. *Can Separate Be Equal?* Harper’s Magazine. June 1994. p. 39.

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*New Answers to An Old Question? Perspectives on Busing and Segregation  
From Communities of Color*

- “The effort to achieve racial balance through desegregation has acted in conjunction with other forces to erode the community fabric that once provided support to children and families.”
- “Focus less on student racial percentages and more on student outcomes--resources must be in place to support equity in outcomes.”
- “I will venture and offer my humble opinion (as a non-educator) on the issue of busing as a tool to improve educational achievement among “minority” children. As a product of a public school system with 100% Latino students (Puerto Rico), I find it hard to believe that “minority” kids need to sit side-by side with white kids in order to learn!”
- “I’ve always chosen to put my children in schools that are close to me . . . and the fact that they are black to me is an asset. . . .That’s the best for my children, to be taught by people who understand them, who want to teach them, and who expect that they will achieve.”
- “Frankly, I find most arguments FOR busing self-defeating, in the sense that by busing kids we seem to imply to our kids that ‘whites are smarter and maybe their ‘smarts’ will rub off on you’ by attending mostly-white schools! Also, busing is a cheap way out for those in power to claim that they are doing something to improve education in ghettos and barrios, instead or adopting the right (but politically unpopular approach) of providing more resources to the neighborhood schools and the “minority” community in general.”
- “As a parent, I see no intrinsic value in having my daughter travel for hours to a far away school, potentially risking harassment by white kids because of her heritage, in order to get an education. She should be entitled to a perfectly good education right at her neighborhood public school!”

## **A Strong Foundation**

The intersection of race and poverty is very real. Nonetheless, over two-thirds of the people living in poverty in this region are white. This is not good news--it merely serves to remind us that our region is not only segregated by race, but by class as well. Racial and economic segregation damages the entire metropolitan region--both the urban core and the suburbs. A strong and prosperous core is key to the health of the entire region, for without the city, there would be no suburbs. Suburban communities benefit from the unique economic and cultural opportunities that only large urban centers can provide. Segregation, however, prevents wealth accumulation by residents of isolated, poor communities, thereby establishing major barriers to market participation. And indeed it is not only individuals who suffer. Metropolitan regions as a whole suffer when large percentages of people do not have the skills necessary to participate in the economy as workers, consumers, and citizens. In other words, providing a token few individuals with more opportunities and choices--greater "mobility"--will do little good for the region if the communities that are left behind remain poor and isolated.

## **Education and Job Training**

Society has changes substantially in recent decades. Advances in technology and shifts in the labor market have largely eliminated the need for unskilled labor. In order to be self-sufficient in today's world, education or vocation training is absolutely essential.

The greatest concentration of jobs in this region is in the core. As of the early 1990s, it had approximately 374,000 jobs, more than 2.8 jobs for each of its 133,000 households.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, the core has the highest rates of unemployment and poverty in the region. Why? Because there is a serious mismatch between the skills and knowledge of low-income core residents and the skills and knowledge required by available jobs. The jobs available in the core--which contains not only two downtowns but the University of Minnesota, the Midway area, and the Capitol complex--are highly professional. As a result, jobs are typically filled by suburban commuters. This is one side of the story.

On the other hand, while the central cities still maintains the largest percentage of jobs, job growth in the central cities has virtually come to a halt. The region's economy is rapidly becoming suburbanized. The suburbs captured almost 98% percent of job growth in the 1980s--66% of which went to the fast growing outer-ring suburbs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress*. 1992. p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 18.

**Per Capita Income, by Race and Hispanic Origin, 1990 Census(in \$1,000s)**

	7 County Region	Minneapolis	St. Paul	Suburbs
Average	\$14.5	\$13.3	\$12.9	\$15.0
White	\$14.8	\$14.1	\$13.5	\$15.1
African Am.	\$9.1	\$8.4	\$8.2	\$13.1
Am. Indian	\$6.8	\$5.9	\$6.2	\$8.6
Asian	\$9.4	\$6.9	\$5.5	\$11.9
Hispanic	\$8.4	\$7.5	\$7.3	\$9.7

Source: Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: Twin Cities Under Stress*. November 1992. p. 38

**Percent Change in Per Capita Income, By Race and Hispanic Origin, 1979-1989 (1989 dollars)**

	Region	Minneapolis	St. Paul	Suburbs
Average	18.4%	11.5%	6.5%	20.9%
White	21.3%	20.1%	13.9%	21.9%
African Am.	-3.5%	-7.5%	-5.0%	-8.1%
Am. Indian	20.1%	-5.7%	4.9%	56.8%
Asian	-12.1%	-11.6%	-25.1%	1.8%
Hispanic	8.4%	14.9%	-2.3%	10.5%

Source: Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: Twin Cities Under Stress*. November 1992. p. 39

Income disparities in the central cities and the suburbs increased throughout the 1980s. Per capita income in the suburbs was higher than in the central cities to begin with, and then increased at a faster rate throughout the decade. Areas outside of the central cities experiences a 21% increase in average per capita income, while average per capita income in Minneapolis and St. Paul went up about 12% and 7%, respectively. More striking, however, is the difference in per capita income between whites and minorities. Average per capita income for African Americans and Asians actually *decreased* throughout the decade. This may be in part due to the shift in the regional economy. The economy of the Twin Cities (like that of the nation) has become increasingly based on services and trade activity and proportionately less on manufacturing. Two-thirds of all the region's new jobs in the last decade were in the services and trade sectors. These jobs--largely in retail--generally have lower wage rates than jobs in manufacturing. In fact, less than half of the jobs in Minnesota today pay a livable way.

## What's the Prescription?

If we are to strengthen our core, it is imperative that we focus on job training and placement programs for the unskilled inhabitants of the core. Moreover, we must start preparing "tomorrow's workers" today by providing quality educational opportunities for *all* children. Currently Minneapolis and St. Paul have the highest drop-out rates and lowest achievement scores of all school districts in the seven county region. This suggests that we need to focus on equalizing resources between suburban and urban schools, through some sort of revenue-sharing plan or suburban-urban transfer. As well, we could redirect funds earmarked for busing to improve neighborhood schools in the central cities.

It is also essential that we reverse the outflow of economic activity to the suburbs. Due to changes in technology and transportation structures, large firms no longer find it necessary to locate in the central cities. As a result, more and more companies are relocating to the suburbs. To prevent this flight of capital as well as to entice capital back into the cities, redevelopment grants and loans as well as tax exemptions--the distinguishing tool of urban enterprise zones--could be used. Beyond providing more job opportunities for the urban poor, an influx of capital into the central cities would help compensate for the deteriorating urban tax base.

## What Critics Say

- Pumping money into the central cities is not the answer because it is prohibitively expensive. When poverty is so concentrated, using money to tackle the problem is like throwing it down a black hole because it is absorbed so quickly. Given the fact that many of these communities are in serious debt, it would take an impossible amount of money to revitalize their economies. It isn't realistic to believe that we can generate that much investment, particularly as it will largely have to come in the form of transfers from the suburbs.
- Creating "enterprise zones" is not an effective way to stimulate economic activity and create jobs in the urban core. Enterprise zones are not pro-labor or pro-community, but pro-profit. Jobs are not guaranteed to go to the urban poor; they can (and very often are) filled by suburban commuters. Moreover, the communities providing the tax-exemption must provide resources to compensate for the tax expenditure granted to the enterprise zone--either through increased tax burdens or decreased services.
- In order to create more regional stability, our communities need to be more economically and racially diverse. Building up infrastructure in the cities will do little good if our communities are still divided along race and class lines.
- The only way to break down the racial hierarchy that currently exists is to integrate. People of color need to enter into the economic and social mainstream where they will have more access to good jobs and good schools. Equally important, white folks must diversify and expand their understanding of people of color. If we continue to stay apart, the structure of the "racial other" goes unchecked.

- People need to have real choices about where they live. Since a majority of the new jobs are in the suburbs, and because we have limited mass transit in the region, there needs to be more low-income housing in the suburbs.

## Personal Responsibility and Market Mechanism

### A Safety Net or A Trap?

Can a society take care of its *deserving* without encouraging people to become *undeserving*? Can society create a welfare system that doesn't undermine the moral character of its people? The general answer, as history has taught us, is no.

A government's social policy establishes the rules by which its citizens live. It creates incentives and strategies to go about making a living, raising a family, and having fun. All people--poor and not-poor--respond to these incentives as rational human beings, attempting to maximize their own utility. The primary difference between the poor and not-poor, however, is that they play under different constraints: poor people cannot wait as long for results.

Beginning in the early 1960s, social policy in the United States underwent a major transformation. Programs initiated under the War on Poverty radically changed the rules for poor people, making it profitable for the poor to behave in the short term in ways that were destructive in the long term. The changes in benefit levels and eligibility requirements ushered in by the social policies of the 60s dramatically changed incentives to the poor. As a result, we saw an increase in unemployment among the young, a decrease in labor force participation, and an increase in illegitimacy and welfare dependency.<sup>6</sup> Since then, we have been masking these losses by further subsidizing destructive behavior. We tried to provide more help to the poor, but instead we only created more poor. We tried to prevent people from becoming dependent, but instead created long-term dependency.

We cannot blame people for acting rational. If a young, single mom has a choice between working a full-time, minimum wage job with no insurance (and then paying half of her income for child care), or staying at home with her child, claiming AFDC benefits, Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Section 8 rent subsidies, what is the rational choice? Of course it is the latter of the two. The problem, however, is that this woman is only looking at her short term needs. When this woman's child grows older and she suddenly finds herself needing and wanting to work, she will also find herself lacking a solid employment history and job skills. As a result, she will have no choice but to stay dependent on government assistance.

Moreover, every assumption young blacks or Latinos might make about their inability to compete with whites is fed by targeted social policies which tell them that they are un-responsible victims. We tell youth from disadvantaged families to be proud and to believe in themselves, yet our actions tell them that no one else believes in them. It is, in essence, the self-fulfilling prophecy. Low-income minorities typically live in the most isolated communities, experience the most severe negative conditioning, and have been granted by policy the most immunity from responsibility.

Essentially, then, instead of a safety net, we inadvertently built a trap. By allowing people to be dependent on the government during hard times, we've taken away their ability to be self-sufficient. People *would* play the incentives offered by the market if they didn't have the option of playing the incentives offered by the government. If we eliminated assistance for everyone but the truly needy, it would leave the able-bodied no recourse whatsoever except the job market.

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<sup>6</sup>Murray, Charles. Losing Ground. NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1984. p. 9.

“It is the Alexandrian solution: cut the knot, for there is no way to untie it.”<sup>7</sup>

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“The most troubling aspect of American social policy toward the poor in the late twentieth-century America is not how much it costs, but what it has bought.”

--Charles Murray,  
Losing Ground

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### **The Culture of Poverty**

Spending on social programs has steadily increased since America first began waging its “war on poverty.” Public assistance costs were thirteen times higher in 1980 than they were in 1950 (in constant dollars). Education costs in 1980 were 24 times their 1950 cost, while housing costs were 129 times their 1950 cost. Overall, civilian social welfare costs increased by twenty times. During that same period, however, the United States population increased by one half.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, a fundamental change took place in American social policy. But why hasn’t this investment paid off?

As some suggest, this investment has not paid off because a certain class of people will always be poor regardless of their external circumstances. People are stuck in a self-perpetuating cycle of disadvantage because poverty traits are transmitted intergenerationally. Research shows that this “culture of poverty” transcends regional, rural/urban, and national differences, and that everywhere individuals stuck in this culture of poverty show “striking similarities in family structure, interpersonal relations, time orientation, value systems, and patterns of spending.”<sup>9</sup> This culture is characterized by things such as (1) hopelessness, indifference, alienation, apathy, and a lack of effective participation or integration into the social and economic fabric of society; (2) a present-tense time orientation; (3) cynicism and mistrust of those in authority; (4) strong feelings of marginality, helplessness, dependence, and inferiority; (5) lack of impulse control and the inability to defer gratification; (6) the absence of childhood as a specially protected and prolonged state, and thus early initiation into free sexual unions or consensual marriages; (7) a high incident in the abandonment of wives and children; (8) a matriarchal family structure; and (9) a minimum level of organization beyond the nuclear or extended family, a low level of community organization, and a strong sense of territoriality.<sup>10</sup> This is not the same type of poverty found among those who have experienced the loss of a breadwinner, are involuntary unemployed, or are ill. The poverty that these people endure is typically not enduring and self-perpetuating but rather temporary. Approximately only 20% of those living below the poverty line are actually trapped in the culture of poverty, but indeed this 20% is largely why our

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid. pp. 227-228.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. p. 14. (From Office of Research and Statistics. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1981*. Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, 1982.)

<sup>9</sup>Karger, Howard Jacob and David Stoesz. *American Social Welfare Policy*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group, 1994.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. p. 148.

increased investments have *not* paid off. An expensive program such as Section 8--one that costs approximately \$6000 per year per family--is a futile effort because those in the culture of poverty will remain poor whether they live in core of whether they live in the Eden Prairie.

Improvements in environment will superficially affect their poverty, but only a change in values and family structure can help break the cycle of disadvantage.

### **“The Poverty of Values”**

History is replete with individuals who have climbed their way out of poverty. But what is it that allows some people to hurdle life's barriers while others consistently stumble?

General Colin Powell grew up in Harlem and the South Bronx, two of America's very poorest and crime-ridden neighborhoods. He was not an exceptionally gifted student nor a star athlete, but he was a hard-worker. In 1989, the 52-year-old was appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The youngest man and first African-American ever to hold that position, Colin Powell is greatly respected by the American public. When asked the secret of his success, Powell gives a definitive response: “My family.” In his own words, “The worst kind of poverty is not economic poverty. It is the poverty of values.”<sup>11</sup>

Today, one out of every four children is born to a single mother. A third of these single mothers are teenagers.<sup>12</sup> Studies show that children in single-parent families are more likely to have problems. They tend to do more poorly in school and are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol. They typically earn less and are more likely to become single parents themselves. This breakdown of values is ultimately what causes the perpetuation of poverty. Children do not have role-models and thus do not learn how to be disciplined and self-sufficient.

Our current public policies and practices counteract traditional American values of hard-work, self-sufficiency, and strong, two-parent families. Aid to Families with Dependent Children, for example, allows a woman to have a child out of wedlock with no conceivable way of supporting that child. No-fault divorce laws are another example; by allowing couples to easily get divorces, they place a low value on family and marriage. Our current laws and practices need to be restructured to encourage two-parent families and family values.

### **The Impact on Schools**

Perhaps nowhere has the break-down of the family structure had a stronger impact than on our schools. People often voice dissatisfaction with the public schools, but schools nowadays are asked to do the impossible: they are asked not only to educate children, but raise them, protect them, and discipline them too. Schools are asked to provide children with their breakfast and lunch, their after-school activities, their values and morals. Teachers are forced to discipline children who cause disruptions and create problems. They must spend extra time helping children with assignments who get no help at home. Where are the parents? When teachers are asked to take on so many other roles, it seriously diminishes their capacity to do their primary function: teach.

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<sup>11</sup>National Issues Forums. *The Troubled American Family*. 1995. p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. p. 7.

Not ironically, it is in the best schools that we see the most two-parent families. In these schools, teachers are free to teach without constantly having to deal with disruptions and incomplete assignments. Indeed, many studies have found that it is not the amount of money that a school spends that has the greatest impact on educational achievement, but rather the socioeconomic make-up of the students. In 1964, John Hopkins sociologist James Coleman conducted an extensive study of equality of educational opportunity in America. When measured by the "input" criteria, Coleman found that differences in the quality of schools was not very closely related to differences in student achievement. Instead, he found social class mix to be the crucial factor in explaining differences in achievement. Children from low socioeconomic backgrounds--regardless of race--improved when studying along side of children from a mixture of *social* classes. This may be because children from middle- and upper-class families typically have a different values system and receive discipline and instruction at home. The crucial point, according to Coleman, is that "schools have little influence on a youngster's achievement that is independent of his social, economic, and cultural background."<sup>13</sup> Our own experience in the Twin Cities seems to confirm Coleman's point. While the Minneapolis school district is the highest spending district in the region, it also has the lowest achievement rates (as measured by the Minnesota Basic Skills Tests). It also has more children living with only one parent (46.2%) than with two parents (42.5%).<sup>14</sup>

### **Using Market Mechanisms to Improve Opportunities**

Despite the best of intentions, government intervention in markets such as education and housing has produced less-than-desired results and numerous unintended consequences. Public housing stands out as one infamous example. While the original housing constructed under the Housing Act of 1949 consisted predominantly of low-rise, two- and three-story apartment buildings, and while the first tenants of public housing apartments were predominantly young, employed, working-class families, beginning in the mid-1950s, public housing underwent a dramatic shift. Higher urban land costs led to more and more high-rise buildings. Architectural designs took little account of the needs of families with children (apartments had few bedrooms and little recreational space). Municipal housing authorities and elected officials decided to concentrate the buildings. In some instances, design standards were even lowered to make public housing less attractive to force more reliance on the public sector.<sup>15</sup> Eventually, large numbers of poor families began to crowd into the projects. In many communities, "the projects" became a code for poverty, crime, and despair. Today, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is thought by many to be the largest slum-lord in the country.

Public education stands out in the mind of many as another bureaucratic failure. Again, despite the best intentions, political institutions burden schools with excessive bureaucratic redtape, inhibit effective organization, stifle innovation and flexibility, and thereby impede student achievement. People nowadays consider private schools to be a beacon of excellence.

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<sup>13</sup>Tesconi, Jr. Charles A. and Emanuel Hurwitz, Jr. *Education For Whom?* NY: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1974. p. 23.

<sup>14</sup>The Urban Coalition. *Minneapolis Public School Neighborhood Student Data, 1995-96.* p. 42.

<sup>15</sup>Egan, John, et al. *Housing and Public Policy: A Role for Mediating Structures.* Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1981. p. 16.

The main difference, many contend, is that private schools maintain a safe and disciplined environment in which people can learn, and that teachers engage parents more fully in their children's education.

From an institutional perspective, however, private schools are successful for a different reason. They are successful because the market mechanism of competition ensures that parents have more control than they do in public schools. Private schools have the incentive to please their "customers" and respond to their wants and needs lest they should take their "business" elsewhere. In contrast, public schools are democratically governed; they are represented by varied interests all vying for control over and within the system. A single school is governed by a huge and heterogeneous constituency comprised of politicians, administrators, teachers, and various groups at all levels. Parents and students are but a small part of this constituency. And because political resources are distributed unequally and the interests of the politically powerful do not always, if even occasionally, parallel the interests of the average citizen, parents wants and needs are often considered last. Low-income families are particularly disempowered. While wealthy parents might in fact choose to remove their children from public schools and send them to private schools, or they perhaps might even choose to move to a different neighborhood, poor families have no such recourse. Because of the steep financial costs of alternatives, public schools can attract and keep students without being particularly good at educating them.

These two anecdotes on housing and education suggest that we must reverse the policies of the last fifty years. The government has grown steadily larger and more intrusive, spending more and more money to tackle problems that simple cannot be solved with money. To avoid the mistakes of the past, we need policies that encourage self-sufficiency and maximize individual choice. Recognizing that many jobs today do not pay livable wages, it may be an appropriate policy for the government to subsidize low-income families with vouchers for housing and education, but that is where government intervention should end. The market should then take over. For example, it is inefficient and intrusive for governments to mandate "fair share" housing policies. There will obviously be a greater demand for low-income housing in some areas than in others, and the market is by far more accurate and efficient in measuring that demand than the government. Where there is sufficient demand, suppliers will appear. Individuals who are motivated and responsible will take advantage of the opportunities created through voucher systems, but it is otherwise inappropriate and unnatural (and expensive) for the government to try and help those who do not want to be helped and who are unwilling to "help themselves."

## What Critics Say

- Less than half of the jobs in Minnesota pay a livable way. Sixty-one percent of Minnesota's 85,348 families in poverty have at least one person in the work force. Approximately 400,000 Minnesotans lack health coverage--72% of which are in the work force.<sup>16</sup> If we want to create less dependency on the government and more dependency on the market and on the individual, we have to create a market system which allows responsible people to survive.
- Discrimination remains a significant barrier for people of color, no matter how "responsible" they are.
- Poor people do not have the time or money to lobby for their interests and rights. The wealthy, on the other hand, abuse their power and continue to get richer at the expense of the poor. The new Twins stadium is one example of how the needs and wants of the wealthy are considered above those of the poor.
- Everyone in this country receives government benefits of some sort. Whether it is in the form of a check or a tax deduction is immaterial. In fact, the federal government spends \$66 billion a year on mortgage-interest and property tax deductions for homeowners--two-thirds of which goes to families with incomes over \$75,000.<sup>17</sup> This is more than *four times* as much as is spent on low-income housing programs.
- The poor will always be with us; a reserve labor pool is essential to capitalism.. The chief function of social programs is to regulate labor. When mass unemployment leads to outbreaks of turmoil, relief programs are initiated or expanded to absorb/control the turmoil and restore order. As turmoil subsides or as labor is needed, the relief programs contract, expelling those who are needed back into the labor market. Responsibility has nothing to do with it.
- The problem with social welfare policies in this country is not that we've done too much--creating dependency--but that we've done too little. The actual amount spent on programs like AFDC is very small. If we truly want to help people get back on their feet again, we need to invest more in these programs.

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<sup>16</sup> United Way of Minneapolis Area. The Face of the Twin Cities: Another Look. 1995. p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> DeParle, Jason. The Year that Housing Died. The New York Times Magazine. 20 October 1996. p. 53.

# Mobility: Creating Choices

## No Turning Back?

*"Forty percent of America's cities are programmed to fail. Gary, Camden, and East St. Louis are already clinically dead. Bridgeport, Newark, Hartford, Cleveland, and Detroit are on life support systems. New York, Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, and Philadelphia are sinking. Through seemingly healthy, Boston, Minneapolis, and Atlanta are already infected."*<sup>1</sup>

Dean Rusk, urban policy expert and author of Cities Without Suburbs, visited the Twin Cities a few years ago. He warned that Minneapolis and St. Paul were headed down the same one-way track that cities like Detroit and Cleveland have already traveled. The basic pattern remains the same: poverty concentrates in the core, middle class flight accelerates, and the core is left with a higher percentage of poor families but less resources to meet their needs. As a result, we end up with a polarization of the region along race and class lines.

"Inelastic" cities that are unable to expand their city limits are programmed to fail, according to Rusk, because they become "their own suburbs' poorhouse."<sup>2</sup> For many reasons -- a lack of affordable housing in the suburbs, limited mass transit in the region, discrimination in lending and realty markets, myopic city politics, racism -- low-income families in the Twin Cities have remained trapped within city limits, and largely, within certain neighborhoods. When poverty is concentrated, it exacerbates a myriad of other problems: poor schools, crime, unemployment, drugs, dependency, and illegitimacy. The most effective solution is simply to get people out of the ghettos and into neighborhoods with good schools and job opportunities.

## Poor Communities = Poor Schools

Education is typically viewed as the path to self-sufficiency. History is rife with examples of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who pulled themselves up "by the bootstraps" and out of poverty. Clarence Thomas and Colin Powell-- prominent, successful, national figures. Through hard work and dedication, these two individuals defied the odds. But unfortunately, those odds are hard to beat. These men are statistical anomalies. The reality is that for children who grow up in poor families and live in poor communities, the odds of escaping those deprivations are infinitesimal. A school may be a child's only hope for a transcendent future, and when that school is overcrowded, impersonal, and gray as well, hope fades fast. At the very minimum, then, we must assure that children have access to good schools.

In Minnesota, many options currently allow families to choose their school. The "open enrollment" option, for example, allows students aged 5 to 18 to transfer to public schools outside of their residential district unless the receiving district does not have room or the transfer will have a negative impact on desegregation efforts. Currently less than 2% of all students take advantage of this option.<sup>3</sup> A major obstacle for poor families, however, is the fact that transportation is not provided for students using the open enrollment option. If the family does not have a car, and because public transportation is not available to all areas within the suburbs, choices are effectively limited. Moreover, some parents may be unwilling or unable to invest the time and money seeking

<sup>1</sup> Rusk, David. "Without Urban-Suburban Unity, Cities Future Looks Bleak." Pioneer Press. 10 June 1994.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. School Choice. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation, 1992.

out a quality school for their child. As a result, transportation subsidies and extensive outreach programs are vital if school choice programs are to provide options to the families who need them most.

Busing, of course, is another way in which we have traditionally attempted to provide low-income and minority students more opportunities in education. For more than 30 years now, cities across America have engaged in extensive busing efforts to create more culturally and economically diverse classrooms. Some people feel the results have been costly and largely ineffective, but a significant number of people still express strong support for desegregated schools. Research has shown that desegregation has modest positive effects on the achievement of black students, while having no negative affect on white student achievement.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, students attending integrated schools have a better chance of attending selective colleges, majoring in technical fields, and working /living in integrated settings.<sup>5</sup> And while raising the achievement of children of color is important, equally important is how children are socialized to become the next generation of adults. Thus even if no gains in achievement were evident, one might still argue that busing is a worthwhile endeavor.

Desegregation proponents argue that the failure of desegregation-based education strategies to produce better academic results, particularly in regard to students of color, comes from its incompleteness. For example, we haven't done enough in our schools to make students of color feel welcomed and valued. There is a lack of diversity among the teaching staff in the region, and staff development efforts to help all staff develop skills, knowledge, and strategies to work with students from various cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds have not been made. Moreover, even though schools may be desegregated, classrooms often are not. Once desegregated by school, children are often "re-segregated" by a tracking system that assigns minority children to the least challenging, least interesting classes, often taught by the least experienced or least motivated teachers. In other words, we should actually *try* busing before we condemn it.

Overall, however, a child's educational opportunities and achievement depends on the entire spectrum of resources available through their *whole* environment: home, school, and neighborhood. How they speak and think, how they interact with others, their goals and dreams ... these things depend on where a child lives, and thus, how he or she sees the world. Is it hopeful and bright? Is it dangerous and threatening? Is it gray and sad? Even if one part of a child's spectrum thrives, it will, on average, not be sufficient to counter the impacts of the other two. This is not to say, of course, that we should abandon short-term desegregation strategies such as busing, but if we are ever going to make *real* changes, we will need to "exchange rose-colored glasses for binoculars and move from the false hope of a quick fix to slow but steady improvements in the long term."<sup>6</sup> That is to say, if we want desegregated schools, we need desegregated neighborhoods.

## Barriers to Choice

The Twin Cities economy is increasingly becoming suburbanized. The region gained 225,000 new jobs in the 1980s, only 5,400 of which went to the central cities. As a result, there is a significant spatial mismatch between those who need the jobs and where the jobs are actually located. More than one in four households in the core lack a vehicle, making it largely impossible for low-income families to take advantage of job opportunities in the suburbs. For minorities, the percentages are substantially higher: 47% of African-American households, 56% of Native

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<sup>4</sup>Minneapolis Public Schools. Quality Schools Report. 17 April 1993. p. 24.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid p. 24.

<sup>6</sup>O'Connor, Debra. Promises Unfulfilled. St. Paul Pioneer Press. 11 May 1995, p 10A.

American households, and 36% of Asian households lack a vehicle.<sup>7</sup> Bus routes do serve the developing suburbs but only go to a limited number of locations and with much less frequency. Increasingly, the distance between job locations and people's homes is a major barrier of economic opportunity.

Perhaps the biggest barrier to low-income families, however, is the lack of affordable housing in the suburbs. Seventy-one percent of the rental units affordable to very low-income renters<sup>8</sup> and nearly two-thirds of the homes valued at \$60,000 or less were located in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Furthermore, the central city and the inner-ring suburbs possess a majority of the region's subsidized housing. While the central cities' share of all subsidized housing in the region has declined from 90% in the early 1970s to 65% today, the fact remains that low-income families still have a limited number of choices of where to live.<sup>9</sup>

There are many reasons why there is a shortage of affordable housing in the suburbs. Perhaps the biggest reason: zoning laws that prohibit the construction of low- and middle-income housing. Because so many vital services (such as education) are funded through property taxes, municipalities have an incentive to keep low-cost developments out of their communities. "Exclusionary zoning" occurs when municipalities increase the required standards of housing quality beyond those necessary for healthy and safety standards. Examples include specifications of minimum square footage for new homes and lots, prohibitions on multi-family housing units, maximum densities limitations, and garage requirements. For example, while the Metropolitan Council's Advisory Standard for minimum lot size (for single family housing) is 7,500 square feet, Minnetonka has a minimum lot size of 22,000 square feet. As well, Lakeville requires that each single family site provide space for a three-car garage regardless of whether the garage is constructed.<sup>10</sup> Though land costs, building costs, and utility connection costs, these requirements contribute significantly to the cost of a house.

Housing is a basic human need that changes with people's age and economic condition. Over their life span, people's needs change in respect to housing type, size, price, and location. As a result, exclusionary zoning not only keeps people out of communities, it actually "squeezes" established community members out as their circumstances or needs change. For example, when people retire and suddenly find themselves on fixed budgets, they may have to leave the community altogether if they cannot find housing which meets their needs. Hence it is not just low-wage workers who need housing options, but the elderly, young people such as students, and people going through life changes, such as women who become single moms after a divorce.

Other barriers for low-income and minority households include discrimination in lending markets. "Redlining," or the refusal by banks or companies to issue loans or insurance on property in certain neighborhoods, occurs quite frequently. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston claims that people of color are sixty percent more like to be rejected for loans for home purchase, improvement, or refinancing than similarly situated white applicants (controlling for financial, employment and neighborhood characteristics).<sup>11</sup> The incidence of racial discrimination specifically in the Twin Cities home mortgage lending market is well documented. Recent statistical analysis found that approximately 70% of the disparity between home mortgage loans rejection

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<sup>7</sup> Metropolitan Council. Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress. 18 November 1992. p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Low income renters are those at 30% of the median income.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid p. 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Lukermann, Barbara and Michael Kane. Land Use Practices: Exclusionary Zoning, de Facto or de Jure? Center For Urban and Regional Affairs. p. 17-18.

<sup>11</sup> The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing Segregation and Persistent Segregation. (Executive Summary). 1996. p. 6.

rates of nonwhites and whites is due to the unequal treatment of similarly qualified loan applicants.<sup>12</sup>

Discrimination in the rental market is also severe. A review of seventy-one fair housing audits conducted in cities across the nation throughout the 1980s found that blacks seeking homes for sale encountered a 20% chance of discrimination (on average) while blacks seeking rental units faced a 50% chance of discrimination.<sup>13</sup> Similar discrimination exists for Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. A recent study conducted by the Minnesota Fair Housing Center on the rental practice in two Minneapolis Communities found the incidence of discrimination to be even higher. The MFHC conducted a series of survey tests in the Northeast and Southwest neighborhoods, and found that a total of 72.2% of the cases received different treatment based on race, family status, or public assistance status. In 55.5% of the survey tests, applicants received less favorable treatment based on race.<sup>14</sup> There was a range of discriminatory behavior uncovered: more information was offered to white testers than testers of color, white testers were encourage to fill out applications right away while testers of color were not encouraged to do so, agents not showing up for testers of color, units being unavailable for testers of color but available for white testers, testers of color being shown inferior units, and more burdensome terms and conditions for testers of color.<sup>15</sup>

### What's the Prescription?

To prevent local governments from acting like monopolies, housing policies should be made at least in part on a regional level. A national myth holds that small government is better than big government. But according to Dean Rusk, our national reality is that small governments act to exclude racial and economic groups. "Broad-based government can promote diversity. In short, multiple, independent suburbs are machines to keep poor blacks and Latinos trapped in inner cities away from middle class America."<sup>16</sup> The power now held by dozens of independent, local governments should be placed in the hands of an effective, accountable, elected metropolitan government.

At the very least, however, suburbs need to accept their "fair share" of responsibility for creating affordable housing. It is to their own benefit to provide life-cycle housing in a range of types and prices for their own community members as well as individuals wanting to re-locate closer to job opportunities. To prevent creating new pockets of poverty in the suburbs, low-income housing should be scattered throughout neighborhoods and communities. When poverty is not concentrated, it tends to mitigate many of the other problems often associated with poverty, such as crime and declining property values. In order to get suburbs to comply, special incentives may be needed. If tax incentives are not strong enough, mandatory policies with penalties for noncompliance could be adopted.

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<sup>12</sup>The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing Segregation and Persistent Segregation. 1996. p. 54. (From Tze Chan and Samuel L. Myers, Jr., "Racial Discrimination in Housing Markets: Accounting for Credit Risk," *Social Science Quarterly*, Volume 76, No. 3, September 1995 and *Disparities in Mortgage Lending in the Upper Midwest Summary of the Results Using 1992 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data*.)

<sup>13</sup>The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing Segregation and Persistent Segregation. 1996. p. 35.

<sup>14</sup>Minnesota Fair Housing Center. *Housing Discrimination: A Report on the Rental Practices in Two Minneapolis Communities*. December 1996. p. 9..

<sup>15</sup> Minnesota Fair Housing Center. *Housing Discrimination: A Report on the Rental Practices in Two Minneapolis Communities*. December 1996. p. 10.

<sup>16</sup>Rusk, Dean. *Without Urban -Suburban Unity, Cities Future Looks Bleak*, Pioneer Press. 10 June 1994.

Incentives directly to developers are another possible option. The state of Massachusetts, for example, adopted guidelines in 1969 requiring local governments to take regional needs into effect in the implementation of local planning and development standards in its "Anti-Snob Zoning Law." The law allows developers of projects that are at least 30 percent low-income affordable to bypass local planning commissions in securing permits. Developers have won most of the appeals filed as a result of the law, and some 20,000 units of affordable housing have been created.<sup>17</sup> Massachusetts also withholds federal and state assistance grants from municipalities that implement exclusionary zoning ordinances or unreasonable restrictions on private developments of low-income housing.<sup>18</sup>

Another possibility includes replacing exclusionary zoning with "inclusionary" zoning. Density bonuses and mandatory set-asides are two of the main instruments of inclusionary zoning. Density bonuses increase the permitted density of a development as the amount of affordable housing increases. Mandatory set-asides require developers to reserve a certain portion of units in each development for low- or moderate-income residents.<sup>19</sup>

On the flip side, the government needs to expand voucher programs and lending programs to enhance the purchasing power of low-income households. As well, the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws is critical. Housing audits, such as the one recently conducted by the MFHC, is one important and relatively inexpensive method of checking discrimination in the housing market. Courts rely on evidence gathered in such tests to determine if violations of the fair housing laws have occurred. An ongoing, comprehensive program of random testing with penalties for violators ought to be enacted.

Finally, community outreach efforts should be made to integrate new residents and make them feel a part of the community. Home-improvement training programs and seminars could be implemented to help new residents maintain their property. Mentoring programs would help the new residents learn what healthy communities demand in terms of values and responsibilities.

## **Gatreaux Mobility**

The strategy of giving the minority poor more choice in where they live can be traced largely to the relative success of a plan in Chicago that grew out of a 1966 lawsuit. Residents of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)--led by Dorothy Gautreaux--charged that the CHA reinforced segregation by locating nearly all public housing in overwhelmingly African American neighborhoods. The plaintiffs successfully sued to force HUD and the CHA to fund a rent-subsidy voucher program throughout the six-county Chicago area.

The Gatreaux Assisted Housing Program is the oldest and most renowned of the special mobility programs. Northwestern University sociologist James Rosenbaum and his colleagues found that improvements in economic outcomes for parents and educational outcomes for children are associated with enhanced opportunities in neighborhoods less severely impacted by poverty. Specifically, they found that children who had grown up in the suburbs were more likely to have completed high school, attended college, be employed, and earn higher wages.

Minneapolis, St. Paul, and a number of inner-ring suburbs already meet or exceed their share of affordable housing unit in the metropolitan area. Other communities, however, fall

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<sup>17</sup> The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation. 1996. p. 34 (From Sylvia Lewis, "A Parallel Experience," in *Planning* 58 (May 1992): 14.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. p. 35. (From Justin D. Cummin, *Recasting Fair Share: Toward Housing Law and Principled Social Policy*, 54 *Law and Inequ. J.* 339, 364, 1996.)

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. p. 35.

substantially short. The lack of affordable housing in the suburbs is one of the largest barriers to economic opportunity faced by low-income households.

### **What is “affordable housing”?**

Under standards established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing is classified as “affordable” if it consumes no more than 30% of a household’s income.<sup>20</sup> Housing that exceeds 50% of income is defined as a severe cost burden. According to the 1990 Census, the region faces a serious need for affordable housing. There is a current shortage of over 36,800 units which would be considered affordable to low-income renters at the 30% benchmark. This shortage may even be understated as it fails to consider the current mismatch between low-income households and affordable housing units. Many of the units deemed affordable for low-income households are actually occupied by households with higher incomes. As a result, large percentages of the Minneapolis and St. Paul poor face severe housing cost burdens. In 1990, 76% of the region’s low-income renters (84,000 households) paid 30% or more of their income on rent, while 43% of these low-income households (48,000) paid over 50% of their income on rent<sup>21</sup>.

While the central cities still has the largest concentration of jobs, the fast-growing suburbs captured two-thirds of net-job growth in the 1980s. This trend is projected to continue on into the next decade.

### **Critics Say**

- “The solution to pollution is not dilution.” It is better to help people where they are than disperse poverty into other communities. Instead of making other communities worse, we need to clean up the bad neighborhoods. (An influx of low-income families could lead to increased crime in the suburbs. As well, low-income home-owners and tenants of low-income housing projects who do not maintain their property will lower surrounding property values.)
- People move to the suburbs to escape crime and bad schools. It is not fair or realistic to expect suburban residents to take these problems on again.
- “Transplanted” low-income families may not share the same values as existing residents; as a result, they may feel alienated and cause problems.
- Efforts to desegregated neighborhoods and schools with high proportions of minorities assume that it is better to live and go to school in majority white settings. This is disrespectful of the strengths of communities of colors. Furthermore, people of color need to remain together in order to preserve their culture and maintain their political representation.
- “Mobility” may heighten racial tensions and lead to more racist encounters and attacks. Public transportation in suburbs does not provide 24 hour, 7 day-a-week service. The suburbs are not geared for families without vehicles.
- Dispersing poverty may help the few, token families who are lucky enough to escape the ghettos, but it does little for the people, schools, and deteriorated neighborhoods that are left behind. Even under the most renowned mobility program of all, the Gatreux program in

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<sup>20</sup>Until 1981, housing was considered affordable by HUD if it consumed no more than 25% of adjusted household income. This benchmark was raised to 30% under federal budget reductions in 1981.

<sup>21</sup>Metropolitan Council. Housing Policies for the 1990s. February 1994. p.2.

## Foreward

This conversation guide is dedicated to the proposition that we, the citizens, are ultimately responsible for what happens to us.

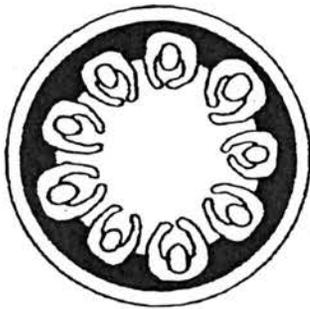
Our hope is that the guide will assist you and your fellow conversation partners in examining and making choices together on the difficult but important challenges of segregation, housing and education.

The Twin Cities metropolitan region is at a crossroads. Issues of affordable housing, community stability, educational achievement and race relations make up the news and affect our lives. The problems facing our communities can continue to present us with historic opportunities to forge a new path in civic cooperation and problem-solving.

To forge a new path requires our coming together, to "struggle" together over what should and should not be done about these issues facing the character and quality of our region. Together we will inform ourselves and talk with one another in community circles, contribute to public policy making for our communities, and hopefully move ourselves and our communities to responsible, positive civic action.

Dick Little, Coordinator  
on behalf of

The Community Circle Collaborative and  
The Education and Housing Equity Project



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# CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY

*A REGIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT THE  
CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION,  
HOUSING AND SEGREGATION  
IN THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA*

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AND ISSUES GUIDE

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AND  
THE EDUCATION AND HOUSING EQUITY PROJECT

SPRING, 1997



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*Looking at the viewpoints*

1. **Does one of the viewpoints or some combination of views, come closest to your own? Why? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?**
2. **What view(s) are most distant from your own? What experiences, beliefs and values might lead a reasonable person to support the views that are different from your own?**
3. **What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective?**
4. **Besides the ones presented here, what other kinds of policies would help us to reduce racism and improve race relations? What, if any, perspectives are missing?**
5. **What proposals would you like to see policymakers concentrate on? Why?**

**What kinds of economic strategies  
will help us bridge racial and ethnic divisions in our region?**

**View 1:**

**Our education and training systems should better prepare poor and minority students for higher skilled and higher paying jobs.**

*According to this view, our economic policies should focus on improving our education and training systems. In the near future, one out of every two workers will be a person of color. Unless we improve our urban schools, we won't have the brainpower to support our regional economy in the future. We need to develop well-trained workers with the math and reading skills to compete in the global economy. Those with wealth and those in the suburbs need to understand that our failure to address these issues ultimately will harm their own economic well being. We all have a stake in high-performing schools. We need to have high expectations for urban schools and students and education and training opportunities that ensure that all students in our region are fully prepared for the future.*

**View 2:**

**We need economic policies that create more ownership opportunities for minorities.**

*According to this view, our economic policies should help people of color get the capital and support they need to start their own businesses. Many urban residents believe that their economic future is tied to business ownership. The problem is that developers have ignored minorities or consciously kept them from getting the resources they need. Low income residents of cities have more difficulty obtaining loans than people in wealthier*

areas. This is based in part on a belief that poor people and people of color can't successfully operate in the economic mainstream. It has led to policies that create social services rather than hard cash for business start-ups and expansion. Our economic policies must provide economic incentives and support for minority owned businesses. People who own their own businesses were given help in the past, Our failure to do this now is due to racial prejudice.

**View 3:**

**Employers can reduce racial divisions by hiring and promoting more people of color and addressing diversity issues in the workplace**

*According to this view, employers in our region must play a key role in helping to bridge racial and ethnic divisions. All of us tend to hire people like ourselves, and special policies like affirmative action are still needed to create a more level playing field for everyone. There have always been informal job networks for white people and these inhibit employment and advancement opportunities for people of color. People whose first language is not English face additional barriers to employment and upward mobility. As a first step, we need to recognize and acknowledge the existence of prejudice in the workplace based on race and culture. The tendency is for employers to expect more of people of color. Often when a person of color is hired, many people still question his/her credentials. Employers need to intensive efforts to diversify workplaces at all levels, especially management. They must expand programs that deepen our understanding of racism in the workplace and promote action to eliminate it.*

**View 4:**

**Public policies that strengthen the overall economy and create more jobs will naturally benefit poor people and people of color.**

*According to this view, the best way to help poor and minority residents enter the economic mainstream is to create a strong and healthy economy that provides more job opportunities. The free market is the best approach. If we help businesses expand and flourish, people of color will naturally benefit as these healthy companies will be in a position to hire them. We are already seeing this in our region as the economy improves and the unemployment rate goes down. Our economic policies therefore should emphasize strong job creation programs and financial incentives to businesses that wish to locate or expand their operations in the region.*

**View 5:**

**We need to develop regional and global economic strategies if we are to bridge racial divisions and successfully compete in the global economy.**

*According to this view, individual communities must understand that their future is tied to the well-being of the region, and the region must see itself as a competitor in the global*

*economy.* Businesses don't operate within political jurisdictions anymore and we are now competing with other regions and other countries. Employers won't locate or stay here unless we can attract and retain the diverse well-educated workforce needed to compete in international markets. Within the region, the fate of the suburbs is tied to the fate of the city. The problem is that people in the suburbs and the city see themselves as separate and in competition for the same limited resources. Another problem is the perception by some in the minority community that the community should take care of itself. We need to develop new economic development strategies based on cooperation between cities and suburbs such as tax-base sharing, metro-wide economic development districts and the development of mixed income neighborhoods.

#### **Viewpoint 6:**

#### **Our economic policies must be developed at the community and the neighborhood level**

*According to this view, the problem is that economic development strategies have usually been driven from outside the city and its neighborhoods.* People who live in the city have a broader view of economic development. More than just profit, they want a better quality of life, good schools and healthy neighborhoods. Economic development strategies should focus on the strengths of the communities and involve residents of the neighborhoods. City residents should have access to more capital for home and business ownership and to financial services, transportation and good quality and affordable food. We can't bridge the racial and ethnic separation in our region unless all of those affected by our economic policies have a strong hand in creating and implementing them.

## **Proposed Format for 1998 Community Circle Discussion Guide (Revised 07/02/98)**

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### **The Community Circles Collaborative: An Introduction to the Process**

Welcome to the Community Circles project. You are one of several hundred residents of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area who have come together to address issues of segregation in housing and education.

#### **What is the Community Circles Project?**

Many people have recognized that the Twin Cities are becoming increasingly divided along the lines of race and class. The Community Circles project was created out of a belief that local citizens should address these issues and find ways of doing something about it.

Since December 1996, over 350 residents of the Twin Cities metropolitan area have been involved in community circles – small, democratic discussion groups – on these issues. Participants shared their hopes, concerns, and recommendations at a Community Forum held in May 1997.

This fall, another round of community circles will begin. The project's organizers and sponsoring organizations are determined to bring many more people into these vital discussions. Based on findings from the first round, the program will also facilitate more opportunities for participants to join in implementing the solutions they develop. With the foundation laid in the first year, the second will act as a springboard for action at the neighborhood, community, and regional levels.

#### **What is the Community Circle Collaborative?**

The Collaborative is made up of over 30 metro-area organizations, united in the belief that citizen dialogue and action on these issues can make a difference. The original partners in the effort were the Education and Housing Equity Project, the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism (MIAR), the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP), and the Minnesota Fair Housing Center. The Collaborative has expanded into a wide-ranging coalition of community-based organizations, public officials, and individuals working in a variety of fields, including social justice, race relations, housing, education, religion, law, and social research.

Organizations are welcome to join the Collaborative; all it takes is a shared concern for these issues, a shared belief in the power of citizen involvement, and the willingness to help with the organizing tasks necessary for making the project a success.

### **What is a community circle?**

Community Circles, or study circles, are democratic, highly participatory discussion groups which meet several times to address a critical public issue. The discussions are facilitated, and they follow a framework laid out in a discussion guide specific to that issue. The participants talk about how the issue affects them, then consider some of the larger questions surrounding the issue, and finally, discuss how they might take action on the issue. Successful organizers have been able to mobilize large numbers of citizens – a “community-wide” program in a medium-sized city can involve roughly 1,000 people in 75-100 circles.

### **The Task of the Community Circles**

Keeping the conversations centered on the following two questions:

- ❑ ***What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic, and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?***
- ❑ ***What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults in the Twin cities area?***

These are important questions affecting our future. The Twin Cities metropolitan region is moving toward a crossroads. We have an historic opportunity to confront many of the problems of urban decline that have already overwhelmed other metropolitan areas.

We hope that through conversations such as the one in which you are participating today, a greater understanding of these issues can emerge, along with new ideas for solutions.

### **Where have community circle programs been successful?**

The impacts of these programs range from new friendships, to neighborhood projects, to city-wide action plans, to new legislation. An evaluation of a study circle program in Greater Cleveland showed basic changes in attitude as a result of the study circles. Study circle participants in Lima, Ohio have done everything from building new playgrounds to changing the makeup of a regional development board. A state-wide study circle program in Oklahoma helped the state legislature enact sweeping changes in the criminal justice system.

### **How will the process work?**

At the first meeting of your community circle, your facilitator will introduce him/herself, explain their role, and ask the participants to introduce themselves. Then the facilitator will lead the group through a process of setting ground rules for the discussion. After some initial rules have been adopted, the group will start on the first session, which will focus on participants' personal experiences and their hopes for the future of the community. Over the next several weeks, the group will explore some of the larger questions about segregation, examine various avenues for change, and strategize about the next steps to be taken on various action ideas. After the final session, community circle participants from all over the metro area will meet for an action forum, where task forces will be formed to move forward with implementation plans.

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### **The schedule:**

**Session One:** Who are we?

**Session Two:** What is the nature of segregation in the Twin Cities?

**Session Three:** What should we do about residential segregation?

**Session Four:** What should we do about segregation in schools?

**Session Five:** How can we make a transition to action?

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### **Why is the Community Circles project unique?**

Much of what we see in the media and in public meetings today cannot be called conversation for many reasons. Chief among them is the fact that advocacy of one point of view or another at the expense of decorum, is an integral part of what is often called "positioning" or "posturing." This kind of communication has become an accepted fact in most of the media, but it ultimately leads to public cynicism and withdrawal from the political process.

On the other hand, to "converse" means "to share words with others" and carries the implication of equality. A "conversation" is a sharing of ideas, thoughts, and perspectives intended to lead to understanding. Agreement, however, is not necessary in order to have a successful conversation. What is important is listening, reflecting, and speaking from both the head and heart.

One of the goals of the Community Circles project is to institutionalize the art of guided conversation in our metropolitan area. We sincerely believe that solutions to serious and often divisive issues can be found if we put aside our fears and prejudices and work together.

**What is Required of You?**

Your role as a participant in the Community Circle Collaborative Process includes the following expectations:

- ◆ A commitment to the entire five session schedule and the Action Forum
- ◆ A promise to share thoughts honestly and respectfully
- ◆ A willingness to listen deeply to others
- ◆ A preference for collaboration rather than competition
- ◆ A desire to find common ground and creative solutions

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**What can you expect?**

You are investing your time and effort in the Community Circle Collaborative Process, naturally you may be wondering what you will accomplish. By the end of the five sessions, the members of each group should feel successful if the group has:

- ◆ Participated in civil discussions among people with different points of view
- ◆ Provided its participants with a new way of understanding the issues, especially those we personally may not be receptive to hearing
- ◆ Enumerated the strengths and weaknesses of the Twin Cities and come to a more informed opinion than before the process began
- ◆ Generated concrete suggestions of how we as individuals and as a community should approach issues of education, housing, and segregation
- ◆ Acted as a catalyst for and listed action steps to be taken in the future to ensure optimum educational and life opportunities for all Twin Cities children
- ◆ Applied some of the ideas exchanged in these sessions to your own daily life

### **Session I: Getting the Dialogue Started** (Possible title, "Who Are We?")

- ❖ *(Note: The goal of session one is to familiarize the participants with each other and the issues. Session one is structured around personal perceptions to be exchanged among the participants and is an opportunity to get acquainted with each other. Session two introduces the issue itself, concentrating on segregation and its effects on education, housing, economic development/jobs, etc., and should redirect the focus of the discussion to institutional/macro-level factors.)*

#### Hour One: Connecting People and the Issues

- Use a series of questions to jump-start the conversation; let the participants "get to know each other" and develop a more personal connection to the issue.

Examples:

- (1) Relate a story or give an example to illustrate how your background or experiences may have shaped your attitudes about segregation.
- (2) Where are you from? What kinds of things seem important in describing this place?
- (3) In retrospect, what characteristics of your neighborhood(s) or schools may have been a benefit or disadvantage to you?
- (4) Why did you decide to take part in this study circle program?
- (5) How do you perceive life in the Twin Cities now? Do we have two separate societies now.
- (6) Does everyone in the Twin Cities have an equal opportunity at shaping the character of their lives?
- (7) What's your reaction to the NAACP premise that having two separate societies, even if they were equal, would be unhealthy for the Twin Cities?

## Session I: A Tale of Two Cities (Continued: Hour Two)

- ❖ *Note: more input is needed here; Which statistics best summarize the state of the region? What kinds of statistics are most provocative?*

### What are some of the things we are doing right?

- The Twin Cities are consistently rated one of the most livable communities in America
- The regional economy is viable and growing
- Downtown is growing, at least 150,000 jobs by 2000
- Neighborhoods are being Redeveloped
- Overall crime has been reduced
- New light rail project will improve mobility

### What are some of the challenges currently facing our community?

- **Educators are saying:**
  - Low achievement in central city's public schools (Only 9% of eight graders in Minneapolis public schools passed both the math and reading skills tests)
  - Urban schools are burdened by teen pregnancy, crime, gang activity, and drugs
  - Diversifying student populations, many students come to school not speaking standard English
  - Children and families are increasingly under stress, children may be burdened by additional responsibilities at a young age, instability, frequent moves, or violence.
  - Students have weak educational preparation or come from homes with few or no educational materials
- **The housing market reflects:**
  - Affordable housing is becoming increasingly scarce, especially with the loss of many large federal subsidies
  - Poverty is concentrating nearly twice as fast as the national average in the Twin Cities
  - People of color are increasingly concentrated in the core cities and in poverty

- **Community life:**
  - Segregation is increasing
  - Growing gap between the rich and poor
  - Not all citizens have equal access to the benefits of our community (transportation, jobs that pay livable wages, an equitable education, and affordable housing)
  - Juvenile crime is increasing
  - Infrastructure needs to be updated
  
- **Business community and economic development:**
  - Are schools producing graduates with adequate skills for the workplace?
  - Is there enough affordable housing near the available jobs?
  - Transportation is inadequate,
  - Why are so many new jobs unfilled in the Twin Cities?
  - Are minorities represented in all job fields?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you feel are the strengths of the region? What do you feel are its challenges?
2. How does the data about poverty, housing, and communities of color relate to your neighborhood? Is it consistent with your experience? Which of the neighborhoods in the maps most resembles your own?
3. Do you see life opportunities getting better or worse in the future? Do you see life opportunities increasing or decreasing in your neighborhood? (e.g., jobs, income, health...)
4. Are some people doing better than others, why?
5. Do you think segregation in the Twin Cities has a positive effect, negative effect, or no effect at all on the life opportunities of the children you know?
6. Is segregation today different from the 1960's?
7. Is there room for citizen involvement on any of the issues discussed so far? Where or how?

## Session II: What are the Reasons for Segregation in the Twin Cities?

Many of us share a desire to do something about segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. But, when we are asked to describe the kinds of segregation problems we are facing, our answers vary a lot. We tend to disagree even more about what caused these problems in the first place.

It makes sense, then, to talk about the reasons for segregation before we talk about solutions (in fact, it may help us come up with solutions). This session presents a range of viewpoints on the question of "What are the reasons for segregation?" Each view is written in the voice of someone who supports that position. The viewpoints are not presented as "truths" – they are intended as a starting point for your discussion. Other views are likely to emerge as the dialogue unfolds. As you talk about the views, remember to give a fair hearing to each other's ideas.

### Viewpoints:

#### **1. Racial prejudice causes people to live apart.**

*According to this view*, the most basic reason for segregation is that people don't like living with people who are different from themselves. In particular, whites are uncomfortable living next to people of color, or sending their children to school with children of color. This kind of prejudice isn't just limited to whites – people of color sometimes are biased against whites, and different ethnic minorities sometimes are biased against one another – but whites are on average wealthier, and therefore have greater segregation. People of color are often discouraged from moving to white communities by the prejudice of real estate agents or white residents.

#### **2. High crime and poor schools drive people away.**

*According to this view*, segregation is the logical outcome of people trying to escape bad situations. City neighborhoods are usually noisier, dirtier, and have some have more crime than the suburbs. City schools to be generally perceived to be poorer in quality, with lower average test scores and less experienced teachers, than suburban schools. People who can afford homes in the suburbs will usually move there, creating economic segregation. And because whites as a whole are wealthier, racial segregation happens as well. While segregation isn't good, it is happening because people want to make the best choices possible. You can't blame people for doing what is best for themselves and their families.

#### **3. Institutional racism in housing, hiring, and education leads to inequities.**

*According to this view*, racism is firmly established in the institutions of our society. Power continues to be used in a way that favors whites, hurts people of color, and leads to segregation. "Institutional racism" is entrenched in our businesses, government agencies, the media, schools, the criminal justice system, and more. Much of the time, this kind of racism manifests itself indirectly. For instance, many hiring practices use racially biased standardized tests that keep out otherwise

qualified applicants, mortgage companies engage in unfair lending practices, schools disproportionately track students of color into remedial classes and white students into college prep courses. Such practices may appear benign on the surface, but in effect they disproportionately affect the opportunities of people of color. In all kinds of ways, American institutions have continued to limit opportunities for people of color and treat them as second class citizens. It's been this way for so long that white people aren't even aware of the "white privilege" they carry with them.

#### **4. People like to live where they have "elbow room."**

*According to this view*, the "American dream" of owning your own home with some land around it is the single greatest cause of segregation. Americans don't like living in small apartments or the narrow lots of city neighborhoods. Many people came to this country to avoid that kind of lifestyle and find more elbow room. At the moment, whites are wealthier on average, so they are better able to realize their dreams. As people of color get richer, more of them will move out to their own homes outside of the city (in many suburbs this is already happening.) This doesn't mean we shouldn't try to do something about segregation. However, we should remember that there are positive reasons for moving out of the cities; we can't blame people for wanting live where there is more greenery and open space.

#### **5. Public policies divide types of people.**

*According to this view*, government decisions on issues such as transportation, housing, and zoning contribute greatly to segregation. Building highways rather than public transit systems encourages people to drive to work rather than living near train stations and bus lines; in turn, this leads to more spread-out cities and suburbs where different kinds of people live farther away from each other. Zoning boards often pass restrictions which effectively prevent more affordable houses or apartments from being built in affluent neighborhoods and suburbs. In fact, there just isn't enough affordable housing in general. Suburban governments put less restrictions and fewer taxes on businesses, so the new jobs being created are often out of reach of the poorer city residents. Dealing with segregation will have to become an important government priority if we are to make any progress.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the viewpoints is closest to your own? Why?
2. Are there viewpoints not represented here which should be? Why?
3. Are some of these reasons for segregation becoming more prominent, while others get less important? What are the trends?
4. Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation – does each one also suggest ways of doing something to change segregation? What are they?
5. What general direction should we take for dealing with segregation?

## Session Three: What Should we do about Housing and Residential Segregation in the Twin Cities?

### Viewpoints:

1. **Enforcement of Anti-Discrimination Laws should be stepped up by agencies already in place.** All people have the right to choose where they want to live. However, steering by real estate agencies, discriminatory practices by landlords, and unfair lending practices in the mortgage and banking industries have made this near to impossible for many. Because of these discriminatory practices, people of color and the poor often become concentrated in a few neighborhoods. People who feel discriminated against should use the agencies already in place or bring lawsuits against those who violate their right to fair housing.
2. **Limit new growth and expansion.** The boundaries of the suburbs continue to expand as new developments move farther out into the surrounding farm or open land. This expansion forces the metro area to direct a disproportionate amount of its precious resources on new infrastructure and lures white, middle class residents farther away from the city. If this growth was limited, eventually developers would have to reinvest within the now deteriorating city and inner-ring suburban neighborhoods instead.
3. **Exclusionary zoning practices should be eliminated.** Many suburbs have zoning requirements which serve to increase the cost of living in their city. In turn, this makes affordable housing developments, such as apartments or multi-family houses, and access to the resources of the community unavailable. If such policies were challenged, new development may occur, resulting in more choices and diversified neighborhoods.
4. **Reinvest in the core cities and inner-ring suburbs.** Funds should be redirected to re-developing the core and inner-ring suburbs. If property taxes were reduced, neighborhoods were beautified and kept safe, shopping districts improved, and new housing with modern amenities more available, these cities could lure middle class residents back into the city. The citizens living there would also have a higher quality of life and would be less likely to leave.
5. **Begin a system of mandatory requirements for new development.** Efforts to desegregate neighborhoods, both racially and on the basis on socioeconomic status, have been voluntary thus far and have had limited success. Targets have been set, but are rarely met. In other cities, zoning laws actually prohibit the development of affordable housing preventing many individuals from even moving to the community. Now, we need to turn our focus away from redeveloping the core cities to desegregating the suburbs. Through mandatory provisions requiring the inclusion of affordable housing units in all new multi-unit developments or providing bonuses to developers who do so, all people will eventually have more housing choices and neighborhoods will be more diverse racially and socioeconomically.

6. **Let the market regulate itself.** The best role for government in desegregating housing development and neighborhoods in the Twin Cities is to reform the property tax structure and other codes which hinder profitable development in low income housing. High land prices and the cost of construction already keep the market from providing new affordable housing. If government could make affordable housing more appealing to the private sector, then more of it would be built.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of these viewpoints is closest to your own? Why?
2. Try to imagine all of the possible outcomes of the changes proposed by each viewpoint. Who would be most effected? Who would stand to benefit the most? The least?
3. Which of these viewpoints do you feel would be most effective in remedying segregation in the Twin Cities? Are there any that would be ineffective in dealing with segregation?
4. What are the strengths of each plan? What are the weaknesses?
5. Do you prefer strategies at the government or private sector level? Metro or local level?

## Session IV: Education Policies and Segregation in Education

### Basic Issues to Address

- How have our schools worked for some children and how they have worked against other children? What are the internal (institutional) factors and what are the external (community) factors that could be causing this?
- Understanding the nature of "white privilege": People of color are usually aware of how systems and institutions work against them. How well do whites understand how the system works in their favor?
- Looking at the relationship between persistent residential racial and economic segregation, school segregation and educational achievement in our schools: what do we see?

### Section One: Some Challenges Facing Schools Today

#### **Option One:** List by level

- At the Level of Individuals
- Small-group/Community
- Institutional/regional

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#### **Option Two:** : List more generally, do not categorize by level

- Disparate school failure/success rates
- Failure of the School system to serve its minority students specifically
- Stress on certain school districts
- Residential segregation ->poverty concentration
- Issues correlated with concentrating poverty in schools: crime, teen pregnancy, low achievement, high dropout rates, drug use, etc.

## Session IV: What should we do about Education Policies and Segregation in Education?

### Section Two: Creating a Vision for the Future

- View One – Return to Community Schools  
D/n deny the prob of segregatioln, more segregated but long run better serve the opp of student of color greater achievement
- View Two – The Creation of a Metropolitan School District
  1. More Magnet Schools
  2. Interdistrict Schools are Key
- View Three – Charter Schools
- View Four – Vouchers  
Free market situation, better students better choice, only effects individuals, more indic opportunity
- View Five – Create Regional or Statewide Strategies for Funding Equity
  1. Tax-base Sharing
  2. Metro or State Redistribution
  3. Expansion of the Fiscal Disparities Act
- View Six – Busing
  1. Do we need to redefine the objective? How has the role of busing changed since the 1960's?
  2. How can we get away from solutions which simply mix kids numerically?
- View Seven – Reverse the Patterns of De Facto Segregation
  1. Integrate neighborhoods
  2. Expand Housing Choices
  3. Discrimination, steering, Etc...

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Which of these viewpoints comes closest to your own? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?
2. To what extent or in what ways should we utilize institutions in our communities to make progress on the issue of racial segregation?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective?
4. Which kinds of proposals would you like to see policymakers concentrate on?

## Session V

### Making a Difference: What is the Community's Responsibility?

- ❖ *Use the following questions to get the discussion and action steps started. Think about the many different types of "action" and "actors." If an answer seems to present possibilities for future action or even the ingredients take note. Pay special attention to the persons, organizations, and areas in the community and their respective role in any action possibilities.*

#### Hour one: Things to consider....

- Think back to sessions two, three, and four. What seemed to be the key ingredients of the solutions you chose? What were the roles of schools? Of communities? Were there any themes in the solutions chosen by other members of the study circle?
- What is the responsibility of the community – the public – for addressing these problems? Resistance to taking responsibility for community problems may be our biggest challenge.
- In what ways is your community tied to the well being of other communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan region?
- Why should these problems be of concern to all Twin Citians? Or not? Do we need a healthy whole in order to be healthy individually? Are there costs and risks of further delay?
- What are the implications of race and racial relations in the Twin Cities? For children? For adults? For Caucasians? For people of color?
- Given the residential patterns articulated already, what do you think the twin Cities will look and feel like ten years from now? How do you want it to look? Are these two visions more similar or different?
- Where do you see possibilities to influence this outcome? Offer possible viewpoints...

## Session V

### Making a Difference: What is the Community's responsibility?

#### Action Ideas and Promising Practices in Other Communities:

- **Portland, Oregon** (metro governance and containing sprawl)
- **Gatreaux** (deconcentration of poverty)
- **Raleigh and Durham, NC** (school desegregation)
- **Norfolk, Virginia** (return to neighborhood schools)

#### Action Ideas and Promising Practices in the Twin Cities

##### **Community-level Initiatives:**

- Twin Cities (fiscal disparities act)
- Holman Lawsuit

##### **Individual-level Initiatives:**

- West Metro Education Program demonstration schools
- Tri-District School (St. Paul, Maplewood, North St. Paul)
- Urban Coalition's 50/30 Program
- Mediation of the NAACP educational adequacy lawsuit
- MICAH's Suburban Housing Initiative
- Implementing the Minneapolis Housing Principles
- AMS' Inclusionary Zoning Initiative
- State legislative initiatives (e.g., Mandatory LCA)
- *A Thousand Voices, A Thousand Families for Integrated Schools: From Talk to Action* (See attached)

## **APPENDICES**

### **I. Snapshot: Where We Are Today**

- reformat the layout of this section to make it more user friendly, update statistics, but maintain much of the content from last year.
- *(Note: this will be reformatted as a reference with these suggestions in mind. It will appear at the end of the discussion guide)*

### **II. Glossary**

### **III. Action Possibilities: Contacts**

### **IV. Supplementary Reading (citations, newspaper articles, summaries, etc.)**

### **V. Bibliography**

### **VI. Evaluation/Feedback Forms (?)**

Dick:

3/28/97

I think I've done about all I can do to this.

Doing the matrix (see attached) helped immensely in framing the issues and figuring out what pieces belonged where. I think Perspective #1 is basically an economic/investment strategy, while #3 falls more into social engineering where care is the primary consideration. Hopefully, this rationalization of topics can help rationalize & clarify the discussions, too.

Also, there's some stuff now in Persp. #3 that is really background (all the stuff about Sautreaux, affordability, Section 8). These are statements of fact, not perspective, (although perhaps, on second reflection, the Sautreaux stuff should stay in Persp. #3.)

I did cut the text somewhat - it probably needs more, but this is a start.

Please tell Syl not to feel badly about all the marks and questions - all things considered, he did a good job on many aspects of this behemoth. There's enough here for at least one book and a couple of Ph.D. dissertations!

In particular I liked his down-to-earth style. Although I did modify it in places I felt the style is very readable and a pleasant (and necessary!) change from the usual jargon-filled planneristic stuff we often produce.

Good luck, and send me a copy of the final.

Jayne

P.S. - The delivery charges for this were \$43 total. Let me know what your cost for shipping the MC stuff is, and we'll settle it.

Perspective	Root Cause(s) of Problem	Effects on Public Education	Primary Response	Types of Actions Recommended	Major Criticisms
#1: Enriching & Revitalizing ...	Economic disparity Lack of economic opportunity	Poor schools = Poor education	Resourcing people where they are	Affordable housing in suburbs Improving n'hood schools Reverse commuting	"Black hole" syndrome Enterprise zones benefit businesses, not residents Ignores racial segregation ...
#2: Personal & Market...	Culture of poverty Personal values Govt. control	Schools have taken on too many roles		School vouchers Housing vouchers	overlooks discrimin. Wrong societal priorities Poverty is an issue of economics, not lifestyle ...
#3: Dream: Integration	Racial segregation/ legacy of slavery Housing discrimin.	Deficient knowledge/ understanding of others		Anti-redlining Fair housing & lending Affordable housing in 'burbs	Naive Value conflicts Lack of public transp. Will take too long ...

### 3 PERSPECTIVES:

### Emphases

#### #1: ENRICHING & REVITALIZING EXISTING COMMUNITIES

Separate But Equal?

Economic Polarization

The Impacts of Polarization on Schools

The Prescription: Strengthen the Core

What Critics Say About This Perspective (#1)

Resourcing people where they are  
Segregation (by race) may be tolerated,  
if not encouraged

Schools: emphasis not on desegregation but on poor n'hoods → students must leave the n'hood to get a good education → open enrollment, busing AS A TOOL OF ECONOMIC MOBILITY (not social mobility)

#### #2: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY & MARKET CHOICE

A Safety Net — or a Trap?

The Culture of Poverty

"Poverty of Values"

The Impact of This Culture on Schools

The Prescription: Use the Market to Improve Opportunities

What Critics Say About . . . . (#2)

#### #3: FULFILLING THE DREAM: FULL INTEGRATION

Not turning back?

Barriers to Choice

The Impact of Segregation on Schools

The Prescription: Integrate the Region

What Critics Say About . . . . (#3)

Schools: busing as a tool of social mobility / desegregation  
desegregation is not enough

Sections on Gauthreaux Mobility

What is "Affordable" housing?

The Armageddon of Section 8

} now in Perspective #3

MOVE to background section — these are statements of fact, not perception  
(p 11)

Date: January 24, 1997  
To: Community Circle Collaborative Discussion Guide Review Committee  
From: Dick Little, CCC Coordinator  
Kristy Greenwalt, CURA Research Assistant  
RE: Discussion Guide--New Format

As some or all of you may know, after much thought and discussion, we have decided to alter the format of the discussion guide. We hope that the new format will provide more flexibility for groups to go in whatever direction they choose. As well, we hope that this new version will be more balanced and inclusive of diverse perspectives.

The new guide will function as a *framework* for thinking about the issues of segregation. It is somewhat modeled after the format the National Issues Forum uses in their discussion guides. A forward (written by Darcy Seaver) will explain the purpose of the project and what the group's "charge" is. Moreover, it will explain our perspective (to the extent that we all even share one perspective) but explain how this project depends on others sharing their perspectives as well.

Next will be an introduction to the issues of housing and education. In this section, I will attempt to "lay the groundwork"--or in other words, explain why it is important to think of these issues as connected. This section will present information on how the composition of our communities affects educational opportunity and achievement.

In the final three sections we would like to present three different perspectives on dealing with the problem of economic and racial segregation. We will be clear from the onset that these three perspectives are *not* mutually exclusive, nor are they the *only* perspectives. Rather, they are a beginning point. What we would like all of you to do is look over the enclosed matrix and give us feedback on this new format. Please be specific with your comments, i.e., don't just tell us what needs to be changed, but how we can change it.

Some specific areas of concern that we have: (1) The "diagnosis" of the problem that I wrote is too focused on poverty in general. How can it be re-worded or "fleshed out" so as to focus more on economic and racial segregation? (2) Are there ways in which we can re-word the choices....specifically the ultra-cliched "a return to traditional values"? (3) How and where can we include more information about schools? (Remember, however, that the first section will be about education, and that the perspectives in the matrix are broader frameworks for dealing with residential and educational segregation).

Please include specific suggestions--write them on the matrix if you have room. Choice #2 particularly needs additional perspectives, which I have a difficult time presenting as I don't completely *understand* them. . .

Finally, we will also include a section of Additional Resources....other articles, books, videos and non-reading material that people may want to look at. Again, if you of good resources, please help me out and add a couple citations to your list of suggestions. As well, we had also

discussed including a data appendices. This would included some of the data from the first draft, minus the commentary about what it means or what it implies. It would just be there for people to look at or use as they pleased. This could be included in the study guide, or as others felt (to save on costs and keep the guide less academic) be made into a separate booklet that would be accessible at the meetings. Any feelings??

Thank you all very much for your input on the last draft. I think it is important that many people contribute to the formation of this discussion guide, so I would really appreciate it if you could respond to the new format as soon as possible. Our time line is a lot tighter now, so the sooner you could get your comments back the better, but for sure by January 31st. Your comments and suggestions can be sent to:

Dick Little  
c/o MICAH  
Education and Housing Equity Project  
122 W Franklin Ave.  
Suite 320  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Thanks again,

Kristy Greenwalt  
CURA Research Assistant  
kgreenwalt@hhh.umn.edu

**COMMUNITY CIRCLE COLLABORATIVE**  
**Housing and Education Equity Project**  
**122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 320**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55404**

**Date:** February 21, 1996  
**To:** Discussion Guide Review Group  
**From:** Dick Little, Project Coordinator  
**Subject:** Review of Revised Draft of Discussion Guide

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a member of the review group for the Community Circle Discussion Guide. As most of you know, the guide will be used as the principal resource for facilitated discussions on the challenges of education and housing segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. We are asking that you read through this draft and make additions, revisions, deletions, suggestions or comments -- you can do this on the document or in separate script. We are looking for substantive contributions and constructive improvements to the document.

Please relay your edits or comments to me at (fax) 871-8984 or (phone) 871-8984, or send them directly to Kristy Greenwalt at (e-mail) [kgreenwalt@hhh.umn.edu](mailto:kgreenwalt@hhh.umn.edu), no later than next Wednesday, February 26th. In addition, we invite you to a review meeting with the writing team that will be held at the Minnesota Church Center (on Pillsbury Ave and the north side of Franklin Ave), Conference Room 2, Wednesday (Feb. 26) at 8:30 AM (for apx. 1 to 1-1/2 hrs.). This will offer an opportunity to discuss our suggestions with the drafters.

If you have any questions or want additional information, please call me at 871-8984 or 724-5662. We look forward to receiving your reviews, and any additional information or sources of information you want to provide us.

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**To: Dick Little**  
**From: Syl Jones**  
**Re: Conversation Guide Materials**  
**Date: April 2, 1997**

Dick, I have completed my compilation of the materials you have provided and have written some of my own.

Please pay close attention to "gaps of understanding" as we transition from one section to another. Also note that I did not use some of the materials you provided because they tended to clutter certain sections. For readability sake, we should reduce the number of bullets under each of the premises where possible.

I put in the "positions/actions" materials you provided for the second

perspective so you could see it. Generally, I don't think it a good idea to

*include a description of the potential actions of each position*  
 include these you can find actions because they don't seem to be in the  
 what I hope you can provide us tomorrow, so I can complete  
 complete to this section of the document is: *Let the groups come to their  
 conclusions about the possible*  
 actions for each perspective.

- Specific notes on any changes
- A manuscript that is marked with insertion points
- Edited copy that reflect's the Board's final say on this version

To facilitate changes, you may want to fax to me tomorrow copies on any pages that need to be altered. I will then attempt to provide you with the finished manuscript on disk.

Please keep in mind that the number of sections and items within each section have made it difficult to judge the flow of these materials. I hope that in your review, you will be able to suggest alterations that clarify the intent of this document and make it easier to use.

# **The Unfinished Agenda: Coming Together As a Community**

**{Title Page Only}**

**A Metro-Wide Conversation About The  
Challenges of Education, Housing and  
Segregation**

**Sponsored By:**

### **Introduction to The Community Circle Collaborative Process**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Community Circle Collaborative Process, a guided conversation focused on the challenges of Segregation, Housing and Education in the Twin Cities. Across the Metro area, perhaps a dozen or more groups similar to yours will be conducting conversations about this issue. Your participation means that you are part of a small but significant community of people who are taking action to address this difficult and important issue.

For at least three sessions of two hours each -- over the course of three to five weeks -- you will gather with other members of your circle to share opinions, facts, and perspectives. The goal of these sessions is to fully discuss the issue from many perspectives and to develop solutions as you and members of your circle see fit. Eventually, we hope to share some of these solutions with public policy makers so that the entire region may benefit from this process.

Before you begin your conversation, please read this Guidebook as completely and thoroughly as possible. While it does not cover all possible perspectives, the guidebook provides background that can help you more fully understand the issue and can assist you in discussing it more completely.

### **How The Circle Process Works**

In many cultures, circles are symbols of equality, fairness and completeness. The Community Circle Process has been designed with these qualities in mind. However, your cooperation is required if your Community Circle experience is to be satisfactory.

In the early days of American Democracy, communities held town hall meetings or sat around pot-bellied stoves or spinning wheels to discuss major issues. Communities were smaller and more homogenous, and the various members of the community usually knew each other well.

The pros and cons of those early American meetings were essentially the same: homogeneity bred greater agreement and less conflict; however, other voices in the community -- those of

women, slaves, Native Americans, the poor, and immigrants outside the mainstream -- were seldom heard.

As American Democracy has grown to include a wider variety of individuals, the need to broaden discussion about major issues affecting the nation has increased. Today, inclusivity is highly prized in such discussions because the Jeffersonian vision of "an informed citizenry," which is essential to a healthy democracy, cannot be fully realized without it.

The Community Circle Collaborative Process is one way to sample the broadest possible spectrum of opinion within a community. A similar process has been used in many parts of the nation to help create a public voice about major issues. The Community Circles themselves are a refreshing change from the narrow and often restrictive discussions of the past and the competitive debates used in present day political programs. In short, Community Circles are the wave of the future because they are cooperative, not competitive, in nature.

### Why A "Conversation" ?

Much of what we see in the media and in public meetings today cannot be called conversation for many reasons. Chief among them is the fact that advocacy of one point of view or another, at the expense of decorum, is an integral part of what is often called "positioning" or "posturing." This kind of communication has become an accepted fact in most of the media, but it ultimately leads to cynicism and withdrawal from the political process.

On the other hand, to "converse" means to "share words with others" and carries the implication of equality of opportunity and status. A "conversation" is a sharing of ideas, thoughts, and perspectives intended to lead to a understanding. Unity of purpose is inherent in the word; a conversation should clear the air by honestly reflecting differences and similarities.

Agreement, however, is not necessary in order to have a successful conversation. What is important is listening, reflecting and speaking from both the head and heart. Mutual respect and a belief in the healing nature of sharing ideas across boundaries of ethnicity, geography, socioeconomics and even language

differences can go a long way toward making a conversation satisfactory.

The goal of the sponsors of this program is to institutionalize the art of guided conversation in the Metro area. We sincerely believe that solutions to serious and often divisive issues can be found if we put aside our fears and prejudices and work together to realize our dreams.

### **What The Process Requires From You**

Your role as a participant in the Community Circle Collaborative Process includes the following requirements:

- A commitment to the entire 3-5-week meeting schedule
- A promise to share your thoughts and feelings honestly and respectfully
- A willingness to listen deeply to others
- A preference for collaboration rather than competition
- A desire to find common ground and creative solutions
- Realistic expectations of the process and the people of your circle.

### **What You Can Expect From The Process**

On the other hand, when you invest your time and effort in the Community Circle Collaborative Process, you will receive:

- The opportunity to be heard by others
- Challenges to some of your beliefs, attitudes and assumptions
- Moments of great insight and inspiration
- Feelings of confusion and, at times, alienation
- A sense of accomplishment

### **How To Begin**

1. Your facilitator has been trained to help your circle begin discussions. Please follow his/her guidelines as outlined at the beginning of each Community Circle meeting.
2. Read the materials in this guidebook before you begin discussions.
3. Please feel free to conduct your own research using the bibliography in the back or any other materials.

4. Please do not seek to dominate discussion or monopolize the floor at any time. Remember to be courteous.
5. Although the discussion period may vary depending on the size of each Community Circle, keep in mind that it is difficult to sustain sessions of more than two hours.

### **The Task Of The Community Circles**

The Community Circle Collaborative meetings are gathered to discuss the following two central questions:

1. *What is the relationship between -- and the impacts of -- existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin City area children?*
2. *What can we do, or should we do as individuals and as a community, to enhance the life opportunities (especially educational, housing and economic opportunities) for all children in the Twin Cities area.*

### **The Current Context: A Failure to Thrive**

These meetings are taking place because:

- A lawsuit filed by the Minneapolis chapter of the NAACP vs. The State Board of Education alleges that schools in the metro area are "inadequate by design and chance" and that a desegregation remedy must be found.
- The St. Paul School District has also filed suit against the State Board of Education alleging "inequity of resources" and unfair distribution of state funds for resources.

- Both of these lawsuits are likely to be settled out of court in favor of the plaintiffs because of the overwhelming evidence in their favor.

As the information to follow will document, the Twin Cities has become polarized into two distinct societies, separate and unequal. On one side are the middle class and the wealthy, who have managed to do well over the last decade and live primarily in the suburban Twin Cities area. The children of these citizens attend schools that have higher graduation rates, better paid teachers and more resources.

On the other side of the equation are poor families who do not have access to many of the resources that middle class and wealthy families have. The fact that a huge number of poor families are African American, Native American, Latino and Asian further complicates the current context.

This means that our community is unhealthy. While part of it is growing, another part is decaying and, thus, the entire area is suffering from a failure to thrive. Decay at the center of our communities is spreading, so that even those areas that seemed healthy are showing signs of trouble.

The lesson inherent in the current context, then, is that when one portion of our community is unhealthy, the metro area cannot thrive. Both sides suffer from neglect. The wealthy live in segregated communities that have failed to benefit from interaction with diverse segments of the population; the poor have little opportunity to avail themselves of the American Dream. Our communities will not live up to their potential until all citizens are able to fully participate in the education, housing and social opportunities available now and in the future.

## Part One: A Snapshot Of Where We Are Today

*"What is the relationship between -- and the impacts of -- existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin City area children?"*

Every year when the list of America's most livable cities is published, the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis are high on the list. The standards used to judge major metropolitan areas -- job growth, access to parks and recreation, good schools and social services, lower crime rates -- Minneapolis and St. Paul are superior to many other cities. In comparison to other areas, the Twin Cities is a wonderful place to live. Yet, we are not immune from the social problems that plague other cities.

This is particularly true of challenges related to segregation, poverty, housing and education:

- Between 1980 and 1990, the combined population of communities of color in the Twin Cities metro area nearly doubled.
- Only 25 percent of whites live in the central city while 76 percent of African Americans do.
- The proportion of people of color who live in poverty is higher in our metro area than any other central city in the nation.
- In 1990, per capita income for the region's people of color averaged about \$8500, compared to nearly \$18,000 for whites.
- Less than half the jobs in Minneapolis pay what is considered a livable wage.
- Between 1980 and 1990, 67 percent of new jobs were created in the region's suburbs.
- The poverty rate in Minneapolis is 18.5 percent; in St. Paul it is 16.7 percent; in the suburbs, it is 4.54 percent.

- Among African Americans, the poverty rate in the Metro area is 37 percent, more than six times the rate for whites. For Native Americans, Asians, and Latinos, the rates are 40 percent, 32 percent and 19 percent, respectively.
- The highest poverty rate on a city-wide basis is among Asians living in St. Paul -- 6 out of every 10 lives in poverty.
- The United Way recently cited data revealing that the highest incidence of poverty in Minnesota occurs in specific neighborhoods of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The study concluded that a disproportionate number of those living in poverty are women and children and people of color.
- Between 1979 and 1989, the number of children living in poverty increased 4 percent, compared with a 1.4 percent increase in poverty in the general population.
- Over 73,000 people in the Metro area suburbs currently live in poverty and the numbers are growing.
- About 60 percent of Minnesota families in poverty have at least one family member in the work force.
- According to the 1989 American Housing Survey, over 37,000 household in the Twin Cities metro area spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing. (The federal government considers 30 percent to be affordable.)
- The percent of poor households in the Twin Cities paying excessive amounts for housing is greater than the national average.
- In Minneapolis, students of color make up 65 percent of the total student population; in St. Paul they are 60 percent.
- In the 1995-1996 school year, 85 percent of the students in the Minneapolis Public Schools were receiving free or reduced lunches. In St. Paul, 75 percent of students of color and 35 percent of white students received free or reduced lunches.

• **Please note: More Education Data Needed Here**

- 
- 
- 

**Also, plug in table here: Comparison of school districts showing the numbers of students of color, students below the poverty line, and education achievement levels.**

The following charts and graphs <sup>or maps</sup> further illustrate the situation in the Metro area today:

1. Distribution of Affordable Housing in the Metro Area
2. Distribution of persons below the poverty line and people of color in the Metro area.
3. Minneapolis Infant Mortality Rates by Race
4. Minnesota Life Expectancy in Years by Gender and Race, 1980-1990

## Seven Premises About The Metro Area

After weighing the import of the facts presented above, certain premises about the Metro area become clear:

11

OPTIONAL

**Premise One:** There is an increasing concentration of poverty in the core cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Furthermore, poverty is spreading to the inner ring suburbs and has continued to plague many rural areas within the state.

**Premise Two:** People of color -- especially children -- are more likely to live in concentrated poverty.

**Premise Three:** Neighborhood poverty levels are an indicator of local/neighborhood education outcomes; i.e., the higher the poverty rate, the lower the rate of achievement.

**Premise Four:** Students of color, who are more likely to live in poverty are disproportionately impacted by high levels of concentrated poverty.

**Premise Five:** Eradication of concentrate poverty would prevent many of the social pathologies that prevent students of color from being properly prepared for school.

**Premise Six:** Children attending segregated schools and living in segregated neighborhoods, regardless of color or ethnicity, are not being properly prepared to live in the 21st century.

**Premise Seven:** Much of what is wrong in education in the Metro area can best be addressed through policies related to housing, social services and other areas; education policy itself will not eradicate poverty and segregation.

### QUESTIONS

Even after reviewing the same data, you may develop a different set of premises that support or undercut the above. Some questions for consideration are:

1. What do you think are the most significant problems facing your immediate community? The broader community?

2. Looking at the bullet points and charts provided above, is there any data that surprises you?

3. Do you believe that the Twin Cities is racially and economically segregated? Do we have two (or more) separate societies? Why?

4. How does data about poverty, housing and communities of color relate to your neighborhood? Is it consistent with your experience?

5. What is the Metro area doing right? What is it doing wrong? Make two lists and compare them.

6. Do some people have more opportunities than others? Why?

7. Do you see life opportunities increasing or decreasing in your neighborhood?

8. What is meant by the term "racism" and do you believe it exists?

9. What impact does personal racism have on the quality of life in the Twin Cities?

10. What impact does institutional racism have on the poverty, housing and education issues we are discussing?

11. What is your own neighborhood like in terms of race? Class? Ethnicity? National origin?

12. If you were to think of this circle meeting as your community, what characteristics would you say unite you as a group? What expectations do you have of each other?

## Part Two: Creating a Vision for Our Future

Now that we've taken a look at the way things are today in the Metro area, it is time to consider our vision for the future. Each individual's vision may be different, but in approaching this exercise, we invite you to think broadly about the community. In fact, we invite you to dream a little about the Metro area could be like, what resources would be needed to realize the vision, and what policies or programs need to be changed.

The assumptions underlying this visioning process are simple:

1. All of us want the best for ourselves and each other.
2. Our success as a community depends on the success of most, if not all, others.
3. As a community, as a nation, we have yet to realize our greatest aspirations and must work together to fulfill our potential.

To assist you in your conversation about the vision for our future, we have provided three Visioning Frameworks for your consideration. None of these frameworks should be taken literally, nor do any constitute an ideal future. They are included only in order to stimulate your thinking.

### **Visioning Framework One: The New Frontier**

The Metro area becomes the center of a rapidly growing, ever expanding five-state Region in which resources are pooled and poor families are dispersed throughout the area. Pooling of resources means that economic growth is systematically tied to community need, and new businesses received incentives to employ people who are at or below the poverty line. Children have school choice and are segmented by occupational and/or academic interest. Tax credits are given to families who choose to relocate in order to ameliorate segregation.

### **Visioning Framework Two: The Private/Public Collaborative**

Through a statewide education campaign, all Minnesotans above a certain level of income are induced to sacrifice a small percentage of their earnings each year to help the poor. Corporate and Foundation entities create special jobs that include training for high tech opportunities in the future. New jobs are created on a neighborhood basis and communities are encouraged to advertise their unique qualities in order to attract more diverse residents. Market forces and public opinion encourage investments in the core city, and a Metro-wide push to educate suburbanites on the strength of the cities attracts new residents.

### **Visioning Framework Three: Only The Strong Survive**

At the current rate, the Metro area will reach a crisis in housing, education, crime, health care, etc. simultaneously within the next decade. This crisis will force key businesses to move their headquarters out of the area and will hinder recruitment of top-level executives. When social order has broken down -- i. e., roving bands of poor and indigent people are breaking into shopping centers en masse; police are so overburdened they cannot deal with "petty crime" such as theft of personal property; and the economy has failed -- only then will the Metro area be motivated to take action. "Action" means vigilante enforcement of the rule of common law, posting guards and police at all retail outlets and shooting to kill those who refuse to stay in their place, as determined by natural selection.

### **Questions To Facilitate Visioning Our Future**

- What do you/we want the community to look and feel like five years from now? 10 years? 20 years?
- What are the underlying values that will be needed to sustain the community in the future?
- What are the differences in values between demographic groups and how might they be resolved?
- What do you need from your community to sustain your values? What does your community need from you?
- In what ways is your community tied to the well-being of other communities in the metropolitan area?

# Part Three: What Can We Do?

## Three Perspectives

*"What can we do, or should we do as individuals and as a community, to enhance the life opportunities (especially educational, housing and economic opportunities) for all children in the Twin Cities area?"*

The following three perspectives represent disparate and in some cases conflicting points of view about the question above. These perspectives may not be yours or represent the views of any of your circle members. The goal is to provide a theoretical basis for deeper and more resonant conversations.

### **Perspective One** **Strengthening The Core : Building From Within**

Poor communities and schools are the result of an unequal distribution of resources, much of which has occurred due to outdated and prejudicial actions on the part of government and business. All people want basically the same things in life. The reason there is inequality of outcomes is because there is inequality of opportunity based on race and class.

### **Key Premises**

- Impoverished communities and schools are the result of unequal distribution of resources.
- Schools that are constituted around particular cultural identity by choice improve student self-esteem.

- It is not necessary for children of color to sit next to white children in order to academically achieve.
- Community schools are best equipped to reflect the cultural and community values of students and their parents.
- Neighborhood schools will enable more parent and community participation in the schools.
- Revitalizing the core -- through a reallocation of resources both public and private -- will improve the housing and economic opportunities for minorities and central city residents.
- Desegregation through busing erects significant barriers to a strong sense of community and involvement.

## Perspective One -- Advocates Say

- A stable core is key / essential for a stable region.
- If the region cooperates to improve schools, create jobs, and revitalize neighborhoods in the central cities, people will become more self-sufficient in the long run.
- Rather than spending millions to create new housing and duplicate existing infrastructure in the suburbs, we should sue the tremendous human and economic resources in the central cities.
- If we help rebuild neighborhoods in the core, people of all income levels will have wider choices of where to live. This will help to attract and retain middle income people.
- People of color need to build a sense of community around their unique history and culture. Moreover, they need to maintain whatever political representation they have.
- Many people prefer to live in segregated neighborhoods and go to segregated schools as long as those neighborhoods and schools have equal resources.
- Parents, teachers, students and educators must build bridges that ensure the success of locally based schools.
- Hiring more teachers and staff of color who are from the community would help students feel a greater sense of self esteem and positively impact their academic performance.

## Perspective One: Critics Say

- Pumping money into the central cities is not the answer. Many of these neighborhoods are so impoverished that revitalization is all but impossible.
- In order to create more regional stability, our communities need to be more economically and racially diverse. Building up infrastructure in the cities will do little good if our communities are still divided along race and class lines.
- The only way to break down the racial hierarchy that currently exists is to integrate. People of color need to enter into the economic and social mainstream where they will have more access to good jobs and good schools. Equally important, whites must diversify and expand their understanding of people of color. If we continue to stay apart, racial stereotypes will fester.
- People need to have real choices about where they live. Since a majority of the new jobs are in the suburbs, and because we have limited mass transit in the region, more low-income housing should be developed in the suburbs.
- Creating "enterprise zones" is not an effective way to stimulate economic activity and create jobs in the urban core. They are not pro-labor or pro-community, but pro-business and pro-profit.
- Reinforcing existing, segregated communities will continue to perpetuate the cycle of socio-economic/racial isolation.

## **Perspective Two:** **Market Choice and Individual Responsibility**

Poor communities and schools are the result of a breakdown of traditional values. Children are growing up without two self-sufficient parents who can serve as role models. Welfare programs promote dependency and contribute to a "self-fulfilling prophecy" concerning poverty and lack of achievement.

### **Key Premises**

- We can create opportunities for people with limited resources by subsidizing low-income households with vouchers for housing and education.
- Promoting competition between schools will enhance educational achievement.
- Private institutions (churches, foundations, businesses) are better equipped than government to serve their local communities.
- In order to promote achievement, we must reward self-sufficiency and hard work.
- Public sector social welfare programs divert capital that could otherwise be invested in job creation in core communities.
- The breakdown of the family negatively impacts educational achievement and economic opportunity/advancement.
- A return to traditional values by communities of color would do more to restore their viability than any other single remedy.
- Encourage microenterprise and entrepreneurship.

## Perspective Two --Advocates Say:

- The private market system is faster, more creative and flexible than plodding bureaucratic government in responding to job, housing, and education markets.
- Local level communities are best equipped to answer the needs of their constituents.
- Parents are better equipped/should have ultimate control over their children's schooling (including where their children go to school)
- Public sector social welfare programs divert capital that could otherwise be invested in job creation in core communities.
- Allow the housing market to regulate itself; if demand is great enough, low-income housing will be developed by those who see economic opportunity in meeting these needs.
- Residence in the more affluent communities must be earned through merit and hard work and should not be granted by government fiat.

## Perspective Two -- Critics Say:

- Less than half of the jobs in Minnesota pay a livable wage. Over 60 percent of Minnesota's families in poverty have at least one person in the work force. If we want to create less dependency on the government, we have to create a market system that allows responsible people to sustain themselves.
- Discrimination remains a significant barrier for people of color, no matter how "responsible" they are.
- Poor people do not have the time or money to lobby for their interests and rights. The wealthy, on the other hand, abuse their power and continue to grow richer at the expense of the poor.
- Everyone in this country receives government benefits of some sort. Whether it is in the form of a check or a tax deduction is immaterial.
- The problem with social welfare policies in this country is not that we've done too much -- creating dependency -- but that we've done too little.
- The private market system is not structured to and does not accommodate the social welfare needs for people below the poverty line.
- Basic human rights, such as housing and education, cannot be left to the whim of the marketplace.

### Positions/Actions

- Neighborhood schools
- Universal school choice programs and school vouchers
- Create small education laboratories for minority children
- Uphold high standard and expectations
- Support English as a first language
- Focus on the content of the curriculum, not the color of the student

## **Perspective Three: Creating Opportunities Region-Wide**

### **Opening Statement**

Poor communities and school are the result of discrimination and local government policies that isolate poor people, especially those of color. When poverty becomes concentrated in certain neighborhoods, it perpetuates a myriad of social problems: disinvestment, tax-base erosion, poor schools, crime and racial tension.

### **Key Premises**

- The real issue is the concentration of poverty that cannot be ameliorated without a more equitable distribution of affordable housing.
- Racial segregation results from a combination of lack of choice and racial discrimination in the housing markets.
- Segregated communities result in segregated schools, segregated churches, segregated work forces, and segregated social gatherings. Segregation does not further our objectives.
- Schools segregated by race and income negatively impact educational achievement.
- Residential segregation by race and income isolates communities from the opportunity structure.

## Perspective Three -- Advocates Say

- Research shows that educational achievement and life opportunities for both white students and students of color improves in desegregated school settings.
- Achievement gains are strongest when desegregation begins in the early grades and is implemented under a metropolitan-wide plan.
- People who live in economically and racially diverse areas better understand others who are unlike themselves and are better prepared to work and function in a diverse society. Lack of experience with the racial "other," in turn, contributes to the mystification of racial differences and the perpetuation of stereotypes, fears, and ignorance.
- The opportunity to live in integrated, middle-income neighborhoods appears to boost employment among adults and school performance among children.
- Given the location of most new jobs, economic opportunity would increase if low-income housing were more available in the suburbs.

## Perspective 3 -- Critics Say:

- An influx of low-income families into suburbs could lead to increased crime and declining property values. Instead of creating problems for new neighborhoods, we need to concentrate on cleaning up the communities that need it.
- Efforts to desegregate neighborhoods and schools with high proportions of minorities assume that it is better to live and go to school in majority white settings. This is disrespectful of the strengths of communities of color.
- Because of institutional racism, people of color need to remain together in order to preserve their culture and maintain their political representation.
- "Mobility" as an option will take a long time to implement. It is a gradualistic approach and will do little to help the thousands of poor who need help *right now*. Furthermore, it is tokenistic. Past attempts to provide mobility to low-income families and people of color have been limited in scope, actually helping few people.
- Dispersing poverty may help the few, token families who are lucky enough to escape the ghettos, but it does little for the people, schools, and deteriorated neighborhoods that are left behind.
- Even if obstacles are removed and the poor are granted more mobility, the fact remains that there is a general mismatch between the skills of the poor and the skills required by the available jobs.

## Further Questions To Consider

As you move toward closure of your conversation, you may wish to consider the following four questions in relation to each of the three perspectives:

### **1. What is deeply valuable to us?**

This question will help your circle understand what things you may be willing to sacrifice in order to gain what is most important to all. In considering what is deeply valuable about each of the perspectives, you may want to ask --

- What is appealing about this perspective?
- What are the downsides of this perspective?
- Can you tell a story illustrating this perspective?
- Who is hurt by this perspective? Who is helped by it?

### **2. What are the costs or consequences associated with this perspective?**

Nothing can be gained without some cost to someone. This question will help you deliberate on the balance between the "pros" and "cons" of each perspective. You may wish to ask --

- What do we gain or lose using this perspective?
- Can you project a dollar amount?
- What are the other "costs": social, emotional, cultural?
- Can you provide an example of how costs may be effected?

### **3. What are the tensions or conflicts in this perspective that we must work through?**

Some of these may have become evident as you have discussed the different perspectives. But you may wish to keep track of those issues that generate the most tension/discomfort and ask --

- What are the underlying conflicts really about?
- Where are the "gray areas"?
- Are there feelings that remain unexpressed or unstated?

**4. Can we detect any shared sense of purpose or any common ground that would allow us to recommend action?**

This question is the most important of all, for it sets the stage for the next level of conversations between the public and policy makers. In considering it, you may want to ask --

- Do we believe that some change is necessary?
- What are we willing to do as individuals to address this issue?
- What things seem beyond our power to change as individuals?
- What would we most like to see happen as a result of this conversation?

## Memorandum

**DATE:** January 2, 1997

**TO:** Community Circle Collaborative  
Discussion Guide Review Committee

**FROM:** Matt Leighninger, Program Director, SCRC

**RE:** December 18 draft

*Overall comments:*

I think the two strong suits of the draft so far are the style of writing and the amount of research it represents. You will need to take out a lot of the text and the data, but it is good that you have so much since you can now "boil down" to the most essential passages and facts. I found it very well-written throughout. You will want to take the level of the language down another notch, but that doesn't need to happen until the final edits.

You obviously know what you're doing on those fronts; I'll spend more time on what I see as the main shortcoming of the draft, which is a lack of balance. Balance is very critical when you're writing for public dialogue. If people all across the political spectrum can pick up your guide and find their views represented, large numbers of people will take part in your program. If they get turned off by what they read, they certainly won't take the time, effort, and considerable psychological risk required to participate in a study circle. It is sometimes excruciating to write in this way (for example, SCRC staff members consider some of the viewpoints in our race relations guide to be extremely racist); however, it is absolutely necessary to give everyone a place at the table. The guide itself is not likely to change anyone's mind about anything. The ensuing discussion will change everyone who participates.

Arguments for or against something should always appear in viewpoints, where they are explicitly labeled as views. Everything outside those views needs to be in a narrative voice that is neutral both in ideas and in tone. The narrative voice can embrace only a few bedrock assumptions, like "we must work together to fight crime" or "racism is unacceptable." One of the problems with the draft is that there is so much text in the narrative voice, especially in proportion to the labeled viewpoints (which are only in Sessions 4 and 5; there should probably also be viewpoints in Sessions 2 and 3).

*Foreword:*

The balance problem really shows up in the third paragraph. You may want to simply delete it; at the very least you should qualify it and balance it with some opposing arguments. The tone also gets pretty sharp and polemical at the end of the first and fourth paragraphs. I really like Susan Berkson's quote at the end; it expresses the kind of

bedrock assumption that I think the guide should be based on. Perhaps you could lead the foreword with it? However, "Susan is right" is rather glib.

*Session 1:*

I think section IV should receive most of the emphasis here. If you had about five more discussion questions, it would help people go much deeper into the effects of segregation on their own lives and experiences. Since many people don't recognize segregation as a problem, and since Session 2 will help them decide if/how it is a problem, this will be important.

*Faces of the Region:*

I wasn't quite sure where this text fits. Is it an intro? Part of Session 1? I had a similar confusion with "Barriers to Economic Opportunity." You need to make clear to the reader whether you are giving him/her 1) an argument, or 2) background information. Some of this text could go into viewpoints, some of it into boxes. Two instances on this page which betray a lack of balance are "pulled out to the suburbs" and "we should be concerned." You may want to ask an expert on these issues whether the statistics that conservatives usually cite are also mentioned here.

*Session 2:*

I think you need to let people decide for themselves whether and how segregation harms the community (educationally, economically, socially, etc.). I like the title, but to make the Session fit the title you need more balanced supporting information, as well as some viewpoints. I think the possible explanations under question 3 could go into a box. "Do your perceptions reflect reality?" is too heavy-handed. People get suspicious when you tell them you are interpreting reality for them.

*Barriers to Economic Opportunity:*

This is extremely one-sided. Some of it can be incorporated into the viewpoints in Sessions 2 and 3. Some of the "Food for Thought" pieces are good material for views from the left side of the spectrum (that's the only place they could go). The details on last year's legislation in the "Recent Actions" section will get you into trouble, since you mention public officials by name. This is the kind of information that study circle participants need to find out for themselves.

*Session 3:*

There are some good questions and some valuable background information here, but I think the title and overall directions of the Session may be a problem. What if you called it "How does segregation affect education?" That way, some of the perspectives in Session 4, which I really like, could be the centerpiece.

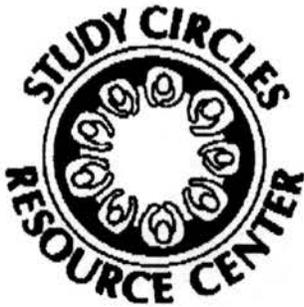
*Sessions 4 and 5:*

I think some of the economic development implications of segregation are just as compelling as the educational ones (see William Dodge, *Regional Excellence*). The guide could reach an even wider audience if Session 4 dealt with those issues explicitly ("How

does segregation affect the Twin Cities economy?"). The Session 5 list of macro alternatives for dealing with segregation - which need some fleshed-out conservative favorites - could then be more clearly connected both education and economic development. You also need an extensive list of what people can do as individuals and as members of small groups, so that they take ownership and don't just think of what government should be doing. If that makes the last session too big for your tastes, you could separate the action discussion into Sessions 5 and 6, dividing either by issue (education and economics) or level of action (what should government do? and what should we do?).

Rereading them, I realize that these last comments have disintegrated into ramblings. I think the conference call will help us sort out all of these options. I do think this draft is a good first step, and though there are some big problems with balance, I think you're headed in the right direction.

Center for Neighborhood  
PO Box 14207  
Mpls 55414-0207



**Study Circles Resource Center**  
 PO Box 203, 697 Pomfret St.  
 Pomfret, CT 06258

Voice: (860) 928-2616  
 Fax: (860) 928-3713  
 e-mail: scrc@neca.com

**Date:** 1/7

**For the attention of:** Dick Little

**Voice/fax:** 612 - 871 - 8984

**From:** Matt Leighninger

**Number of pages (including this page):** 4

**Comments:**

Sorry this took so long - looking forward to talking with everyone on Friday.

M

FAXED TO DARCY SEAVER, 1-7-96. rex  
 MAILED

FAX

MEMO TO SHARON RODNING BASH FROM  
DICK LITTLE. ~~ADDITIONAL PAGE~~  
(ADDITION TO EARLIER FAX)

ORGANIZATION OF DOCUMENT

COVER PAGE

CREDITS

FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION (TO PROCESS)

INCLUDES TASK GIVEN TO COMMUNITY CIRCLES

II (or I) INTRODUCTION TO ISSUES = WHERE WE ARE TODAY

DATA + CHARTS / GRAPHS

QUESTIONS

III (or II) OUR VISION = WHAT WE WANT <sup>OUR COMMUNITY TO LOOK</sup> ~~TO BE~~ LIKE IN FUTURE

IV (or III) WHAT (DO) WE NEED TO DO

THREE PERSPECTIVES

FOR EACH - STATEMENT OF PERSPECTIVE

PREMISES

WHAT ADVOCATES SAY

WHAT CRITICS SAY

FOR ALL - QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

WHAT IS OUR PERSPECTIVE? HARVESTING

A PUBLIC VOICE

(WHAT ARE <sup>THE</sup> FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATION  
OF THIS COMMUNITY CIRCLE?)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY / RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

# ORGANIZATION OF DOCUMENT

COVER PAGE

CREDITS

FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

- I) II WHERE WE ARE TODAY
- DATA + CHARTS/GRAPHS
  - QUESTIONS
- II) III WHAT WE WANT TO LOOK LIKE/BE IN THE FUTURE
- III) IV WHAT WE NEED TO DO

THREE PERSPECTIVES

- FOR EACH PERSPECTIVE  
STATEMENT  
PREMISES  
ADVOCATES SAY
- FOR ALL PERSPECTIVES  
CRITICS SAY  
QUESTIONS TO  
CONSIDER

FINDINGS/ CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Harvesting Public Voice

(Where (do) we go from here)

FAX MEMO

#612/824-1169

ADDITIONAL PAGE  
TO SHARON RODING  
BASH FROM DICK  
LITTLE

(ATTACHED, ONE PAGE)

INTERVIEWS WITH SUBURBAN CITIZENS —  
LEN WITT

QUOTES =      OPTION 2 POINT OF VIEW

QT.

VIEW  
#2

"Letting low-income people buy their own property is outrageous. I worked hard to buy my house. Now these people would live as good as me without having to work for it."

"I've worked hard to get where I am. I didn't get any government assistance."

"I think people would be happier if you improved their income, rather than moving them to the suburbs."

or

QT.  
VIEW #?

"Moving people from the city to the suburbs is just transplanting the problem. They need jobs."

QT.  
VIEW  
#2

"It's the person's responsibility for getting where they want to go. They have to work for it."

"We worked hard for what we have. Let them work hard too."

QT.  
VIEW  
#2

"We worked hard for what we get, let them work hard for what they get."

"There's a definite impact on the school system. If you have a large group of low income people move in, it impacts on services. We're just creating a problem for ourselves and the people moving in."

GENERAL -

QUOTES

"If we don't care about the <sup>condition of the</sup> inner city, we lose too."

"Once it happened [scattered-into housing], they [neighborhood residents] found out things actually went better than they thought they would."

QT.

"Up to now, the pressure has been put on our schools to achieve desegregation. It hasn't worked. We need to desegregate our communities if we're to achieve a desegregated society."

QT.

VIEW  
#3

"Disparity exists in the TC ~~area~~ because of the concentration of poverty. I think this is a harm to the entire metro area. I think it is an issue for us. We need to be cooperative for the sake of the entire metro area."

"I do think that it makes sense that concentrating that poverty in one area might not be in the best interest of those people and the entire community."

"We're starting to follow the eastern cities 'run-down pattern' -- it rots at the core. That's what's happening ~~at the core~~ in the Minneapolis."

QUOTES

OPTION 1

"The solution is to invest where the people already are."

QT  
VIEW  
#1  
"The people who are going get into [the suburbs] are the upper crust of the inner city. When you take these people out, what do you leave behind? The inner city gets worse than before. You need to reinvest in the inner city and ~~to~~ rebuild it, building on the sources there."

## Public Policy

Racial discrimination in the home mortgage lending market

Red Lining in home mortgage lending & insurance market

"Racial steering" in real estate market practice

Exclusionary zoning.

## Public Policy

Racial discrimination in the home mortgage lending market

Red Lining in home mortgage lending & insurance market

"Racial steering" in real estate market practice

Exclusionary zoning.

OPTION ?

DECONCENTRATION

\* Deconcentration of poverty

Source

Citizens Forum on Affordable Housing in  
the Minneapolis - St. Paul Metro Area

A discussion with ~~the~~ five affluent Twin Cities  
communities on the role they play in helping  
to provide affordable housing for low-income families.

**To:** Dick Little  
Community Circle Collaborative Board Members

**From:** Syl Jones  
**Jones!**

**Re:** Enclosed Draft of Discussion Guide

**Date:** March 23, 1997

As I pass on the enclosed first draft of the Discussion Guide, which is incomplete, please accept my apology. The challenge of redrafting the original study guide, based on my initial understanding of what the guide should contain, appeared to be possible within an expanded time frame. The meeting I had with the Board and my limited discussion with you, Dick, convinced me that I would be able to meet the original deadline of a "20-page discussion guide."

However, as I reviewed the dozens of monographs, newspaper clippings, studies, guidebooks, videotapes, magazine articles, etc., that you dropped off in two separate trips to my house, Dick, I began to see that it was not possible. I have spent hours reviewing these materials and attempting to construct a format that would support to goal of the project. The manuscript you now have represents my best effort to date. It is surely not good enough because it is incomplete, but there are also other important observations to be made about the materials and the process of writing this report.

1. An obvious fault of the guidebook as it was written is that it begs too many questions. It assumes that readers will automatically accept the premise that segregation is bad for society. While most of us may agree, such an assumption undermines the nature of the inquiry.
2. In order to change this assumption, the guidebook not only has to be rewritten and restructured. A new introduction explaining the historical context must be added so that readers know where the sponsors of the guidebook are coming from.
3. There are too many experts and too many points of view represented in the research materials I have been given. Although I am capable of sorting them all out and discarding those of minor relevance, I estimate that in order to do the best possible job, I would require at least another week -- and that would be adequate if I were doing only this project.

I realize that the problem is that the process has already begun in some of the circles and the guidebook is needed immediately. But now that I

understand the magnitude of this project, it's my professional opinion that much more time will be needed if this job is to be properly done.

I am still available to complete the guidebook provided I receive clear direction on format, content, length, etc., from a designated spokesperson from the Board. In fact, written feedback would be appreciated. One of the problems I encountered was the often contradictory nature of written comments about the initial discussion guide. What I would need in order to continue the job and, hopefully, complete it by the first week in April, would be feedback that allows me to establish a clear direction.

Finally, this assignment has been the first to confound me in my entire 20-year career. Where I went wrong was in assuming that the project was somewhat finite and that 20 pages could summarize the issues. Now I know that I could easily write a book length manuscript on this subject and still not cover it all.

I will certainly understand should you decide to bring in another writer at this point and, in that case, I will not bill you for my services. I guarantee my work -- which means if I accept a project and can't meet the agreed upon deadline, you do not have to pay me a cent. This is the first time I've *ever* missed a deadline (hard to believe but it's true) or felt the need to invoke my service guarantee. But there's a first time for everything.

Thank you, and I look forward to doing what I can to make this project work.

# A Failure To Thrive:

## A Discussion on the Challenges of Segregation, Housing and Education in the Twin Cities

### **Introduction to The Community Circle Collaborative Process**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Community Circle Collaborative Process, a guided discussion focused on the challenges of segregation, Housing and Education in the Twin Cities. For at least three sessions of two hours each -- over a course of three to five weeks -- you will gather with other members of your circle to share opinions, facts, and perspectives. The goal of these sessions is to fully discuss the issue from many perspectives and to develop solutions as you and members of your circle see fit. Secondly, we hope to share some of these solutions with public policy makers so that the entire region may benefit from this process.

Before you begin your discussion, please read this Discussion Guidebook as completely and thoroughly as possible. While it does not cover all possible perspectives, the guidebook provides background that can help you more fully understand the issue and can assist you in discussing it more completely.

### **How The Circle Process Works**

In many cultures, circles are symbols of equality, fairness and completeness. The Community Circle Process has been designed with these qualities in mind. However, your cooperation is required if your Community Circle experience is to be satisfactory.

In the early days of American democracy, communities held town hall meetings or sat around pot bellied stoves or spinning wheels to discuss major issues. Communities were smaller and more homogenous, and the various members of the community usually knew each other well.

The pros and cons of those early American meetings were essentially the same: homogeneity bred greater agreement and less conflict; however, other voices in the community -- those of women, slaves, Native Americans, the poor, and immigrants outside the mainstream -- were seldom heard.

As American democracy has grown to include a wider variety of individuals, the need to broaden discussion about major issues affecting the nation has increased. Today, inclusivity is highly prized in such discussions because the Jeffersonian vision of "an informed citizenry,"

which is essential to a healthy democracy, cannot be fully realized without it.

The Community Circle Collaborative Process is one way to sample the broadest possible spectrum of opinion within a community. It has been used in many parts of the nation to help create a public voice about major issues. The Community Circles themselves are a refreshing change from the narrow and often restrictive discussions of the past and the competitive debates used in present day political programs. In short, Community Circles are the wave of the future because they are cocoperative, not competitive, in nature.

### What The Process Requires From You

Your role as a participant in the Community Circle Collaborative Process includes the following requirements:

- A commitment to the entire 3-5-week meeting schedule
- A promise to share your thoughts and feelings honestly and respectfully
- A willingness to listen deeply to others
- A preference for collaboration rather than competition
- A desire to find common ground and creative solutions
- Realistic expectations of the process and the people of your circle.

### What You Can Expect From The Process

On the other hand, when you invest your time and effort in the Community Circle Collaborative Process, you will receive:

- The opportunity to be heard by others
- Challenges to some of your beliefs, attitudes and assumptions
- Moments of great insight and inspiration
- Feelings of confusion and, at times, alienation
- A sense of accomplishment

### How To Begin

1. Your facilitator has been trained to help your circle begin discussions. Please follow his/her guidelines as outlined at the beginning of each Community Circle meeting.
2. Read the materials in this guidebook before you begin discussions.
3. Please feel free to conduct your own research using the bibliography in the back or any other materials.
4. Please do not seek to dominate discussion or monopolize the floor at any time. Remember to be courteous.

5. Although the discussion period may vary depending on the size of each Community Circle, keep in mind that it is difficult to sustain sessions of more than three hours.

# A Failure To Thrive:

## A Discussion on the Challenges of Segregation, Housing and Education in the Twin Cities

### **Introduction**

Many people in the Twin Cities believe that segregation is something akin to slavery -- a social disease that occurred in the South many years ago and is no longer a critical issue. Some also fancy that in the comparatively liberal social climate of the Upper Midwest, individuals are free to live in virtually any community, regardless of race or socioeconomic background. Still others believe that our public schools have long since been integrated and that no one is denied an education because of the color of their skin or their economic situation.

But, what if these people are wrong? What if this image of openness and diversity is just that -- an image -- and the reality is far different? How would we feel about our community if we learned that our neighborhoods are still divided along racial and socioeconomic lines? That such divisions foster continued hatred and mistrust and hinder our development as a safe and prosperous metropolitan area? That our children are, in effect, isolated from each other and therefore at a distinct disadvantage in the global marketplace?

What if we discovered that previous attempts to remedy old but highly documented problems -- like segregation in housing and education -- had actually made matters worse? That the list of those who felt aggrieved by inequities based on ethnicity and class was growing instead of shrinking? That far from being a haven for social justice, the Twin Cities and many of its cherished public and private institutions may have perpetuated injustice, inequality and perhaps intolerance?

How would we react if we knew these things were true? Would we study the problem? Would we be moved to take action? Would we deny reality despite empirical and anecdotal evidence to the contrary? Would we point fingers and assign blame? Or, would we move?

This discussion guidebook is intended to help citizens from every walk of life find answers to these disturbing questions. The final solutions, if there are any, must come from you. But before attempting to answer, consider the following information carefully.

### **The Historical Context**

America began as a nation of separatists who founded a New World in order to pursue ideologies that were unpopular in Europe. It was a haven

for those who felt they were persecuted for their various beliefs. The Puritans and Quakers were just the beginning. Soon came a host of rugged individualists who saw in this New World the chance to create a life free of interference from patriarchal governments. In so doing, the first settlers of the land came to this country and constructed separate neighborhoods based largely on nationality: German, Swedish, Irish, Italian, Dutch, English, etc. Although settlers often mixed across nationalities in public places, most lived in communities populated by fellow countrymen.

But the New World contained thousands of inhabitants long before the first settlers arrived. These native Americans, incorrectly labeled "Indians," did not give up their land easily or without a fight. In fact, they hotly contested the acquisition of their territories by Europeans. Because their skin was considered red and their traditions viewed as foreign, the native Americans were seen as being a "lower form of life" than Europeans. As writer David Roediger notes in The Wages of Whiteness:

"...the prehistory of the white worker begins with the settlers' images of Native Americans. Moreover, the images developed by colonists to rationalize dispossession of Native Americans from the land...held that improvident, sexually abandoned, lazy Indians were failing to husband or subdue the resources God had provided and thus should forfeit those resources."

In other words, many European settlers believed they had a God-given right to lands that were already occupied. Conflicts between the native Americans and European settlers -- founded on the basis of the above beliefs -- were never fully resolved in discussion or debate. One reason for the lack of resolution is that European settlers quickly began to outnumber the native Americans and drove them off the land through physical force. Although later efforts were made to pursue peaceful settlements, all of these ultimately failed, and the indigenous population was never able to win a respected place in American society. Entire tribes were wiped out by wars fought by the government on behalf of European settlers. Many died; others were marginalized on reservations.

The new settlers had long kept their distance from the people they called "savages," and the native Americans did, after all, live in tribes. But the idea of the reservation -- a place of restricted access for a people who had been defeated in battle -- carried segregation to its greatest extreme in American history. Both groups believed that segregation, through tribal boundaries or through institutions like the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was the best way to avoid conflict, to strengthen ethnic and family ties, and to survive.

Thus, the pattern for interacting with those who were different was established in America from the very beginning. The clear message of the

white settler regarding the crucial issues of segregation, land (housing) and education was that native Americans had forfeited their right to such things. Because they had not built great cities, had not cleared the land and lived in ways that were considered peculiar, they were seen as expendable.

Had the early settlers and Native Americans been able to find common ground, some of the issues plaguing us today might not be with us. If, for example, Native Americans had been given status as full and equal citizens; if both parties had been able to create a new credo that recognized the need for integration while preserving cherished traditions; and, if these new approaches had resulted in a successful amalgamation of the two cultures, our views on race and perhaps class might have developed differently. But because this did not occur, early American society remained compartmentalized, divided, and extremely competitive.

Into this compartmentalized America in 1619 came black slaves, whose status differed from those of other immigrants in two important ways. First, black slaves were captured and forcibly removed from their homeland and brought to America to work without pay. While there were also white slaves (notably from Ireland and Germany) and white indentured servants in colonial America, these were often set free after working off their debt. Black slaves had no particular debt and were enslaved because of their status as "savages" and their reputation as good workers. Second, black slaves were prevented from learning to read, from speaking their foreign tongues, and were not allowed to become citizens in any sense of the word.

These differences were palpable in the daily intercourse between white settlers from Europe and black slaves from Africa. Regardless of whether individual settlers were slave owners or not, it was clear that the status of the slave differed completely from that of an English, Irish or Swedish immigrant. In short, those who came from Europe and had white skin had the hope, no matter how poor, of one day becoming American citizens. Black slaves knew -- as did the white settlers -- that blacks who were given their freedom and allowed to gain citizenship were major exceptions to the rule.

Thus, the stage for race-based segregation in America, based on double standards, was set even before the nation formally rebelled against England in 1776. European nationalism -- carried to this country by its earliest immigrants and intensified by homesickness and waning memories of oppression -- blended easily with ethnic prejudices, the Native American experience and the special status of black slaves to produce intractable differences. In addition, economic pressures encouraged the accentuation of ethnic differences as a means of securing a foothold in daily commerce. The result was two extremely different nations living along side each other but never completely with each other.

Although there are many landmark events in American history concerning race, most are negative. The Revolutionary War -- which celebrated political freedom from English tyranny -- but it no such effect on the status of African Americans, Native Americans, women or the poor. In fact, by the end of the war, Americans had consigned Native Americans to a status of nonexistence, as noted by Thomas Jefferson's complete absence of reflection upon their fate:

"Deep-rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by blacks, of the injustices they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race."

Roedigger reports that the very document that articulated freedom for whites was also an effective instrument in supporting slavery:

"The Constitution, as it codified an impressive range of freedom for whites, accepted that black slavery would continue by providing for return of escaped slaves, by aggrandizing the representation of slaveholding districts through the partial counting of slaves for purposes of legislative apportionment and taxation, and by allowing for twenty years of noninterference with the slave trade. Remarkably, the framers did all of this without using the words slave or slavery."

In so doing, those early patriots left room for a massive contradiction: black slaves living and working alongside their white masters, nursing their master's children along with their own, while being treated as inferior. This kind of integrated but unequal society had the force of law behind it. Slaves were owned in the same manner as horses, although masters had the option of treating them like human beings. They were forbidden to travel without papers from their owners; bred like cattle for the benefit of the slaveowner; and without even the most basic human rights.

Although many Southern intellectuals had always believed that slavery was right and proper, the effect of living along side slaves brought two distinct reactions by the early 1800's. Some Southerners began to feel that slavery might be wrong and that the institution debased those who used it. Others, in reaction to a new wave of questions about slavery from Abolitionists, began to seek new justifications for their peculiar institution.

The earliest example of a blow against segregation on a national scale is the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, wherein black slaves were declared free by the government. By this time, the land in the East and

South had been completely developed, giving the nation a distinctly European flavor. Land owners -- all male, all white -- controlled the nation and its policies. Women, Native Americans, African Americans, and many poor whites could not vote. In addition, few public servants could be found who championed their needs and interests.

The positive effects of the Emancipation may have been all but negated by the deep tragedy of the Civil War. Although the War is often said to have been about the general rights of the states, at bottom it was fought over the state's right to control life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of black slaves. By war's end a larger proportion of whites than ever before agreed that blacks should have a measure of freedom. However, as the events in Reconstruction soon proved, true freedom for African Americans could not be gained without access to land and to education. In addition, whites would need to let go of long-held racial prejudices -- prejudices that were being compounded at that very moment by a series of deadly wars with Native Americans -- if equality was to be a reality.

African Americans made massive efforts to educate themselves through black schools established in the South. There, in one-room school houses, 85-year-old former slaves sat next to five-year old children and learned their ABC's. But very few slaves could have afforded to buy land, even had it been available to them. Those who stayed in the South continued to work for whites as sharecroppers, where their economic disenfranchisement continued. Those who went North encountered an even more virulent form of racism in urban areas where competition for jobs was fierce.

Prior to the establishment of Jim Crow laws in the North, a period of relative intergration occurred where blacks and whites lived adjacent to each other. Before the development of suburbs and motorized transportation, it was not uncommon to witness poor people and rich people, whites and blacks, dwelling on the same street. This, in fact, was one reason the urban centers of the nation were so attractive at the turn of the century -- they offered the opportunity to see and experience all sorts of people from every walk of life.

But as industrialization grew and competition over jobs increased, racial prejudice expanded for highly practical reasons. White unskilled laborers demanded priority in the marketplace, pushing black labor to the back of the line. And, because many black workers were not as educated as whites, employers preferred whites, if they could hire them at the same or slightly higher rates of pay.

When A. Philip Randolph sought to unionize Pullman Car Porters -- who were nearly all black because the Pullman company insisted that they be -- he faced the great dilemma of black leadership in a white society. His goal was to develop the first all-black union -- a form of segregation -- as a

means of helping blacks fully enjoy the benefits of the American dream, which included integration. After founding the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, he then began to build relations with the American Federation of Labor, an all-white organization that refused to admit blacks.

From 1925 to 1937, Randolph struggled to stabilize wages and benefits for Porters and to lay the foundation for the first extensive black middle class in American history. Randolph was the first black leader to make a connection between class and race and attempt to bridge the gap between blacks and whites by uniting against a common enemy. In Paula Pfeffer's A. Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement, the author paints a picture of the difficulties Randolph faced:

"The Great Migration of southern blacks to northern industrial cities in search of wartime jobs and increased opportunities had resulted in overcrowding, with blacks spilling out of their narrowly defined ghetto areas. The subsequent competition with whites for jobs and the increased tensions led to antiblack riots...(Randolph) argued that capitalists ignored color in their exploitation of labor; hence, black and white workers had the same interests...but Randolph's gospel of labor solidarity was not readily accepted by black workers..."

At the same time Marcus Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement preached a new racial consciousness for African Americans. Garvey's followers -- mostly urban blacks located in the larger cities -- represented the first important group of black militant segregationists. Garveyites believed that the only hope for African Americans was to separate from America permanently and seek redemption in their ancient heritage. The movement failed, but it introduced the idea of segregation as a positive option for the first time on a large scale.

Meanwhile,

### The Way It Is

"The Twin Cities region is becoming increasingly segregated along income, racial and geographic lines. People of color, low income people and persons with disabilities are heavily concentrated in the central areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Moving outward from this central area, the population becomes increasingly whiter and wealthier. Although media household income in the cities as actually increased slightly, household income levels have increased faster, and to higher levels, in most suburbs." --"The Face of the Twin Cities," United Way of Minneapolis

Every year the Twin Cities ranks high on the list of America's most livable cities. When compared to other major urban centers, the Twin Cities region is a good place to live. But the question is, do such comparisons help us in establishing the quality of life we want? What do we have in common with Detroit, Milwaukee or Chicago? How do we differ? And, do we want to maintain those differences as distinguishing characteristics of the Upper Midwest?

What we have in common with other metropolitan areas is the malaise of urban decay in our inner cities, marked by:

- Increased poverty
- Aging housing stock
- Overburdened schools
  - Growing crime
  - Fear

These and other problems are destabilizing our inner cities and spreading rapidly to the suburbs. Fear, the most subjective and wide ranging of the issues listed above, knows no boundaries and has fueled flight from the central cities for many years. But reports of gun violence, drug dealing, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, drunk driving, gang-related crime and other major problems are now commonplace in rural areas, small towns and suburbs as well.

### Poverty

In recent decades, poverty has deepened within the core of Minneapolis and St. Paul. By the end of the 1980s, the core had gained 30,000 poor people, while its total population grew by less than 10,000 people. This suggests that some of those who were above the poverty line slipped below it during years of wage erosion and a stagnant economy.

Also, individuals who reached a certain income level migrated from the central cities to the surrounding suburbs, where there is more space, bigger and newer houses, lower property taxes, and the perception of lower crime rates and better schools.

Most low-income families have no choice but to locate in the central cities, particularly given limited public transportation and the lack of low-income housing in the suburbs. This shift from city to suburb is further illustrated by the 1990 census showing that the central cities contained 28% of the region's population but 60% of its poor.

But poverty isn't just deepening -- it's growing *and* spreading. In 1979, 11 Twin Cities census tracts saw 25% or more of its population sink below the poverty line. In the 80s, 35 additional census tracts in the core area reached the 25% level, which doubled the poverty rate in terms of population and area involved. Of 121 census tracts in the core area, 105 saw their poverty rates

increase.<sup>1</sup> This trend has continues today and is beginning to spread into inner-ring suburb.

Two-thirds of those in poverty are white, but the number of people of color living in poverty is disproportionate to the population. In the core area of the central city, poverty rates for African Americans (44%), American Indians (56%), Asians (62%) and Hispanic residents (31%) are dramatically higher than poverty rates for whites (18%).<sup>2</sup>

### The Impact on Schools

Recent media reports have shown that our public schools are in trouble. Not only have the number of students increased but a greater percentage of those students are poor and in need of social services. At the same time, public resources available to schools have been shrinking in an environment that demands greater educational skills than ever before.

One measure of the difficulty facing schools is student test scores. The table below shows the percentage of students passing the 1996 Minnesota Basic Skills Test for all districts in the seven-county region. Minneapolis schools rank the lowest with only 42% of its students passing the math test and 37% passing the reading test. Minneapolis schools also have the highest per pupil expenditures (\$9,136) within the seven county region, as well as the highest percentage of students living in poverty. Approximately 60% of Minneapolis students receive free or reduced-price lunches -- a federal program available for families with incomes below 185% of the poverty level. Furthermore, 63% of Minneapolis' student body are children of color.

**Figure 13. Basic Skills Test Scores and Spending Levels, By District, 1996<sup>3</sup>**

District	Percent Passing:		Enrollment	Per Pupil	
	Math	Poverty		Gen. Fund	Total
Spending:	Reading				
noka-Hennepin	70	52	38,670	\$4,668	\$5,826
oomington	79	65	11,371	\$5,210	\$6,034
ooklyn Center	64	53	1,650	\$4,856	\$6,707
rnsville	74	65	11,195	\$5,427	\$6,541

<sup>1</sup>Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress*. November 1992. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress*. November 1992. p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>O'Connor, Debra. *Spending Isn't Key to Success*. St. Paul Pioneer Press. 1996.

(Data based on information from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning.)

Columbia Heights	70	57	31	2,987	\$6,328	\$7,259
Ken Prairie	91	79	4	9,198	\$4,709	\$6,495
Lina	95	88	2	6,181	\$5,588	\$7,081
Livingston	79	66	18	3,400	\$4,550	\$6,649
Forest Lake	81	65	15	7,867	\$4,367	\$5,597
Midley	75	71	24	2,607	\$5,950	\$6,723
Stastings	84	65	13	5,119	\$4,615	\$5,617
Mapkins	88	81	10	8,029	\$6,132	\$7,743
Ever Grove Heights	74	69	18	4,005	\$5,014	\$6,101
Wikeville	82	73	5	7,319	\$4,472	\$7,237
Wahatomedi	90	78	6	2,670	\$4,562	\$5,854
Winnneapolis	42	37	61	46,151	\$7,115	\$9,136
Winnetonka	90	83	4	7,235	\$5,714	\$7,440
Wounds View	86	71	10	12,043	\$5,142	\$6,220
North St. Paul-- Maplewood--Oakdale	73	61	17	10,600	\$4,909	\$5,835
Wrono	90	87	4	2,576	\$5,037	\$6,298
Waseo	81	65	14	21,280	\$4,877	\$6,454
Wior Lake	87	76	3	3,859	\$4,387	\$5,775
Wandolph	78	62	3	473	\$5,250	\$5,972
Wchfield	71	62	22	4,343	\$5,843	\$7,020
Wobbinsdale	71 N/A		22	13,507	\$5,490	\$6,460
Woseville	80	72	18	6,772	\$6,102	\$7,377
Wosemount-- Maple Valley--Eagan	78	68	9	25,554	\$4,210	\$5,691
W. Anthony-- New Brighton	78	71	10	1,255	\$5,833	\$6,401
W. Louis Park	76	66	22	4,285	\$6,597	\$7,816
W. Paul	51	44	56	42,046	\$6,017	\$7,095
Wakopee	68	61	15	3,011	\$5,437	\$6,577
Waring Lake Park	82	64	20	4,181	\$4,975	\$5,989
Wouth St. Paul	65	60	24	3,562	\$4,975	\$6,179
Wouth Washington	84	71	12	13,886	\$4,245	\$5,666

Millwater	83	73	7	9,063	\$4,992	\$6,342	13
Mayzata	87	71	7	8,046	\$5,106	\$6,688	
West St. Paul-- Endota Hts--Eagan	67	61	16	4,787	\$5,014	\$7,781	
Wendota	78	72	14	2,364	\$5,417	\$6,854	
White Bear Lake	84	70	12	9,610	\$4,944	\$6,111	

Children who attend school hungry, chronically sick, and mentally fatigued have a far more difficult time learning than do children without such disadvantages. Resources for districts like Minneapolis -- which is among the poorest in the state -- often get diverted away from education toward necessities like free and reduced lunch programs, special education services, and bilingual education.

When schools must spend significant proportions of their budgets on simply getting their students to the "starting line," they often fall short of the finish line. This means that education is unequal in our state and that poor children often do not develop the basic skills -- such as reading, writing, math and relationship building -- they will need to succeed. The result of these inequities is a multi-tiered education system in which some children are doomed to failure as adults while others are likely to succeed.

The connection, then, between poverty and education is this: poverty tends to render achievement less likely by preventing children from learning and sapping resources from the education system. Society suffers from inequities in education because under-educated children are less able to contribute to the quality of life and more likely to need public assistance as adults. Finally, poverty in one generation often leads to an impoverished next generation as the cycle of neglect, mental and physical deficiencies, low achievement and failure continues.

### **Public Education and Equality of Opportunity**

Public schools were chartered to do the important work of developing and maintaining American society. They were designed to establish a nation dedicated to certain shared principles and values, such as individual freedom, justice and self-sufficiency. In fact, one of the most persuasive arguments for the establishment of public education was that it "would open a gateway to opportunity that would otherwise be closed to many youngsters," and would "eliminate the dwarf of social inequities which plague other nations."<sup>4</sup>

Quality public schools and equality of educational opportunity are essential to both individual economic enterprise and general prosperity. Advances in

<sup>4</sup> Tesconi, Jr., Charles A. and Emanuel Hurwitz, Jr. Education for Whom? NY: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1974. p 15

technology and shifts in the labor market have largely eliminated the need for unskilled workers. Students who do not learn crucial skills in school no longer have factory jobs to fall back on. To maintain a productive and profitable economy, as well as compete globally, all individuals in our society need to maximize their literacy through lifelong learning that begins in the public schools.

But because of competing needs and the loss of income within the core cities, financial resources available to public schools have dwindled steadily over the last two decades. The combination of increased poverty, larger populations of students of color and a decreasing tax base means greater pressure on the public schools in the years ahead. For example, the population of white Minnesotans between the ages of 15-19 is projected to decrease by 6% between 1995 and 2015. For African Americans, that the same population will *increase* by 187%, while American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic/Latino Americans will increase by 61%, 111%, and 128%, respectively. This averages out to be an increase of 122% for communities of color.<sup>5</sup>

## The Search For Solutions

No one knows the precise causes for the

failures of our public schools. Nor is it easy to uncover all of the reasons for growing poverty in the Twin Cities. What we do know is that as the region becomes more segregated, as poverty becomes more concentrated among families of color, and as schools continue to underserve our students, the quality of life lowers. This is true now and will be even more obvious in the near-term as the demographics of our region change.

There is evidence that many of the differences between white families and families of color -- in school performance and economic prosperity particularly -- are remnants of past and present segregation. Historically, segregation and the system of laws established to protect it were designed to create separate and unequal societies based on mythologies about white racial superiority. While segregation has been outlawed and is no longer officially tolerated, it remains a demographic reality.

What does segregation have to do with the quality of life? A house divided cannot stand, and a nation divided is structurally weakened. Natural

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*"In today's world, a youngster who leaves school unable to read, write, and do simple arithmetic faces a bleak future. When a substantial portion of boys and girls leave school uneducated, the rest of us face a bleak future."*

--Lisbeth Schorr, Within Our

Reach

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<sup>5</sup>Urban Coalition. *Statement from Citizen's League Communities of Color*. 13 December 1996.

differences will always occur within populations with diverse histories. But when a phenomenon like segregation persists -- and when a significant proportion of our population is plagued by poverty and ignorance that threatens to engulf us all, regardless of where we live -- it is time to investigate the possibility of a systemic problem.

The fact that economic and racial polarization seem to go hand-in-hand is a clue to the multi-faceted nature of the problem. So, too, is our shared history of racial and economic turmoil, which has persisted for 400 years and cost us thousands of lives and million of dollars. Government intervention has been both part of the problem and the solution, from the writing of the Constitution to the "Separate But Equal" ruling, to *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, to bussing, affirmative action and afrocentric education.

In the pages that follow, three of the major perspectives on economic and racial isolation are presented along with potential solutions. These perspectives are in no way mutually exclusive; nor are they the only ones circulating in the marketplace of ideas. Our purpose in selecting these three perspectives is to stimulate discussion and provide a framework for what is, perhaps the ultimate thinking exercise:

*If we are to ensure our future as a people and halt the increasing polarization of this region, where do we begin? What are the interrelationships between segregation, housing and education and how will they impact us in the future? What must we do to improve the quality of life for the region and what are we willing to sacrifice, create and sustain for the sake of so doing?*

### Perspective Number One

## **Building Communities: Enrichment and Revitalization**

### *Separate But Equal or Separate But Unequal?*

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed an earlier decision in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* that declared in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, that "in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place." Forty three years have since passed, and America is now beginning to rethink that precept. Familiar remedies to discrimination and segregation--busing, affirmative action, specially drawn voting districts, and mobility programs--are beginning to draw fire. Today, then, it seems as if we are faced with a new choice: *separate but equal* or *separate but unequal*?

"The practical barriers to desegregation are in many places so high that the moral clarity promised by *Brown*--a simple choice between segregation

and integration, between racism and justice--has blurred."<sup>6</sup> Many of the simple assumptions undergirding the civil-rights movement have been eroded. For years segregated neighborhoods and schools were protested as cruel and unjust. The *Brown* Court in fact found that segregation conferred an ineradicable stigma of inferiority on black children. Today, however, many people of color feel this assumption is *in itself* condescending and racist. After all, seldom do you hear of an all-white neighborhood or school being referred to as "segregated." As well, it is never assumed that white children *must* go to school with children of color or it will damage their self-esteem.

Indeed, what exactly is right and wrong nowadays is no longer clear. Justice has become a matter of interpretation. In the words of Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, "Better for African-Americans to spend the millions in (busing) transportation money improving inner-city schools. Better to build affordable housing throughout Minneapolis. Better to rely on 'children going to school in their own neighborhoods. If that means fewer integrated classrooms, so be it."<sup>7</sup>

Why does the mayor--and so many other people of color--feel this way? Perhaps because, as a nation, we have never truly embraced *integration*. We have attempted *desegregation*--through court-ordered mandates--but the two are not synonymous. Desegregation implies a lack of choice--a "forced" integration. And that very likely *is* damaging to people's confidence and self-esteem. Many people feel that underneath it all, efforts to desegregate neighborhoods and schools with high proportions of minorities assumes that it is better to live and go to school in majority white settings. They feel that it is not a matter of multiculturalism, but assimilation. This is disrespectful of the strengths of communities of colors.

## Segregation and Schools

The battle over "separate but equal" has most clearly manifested itself in the public schools. For more than 30 years now, cities across America have engaged in extensive busing efforts to create more culturally and economically diverse classrooms. People with this perspective feel that the results have been costly and largely ineffective, and many feel that busing has outlived its usefulness.

Why has busing been so ineffective? Largely because it has been carried out for the wrong reasons. After all, if one goes back to the initial concern

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<sup>6</sup>Traub, James. *Can Separate Be Equal?* Harper's Magazine. June 1994. p. 36.

<sup>7</sup>Fineman, Howard. *Redrawing the Color Lines*. Newsweek. 29 April 1996. p. 34.

of the black community, it was not about being with white people. It was about quality education. Former Atlanta mayor Andrew Young explains, "It was really the integration of the money to provide a quality education for all children that was black folks' goal. Racial balance was a means for achieving that goal."<sup>8</sup>

One *could* argue that busing has given some poor, minority children access to the opportunities that white students have. Never mind, however, that children--once "integrated" by schools--are often re-segregated by a tracking system which assigns minority children to the least challenging, least interesting classes, often taught by the least experienced or least motivated teachers. Never mind the limited expectations for minority children, culturally biased instructional methods, and stereotyping and ability grouping. Under these circumstances, many people of color say, never mind busing at all.

The busing efforts undertaken in American cities have placed an unfair burden on communities of color. Not only is there a disproportional busing of children of color, but the widespread use of busing has led to the demise of many neighborhood schools, which some minorities view as a root cause of the destruction of their communities. Schools serve as a hub for communication, interaction, and activities within a community. Desegregation efforts (through busing) have stripped many communities of this vital interaction and communication. It has dismantled community support and parental involvement for many minority children. When children are bused out to the suburbs, many inner-city parents have commented that they cannot find public transportation to attend parent-teacher conferences and other school events. People often blame "unsupportive, uninterested parents" for the demise of public schools, complaining that parents no longer engage in their children's education. But when government policies create such barriers for parents to hurdle, can we truly blame them?

Finally, busing has failed to assist people of color in securing adequate educational opportunities for their children largely because most desegregation plans have been crafted and carried out by the white community with minimal black influence. As a superintendent of a Chicago school district commented, "It's always been on someone else's terms."

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<sup>8</sup>Traub, James. *Can Separate Be Equal?* Harper's Magazine. June 1994. p. 39.

- "The effort to achieve racial balance through desegregation has acted in conjunction with other forces to erode the community fabric that once provided support to children and families."
  - "Focus less on student racial percentages and more on student outcomes--resources must be in place to support equity in outcomes."
  - "I will venture and offer my humble opinion (as a non-educator) on the issue of busing as a tool to improve educational achievement among "minority" children. As a product of a public school system with 100% Latino students (Puerto Rico), I find it hard to believe that "minority" kids need to sit side-by-side with white kids in order to learn!"
  - "I've always chosen to put my children in schools that are close to me . . . and the fact that they are black to me is an asset. . . .That's the best for my children, to be taught by people who understand them, who want to teach them, and who expect that they will achieve."
  - "Frankly, I find most arguments FOR busing self-defeating, in the sense that by busing kids we seem to imply to our kids that 'whites are smarter and maybe their 'smarts' will rub off on you' by attending mostly-white schools! Also, busing is a cheap way out for those in power to claim that they are doing something to improve education in ghettos and barrios, instead of adopting the right (but politically unpopular approach) of providing more resources to the neighborhood schools and the 'minority' community in general."
  - "As a parent, I see no intrinsic value in having my daughter travel for hours to a far away school, potentially risking harassment by white kids because of her heritage, in order to get an education. She should be entitled to a perfectly good education right at her neighborhood public school!"
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## The Polarization of the Region

While many government policies and programs exist which aim at integrating both schools and neighborhoods, the actual trend in housing and education has been towards economic and racial segregation in the last fifteen years--not away from it. "Using Census data and what demographers call a segregation or dissimilarity index, between 1970 and 1990, poor households became 13% more segregated in the 40 largest metropolitan areas."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, studies of racial segregation show that America's major urban centers remain highly segregated, with cities in the northern "rustbelt" typically being the most segregated.<sup>10</sup>

With the acceleration of white and middle-class flight from the central cities in recent decades, poverty has concentrated in the core of Minneapolis and St. Paul. According to the 1990 census, the central cities had only 28% of the region's population but 60% of it's poor. Moreover, 65% the region's minorities live in the central cities.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the communities in this region are rapidly becoming polarized.

The damage that racial and economic segregation inflicts on individuals has its counterpart in the damage inflicted on an entire metropolitan region--both the urban core and the suburbs. A strong and prosperous core is key to the health of the entire region; without the city, there would be no suburbs. Suburban communities benefit from the unique economic and cultural opportunities that only large urban centers can provide. Segregation, however, prevents wealth accumulation by residents of isolated, poor communities, thereby establishing major barriers to market participation. Metropolitan regions as a whole suffer when large percentages of people do not have the skills necessary to participate in the economy as workers, consumers, and citizens.

The greatest concentration of jobs in this region is currently in the core. As of the early 1990s, it had approximately 374,000 jobs, more than 2.8 jobs for each of its 133,000 households.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, the core has the highest rates of unemployment and poverty in the region. Why? Because there is a serious mismatch between the skills and knowledge of low-income core residents and

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<sup>9</sup>The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation. Summer 1996. p. 4. (From Alan Abramson, et al, *The Changing Geography of Metropolitan Opportunity: The Segregation of the Poor in U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 1970 to 1990*. Housing Policy Debate 6 (1), --1995.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>United Way Minneapolis Area. *The Face of the Twin Cities: Another Look*. 1995. p.8.

<sup>12</sup>Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress*. 1992. p.18.

the skills and knowledge required by available jobs. The jobs available in the core--which contains not only two downtowns but the University of Minnesota, the Midway area, and the Capitol complex--are highly professional. As a result, jobs are typically filled by suburban commuters. This is one side of the story.

The other side of the story is that while the central cities still maintains the largest percentage of jobs, job growth in the central cities has virtually come to a halt. The region's economy is rapidly becoming suburbanized. The suburbs captured almost 98% percent of job growth in the 1980s--66% of which went to the fast growing outer-ring suburbs.<sup>13</sup>

\*\*Housing and Disinvestment in core neighborhoods

\*\*Discrimination in rental markets

\*\*crime

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**Per Capita Income by Race and Hispanic Origin, 1990 Census (in \$1000s)**

	7 County Region	Minne apolis	St. Paul	Sub urbs
Average	\$14.5	\$13.3	\$12.9	\$15. 0
White	\$14.8	\$14.1	\$13.5	\$15. 1
African American	\$9.1	\$8.4	\$8.2	\$13. 1
Am. Indian	\$6.8	\$5.9	\$6.2	\$8.6
Asian	\$9.4	\$6.9	\$5.5	\$11. 9
Hispanic	\$8.4	\$7.5	\$7.3	\$9.7

Source: Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: Twin Cities Under*

*Stress*, November 1992. p. 38.

**Percent Change in Per Capita Income, By Race and Hispanic Origin, 1979-1989  
(1989 dollars)**

	Regi on	Minnea polis	St. Paul	Suburbs
Average	18.4 %	11.5%	6.5%	20.9%

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. p. 18.

White	21.3 %	20.1%	13.9%	21.9%
African American	- 3.5 %	-7.5%	-5.0%	-8.1%
Am. Indian	20.1 %	-5.7%	4.9%	56.8%
Asian	- 12.1 %	-11.6%	-25.1%	1.8%
Hispanic	8.4 %	14.9%	-2.3%	10.5%

Source: Metropolitan Council. *Trouble at the Core: Twin Cities Under Stress.*

November 1992. p. 39.

Income disparities in the central cities and the suburbs increased throughout the 1980s. Per Capita income in the suburbs was higher than in the central cities to begin with, and then increased at a faster rate throughout the decade. Areas outside of the central cities experienced a 21% increase in average per capita income, while average per capita income in Minneapolis and St. Paul went up about 12% and 7%, respectively. More striking, however, is the difference in per capita income between white and minorities. Average per capita income for African Americans and Asians actually *decreased* throughout the decade. This may be in part due to the shift in the regional economy. The economy of the Twin Cities (like that of the nation) has become increasingly based on services and trade activity and proportionately less on manufacturing. Two-thirds of all the region's new jobs in the last decade were in services and trade sectors. These jobs--largely in retail--generally have lower wage rates than jobs in manufacturing. In fact, less than half of the jobs in Minnesota today pay a liveable wage.

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### The Prescription: Strengthening the Core

Many people feel that providing the "token" few with more opportunities and choices--greater "mobility"--will do little good for the region if the communities that are left behind remain poor and isolated.

If we are to strengthen the core--and thus the entire region--it is imperative that we focus on job training and placement programs for the unskilled inhabitants of the core. Moreover, we must begin preparing "tomorrow's workers" today by providing quality educational opportunities for *all* children. Currently Minneapolis and St. Paul have the highest drop-out rates and lowest achievement scores among all school districts in the seven county region. This suggests that we need to focus on equalizing resources between suburban and

urban schools, through some sort of revenue-sharing plan or suburban-urban transfer. As well, we could redirect funds earmarked for busing to improve neighborhood schools in the central cities.

It is also essential that we reverse the outflow of economic activity to the suburbs. Due to changes in technology and transportation structures, large firms no longer find it necessary to locate in the central cities. As a result, more and more companies are relocating to the suburbs. To prevent this flight of capital, as well as to entice capital back into the cities, redevelopment grants, loans, and tax exemptions--the distinguishing tool of urban enterprise zones--could be used. Beyond providing more job opportunities for the urban poor, an influx of capital into the central cities would help compensate for the deteriorating urban tax base.

### What Critics Say

- Pumping money into the central cities is not the answer because it is prohibitively expensive. When poverty is so concentrated, using money to tackle the problem is like throwing it down a black hole because it is absorbed so quickly. Given the fact that many of these communities are in serious debt, it would take an impossible amount of money to revitalize their economies. It isn't realistic to believe that we can generate that much investment, particularly as it will largely have to come in the form of transfers from the suburbs.
- Creating "enterprise zones" is not an effective way to stimulate economic activity and create jobs in the urban core. Enterprise zones are not pro-labor or pro-community, but pro-profit. Jobs are not guaranteed to go to the urban poor; they can (and very often are) filled by suburban commuters. Moreover, the communities providing the tax-exemption must provide resources to compensate for the tax expenditure granted to the enterprise zone--either through increased tax burdens or decreased services.
- In order to create more regional stability, our communities need to be more economically and racially diverse. Building up infrastructure in the cities will do little good if our communities are still divided along race and class lines.

- The only way to break down the racial hierarchy that currently exists is to integrate. People of color need to enter into the economic and social mainstream where they will have more access to good jobs and good schools. Equally important, white folks must diversify and expand their understanding of people of color. If we continue to stay apart, the structure of the "racial other" goes unchecked.
- People need to have real choices about where they live. Since a majority of the new jobs are in the suburbs, and because we have limited mass transit in the region, there needs to be more low-income housing in the suburbs.

## Personal Responsibility and Market Mechanism

### A Safety Net or A Trap?

Can a society take care of its *deserving* without encouraging people to become *undeserving*? Can society create a welfare system that doesn't undermine the moral character of its people? The general answer, as history has taught us, is no.

A government's social policy establishes the rules by which its citizens live. It creates incentives and strategies to go about making a living, raising a family, and having fun. All people--poor and not-poor--respond to these incentives as rational human beings, attempting to maximize their own utility. The primary difference between the poor and not-poor, however, is that they play under different constraints: poor people cannot wait as long for results.

Beginning in the early 1960s, social policy in the United States underwent a major transformation. Programs initiated under the War on Poverty radically changed the rules for poor people, making it profitable for the poor to behave in the short term in ways that were destructive in the long term. The changes in benefit levels and eligibility requirements ushered in by the social policies of the 60s dramatically changed incentives to the poor. As a result, we saw an increase in unemployment among the young, a decrease in labor force participation, and an increase in illegitimacy and welfare dependency.<sup>14</sup> Since then, we have been masking these losses by further subsidizing destructive behavior. We tried to provide more help to the poor, but instead we only created more poor. We tried to prevent people from becoming dependent, but instead created long-term dependency.

We cannot blame people for acting rational. If a young, single mom has a choice between working a full-time, minimum wage job with no insurance (and then paying half of her income for child care), or staying at home with her child, claiming AFDC benefits, Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Section 8 rent subsidies, what is the rational choice? Of course it is the latter of the two. The problem, however, is that this woman is only looking at her short term needs. When this woman's child grows older and she suddenly finds herself needing and wanting to work, she will also find herself lacking a solid employment history and job skills. As a result, she will have no choice but to stay dependent on government assistance.

Moreover, every assumption young blacks or Latinos might make about their inability to compete with whites is fed by targeted social policies which tell them that they are un-responsible victims. We tell youth from disadvantaged families to be proud and to believe in themselves, yet our actions tell them that no one else believes in them. It is, in essence, the self-fulfilling prophecy. Low-income minorities typically live in the most isolated communities, experience the most severe negative conditioning, and have been granted by policy the most immunity from responsibility.

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<sup>14</sup>Murray, Charles. Losing Ground. NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1984. p. 9.

Essentially, then, instead of a safety net, we inadvertently built a trap. By allowing people to be lean on the government during hard times, we've taken away their ability to be self-sufficient. People *would* play the incentives offered by the market if they didn't have the option of playing the incentives offered by the government. If we eliminated assistance for everyone but the truly needy, it would leave the able-bodied no recourse whatsoever except the job market. "It is the Alexandrian solution: cut the knot, for there is no way to untie it."<sup>15</sup>

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"The most troubling aspect of American social policy toward the poor in the late twentieth-century America is not how much it costs, but what it has bought."

--Charles

Murray,

Losing

Ground

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### The Culture of Poverty

Spending on social programs has steadily increased since America first began waging its "war on poverty." Public assistance costs were thirteen times higher in 1980 than they were in 1950 (in constant dollars). Education costs in 1980 were 24 times their 1950 cost, while housing costs were 129 times their 1950 cost. Overall, civilian social welfare costs increased by twenty times. During that same period, however, the United States population increased by one half.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, a fundamental change took place in American social policy. But why hasn't this investment paid off?

As some suggest, this investment has not paid off because a certain group of individuals--what is now typically referred to as the "underclass"-- will always be poor regardless of their external circumstances. While the "underclass" and the "lower class" both lack economic resources and opportunities, the two classes are different in that the "underclass" has a different set of values. Moreover, the underclass is delineated from lower class populations in that their poverty traits are transmitted intergenerationally and they thus become stuck in a self-perpetuating cycle of disadvantage. This is in contrast to individuals who have experienced the loss of a breadwinner, are involuntary unemployed, are ill. Their poverty is typically not enduring and certainly not transmitted from one generation to the next. Research shows that this "culture of poverty" transcends regional, rural/urban, and national differences, and that everywhere individuals stuck in the culture of poverty show "striking similarities in family structure, interpersonal relations, time orientation, value

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid. pp. 227-228.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid. p. 14. (From Office of Research and Statistics. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1981*. Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, 1982.)

systems, and patterns of spending.”<sup>17</sup> This culture is characterized by things such as (1) hopelessness, indifference, alienation, apathy, and a lack of effective participation or integration into the social and economic fabric of society; (2) a present-tense time orientation; (3) cynicism and mistrust of those in authority; (4) strong feelings of marginality, helplessness, dependence, and inferiority; (5) lack of impulse control and the inability to defer gratification; (6) the absence of childhood as a specially protected and prolonged state, and thus early initiation into free sexual unions or consensual marriages; (7) a high incident in the abandonment of wives and children; (8) a matriarchal family structure; and (9) a minimum level of organization beyond the nuclear or extended family, a low level of community organization, and a strong sense of territoriality.<sup>18</sup> Approximately only 20% of those living below the poverty line are actually trapped in the culture of poverty, but indeed this 20% is largely why our increased investments have *not* paid off. An expensive program such as Section 8—one that costs approximately \$6000 per year per family—is a futile effort because those in the culture of poverty will remain poor whether they live in core of whether they live in the Eden Prairie. Improvements in environment will superficially affect their poverty, but only a change in values and family structure can help break the cycle of disadvantage.

### “The Poverty of Values”

History is replete with individuals who have climbed their way out of poverty. But what is it that allows some people to hurdle life’s barriers while others consistently stumble?

General Colin Powell grew up in Harlem and the South Bronx, two of America’s very poorest and crime-ridden neighborhoods. He was not an exceptionally gifted student nor a star athlete, but he was a hard-worker. In 1989, the 52-year-old was appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The youngest man and first African-American ever to hold that position, Colin Powell is greatly respected by the American public. When asked the secret of his success, Powell gives a definitive response: “My family.” In his own words, “The worst kind of poverty is not economic poverty. It is the poverty of values.”<sup>19</sup>

Today, one out of every four children is born to a single mother. A third of these single mothers are teenagers.<sup>20</sup> Studies show that children in single-parent families are more likely to have problems. They tend to do more poorly in school and are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol. They typically earn less and are more likely to become single parents themselves. This breakdown of values is ultimately what causes the perpetuation of poverty. Children do not have role-models and thus do not learn how to be disciplined and self-sufficient.

<sup>17</sup>Karger, Howard Jacob and David Stoesz. *American Social Welfare Policy*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group, 1994.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. p. 148.

<sup>19</sup>National Issues Forums. *The Troubled American Family*. 1995. p. 7.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. p. 7.

Our current public policies and practices counteract traditional American values of hard-work, self-sufficiency, and strong, two-parent families. Aid to Families with Dependent Children, for example, allows a woman to have a child out of wedlock with no conceivable way of supporting that child. No-fault divorce laws are another example; by allowing couples to easily get divorces, they place a low value on family and marriage. Our current laws and practices need to be restructured to encourage two-parent families and family values.

### The Impact on Schools

Perhaps nowhere has the break-down of the family structure had a stronger impact than on our schools. People often voice dissatisfaction with the public schools, but schools nowadays are asked to do the impossible: they are asked not only to educate children, but raise them, protect them, and discipline them too. Schools are asked to provide children with their breakfast and lunch, their after-school activities, their values and morals. Teachers are forced to discipline children who cause disruptions and create problems. They must spend extra time helping children with assignments who get no help at home. Where are the parents? When teachers are asked to take on so many other roles, it seriously diminishes their capacity to do their primary function: teach.

Not ironically, it is in the best schools that we see the most two-parent families. In these schools, teachers are free to teach without constantly having to deal with disruptions and incomplete assignments. Indeed, many studies have found that it is not the amount of money that a school spends that has the greatest impact on educational achievement, but rather the socioeconomic make-up of the students. In 1964, John Hopkins sociologist James Coleman conducted an extensive study of equality of educational opportunity in America. When measured by the "input" criteria, Coleman found that differences in the quality of schools was not very closely related to differences in student achievement. Instead, he found social class mix to be the crucial factor in explaining differences in achievement. Children from low socioeconomic backgrounds--regardless of race--improved when studying along side of children from a mixture of *social* classes. This may be because children from middle- and upper-class families typically have a different values system and receive discipline and instruction at home. The crucial point, according to Coleman, is that "schools have little influence on a youngster's achievement that is independent of his social, economic, and cultural background."<sup>21</sup> Our own experience in the Twin Cities seems to confirm Coleman's point. While the Minneapolis school district is the highest spending district in the region, it also has the lowest achievement rates (as measured by the Minnesota Basic Skills Tests). It also has more children living with only one parent (46.2%) than with two parents (42.5%).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Tesconi, Jr. Charles A. and Emanuel Hurwitz, Jr. *Education For Whom?* NY: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1974. p. 23.

<sup>22</sup>The Urban Coalition. *Minneapolis Public School Neighborhood Student Data, 1995-96.* p. 42.

*"At its worst, public housing under HUD has served as an incubator for social pathologies which have been unleashed on our society hurting the very ones such programs are suppose to help."*

--Zenoa

Henderson, Project 21 member

Despite the best of intentions, government intervention in markets such as education and housing has produced less-than-desired results and numerous unintended consequences. Public housing stands out as a testament to the failed social engineering of the 1960s. While the original housing constructed under the Housing Act of 1949 consisted predominantly of low-rise, two- and three-story apartment buildings, and while the first tenants of public housing apartments were predominantly young, employed, working-class families, beginning in the mid-1950s, public housing underwent a dramatic shift. Higher urban land costs led to more and more high-rise buildings. Architectural designs took little account of the needs of families with children (apartments had few bedrooms and little recreational space). Municipal housing authorities and elected officials decided to concentrate the buildings. In some instances, design standards were even lowered to make public housing less attractive to force more reliance on the public sector.<sup>23</sup> Eventually, large numbers of poor families began to crowd into the projects. In many communities, "the projects" became a code for poverty, crime, and despair. Today, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is thought by many to be the largest slumlord in the country.

Public education stands out in the mind of many as another bureaucratic failure. Again, despite the best intentions, political institutions burden schools with excessive bureaucratic redtape, inhibit effective organization, stifle innovation and flexibility, and thereby impede student achievement. People nowadays consider private schools to be a beacon of excellence. The main difference, many contend, is that private schools maintain a safe and disciplined environment in which people can learn, and that teachers engage parents more fully in their children's education.

From an institutional perspective, however, private schools are successful for a different reason. They are successful because the market mechanism of competition ensures that parents have more control than they do in public schools. Private schools have the incentive to please their "customers" and respond to their wants and needs lest they should take their "business" elsewhere. In contrast, public schools are democratically governed; they are represented by varied interests all vying for control over and within the system. A single school is governed by a huge and heterogeneous constituency comprised of politicians, administrators, teachers, and various groups at all

<sup>23</sup>Egan, John, et al. *Housing and Public Policy: A Role for Mediating Structures*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1981. p. 16.

levels. Parents and students are but a small part of this constituency. And because political resources are distributed unequally and the interests of the politically powerful do not always, if even occasionally, parallel the interests of the average citizen, parents wants and needs are often considered last. Low-income families are particularly disempowered. While wealthy parents might in fact choose to remove their children from public schools and send them to private schools, or they perhaps might even choose to move to a different neighborhood, poor families have no such recourse. Because of the steep financial costs of alternatives, public schools can attract and keep students without being particularly good at educating them.

These two anecdotes on housing and education suggest that we must reverse the policies of the last fifty years. The government has grown steadily larger and more intrusive, spending more and more money to tackle problems that simple cannot be solved with money. To avoid the mistakes of the past, we need policies that encourage self-sufficiency and maximize individual choice. Recognizing that many jobs today do not pay livable wages, it may be an appropriate policy for the government to subsidize low-income families with vouchers for housing and education, but that is where government intervention should end. The market should then take over. For example, it is inefficient and intrusive for governments to mandate "fair share" housing policies. There will obviously be a greater demand for low-income housing in some areas than in others, and the market is by far more accurate and efficient in measuring that demand than the government. Where there is sufficient demand, suppliers will appear. Individuals who are motivated and responsible will take advantage of the opportunities created through voucher systems, but it is otherwise inappropriate and unnatural (and expensive) for the government to try and help those who do not want to be helped and who are unwilling to "help themselves."

### What Critics Say

- Less than half of the jobs in Minnesota pay a livable way. Sixty-one percent of Minnesota's 85,348 families in poverty have at least one person in the work force. Approximately 400,000 Minnesotans lack health coverage--72% of which are in the work force.<sup>24</sup> If we want to create less dependency on the government and more dependency on the market and on the individual, we have to create a market system which allows responsible people to survive.
- Discrimination remains a significant barrier for people of color, no matter how "responsible" they are.
- Poor people do not have the time or money to lobby for their interests and rights. The wealthy, on the other hand, abuse their power and continue to get richer at the expense of the poor. The new Twins stadium is one

<sup>24</sup> United Way of Minneapolis Area. The Face of the Twin Cities: Another Look. 1995. p. 9.

example of how the needs and wants of the wealthy are considered above those of the poor.

- Everyone in this country receives government benefits of some sort. Whether it is in the form of a check or a tax deduction is immaterial. In fact, the federal government spends \$66 billion a year on mortgage-interest and property tax deductions for homeowners-- two-thirds of which goes to families with incomes over \$75,000.<sup>25</sup> This is more than *four times* as much as is spent on low-income housing programs.
- The poor will always be with us; a reserve labor pool is essential to capitalism.. The chief function of social programs is to regulate labor. When mass unemployment leads to outbreaks of turmoil, relief programs are initiated or expanded to absorb/control the turmoil and restore order. As turmoil subsides or as labor is needed, the relief programs contract, expelling those who are needed back into the labor market. Responsibility has nothing to do with it.
- The problem with social welfare policies in this country is not that we've done too much--creating dependency--but that we've done too little. The actual amount spent on programs like AFDC is very small. If we truly want to help people get back on their feet again, we need to invest more in these programs.

## Mobility: Creating Choices

### No Turning Back?

"Forty percent of America's cities are programmed to fail. Gary, Camden, and East St. Louis are already clinically dead. Bridgeport, Newark, Hartford,

Cleveland, and Detroit are on life support systems. New York, Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, and Philadelphia are sinking. Through seemingly healthy, Boston, Minneapolis, and Atlanta are already infected."<sup>26</sup>

--David Rusk

David Rusk, urban policy expert and author of Cities Without Suburbs, visited the Twin Cities a few years ago. He warned that Minneapolis and St.

<sup>25</sup> DeParle, Jason. *The Year that Housing Died*. The New York Times Magazine. 20 October 1996. p. 53.

<sup>26</sup> Rusk, David. *Without Urban-Suburban Unity, Cities Future Looks Bleak*. Pioneer Press. 10 June 1994.

Paul were headed down the same one-way track that cities like Detroit and Cleveland have already traveled. The basic pattern remains the same: poverty concentrates in the core, middle class flight accelerates, and the core is then left with a higher percentage of poor but less resources to meet their needs. As a result, we end up with a polarization of the region on race and class lines.

"Inelastic" cities that are unable to expand their city limits are programmed to fail, according to Rusk, because they become "their own suburbs' poorhouse."<sup>27</sup> For many reasons--a lack of affordable housing in the suburbs, limited mass transit in the region, discrimination in lending and realty markets, myopic city politics, racism--low-income families in the Twin Cities have remained trapped within city limits, and largely, within certain neighborhoods. When poverty is concentrated, it exacerbates a myriad of other problems: poor schools crime, unemployment, drugs, dependency, and illegitimacy. The most effective solution is simply to get people out of the ghettos and into neighborhoods with good schools and jobs opportunities.

### **Poor Communities = Poor Schools**

Education is typically viewed as the path to self-sufficiency. History is ripe with examples of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who pulled themselves up "by the bootstraps" and out of poverty. Clarence Thomas and Colin Powell--prominent, successful, national figures. Through hard work and dedication, these two individuals defied the odds. But unfortunately, those hard to beat. These men are statistical anomalies. The reality is that for children who grow up in poor families and live in poor communities, the odds of escaping those deprivations are infinitesimal. A school may be a child's only hope for a transcendent future, and when that school is overcrowded, impersonal, and gray as well, hope fades fast. At the very minimum, then, we must assure that children have access to good schools.

In Minnesota, many options currently exist which allow families to choose their school. The "open enrollment" option, for example, allows students aged 5 to 18 to transfer to public schools outside of their residential district unless the receiving district does not have room or the transfer will have a negative impact on desegregation efforts. Currently less than 2% of all students take advantage of this option.<sup>28</sup> A major obstacle for poor families, however, is fact that transportation is not provided for students using the open enrollment option. If the family does not have a car, and because public transportation is not available to all areas within the suburbs, choices are effectively limited. Moreover, some parents may be unwilling or unable to invest the time and money seeking out a quality school for their child. As a result, transportation

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. School Choice. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation, 1992.

subsidies and extensive outreach programs are vital if school choice programs are to provide options to the families who need them most.

Busing, of course, is another way in which we have traditionally attempted to provide low-income and minority students more opportunities in education. For more than 30 years now, cities across America have engaged in extensive busing efforts to create more culturally and economically diverse classrooms. Some people feel the results have been costly and ineffective, but a significant number of people still express strong support for desegregated schools. Research has shown that desegregation has modest positive effects on the achievement of black students, while having no negative affect on white student achievement.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, students attending integrated schools have a better chance of attending selective colleges, majoring in technical fields, and working /living in integrated settings.<sup>30</sup> And while raising the achievement of children of color is important, equally important is how children are socialized to become the next generation of adults. Thus even if no gains in achievement were evident, one might still argue that busing is a worthwhile endeavor.

Desegregation proponents argue that the failure of desegregation-based education strategies to produce better academic results, particularly in regard to students of color, comes from its incompleteness. For example, we haven't done enough in our schools to make students of color feel welcomed and valued. There is a lack of diversity among the teaching staff in the region, and staff development efforts to help all teachers develop skills, knowledge, and strategies to work with students from various cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds have not been made. Moreover, even though schools may be desegregated, classrooms aren't. Once desegregated by school, children are often "re-segregated" by a tracking system that assigns minority children to the least challenging, least interesting classes, often taught by the least experienced or least motivated teachers. In other words, we should actually *try* busing before we condemn it.

Overall, however, a child's educational opportunities and achievement depends on the entire spectrum of resources available through their *whole* environment: home, school, and neighborhood. How they speak and think, how they interact with others, their goals and dreams ... these things depend on where a child lives, and thus, how he or she sees the world. Is it hopeful and bright? Is it dangerous and threatening? Is it gray and sad? Even if one part of a child's spectrum thrives, it will, on average, not be sufficient to counter the impacts of the other two. This is not to say, of course, that we should abandon short-term desegregation strategies such as busing, but if we are ever going to make *real* changes, we will need to "exchange rose-colored glasses for binoculars and move from the false hope of a quick fix to slow but steady

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<sup>29</sup>Minneapolis Public Schools. Quality Schools Report. 17 April 1993. p. 24.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid p. 24.

improvements in the long term."<sup>31</sup> That is to say, if we want desegregated schools, we need desegregated neighborhoods.

## Barriers to Choice

The Twin Cities economy is increasingly becoming suburbanized. The region gained 225,000 new jobs in the 1980s, only 5,400 of which went to the central cities. As a result, there is a significant special mismatch between those who need the jobs and where the jobs are actually located. More than one in four households in the core lack a vehicle, making it largely impossible for low-income families to take advantage of job opportunities in the suburbs. For minorities, the percentages are substantially higher: 47% of African-American households, 56% of Native American households, and 36% of Asian households lack a vehicle.<sup>32</sup> Bus routes do serve the developing suburbs, but only go to a limited number of locations and with much less frequency. Increasingly, the distance between job locations and people's homes is a major barrier of economic opportunity.

Perhaps the biggest barrier to low-income families, however, is the lack of affordable housing in the suburbs. Seventy-one percent of the rental units affordable to very low-income renters<sup>33</sup> and nearly two-thirds of the homes valued at \$60,000 or less were located in Minneapolis and St. Paul. As well, the central city and the inner-ring suburbs possess a majority of the region's subsidized housing. While the central cities' share of all subsidized housing in the region has declined from 90% in the early 1970s to 65% today, the fact remains that low-income families still have a limited number of choices of where to live.<sup>34</sup>

There are many reasons why there is a shortage of affordable housing in the suburbs. Perhaps the biggest reason: local zoning laws which prohibit the construction of low- and middle-income housing. Because so many vital services (such as education) are funded through property taxes, municipalities have an incentive to keep low-cost developments out of their communities. "Exclusionary zoning" occurs when municipalities increase the required standards of housing quality beyond those necessary for healthy and safety standards. Examples include specifications of minimum square footage for new homes and lots, prohibitions on multi-family housing units, maximum densities limitations, and garage requirements. For example, while the Metropolitan Council's Advisory Standard for minimum lot size (for single family housing) is 7,500 square feet, Minnetonka has a minimum lot size of

<sup>31</sup> O'Connor, Debra. *Promises Unfulfilled*. St. Paul Pioneer Press. 11 may 1995, p 10A.

<sup>32</sup> Metropolitan Council. Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress. 18 November 1992. p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Low income renters are those at 30% of the median income.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid* p. 1-2.

22,000 square feet. As well, Lakeville requires that each single family site provide space for a three-car garage regardless of whether the garage is constructed.<sup>35</sup> Though land costs, building costs, and utility connection costs, these requirements contribute significantly to the cost of a house.

Housing is a basic human need that changes with people's age and economic condition. Over their lifespan, people's needs change in respect to housing type, size, price, and location. As a result, exclusionary zoning not only keeps people out of communities, it actually "squeezes" established community members out as their circumstances or needs change. For example, when people retire and suddenly find themselves on fixed budgets, they may have to leave the community altogether if they cannot find housing which meets their needs. Hence it is not just low-wage workers who need housing options, but the elderly, young people just entering the job market, and people going through life changes, such as women who become single moms after a divorce.

Other barriers for low-income and minority households include discrimination in lending markets. "Redlining," or the refusal by banks or companies to issue loans or insurance on property in certain neighborhoods, occurs quite frequently. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston claims that people of color are sixty percent more like to be rejected for loans for home purchase, improvement, or refinancing than similarly situated white applicants (controlling for financial, employment, and neighborhood characteristics).<sup>36</sup> The incidence of racial discrimination specifically in the Twin Cities home mortgage lending market is well documented. Recent statistical analysis found that approximately 70% of the disparity between home mortgage loans rejection rates of nonwhites and whites is due to the unequal treatment of similarly qualified loan applicants.<sup>37</sup>

Discrimination in the rental market is also severe. A review of seventy-one fair housing audits conducted in cities across the nation throughout the 1980s found that blacks seeking homes for sale encountered a 20% chance of discrimination (on average) while blacks seeking rental units faced a 50% chance of discrimination.<sup>38</sup> Similar discrimination exists for Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. A recent study conducted by the Minnesota

<sup>35</sup> Lukermann, Barbara and Michael Kane. Land Use Practices: Exclusionary Zoning, de Facto or de Jure? Center For Urban and Regional Affairs. p. 17-18.

<sup>36</sup>The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing Segregation and Persistent Segregation. (Executive Summary). 1996. p. 6.

<sup>37</sup>The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing Segregation and Persistent Segregation. 1996. p. 54. (From Tze Chan and Samuel L. Myers, Jr., "Racial Discrimination in Housing Markets: Accounting for Credit Risk," *Social Science Quarterly*, Volume 76, No.3, September 1995 and *Disparities in Mortgage Lending in the Upper Midwest Summary of the Results Using 1992 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data.*)

<sup>38</sup>The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing Segregation and Persistent Segregation. 1996. p. 35.

Fair Housing Center (MFHC) on the rental practice in two Minneapolis Communities found the incidence of discrimination to be even higher. The MFHC conducted a series of survey tests in the Northeast and Southwest neighborhoods, and found that a total of 72.2% of the cases received different treatment based on race, family status, or public assistance status. In 55.5% of the survey tests, applicants received less favorable treatment based on race.<sup>39</sup> A range of discriminatory behavior uncovered: more information was offered to white testers than testers of color, white testers were encourage to fill out applications right away while testers of color were not, agents failed to show up for testers of color, units were said to be unavailable for testers of color but were available for white testers, testers of color were shown inferior units, and testers of color received more burdensome terms and conditions.<sup>40</sup>

### What's the Prescription?

To prevent local governments from acting like monopolists, housing policies should be made at least in part on a regional level. A national myth holds that small government is better than big government. But according to Dean Rusk, our *national reality* is that small governments act to exclude racial and economic groups. "Broad-based government can promote diversity. In short, multiple, independent suburbs are machines to keep poor blacks and Latinos trapped in inner cities away from middle class America."<sup>41</sup> The power now held by dozens of independent, local governments should be placed in the hands of an effective, accountable, elected metropolitan government.

At the very least, however, suburbs need to accept their "fair share" of responsibility for creating affordable housing. It is to their own benefit to provide life-cycle housing in a range of types and prices for their own community members as well as individuals wanting to re-locate closer to job opportunities. To prevent creating new pockets of poverty in the suburbs, low-income housing should be scattered throughout neighborhoods and communities. When poverty is not concentrated, it tends to mitigate many of the other problems often associated with poverty, such as crime and declining property values. In order to get suburbs to comply, special incentives may be needed. If tax incentives are not strong enough, mandatory policies with penalties for noncompliance could be adopted.

Incentives directly to developers are another possible option. The state of Massachusetts, for example, adopted guidelines in 1969 requiring local governments to take regional needs into effect in the implementation of local

<sup>39</sup>Minnesota Fair Housing Center. *Housing Discrimination: A Report on the Rental Practices in Two Minneapolis Communities*. December 1996. p. 9..

<sup>40</sup> Minnesota Fair Housing Center. *Housing Discrimination: A Report on the Rental Practices in Two Minneapolis Communities*. December 1996. p. 10.

<sup>41</sup>Rusk, Dean. *Without Urban -Suburban Unity, Cities Future Looks Bleak*. Pioneer Press. 10 June 1994.

planning and development standards in its "Anti-Snob Zoning Law." The law allows developers of projects that are at least 30 percent low-income affordable to bypass local planning commissions in securing permits. Developers have won most of the appeals filed as a result of the law, and some 20,000 units of affordable housing have been created.<sup>42</sup> Massachusetts also withholds federal and state assistance grants from municipalities that implement exclusionary zoning ordinances or unreasonable restrictions on private developments of low-income housing.<sup>43</sup>

Another possibility includes replacing exclusionary zoning with "inclusionary" zoning. Density bonuses and mandatory set-asides are two of the main instruments of inclusionary zoning. Density bonuses increase the permitted density of a development as the amount of affordable housing increases. Mandatory set-asides require developers to reserve a certain portion of units in each development for low- or moderate-income residents.<sup>44</sup>

On the flip side, the government needs to expand voucher programs and lending programs to enhance the purchasing power of low-income households. As well, the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws is critical. Housing audits, such as the one recently conducted by the MFHC, is one important and relatively inexpensive method of checking discrimination in the housing market. Courts rely on evidence gathered in such tests to determine if violations of the fair housing laws have occurred. An ongoing, comprehensive program of random testing with penalties for violators ought to be enacted.

Finally, community outreach efforts should be made to integrate new residents and make them feel a part of the community. Home-improvement training programs and seminars could be implemented to help new residents maintain their property. Mentoring programs would help the new residents learn what healthy communities demand in terms of values and responsibilities.

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### Gatreux Mobility

The strategy of giving the minority poor more choice in where they live can be traced largely to the relative success of a plan in Chicago that grew out of a 1966 lawsuit. Residents of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)--led by Dorothy Gautreaux--charged that the CHA reinforced segregation by locating nearly all public housing in overwhelmingly African American

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<sup>42</sup> The Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation. 1996. p. 34 (From Sylvia Lewis, "A Parallel Experience," in *Planning* 58 (May 1992): 14.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid. p. 35. (From Justin D. Cummin, *Recasting Fair Share: Toward Housing Law and Principled Social Policy*, 54 *Law and Inequ.* J. 339, 364, 1996.)

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. p. 35.

neighborhoods. The plaintiffs successfully sued to force HUD and the CHA to fund a rent-subsidy voucher program throughout the six-county Chicago area.

The Gatreux Assisted Housing Program is the oldest and most renowned of the special mobility programs. Northwestern University sociologist James Rosenbaum and his colleagues found that improvements in economic outcomes for parents and educational outcomes for children are associated with enhanced opportunities in neighborhoods less severely impacted by poverty. Specifically, they found that children who had grown up in the suburbs were more likely to have completed high school, attended college, be employed, and earn higher wages.

Source: Dreier, Peter and David Moberg. *Moving From the 'Hood*. The American Prospect. no. 24 (Winter 1995): 75-79.

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Under standards established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing is classified as "affordable" if it consumes no more than 30% of a household's income. Housing that exceeds 50% of income is defined as a severe cost burden. According to the 1990 Census, the region faces a serious need for affordable housing. There is a current shortage of over 36,800 units which would be considered affordable to low-income renters at the 30% benchmark. This shortage may even be understated as it fails to consider the current mismatch between low-income households and affordable housing units. Many of the units deemed affordable for low-income households are actually occupied by households with higher incomes. As a result, large percentages of the Minneapolis and St. Paul poor face severe housing cost burdens. In 1990, 76% of the region's low-income renters (84,000 households) paid 30% or more of their income on rent, while 43% of these low-income households (48,000) paid over 50% of their income on rent<sup>45</sup>.

HUD's Section 8 program was created in 1974 to assist individuals with severe housing cost burdens. The program provides subsidies directly to individual households to help close the gap between income and housing costs. Section 8 funds are also needed to protect residents whose units are lost to government initiated disposition or demolition from displacement. Section 8 subsidies cover the difference between 30 percent of an eligible tenant's income and the "fair market rent" for comparably new, rehabilitated or existing units in that particular area. Provided the housing they find meets government quality standards and the landlord is willing to sign a Housing Assistance Payment contract with the local Public Housing Authority, the tenant can move into that apartment. A major obstacle for Section 8 recipients is the lack of housing within the "fair market rent." In fact, even though only 4.5 million of the 15 million eligible households receive *any type* of housing assistance, and even though Section 8 waiting lists in many areas are closed off, Section 8 vouchers go unused every year because people cannot find units within the FMR. Furthermore, just last year Congress approved legislation which reduced the FMR from the 45th to the 40th rent percentile--inevitably making it even more difficult for families to find suitable housing within the FMR.

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EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

	Central Cities	Fully Develope d Suburbs	Developin g Suburbs	Total
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<sup>45</sup>Metropolitan Council. Housing Policies for the 1990s. February 1994. p.2.

1980	445,371	324,437	216,560	1,040,0139 1
1990	450,818	376,674	377,292	1,293,12 1
2000	459,000	426,075	501,576	1,498,89 1
2010	463,500	446,355	567,926	1,602,96 1

Source: Metropolitan Council. Housing Policy for the 1990s. November 1994. p. 18

While the central cities still has the largest concentration of jobs, the fast-growing suburbs captured two-thirds of net-job growth in the 1980s. This trend id projected to continue in the next decade.

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#### Current Level of Affordable Units in Twelve Twin Cities Communities, 1996

City	Affordable Owner-Occupied Units	Affordable Rental Units
Eagan	62%	22%
Eden Prairie	42%	11%
Edina	31%	14%
Maple Grove	69%	4%
Minneapolis	88%	67%
Minnetonka	47%	17%
Plymouth	42%	15%
Shoreview	60%	42%
St. Paul	90%	68%
Wayzata	43%	36%
Woodbury	55%	15%

Source: Metropolitan Liveable Communities Act, Metropolitan Council, January 1996. (From the Institute on Race and Poverty. Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation. (Executive Summary.) 1996. p. 10.

Minneapolis, St. Paul, and a number of inner-ring suburbs already meet or exceed their share of affordable housing units in the metropolitan area. Other communities, however, fall

substantially short. The lack of affordable housing in the suburbs is one of the largest barriers to economic opportunity faced by low-income households.

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### The Armageddon of Section 8

*“The weak political constituency for the Department of Housing and Urban Development makes it a prime candidate for cuts.”*

--House Speaker Newt Gingrich in the  
The Washington Post 12/13/94

The bipartisan desire to achieve a balanced federal budget by the year 2002 is having a dramatic effect on American social policy. The proposal now under consideration would require sharp cuts of at least 25% in discretionary spending over seven years. And unfortunately, it is not likely that all programs will be cut proportionally; HUD programs could very well receive a disproportionate cut.

At the same time that funding is shrinking, need is growing. HUD expenditures have been growing at a rate of 9% per year over the past 15 years--faster than any other federal agency except the Commerce Department. Many opponents of public housing like to use such statistics as evidence of HUD's bloatedness and inefficiency. Yet, the simple fact is that housing spending has increased because the number of poor Americans has increased--and--because the cost of housing has increased. Quite simply, housing need has rapidly outstripped federal expenditures. Many studies have found that the gap between affordable housing units and the number of families in need of assistance is wider than at point since the Great Depression. While approximately 15 million households qualify for federal housing aid, only 4.5 receive any type of assistance (whether it be project-based or tenant-based).<sup>46</sup>

A principle source of the cost growth is the federal government's policy of renewing all housing assistance. Section 8 housing was developed with time-limited contracts, most of which were only for 15 or 20 years (a few were for 40 years). These contracts, now providing housing assistance for up to one million families, will expire in the next few years. The amount of money needed to renew these contracts will explode from about \$2.2 billion in FY 1995 to \$16.1 billion in FY 2000.<sup>47</sup> Considering HUD's total budget has already been cut down from \$25.7 billion in FY 1995 to \$19.7 billion in FY1996, it almost goes

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<sup>46</sup> Deparle, Jason. "The Year that Housing Died." *The New York Times Magazine*. 20 October 1996. p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> "Federal Housing Budget Debate." <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~txlihis/fedbuddeb.html> p.3

without saying that the \$16.1 billion cost of contract renewals would usurp many of the other functions currently performed by HUD. There is currently no formal federal commitment to continue providing the subsidies after the contracts expire. Many housing budget experts have referred to this situation as the "Armageddon."

### What Critics Say

- "The solution to pollution is not dilution." It is better to help people where they are than "disperse" poverty into other communities. Instead of making other communities worse, we need to clean up the bad neighborhoods. (An influx of low-income families could lead to increased crime in the suburbs. As well, low-income home-owners and tenants of low-income housing projects who do not maintain their property will lower surrounding property values.)
- People move to the suburbs to escape crime and bad schools. It is not fair or realistic to expect suburban residents to take these problems on again.
- "Transplanted" low-income families may not share the same values as existing residents; as a result, they may feel alienated and/or cause problems.
- Efforts to desegregated neighborhoods and schools with high proportions of minorities assume that it is better to live and go to school in majority white settings. This is disrespectful of the strengths of communities of colors. Furthermore, people of color need to remain together in order to preserve their culture and maintain their--albeit small--political representation.
- "Mobility" may heighten racial tensions and lead to more racist encounters and attacks.
- Public transportation in suburbs does not provide 24 hour, 7 day-a-week service. The suburbs are not geared for families without vehicles.
- It is inappropriate for the government to interfere in issues that should be worked out though natural market forces.
- "Mobility" as an option will take a long time to implement. It is a gradualistic approach and will do little to help the thousands of poor who need help *right now*. Furthermore, it is a tokenistic approach. Past attempts to provide mobility to low-income families and people of color have been limited in scope, actually helping few people. Using the few "token" low-income and minority families living among them as proof that they have done their "share", suburbs may feel they are then exonerated from the problems of the central cities.
- Dispersing poverty may help the few, token families who are lucky enough to escape the ghettos, but it does little for the people, schools, and deteriorated neighborhoods that are left behind. Even under the most renowned mobility program of all, the Gatreux program in Chicago, very

little improvement was seen in the neighborhoods from which the participants left.

- Even if obstacles are removed and the poor are granted more mobility, the fact remains that there is a general mismatch between the skills of the poor and the skills necessary for available jobs.



## Citizens League

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Email: citizen@epx.cis.umn.edu

Seems we can take dif. approaches

→ communities are segregated, for reasons X, Y, & Z

↳ what to do about it - gets to 3 "perspectives"

- question: what is

the underlying

cause of the

segregation?

## Memo

March 28, 1997

To: Dick Little  
From: Ron Wirtz  
Re: study guide draft

"poor" communities & "segregated"  
& "poor" communities are different issues.

Dick, here are some initial thoughts on the discussion guide.

I found the initial discussion on the history of segregation interesting but not particularly useful as it relates to this policy discussion. *The fact that segregation exists is not widely debated.* This being the case, I'm not sure why the discussion guide spends six pages outlining its existence and historical roots. Maybe I'm missing the point. Yes, I am a white male. But I don't disagree with any of this material, nor do I think many would. If this is the case, the guide should move on to issues that are less clear or not agreed upon.

The introduction talks about racism, freedom, prejudice, superiority, equity, double standards, liberty — important topics but incredibly hard for participants to get their hands around, especially if they are expected to use such information to produce POLICY recommendations at the end of it all.

That said, it seems to me this discussion guide has to provide brief, substantiated evidence of past and current trends as they relate to:

- **the concentration of poverty** — this is covered fairly well;
- **declining education outcomes**, particularly for urban students of color — again, covered reasonably well, but needs better highlighting for proper effect;
- **the connection between the two**, and reinforcement of poor education outcomes for students living in concentrated poverty — this needs work, and I can probably add a few things. → see p 18 of *Liveable Neighborhoods*

I didn't have a good chance to thoroughly read the three "perspectives" but I will admit that I found them very unclear — the blue sheet does a much better job of outlining these issues and arguments, and quite frankly, I'm not sure you need more than this. I

might be able to dig up a few factual tidbits for some points made in the each of these, particularly the "mobility/creating choices" perspective. It seems as though the blue sheet should have been used as a template, and filled in with factual tidbits, but was not.

Hope this is helpful Dick. I do have some specific research tidbits in mind already that might be helpful, and probably can come up with some more if given until Monday.

↑  
MN  
gated parking lot  
- door is locked

Church Center  
122 W. Franklin (+ Pillsbury)  
west of La Salle  
(6-story tower - north side  
of Franklin)

- Hennepin