

# **HOLLMAN v. CISNEROS**

*Deconcentrating Poverty in Minneapolis*

**Report No. 2:  
Planning for  
North Side Redevelopment**

by Edward G. Goetz

Center for Urban and Regional Affairs  
University of Minnesota



A publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), an all-University applied research and technology center at the University of Minnesota that connects faculty and students with community organizations and public institutions working on significant public policy issues in Minnesota.

The content of this report is the responsibility of the author and is not necessarily endorsed by CURA.

© 2002 by The Regents of the University of Minnesota. This publication may be reproduced in its entirety (except photographs or other materials reprinted here with permission from other sources) in print or electronic form, for noncommercial educational and nonprofit use only, provided that two copies of the resulting publication are sent to the CURA editor at the address below and that the following acknowledgement is included: "Reprinted with permission of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)."

For information regarding commercial reprints or reproduction of portions of this publication, contact the CURA editor at the address below.

Publication No. CURA 01-6 (150 copies)

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.



Printed with agribased inks on recycled paper, with a minimum of 20% postconsumer waste.

Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)  
University of Minnesota  
330 HHH Center  
301—19th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Phone: (612) 625-1551

Fax: (612) 626-0273

E-mail: [cura@umn.edu](mailto:cura@umn.edu)

Web site: <http://www.cura.umn.edu>

*The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>List of Figures</b> .....	v
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	vii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Part One: Background</b> .....	3
<b>Announcement of Decree Settlement</b> .....	3
<b>Deconcentration of Poverty as a Justification</b> .....	4
<b>Conditions on the North Side</b> .....	5
<b>The Site</b> .....	6
<b>Sumner Field Project</b> .....	8
<b>Glenwood and Lyndale Projects</b> .....	8
<b>Olson Townhomes Project</b> .....	8
<b>Settlement Details</b> .....	9
<b>Vision</b> .....	9
<b>Part Two: The Planning Process</b> .....	10
<b>Focus Group Membership and Participation</b> .....	10
<b>The Role of the Professional Staff</b> .....	11
<b>Factions and Faultlines</b> .....	12
<b>Demolition</b> .....	12
<b>Housing Mix</b> .....	12
<b>Focus Group Recommendations</b> .....	13
<b>The North Side Action Plan</b> .....	14
<b>City Council Ratification</b> .....	15
<b>Implementation</b> .....	15
<b>Part Three: The Conflict</b> .....	17
<b>Opposition from the Southeast Asian Community</b> .....	17
<b>Loss of Community</b> .....	18
<b>Lack of Consent</b> .....	18
<b>Troubles in the Relocation Process</b> .....	18
<b>The First Protests of Deconcentration</b> .....	19
<b>The Affordable Housing Crisis</b> .....	20
<b>Northside Neighbors for Justice</b> .....	23
<b>The Problems of Relocation and Displacement</b> .....	24
<b>Fighting Demolition of Affordable Housing</b> .....	25

**Hollman v. Cisneros**

**NAACP** ..... 25

**The Anti-*Hollman* Campaign** ..... 26

**Conclusion**..... 35

**Works Cited** ..... 39

**Appendix 1: Chronology of North Side  
Redevelopment Process** ..... 45

# LIST OF FIGURES

**Figure 1.** Location of the North Side Site in Minneapolis ..... 6

**Figure 2.** The *Hollman* Site..... 6

**Figure 3.** Land Uses Surrounding the *Hollman* Site, 1995 ..... 7

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The author would like to thank the Family Housing Fund and the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency for funding this research, and the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority for their cooperation in making data available. The conclusions contained within this report do not necessarily represent the views of these organizations. Chris Dettling, Lori Mardock, Elfric Porte, Kathy Ember, and Li Luan assisted with data collection and analysis. The Minnesota Center for Survey Research conducted the in-person interviews and implemented the mailed surveys. Finally, the author would like to thank the families of public housing who agreed to be interviewed for this study.

## INTRODUCTION

The consent decree in *Hollman v. Cisneros*, signed in 1995, committed the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and their co-defendants to a series of dramatic policy changes. First, four north side public housing projects and dozens of scattered-site public housing units would be reviewed for possible demolition or disposition. Second, the defendants would create up to 770 units of replacement public housing in nonimpacted areas of the city and suburbs. Third, the displaced residents of the demolished scattered-site and north side public housing were to be relocated with public assistance. Fourth, the 73-acre north side site was to be redeveloped. Fifth, hundreds of tenant-based housing subsidies would be made available to Minneapolis public housing residents to enable them to move out of areas of race and poverty concentration. Sixth, changes in the operation of the Minneapolis Section 8 program would occur to make it easier for participants to exercise geographic choice. Finally, an affordable housing clearinghouse would be created to provide low-income families a centralized source of information about housing options in the metropolitan area.

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the University of Minnesota was contracted by the Family Housing Fund of Minneapolis–St. Paul and by the State of Minnesota in 1998 to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the consent decree. This is the second in a series of eight reports generated by the consent decree.

This report is divided into three parts. The first section provides background on the consent decree in *Hollman v. Cisneros*—which calls for the demolition of more than 700 housing project units on the north side of Minneapolis and comprehensive redevelopment of the 73-acre site—as well as a brief context for the lawsuit and settlement. The second section describes the focus group planning process that was created pursuant to the consent decree to deliberate and make recommendations regarding redevelopment of the north side site. This section also discusses the *Hollman* defendants' translation of these recommendations into an action plan for the north side site, and the formation of an implementation committee to select developers and implement the redevelopment plan. The third section of the report describes and analyzes the considerable political opposition that emerged in response to both the redevelopment process, and the city's affordable housing crisis.

## **PART ONE: BACKGROUND**

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECREE SETTLEMENT**

What had been initiated as a discrimination lawsuit on behalf of public housing residents whose housing choices were restricted by the concentration of assisted units on the near north side became, during the process of settlement negotiations, a lawsuit aimed at deconcentrating poverty, facilitating the greater geographic spread of assisted units and assisted families, and reducing the number of public housing units on the north side site (Furst 1996b). As the lead attorney for the plaintiffs said, “I don’t think any of us had heard the term ‘concentration of poverty’” when the suit was first filed (Furst 1996b, 3b). But by the time the settlement was reached, deconcentrating poverty was its main objective.

The settlement negotiation process intersected with three important policy trends that were occurring at the time. The first was the efforts by Minnesota state representative Myron Orfield, a Democrat representing a portion of the south side of Minneapolis, who was leading a local effort to initiate a regional response to the concentration of poverty in the central cities. Orfield, whose efforts would soon attract national attention, contended that past public policies had resulted in a concentration of affordable housing in central-city neighborhoods, driving up social service costs in those areas. In contrast, newly developing suburban areas were spared those costs, and were subsidized by inner-city districts as a result. Orfield’s own legislative initiatives called for a regional housing program to spread the availability of low-cost housing throughout the region. Consulting with the lead attorneys for the plaintiffs, Orfield encouraged the settlement negotiations to include the Metropolitan Council (the area’s regional governmental body, which implements an affordable housing program in suburban areas), and to push for a regional remedy to the issue of concentrated public housing (Thompson 1996). This, in fact, was done. The Met Council was added to the list of defendants—which included MPHA, the City of Minneapolis, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—and the scope of the remedy was greatly expanded from merely a greater geographic spread of assisted units within Minneapolis to a spread of units and families throughout the metropolitan area.

At the same time, HUD, under then-Secretary Henry Cisneros’ lead (during the first Clinton administration), was beginning to vigorously pursue a strategy of deconcentrating public housing. Cisneros readily admitted that past public housing policies had unfairly and inappropriately concentrated public housing in low-income, predominantly high-minority neighborhoods within central cities. In fact, HUD was voluntarily settling a number of lawsuits across the country with plaintiffs making similar allegations (Hartman 1995). This concentration of public housing, as the argument goes, contributed significantly to the concentration of poverty in American cities. Prominent social scientists since the mid-1980s had been documenting the adverse community and individual-level impacts of concentrated poverty, and Cisneros himself came to call concentrated poverty the greatest challenge for the nation’s cities (Cisneros 1995). By the early to mid-1990s, HUD was using the HOPE VI program to demolish “distressed” high-rise projects and other older public housing developments to make way for more mixed-income, mixed-use communities. Public housing residents, in the typical scenario, could choose between living in the new or rehabilitated public housing units on-site, or, because the number of these units was almost always less than the number that had previously existed at the site, choose to receive a Section 8 certificate or voucher to subsidize their housing on the private market. The use of the Section 8 subsidies was seen as a way of providing these residents with greater choice in their housing, of facilitating the dispersion of assisted families, and of allowing them entry into better, more stable neighborhoods (see *Report No. 1: Policy Context and Previous Research on Housing Dispersal*).



## Hollman v. Cisneros

Third, events within the city of Minneapolis also contributed to the *Hollman* agreement in important ways. The city was in the middle of an unprecedented increase in violent crime, much of it attributed to illicit drug activity. Fear of crime in the city and indeed in the entire region was on a sharp increase (see Goetz 1996). Local media outlets followed the crime beat closely, and local governments and community organizations focused on community-based responses. The Near North neighborhood and the public housing units on the project site were seen as two centers of violent crime activity in the city. Local officials were eager to pursue some remedy for reducing the level of danger in that community.

In addition, Minneapolis mayor Sharon Sayles Belton was beginning her efforts to end the city's long-standing school desegregation program and convert the city's education system back to neighborhood schools. The mayor saw this change in public school policy as a way of stemming middle-class flight from the city. But to reassure her core constituency, the African-American community, that neighborhood schools did not mean a return to unconscionable levels of school segregation, steps had to be taken to reduce the levels of residential segregation in the city. The consent decree was movement toward this end, as was the announcement of her "Housing Principles" one month after the settlement was entered.

The *Hollman* settlement thus fit seamlessly into a number of policy trends. Given these trends, many of the local officials who were ostensibly defendants in the process—from the city council to MPHA and HUD, by the time of the agreement—shared with the plaintiffs the central goals of the agreement: reducing the concentration of public housing units on-site, and dispersing the very low-income families throughout the local housing market. An element of this consensus was a fundamental agreement that the reuse of the site should include a significantly reduced concentration of public housing units.

In January 1995, the agreement between the parties was announced, and HUD stated that it would allocate \$100 million toward the settlement of the case (Diaz 1995). All that was left was ratification by all of the parties, which was achieved by April. The agreement covered four separate public housing projects: Sumner Field Townhomes, Olson Townhomes, Glenwood Townhomes, and Lyndale Townhomes. In all, these projects and the public land on which they stood encompassed 73 acres, located just one mile from downtown Minneapolis.

## DECONCENTRATION OF POVERTY AS A JUSTIFICATION

The deconcentration of poverty on the north side was mentioned prominently by the parties as a justification for the agreement. Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton called the agreement "a significant event in the life of our community. It represents one giant step toward dissolving the concentrations of poverty in Minneapolis, and addressing the related urban problems" (Diaz 1995, 1A). She went on to describe the concentration of poverty theory:

We know that poverty by itself doesn't cause urban problems. It's the concentration . . . that eventually strangles those neighborhoods economically, making it impossible for residents to have access to jobs, good schools, health care, transportation. These are living conditions that can, and too often do, foster hopelessness, despair, and antisocial behavior. (Diaz 1995, 1A)

There was little question that the 73-acre site was the location of the city's greatest concentration of poverty. Median household income on-site was one-third that of the city as a whole. More than 70% of all households were below the poverty level (the typical threshold used for the identification of areas of concentrated poverty is 40%), and the percentage of the population receiving public assistance was six times that of the city as a whole. In addition, the residents of the project site were

overwhelmingly (94%) non-White in a city that was 78% European American at the time (Washington and Drew 1995). Nor was there much of an argument about the fact that the city over time had concentrated its public housing in that area, and in the near north side more generally. The site was home to four of the five family public housing townhome projects that existed in the city. The project area had a total of more than 900 units of public housing (including 188 units not included in the lawsuit), 25% of the total non-scattered-site units that MPHA owned.

In addition, 1990 census data showed that concentration of poverty among African Americans was greater in the Minneapolis–St. Paul region than in most other regions in the United States. Minorities in the Twin Cities are more likely to live in poverty than minorities in any other major metropolitan area in the country (Draper 1993). The percentage of African Americans living in high-poverty areas increased from 27 to 47% between 1980 and 1990 (Jargowsky 1996). At the time the lawsuit was filed, 58% of all scattered-site units were located in predominantly minority census tracts despite the fact that the city was 78% White (Thompson 1996). The pattern of public housing siting had concentrated public housing developments on the city’s near north side and along a corridor either side of Interstate 35W on the city’s south side. These were the same neighborhoods that had the highest concentration of Section 8 participants as well. “These poor neighborhoods . . . comprised only 19.9 percent of the city’s total population, while 50.9 percent of all certificate and voucher holders resided there. These areas had a minority population of 56.7 percent compared to the city-wide minority population of 21.6 percent” (Thompson 1996, 244). Thus, the evidence was clear on a number of dimensions that serious problems of residential segregation characterized the public housing program in Minneapolis, and affected minority populations in particular.

## **CONDITIONS ON THE NORTH SIDE**

An examination of the units on the north side site revealed an aging project suffering from physical decline, neglect, and a host of design problems. In 1995, few were ready to contest such a characterization of the north side public housing units. The *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, the city’s leading daily newspaper, ran stories of mice and cockroaches overwhelming some residents. As one of the plaintiffs said in 1995, cockroaches were “inside my washer, they’re in my radio, they’re in my telephone, and when I turn on my microwave, they come running out. The roaches even used to get up in the smoke detector and set the thing off” (Morrison 1995, 1A).

The projects had been built on a flood plain through which Bassett Creek had once run. When the projects were built, the creek was diverted through an underground storm sewer to connect with the nearby Mississippi River. The unstable soil of the former creek bed had led, over the decades, to the buildings of the Sumner Field project shifting and cracking until, in some units, one could allegedly see outside through the cracks. The nature of the soils would later play a prominent role in the decision to demolish all of the public housing units on the site (the consent decree explicitly called for the demolition of only the Sumner Field project).

The design of the buildings and the site also came in for criticism. According to Mack (1995), they had front doors indistinguishable from back doors.

Garbage carts are as likely to stand by the one that looks most like the front door. Doors open directly to the outside, without a vestibule or any way to personalize the entry. Most of the original canopies have rotted away. Yards belong to everybody and, therefore, no one. And the 5.2 miles of sidewalks that crisscross the six square block project make all spaces open to strangers. (Mack 1995, 1B)

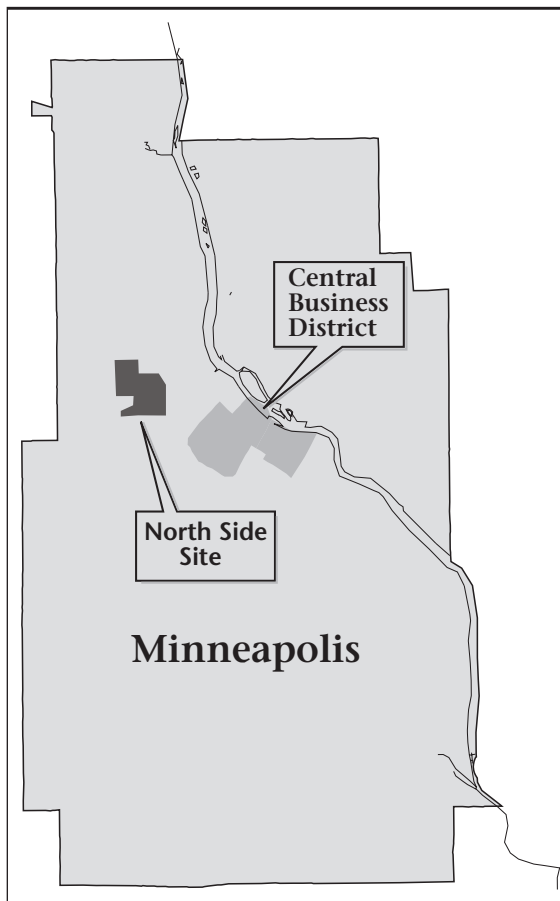
The site included a three-square-block area (a so-called superblock) that interrupted the street grid and isolated the projects from the residential neighborhood to its west. All of these features had, by the 1990s, come to be seen as destructive of good community life, and obstacles to a safe residential experience. The HUD HOPE VI program officially adopted the view that much public housing

## Hollman v. Cisneros

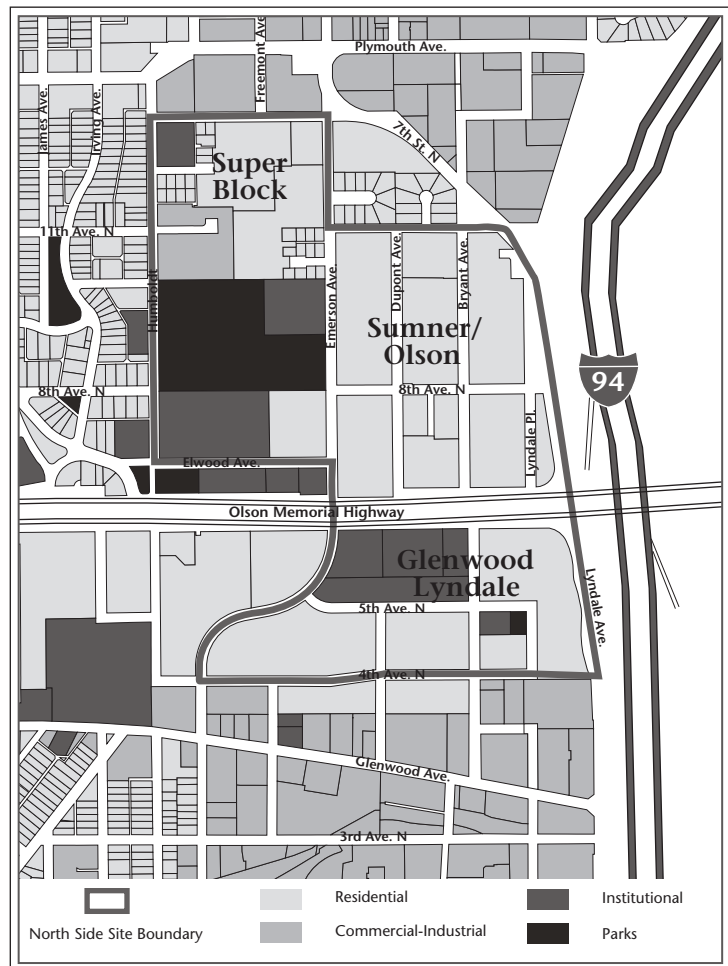
that had been built between 1930 and 1980 in the modernist tradition significantly and negatively affected the quality of life of residents. In place of these modernist characteristics, the federal government had officially adopted new urbanist design principles, calling for the return of street grids and personalized spaces, and the reintegration of public housing with its surrounding communities.

## THE SITE

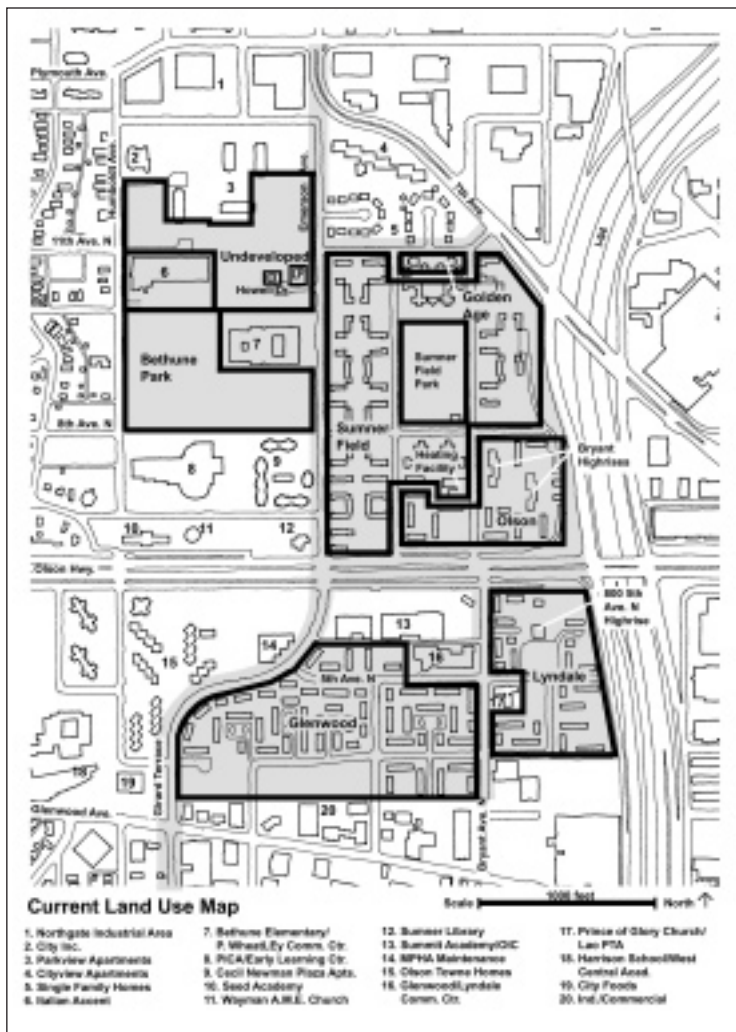
The *Hollman* site area encompasses 73 acres of publicly owned land located 1 mile northwest of the central business district (downtown core) of Minneapolis (see Figure 1). The area is directly adjacent to Interstate 94 and bisected by Olson Memorial Highway (State Highway 55). Thus, it is favorably positioned relative to the city's core and is well served by transportation routes. At the same time, however, I-94, I-394, and the railroad tracks to the south of the site serve as important physical barriers between the near north side and downtown (see Figure 2). The site is ringed on the north and south by areas zoned for manufacturing uses, including the far southern portion of the site along Glenwood Avenue, and two areas in the northwestern portion of the site along Plymouth and Humboldt Avenues. The Glenwood corridor includes light manufacturing and some existing commercial properties. There are smaller commercial parcels on the southern face of Olson Highway and on the corner of Humboldt and Glenwood. In 1995, the site was virtually surrounded on all sides by major transportation routes or by industrial land uses. In addition, there are several other subsidized housing developments adjacent to the site. The Bryant Highrises (for seniors) were located immediately east of the Sumner Field and Olson projects, while several privately owned but publicly subsidized buildings are located northwest of the site. Between the public housing and the traditional



**Figure 1.** Location of the North Side Site in Minneapolis



**Figure 2.** The *Hollman* Site



**Figure 3.** Land Uses Surrounding the *Hollman* Site, 1995

residential neighborhood to the west is a superblock of low-density commercial and industrial uses. Figure 3 shows the land uses on the site as of 1995.

The site was the location of five separate public housing projects: Sumner Field Townhomes, Olson Townhomes, Glenwood Townhomes, Lyndale Townhomes, and the Bryant Highrises. Only the first four of these developments were targeted by the consent decree. The Bryant Highrises were not included in the suit because they housed seniors. Attorneys for the plaintiffs felt that the seniors would likely prefer to remain in their homes rather than face displacement and disruption. Further, it was felt that the mobility remedies called for in the consent decree would benefit families more than seniors (Thompson 1996).

According to Thompson (1996), the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis had been receiving complaints about the living conditions in the Sumner Field and other public housing projects on the city's north side. Most public housing applicants, regardless of race, rejected offers from the MPHA of those units.

The Sumner Field area had already endured one round of clearance, redevelopment, and resettlement.

In 1939, when the first public housing project was developed, the area was characterized by a heavy concentration of dilapidated housing structures. According to Chapin (1938), the site had a high incidence of mortgage foreclosures, and many of the buildings did not have central heating, adequate toilet facilities, baths, gas, or electricity. The area was also a center for crime, juvenile delinquency, and “next to the highest rates for pulmonary tuberculosis and infant mortality” (745).

The area was inhabited by immigrants and larger families. The project site was just east of the center of the Jewish population in Minneapolis. Of the families who were forced to move from the site in 1939, 84% relocated within three-quarters of a mile from their previous home (Chapin 1938). The conditions in their new housing did not change dramatically, although the average family did experience an increase in rents (Chapin 1938).

After the public housing was built, the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA) deliberately segregated Black families by restricting them to the east half of the project, while White families lived in the west half. For the next two decades, city council approval of new public housing sites ensured that new projects built would reinforce existing patterns of segregation. Even when the city initiated its scattered-site program, the city council limited it to “the city’s three poorest and most highly minority concentrated neighborhoods. In 1969, Mayor [Arthur] Naftalin vetoed the council’s limitations, referring to them as ‘discriminatory and unwholesome’” (Thompson 1996, 241). Similar siting

## **Hollman v. Cisneros**

restrictions were put upon other HUD-subsidized non-public housing, until a 1984 citywide task force criticized the process, noting that “concentrating and isolating low income families headed primarily by unemployed single parents intensified social problems” (Thompson 1996, 243). The pattern that was emerging in the central city was being repeated on a larger scale at the regional level. In the early 1970s, the Metropolitan Council was nationally acclaimed for its efforts to disperse subsidized housing throughout the region (Thompson 1996; Johnson 1998). By the early 1980s, however, despite its success, the council ended its effort.

## **Sumner Field Project**

The Sumner Field project was the first public housing project built in the state of Minnesota. Constructed in 1938 as part of the first wave of public housing developments, Sumner Field was also the largest of the four housing projects (350 units) subject to the decree. It was built in a series of two-story buildings, with more than 30 buildings in all. The project was built in an area that had been the location of Bassett Creek. Because the creek regularly flooded, various efforts were made to control it during the early part of the 20th century. Ultimately, the city decided to convert the creek to a closed sewer and the creek was covered in 1925. The Sumner Field project was envisioned as an opportunity to revitalize the deteriorating conditions of the neighborhood surrounding the creek, utilize the lands under which the creek flowed, and create jobs during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Thus, the project was approved by the federal Public Works Administration, or PWA (the predecessor to the U.S. Public Housing Administration), and the project was begun in 1938.

Despite the size of the project, it did not reverse the declining fortunes of the near north side. Housing and commercial land uses continued to decay. The site itself became increasingly isolated over time as retail and residential areas gradually gave way to highways and industrial uses. In addition, the soils underneath the project remained unstable. Over time as the soils shifted, cracks began to appear in the walls and ceilings of units in the project. That Sumner Field did not revitalize the area is borne out by the fact that 20 years later the city embarked on its largest slum clearance project on a site adjacent to Sumner Field, an urban renewal project that produced the Glenwood, Lyndale, and Olson public housing projects (Martin and Goddard 1989).

## **Glenwood and Lyndale Projects**

The Glenwood project, 220 units in row houses, was built just south of Olson Memorial Highway as part of a large urban renewal project in 1960. The Lyndale project was also completed in 1960 and was an 86-unit row-house development built adjacent to Glenwood. The area was, at that time, characterized by dilapidated housing structures, “adverse land use mixtures, a badly designed and inefficient traffic system, and environmental deterioration resulting from the poor drainage around Bassett’s Creek” (Martin and Goddard 1989, 34). This was an area that also was experiencing racial transition during the 1950s, from a predominantly White and Jewish population to a growing African American population. The entire Glenwood redevelopment area encompassed 180 acres, an area much larger than the site of the two public housing projects that were erected there in 1959 and 1960.

## **Olson Townhomes Project**

The Olson public housing project was built in 1960 on land adjacent to and southwest of the Sumner Field development, sandwiched between Sumner Field and Olson Memorial Highway. The stucco-covered row-house development was the smallest of the four north side developments (66 units). This project, too, was part of the systematic effort to redevelop the near north area along Olson Highway and Glenwood Avenue.

With the addition of the Bryant Highrises in 1960, this 73-acre tract of land on either side of Olson Highway in the Near North neighborhood of Minneapolis was home to over 900 units of public housing.

## SETTLEMENT DETAILS

The settlement reached by the parties to the *Hollman* lawsuit is the framework for an aggressive plan of deconcentration and redevelopment of the site. The decree calls for the demolition of the 350 Sumner Field Townhomes. These units were designated for demolition because of the structural problems resulting from the unstable soils on which they were built. The decree also calls for the disposition (demolition or sale) of the rest of the public housing on-site. Whether the other public housing units would be demolished was to be agreed upon later by the parties to the settlement. The MPHA also agreed to evaluate for disposition 129 scattered-site units in minority-concentrated areas to enhance the deconcentrating impacts of the agreement. The families displaced from the public housing would be provided relocation assistance to cover moving expenses and counseling in finding a new home (see *Report No. 5: Relocation of Residents from North Side Public Housing*).

The details of the redevelopment of the 73-acre site would be agreed upon by the parties to the lawsuit at a later time. To provide a basis for this later decision, the agreement called for the convening of focus groups of nearby residents, businesses, nonprofit agencies, members of the plaintiff class, and others affected by the redevelopment to give recommendations to the parties.

The decree also called for the development of up to 770 replacement units of public housing to take the place of those demolished or disposed of in other ways on the north side. Some of those units were to be replaced on-site, others would go elsewhere in the city of Minneapolis. The remainder would be built in suburban neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area (see *Report No. 7: Mobility Certificates*). As a measure of the anticipated difficulty in getting suburban areas to cooperate with this effort (as nonparties to the lawsuit they were not compelled to participate in the remedy), an incentive was created; those suburban authorities that helped to build *Hollman* units could set aside 30% for occupancy by families on their own waiting lists.

## VISION

When the settlement announcement was made, local officials hailed it as a wonderful opportunity to address significant problems in the community. Jackie Cherryhomes, city council president and the council member for the north side area, claimed that the settlement was “the most important thing that’s happened in the Fifth Ward and north Minneapolis in the last 30 years. This represents a real opportunity to rebuild north Minneapolis” (Diaz 1995, 1A). The MPHA concurred: “There’s the potential to dramatically change a part of the city,” said Deputy Director Tom Hoch when the settlement was announced (Washington and Drew 1995, 1A).

Although the decree called for a focus group process to provide recommendations for the redevelopment of the site, many had their own ideas about what a cleaned-up version of the 73 acres might look like. There was talk from the outset of resurfacing Bassett Creek and developing a creek/park amenity on-site. The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* prominently suggested this alternative, citing a just-released study of property values in the city that showed a significant spike in values for homes located near the city’s chain of lakes, which rings the southwestern part of Minneapolis (Mack 1995). The larger hope for the area was that it would become another link in the chain of greenway paths stretching from the western suburbs, across the entire city of Minneapolis, well into St. Paul (Brandt 1995). The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* called it a “once-in-a-lifetime chance to create the kind of amenities on Minneapolis’ north side that have made the southwest side so desirable” (Mack 1995, 1B).

The potential for new housing and the attractiveness of the site was mentioned by others. Matthew Ramadan, then-director of the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC), noted the “beautiful sunset views of the downtown skyline” just a two- or three-minute drive away (Mack 1995, 1B). This was a theme to be taken up later by opponents of the redevelopment who felt the attractiveness of the site was such that gentrification was bound to occur, and indeed, that gentrification was planned for the site. Yet, the general response in 1995 was that the settlement offered a

## **Hollman v. Cisneros**

great hope to simultaneously deal with the city's worst concentration of poverty and social problems, while adding a new and welcomed amenity to the city.

## **PART TWO: THE PLANNING PROCESS**

Paragraph 27 of the consent decree requires “a study process to develop a comprehensive plan for reuse of the Sumner Field site and any additional land vacated by second phase demolition” (U.S. District Court in *Hollman v. Cisneros* 1995). Plaintiffs and defendants agreed that the process would proceed through the ongoing meetings of two focus groups, one for the Sumner-Olson site north of Olson Memorial Highway, and another for the Glenwood-Lyndale site south of the highway. Once plaintiffs and defendants reached an agreement concerning the form of the planning process, both parties negotiated the planning outline to detail how the focus groups would operate, determine the organizations that would have representation on either of the focus groups, and select facilitators for each focus group. Focus group membership consisted of representatives of public housing residents, community organizations, low-income residents from developments adjoining the sites, representatives from surrounding neighborhoods, and *Hollman* plaintiffs represented by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis.

### **FOCUS GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

The Phase I Focus Group (so-named because the demolition of Sumner Field, agreed to in the consent decree, was regarded as the first phase in the redevelopment of the north side site) had 15 members representing several groups and agencies, including four residents from the Sumner Field project, three residents from the surrounding area, two representatives of north side service agencies, and one representative each from NAACP, Legal Aid, the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC), the Near North neighborhood, the Sumner-Glenwood Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) committee, and neighborhood businesses.

The Phase II Focus Group had 17 members, including four residents of the Glenwood and Lyndale projects, four residents from the surrounding area, two residents from the Bryant Highrises, two representatives of north side social service agencies, and one representative each from the nearby Lyndale Highrise,<sup>1</sup> the Olson Townhomes, the Harrison neighborhood, the Sumner-Glenwood NRP committee, Legal Aid, NAACP, and neighborhood businesses.

The Sumner Field focus group began meeting on February 26, 1996, while the Glenwood, Lyndale, and Olson focus group began meeting on March 4, 1996. Later in June, the focus groups began meeting jointly.

The focus groups participated in a visioning process to develop a set of recommendations for the reuse of the site plan areas. This process had two purposes: (1) to help the focus groups think about the long-term community development issues, and (2) to generate a list of ideas and priorities that the Design Center for the American Urban Landscape (at the University of Minnesota) could use to develop a range of land-use scenarios. Participants were asked to imagine a new neighborhood on the public housing sites and describe its features, regardless of any potential constraints. Their ideas were recorded and organized under four land-use categories: community services/education, housing, industrial/commercial, and parks/environment.

Considerable efforts were made to facilitate the participation of area residents in the planning process. Two community meetings—one of which was specifically geared toward the Southeast Asian

---

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with the Lyndale Townhomes, the Lyndale Highrise building is located just northeast of the project site.

community—were held, as well as meetings with individual organizations, to highlight the background of the decree and to inform residents of the planning process.

To enable the maximum number of representatives to attend, meetings were scheduled at convenient times within the respective neighborhoods. Staff provided food, childcare, and stipends, as well as simultaneous translation services to focus group members. Focus group organizers publicized the meetings in community papers, north side newspapers, and through flyers. All of the focus group meetings were open to the public. Finally, the groups held three community “speak ups” to allow the public to comment on their work.

Despite efforts to include all of the relevant parties, some participants suggested that residents from nearby neighborhoods such as Willard-Hay and Near North should have been included in the focus group process. Some of these neighborhood representatives and property owners were upset that they did not have a voice in the redevelopment planning. As it turned out, these groups did influence the process at a later stage, convincing the city council to amend the mix of housing options included in the plan.

Most participants agreed that attendance at the focus groups was very good. Language barriers, however, may have played a part in the lack of Southeast Asian participation in the process. In the beginning of the process there had been no provision for Hmong and Laotian translators. After the plaintiffs complained, the MPHA did provide for translation services. But according to one participant, “sometimes the interpreters would not show up, sometimes they would show up and did not interpret very well—or never said anything.” Most observers interviewed agreed that the Southeast Asian community was not very vocal during the focus group meetings. On the other hand, public housing residents, according to one participant, “were very, very active.” Particularly influential in the process was the president of the Sumner Olson Residents Council, a woman who had been a presence in the community for many years. “When she spoke about an issue people tended to listen,” one informant said. “They paid close attention to what she said because she had such a history there.”

## **THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

Staffing for the focus groups was provided by the MPHA, the Design Center, the Minneapolis Planning Department, the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA), the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), and the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis. The focus group staff met weekly to review the progress of the groups, and to map out possible agendas and strategies for the continued work of the groups.

Initially, focus group staff were heavily involved with establishing the agenda for the group meetings. At the outset of the process, staff presented a history and background to the lawsuit. According to a city official, the initial goal of the staff was to have the focus groups “as structured as possible . . . to always be introducing topics to the group for purposes of discussion, and allowing them to comment, discuss, and then make recommendations.” For example, staff members arranged speakers to provide focus group members with more contextual information. John Powell, director of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota Law School, spoke about the dire community impacts of highly concentrated poverty at an early joint meeting of the focus groups in March. This directive orientation on the part of the staff gave way to a more responsive role over time. The same city official indicated that “once people got more information they were less likely to be led in that sort of way . . . They were more likely to suggest topics on their own that they wanted to talk about, which was fine because what that was doing was creating more ownership over the product that was coming out.”



## **FACTIONS AND FAULTLINES**

Community-based planning processes are by their nature often contentious proceedings. As one focus group participant said, “It’s hard to achieve consensus with a group that big with all sorts of divergent viewpoints.” Faultlines developed on a number of issues. There was a significant change in the ethnic makeup of project-site residents between the time the lawsuit was filed in 1992 and the time of the settlement in 1995; a predominantly African American population in Sumner Field and Olson gave way to a largely Southeast Asian immigrant population. Thus, in the words of one participant, “The tenants who won the lawsuit are really no longer here in large part, and another ethnic group is going to benefit from the results of the lawsuit rather than the people on whose behalf it was originally brought out.” This ethnic turnover resulted in problems during the relocation stage, and it also created some tension during the focus group process.

In March, the groups heard from John Zeisel, under contract with the Design Center, who had completed a survey of residents of the north side site. Zeisel’s data, collected in the fall of 1995, showed that a majority of respondents (52%) wanted to move away from the site, while 48% indicated they would stay if they could. Most of the respondents wanted to remain in public housing of some sort; this tendency was most pronounced among Southeast Asian respondents. Almost half indicated they would stay in their current unit if it were renovated. There was some division in respondents’ evaluations of the north side housing based on ethnicity. African American respondents were more critical of the housing than were the Southeast Asian respondents. Members of the focus group debated the validity of these findings, suggesting that questionnaire responses can vary depending on the alternatives provided to respondents. Nevertheless, the Zeisel (1997) report provided some ammunition to those members of the focus group, and later to opponents of the process outside the focus group, who were beginning to question the direction of the redevelopment.

There were two major issues on which there was significant disagreement among focus group members. The first was whether or not the Glenwood and Lyndale projects should be rehabilitated or demolished. The second issue was the income mix in the new housing that was to be built on-site.

### **Demolition**

The demolition of the Sumner Field project was agreed upon as part of the consent decree. As for the rest of the public housing in the North Side Action Plan area, it was up to the focus group to provide recommendations as to its disposition. Thus, the possibility existed that the buildings could be saved, rehabilitated, or used for other purposes.

The greatest resistance to demolition was centered on the Glenwood and Lyndale projects to the south of Olson Memorial Highway. Some focus group members who were residents of the projects “were skeptical about the need to demolish all the housing projects” there, according to one participant. On the other hand, a number of public housing residents were quite vocal in their support of demolition as well. According to one participant, however, “Once people learned that rehab or demo, either way people would have to be relocated, I think it helped resolve the problem” in favor of demolition.

The condition of the soil in the action plan area was also one of the justifications for the decision to demolish the public housing on both sides of Olson Memorial Highway. An early estimate by MPHA indicated that the cost to correct just the structural problems with the units at Sumner-Olson would be \$30,000 to \$100,000 per unit. Such a high cost, argued the housing authority, made rehabilitation impractical.

### **Housing Mix**

The configuration of the new housing on-site was a major point of contention. One decision that was required was a determination of how much public housing should be put back onto the site. Most of the participants agreed that some income mix was necessary to avoid a reconcentration of very low

income residents. Resident participants wanted to ensure that there was enough low-income housing on-site to allow them to move back into the neighborhood. Another concern of some participants was that the entire site not be gentrified, but remain hospitable to people of lower income, accompanied by better housing and employment opportunities.

On the other hand, there were participants who felt that this was an opportunity to introduce higher incomes into the neighborhood, and that the development of new public housing, without a significant income mix, would defeat the purpose of the settlement and simply reconcentrate the poor.

The Glenwood, Lyndale, and Olson (Phase II) focus group picked up the issue of the on-site housing in June. Having been provided with data on the soils and the cost of rehabilitation versus new construction, the group decided in favor of new housing. At the same time, however, on June 10, the group expressed general agreement that as much public housing as possible should be built on the site. The minutes to the meeting indicate that there was “not a lot of support for a mixed income [housing] scenario on site” (MPHA 1996, 6). In fact, the group formally voted 12 to 1 in favor of a motion calling for the “maximum number of units of public housing” on-site.

Yet, the issue of mixed-income versus maximum public housing did not disappear after this vote. In future meetings, when the focus groups were meeting jointly, the original motion was brought up several times. Three weeks after the vote on the housing mix, the focus group staff brought in James Head of the National Community Development Law Center to speak. He spoke to the group on July 1 about the necessity for a mixed-income approach to make the community revitalization work. On July 20, the issue was raised again when one member suggested that the maximum public housing motion would not be agreed to by the city council, which had to sign off on the final redevelopment plan. Two weeks after that, MPHA staff provided to the focus group an information sheet on mixed-income developments around the country. Finally, on August 19, the group was told by its facilitator that their earlier decision to place the maximum public housing on-site was inconsistent with a mixed-income approach, and that they would have to choose between the two.

The discussion on August 19th quickly turned to how much mixed-income housing was appropriate. James Head’s expert testimony and the data provided by MPHA were used to focus this discussion. The focus group passed a motion recommending 25% public housing, 25% low-income housing, and 50% market-rate housing. This motion indicates considerable movement away from the position the group had taken two months earlier.

This interesting progression of events suggests that the focus group staff felt that, at the very least, the group had not deliberated enough on the issue and had made a premature decision in June. It could also indicate that the focus group staff had been unhappy with the initial vote, and had therefore invited Head to speak and had provided the information on other mixed-income projects in an attempt to get the group to move from its original position. A close reading of the minutes of the focus group proceedings does not reveal another occurrence of an issue that had been voted on and decided by the group being reintroduced and reconsidered on multiple occasions.

## **FOCUS GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

The culmination of the focus group process was the creation of a common vision for the community. On July 20, 1996, the focus groups held an all-day design retreat to develop recommendations for the reuse of the land vacated by public housing. The Design Center presented three development scenarios, incorporating the four land-use categories from the common vision statement. The focus groups developed hybrid scenarios and a series of planning recommendations. Of the three scenarios presented by the Design Center, the one receiving the most favorable response consisted of a series of wetlands in the former Bassett Creek basin, surrounded by a mix of housing, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses.

## **Hollman v. Cisneros**

In their vision, the focus groups stressed the need to create a new community of diverse, mixed incomes, anchored by attractive natural amenities; ethnic and cultural attractions; and educational, job training, and social service institutions. Approximately 28 acres would be available for housing, resulting in between 150 and 375 units at various density levels. Open space would comprise approximately 40 acres on the current Sumner Field and Glenwood sites. Institutional use would be allocated to approximately 16 acres of development area.

On November 2, 1996, the focus groups held a half-day retreat to finalize their recommendations. Once adopted, the recommendations were presented to area organizations for their review and comment. The key land-use recommendations as defined within the Focus Groups Report included:

- Demolish existing family public housing and construct new, mixed-income housing (including some public housing) on the better soils of the area. Use the vacant land on the adjacent superblock for new housing.
- Create open space on the worst soils of the site, with natural amenities attractive to residents, businesses, and other institutions adjoining these areas.
- Pursue locating Metropolitan State University in the Glenwood-Lyndale area because it would provide both educational and employment opportunities, and add to neighborhood stability.
- Create a commercial/retail center, including an ethnic cultural market on Olson Memorial Highway and Interstate 94.
- Build a pedestrian bridge across Olson Memorial Highway and encourage development of a corridor linking the north and south neighborhoods.

In addition, the focus groups developed a number of recommendations concerning new services and land uses for the area. As it turned out, the final set of focus group recommendations was significantly different than at least one scenario that had originally been applied to the site. One city official interviewed stated, “The assumed redevelopment objective for the whole area once public housing was torn down was to [develop] a bunch of light industrial buildings.” Jackie Cherryhomes, council member for the north side, was supportive of this original conception of the redevelopment. The official continued, “What happened is we really changed, or shifted, the paradigm of what city hall had on its agenda . . . And Jackie bought into it.”

## **THE NORTH SIDE ACTION PLAN**

After the focus groups ended their formal meetings in November 1996, the lead defendant, MPHA, began the process of writing the North Side Action Plan. That process took more than one year to complete. During that period MPHA met regularly with the plaintiffs, primarily Legal Aid, to ensure that the plan would address all of the points outlined in the consent decree. In addition, MPHA showed drafts to the other defendants to get their input on the document. MPHA also met twice with the focus group members to inform them of the progress on the plan as it was being finalized.

In March 1997, during the period in which MPHA was developing the plan, the agency released a new soil study that indicated a greater area of poor soil than the original study had shown. MPHA called a meeting of the focus group to present them with this information, and indicated a need to reduce the number of acres devoted to housing that would be built on-site (it had been agreed throughout the focus group meetings that housing should not be built on poor soils). The April 1997 deadline for completion of the North Side Action Plan came and went. The defendants asked the court for an extension in May, and it was granted in June. Finally, in September, the action plan framework was filed by the defendants.

The draft of the action plan was completed in late 1997 and presented to the city council for ratification. The plan called for the following:

- demolition of all existing family public housing on the site
- construction of a mixed-income residential community that would include 25% public housing, 25% moderate-income rental housing, and 50% market-rate housing
- a 36-acre open space amenity to include playfields, wetlands, and other water features
- possible new commercial and institutional uses
- a significant new parkway boulevard connection south to the Dunwoody Boulevard/Loring Park area

## **CITY COUNCIL RATIFICATION**

In December 1997, the Minneapolis City Council met to consider the action plan framework for the north side project area. At that time the council, under the direction of council president Jackie Cherryhomes, made several amendments to the plan and then ratified it. First, the council changed the mix of housing, contradicting the directive of the focus group on one of its most contentious issues. The council mandated that 75% of the housing would be market rate and 25% public housing. In addition, the council deleted all references to rental housing, thereby eliminating any goals related to the development of nonownership housing other than public housing. Finally, the city council insisted that no social services be added on-site.

These were not minor revisions. According to one informant interviewed, what happened at the council was “the showing of the muscle of the north side community that lived to the west [of the site] that complained initially that they weren’t part of the focus groups.” This group, predominantly homeowners, was concerned about the potential reconcentration of poor people if too much affordable housing was included in the plan, or if social services were provided on the site that might “anchor” poorer residents to the area. This is essentially confirmed by Cherryhomes’ own explanation of events when she said that “the surrounding community preferred non-rental housing and wanted more market-rate housing” (Brandt 1997, 1A).

The council amendments did not sit well with focus group participants, attorneys for the plaintiffs, or community members who were beginning to suspect that the elaborate planning process undertaken thus far might be used to justify a dramatic reconstitution of the neighborhood. Some in the community had already voiced the concern that redevelopment would lead to wholesale gentrification of the neighborhood (Diaz 1997; Brandt 1997), and that deconcentration would have the effect of “wiping out” the political bases of African Americans and Southeast Asians on the north side (Furst 1996b). The council’s decision to reduce low-income housing to 25% of the total and remove social services and rental housing seemed to confirm those fears.

Any amendments to the action plan, however, had to be approved by the plaintiffs. In response to the changes made by the Minneapolis City Council, Legal Aid filed an objection to the new action plan, and this forced a round of negotiations between the plaintiffs and the city council. Ultimately, the plaintiffs signed off on the deal in April 1998 when it was agreed that having a goal of 75% market-rate housing did not preclude the development of lower end market-rate housing, and furthermore did not preclude the development of rental housing. It was agreed that the Request for Proposals (RFP) that was to be sent out to potential developers describing the redevelopment objectives for the site would mention the potential for various market ranges and tenure types among the housing units to be built. In addition, plaintiffs negotiated two seats for themselves on the North Side Implementation Committee that was created to carry out the action plan.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

In April 1998, the city council created an implementation structure for the redevelopment project. Central to the structure was the North Side Implementation Committee. This committee included

## Hollman v. Cisneros

the directors of MPHA and MCDA; the city coordinator; and representatives from the planning department, public works, and the park board. In addition, the mayor had a seat on the committee, as did north side council member Jackie Cherryhomes. Finally, both Legal Aid and NAACP had seats. Cherryhomes acted as chair for this committee.

A community advisory committee was also formed to provide a role for other affected constituencies, such as nearby neighborhood residents and public housing residents. Legal Aid and NAACP were included in this committee as well.

The last element of the implementation structure was the staff steering committee. The council had originally identified MCDA as the implementing agency for the north side redevelopment. Although intimately involved in the planning process, MPHA is statutorily restricted to redevelopment involving public housing. Because of the mixed land uses on site, it was felt that the broader powers and expertise of MCDA were necessary to oversee the north side project. However, MCDA was less familiar with the background of the lawsuit and consent decree, as well as the particular community planning process that had generated the action plan. Therefore, the city council agreed to create an interdepartmental staff committee charged with carrying out the action plan. The committee included representatives from a range of departments. The project director, or chief staff member for the committee, was the MPHA staff member who had managed the drafting of the action plan.

At the beginning of its deliberations, the implementation committee directed the project staff to expand the project boundaries. The area considered by the committee incorporated the original 73-acre site and the rest of census tract 43 that extends south and southwest to include the Bassett Creek area. This expansion of the planning boundaries, supported by Legal Aid, was done in order to coordinate the action plan with a study being done of the Bassett Creek area and with the Minneapolis Empowerment Zone proposal. The Bassett Creek study is an examination of the potential for redevelopment along the area south of Glenwood, and the land pollution concerns that must be addressed to allow development. The Minneapolis Empowerment Zone application (approved by the federal government in early 1999) called for the infusion of millions of dollars in economic development into the greater Near North neighborhood (as well as into a neighborhood on the city's south side).

In November 1998, the implementation committee distributed an RFP for the redevelopment of the action plan site. Despite the expanded focus to accommodate the Bassett Creek study area, the RFP was limited to the 73-acre project site. It announced the city's official vision for the site:

A new mixed-income community will emerge—a vital, diverse community in which public housing is interspersed with market rate housing. This new development will surround a 36-acre park, part of the city's world-renowned park system. A new parkway will achieve an historic link between residential communities in north and south Minneapolis, connecting residents of the near northside neighborhoods to the Guthrie Theater and Walker Art Center, the Sculpture Garden, the Loring Park college campuses and to the heart of downtown. (City of Minneapolis 1998, 1)

The RFP included the following development objectives:

- Develop approximately 450 units of new mixed-income housing, 75% of which will be priced to serve a community where a broad and continuous range of incomes is represented and 25% of which will be public housing.
- Develop facilities for institutions currently located in the area, as well as those that may locate here in the future.
- Develop appropriate commercial facilities.
- Develop parkland that includes recreational areas, wetlands, and stormwater ponds.

- Develop infrastructure, including streets, sewers, and a new boulevard connecting the site to adjacent neighborhoods to the south. Create links to the regional network of hiking and bike trails.

As expected, the McCormack-Baron development team (which included local partners) was chosen as the developer, and in January 2000, after the demolition of the Glenwood-Lyndale site had begun, the redevelopment plan for the north side was announced. The final plan called for 800 units of housing, 55% of which would be rental. Of that total, 200 units (25%) would be public housing and 200 (25%) would be subsidized for moderate-income families. Of the moderate-income units, 110 would be ownership and 90 rental. The rest of the housing, 250 ownership units and 150 rental units, were set at market rates. The number of housing units planned turned out to be nearly double the number identified in the initial plan. This was a result of the protracted conflict over affordable housing that had been concluded in Minneapolis at the end of the 1990s. This struggle is the topic of the next section.

## **PART THREE: THE CONFLICT**

Such a “groundbreaking experiment in the deconcentration of poverty,” as the *Hollman* agreement was called, was bound to elicit some degree of political opposition. The scope and nature of the changes to be wrought by the agreement—including the remaking of a 73-acre site situated where the historic center of the city’s Black community and its downtown meet, the loss of over 700 units of public housing, and the development of replacement units on a scattered-site basis throughout the metropolitan area—span the entire range of housing and community development issues facing metropolitan areas. The conflict was manifested in two ways. First, a portion of the Southeast Asian community (those who were recent immigrants to the region) opposed the demolition of the community, and feared the destruction of support networks so important to their transition to American life. Second, there was opposition to the goal of poverty deconcentration that centered on the loss of affordable housing on the site, the potential for gentrification, and the resultant “redefinition” of the north side neighborhood.

The first of these conflicts never achieved more than the status of a low background hum because of the lack of political clout of the new Southeast Asian community. The other issue, however, became a major obstacle for the parties of the lawsuit, as it engaged representatives of the African American community on the north side, and was swept along by changes in the housing market in Minneapolis and the region during the late 1990s.

### **OPPOSITION FROM THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY**

The opposition to demolition and dispersal from the Southeast Asian community on the north side was based on three complaints: that the dispersal of families destroyed their community networks, that they had not been full partners in the negotiations process, and that the relocation process had not been sensitive to their needs.

As briefly noted, opposition among Southeast Asians to the deconcentration edict was voiced fairly early in the process. The 1995 study of housing preferences discussed by the focus groups had indicated that opposition to resettlement was greater among Southeast Asian families, especially the Hmong, than it was among other groups. The beginning of relocation from Sumner Field in December 1995 triggered a response among some Southeast Asian residents who hired an attorney to represent them in the process. The focus groups’ “Community Speak Up” on April 4, 1996, elicited critical comments from community members about the process. The official minutes from the meeting indicate that “the majority of Southeast Asians who spoke made it clear they did not want to move to the suburbs” (MPHA 1996, 3).

## **Loss of Community**

Southeast Asian families living in north side public housing were more likely than African American families to like the housing and to value the community resources and networks that had been created in the area. The argument of Southeast Asian opponents was that dispersal would destroy the support networks upon which they, as recent immigrants to the country, depended. There were two dimensions to these networks. The first was the formal assistance organizations and service agencies that existed on the north side, including the Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association, the Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota, and the Southeast Asian Community Council. The north side site was also home to an array of social services that had been put in place over time to assist public housing residents, including a food shelf and adult education and language services.

In addition to the formal organizations, however, the Southeast Asian residents worried about the loss of family networks. According to a report by the Southeast Asian Community Council, there was a potential for reduction in the “influence of extended families and clans on the behavior and values of Hmong teenagers, already at risk . . . When families must move away from Sumner Olson social order will disappear.” The report went on to claim that “with the demolition of public housing, young people will be even more isolated. They will be harder to reach, harder to teach” (Inskip 1996, 11A). Additionally, there were concerns in the community that the local housing market did not have enough larger units to accommodate the typically large immigrant family. As one Hmong woman said, “five-bedroom apartments are virtually nonexistent outside of public housing. I’m worried that I would not find a place big enough for my family” (Washington and Drew 1995, 1A).

The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* carried dramatic quotes from another Hmong woman who, according to a story in the paper, “bought a rope and plans to hang herself if she has to move. ‘Here I can see the sky. Here, when I feel sad, I can walk to friends or the park and relieve my sadness’” (Furst 1996a, 3B). The same article quoted another woman as saying, “It would be better to be dead and be living with the Americans in the cemetery” (Furst 1996a, 3B).

## **Lack of Consent**

A second complaint voiced by at least a portion of the Southeast Asian community was that they were not adequately consulted during the lawsuit negotiations, and that the settlement did not represent their interests. Some representatives of the Southeast Asian residents suggested that not enough members of the plaintiff class were included in the focus group process (Bauerlein 1996). Another claim suggests that the considerable number of those who cannot read even in their own language were unable to benefit from any of the notices that were sent out, regardless of the language used.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs strenuously disagreed with that contention, citing numerous meetings in the community and notices to families in several Southeast Asian languages. For their part, however, the Legal Aid staff acknowledged the difficulty of bridging the language gap. The attorneys for the plaintiffs had to force MPHA into providing translators for the focus groups. Once translators did show up, as was reported earlier, they sometimes “did not interpret very well—or never said anything.”

In any case, by July 1997, when a portion of the Southeast Asian community formally asked Judge Rosenbaum, who presided in the *Hollman* case, to reopen the lawsuit, the claims on behalf of the community were more severe. “It was a class action suit without the involvement of the class,” claimed the director of the Minnesota Tenants Union. The former director of the Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association added, “There’s no consent. It was a misnamed consent decree” (Furst 1997, 3A). Judge Rosenbaum, however, did not concur with these arguments, and the legal challenge of the Southeast Asian community failed.

## **Troubles in the Relocation Process**

A third area of concern for members of the Southeast Asian community was the process of relocation. In April 1996, the director of the Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota reported that a number of

families moved without relocation assistance because they did not understand the process and were not given enough information about it (Bauerlein 1996). A study of the Sumner Field relocation process by the Minneapolis Urban Coalition that was released in April 1997 documented the reactions of residents to relocation.

A roughly equal percentage of African American and Southeast Asian relocatees were interviewed by the Urban Coalition. The findings suggest that a portion of those relocated felt they were not given enough information about the process, or were hurried through the process. In most cases, it was Southeast Asian families who reported these responses. The report found that “more than half of the Hmong respondents did not want to move” from their north side units (Urban Coalition 1997, ii). One in five (22%) of all respondents felt they had been pressured and rushed out of the Sumner Field apartments. All of the respondents reporting so were Hmong. “Hmong households reported much greater difficulty finding new housing than members of other ethnic groups,” according to the report (Urban Coalition 1997, ii). The Urban Coalition also found that Hmong respondents were less likely to report having been assisted with transportation, having received necessary information, or having been treated respectfully during the relocation process.

### ***The First Protests of “Deconcentration”***

The first episode of public opposition to the *Hollman* process was a protest of relocation by members of the Southeast Asian community in May 1996. A group of 30 Southeast Asians marched through the Sumner Field project carrying signs protesting their relocation. There were complaints about being rushed out of their units, and about being widely scattered and isolated as a result of the process (Bauerlein 1996). A group of the protesters pleaded their case to the mayor, and in early June, the then-president of the Minneapolis Urban Coalition announced he was joining them to request a delay in the relocation of residents who did not want to move (Furst 1996a). This effort did not generate much momentum, however.

More than a year later, in July 1997, more than 100 members of the Hmong community submitted a formal request to the presiding judge in the *Hollman* case that it be reopened because of the negative impacts it was having on their community. As noted, the judge declined their request, and the relocation and demolition continued. In time, the reaction of the Southeast Asian community died away as more of their members were relocated away from the site.

Despite the scope of the *Hollman* decree and the brief resistance of some in the Southeast Asian community, for many months the redevelopment plan remained below the radar screen of many community activists. While the focus group was deliberating—and for most of the period during which the action plan was being created—the project did not receive much media attention. There was, in fact, not much for the media to report; families were being moved out, but the site itself remained untouched, and there were no visible signs of change occurring.

The relocation of Sumner Field residents was accomplished in the summer of 1996, the last family moving out in September. The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority decided in late 1996 to demolish the Bryant Highrises, two buildings containing 188 units for elderly public housing residents located on the east side of the 73-acre project site. This demolition was related to the removal of the rest of the public housing on-site in that the Bryant Highrises’ heating plant was the same one that served the other units located north of Olson Memorial Highway. The demolition of Sumner Field would have left the high-rises without such a facility. In addition, MPHA estimated the rehabilitation cost for the high-rises was within 10% of the replacement costs. Under a new HUD program aimed at revitalizing distressed public housing projects across the country, when rehabilitation costs are determined to be comparable to new construction, the local housing authority may move for demolition of the units and partial replacement, combined with a shift in subsidies to tenant-based Section 8. This is, in fact, what MPHA had proposed for the Bryant Highrises: the replacement of about 100 units, and the conversion of 88 subsidies into tenant-based certificates and vouchers



## **Hollman v. Cisneros**

(Brandt 1996). In January 1997, HUD approved the demolition, and relocation of households from the Bryant Highrises was begun. The buildings were empty by June.

The demolition of the Olson Townhomes began on September 16, 1997, and the Bryant Highrises were torn down one week later.

The demolition of the empty Sumner Field units was delayed, however, by a request for historic preservation that had been made by opponents of the demolition. The Sumner Field project was one of the earliest public housing projects in the nation, initiated under a temporary program that actually preceded the establishment of the public housing program in 1937. In an attempt to save the units, opponents filed a request to have the project designated as historic. The National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation ruled that some of the Sumner Field buildings could and should be reviewed for possible preservation. (The other buildings located on poor soils were excluded from the council's ruling.)

## **THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS**

In the summer of 1997, as MPHA staff were finalizing the draft action plan, advocates began to organize throughout Minneapolis around the issue of affordable housing. The city's housing market had begun to heat up considerably, leading to rapidly escalating housing prices and very low vacancy rates for rental housing. A coalition of organizations came together during this campaign, including Children and Family Services (CFS), an advocacy and service group that was behind the formation of the Jobs and Affordable Housing Campaign (JAHC), the Metropolitan Interfaith Coalition for Affordable Housing (MICAHA), a group that had long been active in regional affordable housing efforts, and Jewish Community Action.

The 1997 campaign resulted in a resolution before the City Council of Minneapolis, sponsored by south side council member Jim Niland, to increase the resources the city devotes to affordable housing. By the time it came up for a vote, the resolution had been amended so significantly and the intent altered so greatly that Niland himself felt compelled to vote against it. The resolution passed anyway, and the Mayor's Task Force on Affordable Housing was born. The task force was given the charge of studying the issue of affordable housing and making recommendations to the council about what efforts should be taken. Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton appointed John Powell, of the University of Minnesota Law School, to head the task force. The task force was made up of advocates, nonprofit and for-profit developers, and funders of affordable housing. The task force met throughout the rest of 1997 and into the next year, discussing various aspects of the issue.

The task force heard from a number of local experts about the housing situation in the Twin Cities. On more than one occasion, the group took up the issue of the deconcentration of poverty. Powell, the head of the task force, had spoken out throughout the community on this issue. He felt strongly that concentrated poverty was the result of a history of residential segregation and discrimination targeted at African Americans and other people of color. Powell frequently invoked an argument that had been used by many in the Twin Cities region over the preceding years. This argument describes the potential effects of concentrated poverty in the central city, and can be called The Detroit Scenario for short.

The Detroit Scenario describes a city overcome with poverty, in which the middle class has fled to relatively safe and secure havens of racial and class exclusivity. The city is wracked by high property tax rates on ever-devaluing property, struggling to generate sufficient resources to fund essential city services and the elevated level of public and social services necessary to support an impoverished populace. Schools become underfunded and inadequate, and the streets become unsafe as drugs and crime begin to take over entire neighborhoods. All the while, the city is surrounded by an affluent ring of suburbs whose residents benefit from low tax rates due to the lack of a dependent population needing public and social services.

The Detroit Scenario highlights the consequences of several factors that have produced the particular spatial pattern of poverty characteristic of urban America. Racial discrimination in housing markets imposed by real estate professionals (Massey and Denton 1993) and endorsed by the White population (Meyer 2000) severely limited African Americans' choices in the housing market. In addition, government housing policies facilitated and subsidized White flight to the suburbs, primarily through the actions of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), a program that applied explicitly racist underwriting principles for a 25-year period beginning in the late 1930s. At the same time, federal and local governments were concentrating inside the central cities subsidized public housing for the very poor (Jackson 1985).

Most importantly, for Powell and others, The Detroit Scenario suggested a clear course of action. To avoid Detroit's fate, people of color and lower income people in general cannot be confined to central-city neighborhoods. The barriers to their participation in housing markets outside of central neighborhoods must be overcome. The correct response in a city experiencing The Detroit Scenario is a regional approach to affordable housing issues. Suburban jurisdictions must work to provide affordable housing opportunities to lower income families. Lower income families and families of color must be provided with the means of moving out of the central-city neighborhoods to which they have been relegated. High concentrations of public housing must be eliminated, and the families stuck in them must be given greater choice in their housing and in the neighborhoods in which they live.

Powell's effort to spread the word about The Detroit Scenario complemented the work of Democratic state representative Myron Orfield, who had put together a successful legislative package in the early 1990s calling for a regional approach to affordable housing development, tax-base sharing, and reforms to public infrastructure spending that were also justified by the concentration of poverty argument. Orfield worked tirelessly during these years, speaking before groups and making the argument that central cities were in effect subsidizing the growth of outlying suburban areas through public support of road and sewer infrastructure that at once contributed to sprawl, drew the middle class out of the central cities, and left an underutilized and wasted infrastructure in the core. This pattern of growth also contributed to higher concentrations of poverty in the core because the housing stock of developing suburbs was not affordable. For three years in a row, Orfield put together a coalition of central-city and inner-ring suburban legislators to pass his legislative package. In fact, one of Orfield's most innovative contributions to this debate was to demonstrate that the inner-ring suburbs had more in common on these issues with the central city than with the developing suburbs. Orfield's package was, however, vetoed three years in a row by the governor.

Orfield was adamant in his public appearances. The central city and the inner ring suburbs desperately needed to reduce the concentrations of poverty that currently existed, and they should do nothing that might work to maintain those concentrations or to increase them. This meant, in practice, that high concentrations of low-cost housing needed to be broken up, that central neighborhoods needed to attract mixed-income housing, and that suburban housing markets needed to be opened up. Orfield's argument caught on with many activists and officials in the central cities and inner-ring suburban areas.

In making this argument, Powell and Orfield invoked the work of a national cadre of social scientists who had convincingly made four separate empirical arguments. First, poverty in the United States had become very highly concentrated in urban neighborhoods, with the number of neighborhoods in which more than 40% of the population lived below the poverty level mushrooming between 1970 and 1990 (Jargowsky 1996; Jargowsky and Bane 1991; Ricketts and Sawhill 1988). Second, such high concentrations of poverty produce a range of social pathologies at unexpectedly high levels (Anderson 1991; Case and Katz 1991; Crane 1991; Massey, Gross, and Eggers 1991). Third, this concentration of poverty was due to a range of factors that included residential segregation, changes in the job structure of American cities, and the legacy of American housing policy (see,

## Hollman v. Cisneros

e.g., Wilson 1987; Massey and Denton 1993; Massey and Kanaiaupuni 1993). Finally, research on the only sizable program in the country that systematically attempted to move poor, African American public housing residents to integrated suburban areas—the *Gautreaux* program in Chicago—was showing a range of positive outcomes for those families (see, e.g., Rosenbaum and Popkin 1990; Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum 2000). Added to this empirical research demonstrating the ill effects of concentrated poverty was the fact that The Detroit Scenario and the case for deconcentration were both intuitively appealing. People could see for themselves the increased crime and social problems, and the growing economic marginalization of high-poverty neighborhoods.

There are two other reasons for the appeal of The Detroit Scenario and the deconcentration of poverty argument, at least among progressives. The concentrated poverty argument identifies specific public and private actions that have led to current conditions of poverty and hopelessness in American cities. It acknowledges the long and grim history of racial discrimination in housing. It provides, in essence, the rationale for a public policy response to urban poverty, an issue that had not been the subject of sustained policy attention since the 1960s. Among advocates for the poor, this was not an easy argument to oppose.

Second, it was not clear in the early 1990s that there was reason to oppose the concentration of poverty argument. Potential “downsides” to deconcentration had not yet become evident. In fact, a counterargument emerged only when the abstractions of deconcentration became the reality of housing demolition and forced displacement.

Predictably, in Minneapolis, Chicago, Atlanta, and other cities that are trying to deconcentrate poverty, the first steps have been to demolish the housing of the poor in concentrated neighborhoods (Keating 2000; Bennett and Reed 1999; Popkin et al. 2000). This is often done before a significant level (or any level) of new affordable housing is made available in suburban areas. When this approach is coupled with a very tight housing market, as existed in Minneapolis, the potential for active resistance increases significantly.

In Minneapolis, the mayor’s task force was the scene of a protracted debate about deconcentrating poverty. A sizable number of participants saw a great need for affordable housing in Minneapolis and advocated for efforts to meet that need. Orfield argued against such strategies because he felt it would further the centralization of resources that leads to a concentration of poor families in the central city. Orfield and Powell continued to argue for a strong statement by the city in favor of a regional approach. The importance of this for the unfolding *Hollman* story is that the group of low-income housing advocates, previously muted before the appeal of the deconcentration of poverty argument and The Detroit Scenario, was beginning to find its voice on this issue during the proceedings of the Mayor’s task force.

Advocates involved in the affordable housing campaign had been fighting rear-guard actions to demolish existing affordable housing for several years. They began to associate this trend with the growing acceptance by local officials and neighborhood groups of the concentration of poverty argument. The loss of two apartment buildings in St. Paul, the threatened demolition of over 1,000 units in the inner-ring suburb of Brooklyn Park, and the growing reluctance of Minneapolis neighborhood groups to create affordable housing were all attributed, by housing advocates, to the logic of deconcentration of poverty. Central-city neighborhood groups had begun talking about how they had done their share of low-cost housing and that it was time for the suburbs to do more. Inner-ring suburban communities moved to demolish affordable units, arguing that they too had an overconcentration. The advocates came to see *Hollman* as another example of a loose and uncoordinated, but no less threatening, movement to reduce affordable housing in the city in the name of deconcentrating poverty. They felt that in the midst of what was becoming a severe shortage of affordable housing, the *Hollman* decree meant the loss of several hundred more units of low-cost housing. As one of the organizers later wrote, their “goal was not only to organize the community to stop or delay further

demolition, but to make affordable housing a public policy priority by exposing the devastating effects of demolition and the lack of affordable housing on real people” (Watson 2000, 1). In other words, it was time in their minds to wed the affordable housing campaign to the *Hollman* issue.

Meetings of north side service agencies and other interested parties began to take place in September 1998. This group, calling itself the Hollman/North Minneapolis Human Development Coalition, met to “ensure meaningful community participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the community development of the Near Northside of Minneapolis” (Coalition minutes, September 2, 1998). This coalition included representatives from several community centers in the neighborhood, the Harrison Neighborhood Association, two Southeast Asian community groups, Summit Academy, and the Jobs and Affordable Housing Campaign.

One of the issues this coalition discussed was how the *Hollman* redevelopment fit into other city plans for the larger community. The city’s planning documents for the near north side envisioned a larger scale remake of the community that included the possible removal or renovation of four nearby low-income apartment buildings that did not “fit in with the proposed mixed income housing to be built” on the *Hollman* site (Brandt 1998a).

## **Northside Neighbors for Justice**

Out of the coalition meetings a new group was born in December 1998. The Northside Neighbors for Justice (NNJ) was created through the efforts of organizers at Children and Family Services, and became combined with organizing efforts being undertaken by MICAHA. Jewish Community Action, another partner in the affordable housing campaign of the previous summer, also became involved in the Northside Neighbors for Justice effort. Shortly after NNJ was formed, the Northside Pastors group was organized by MICAHA to provide its perspective on the *Hollman* issue.

Northside Neighbors for Justice’s position evolved over time from general demands for living wages, affordable housing, and “meaningful involvement in decisions that affect our lives” to very specific demands about the north side public housing projects. As these positions evolved, the organization did a very effective job of communicating them throughout the north side community and to the city officials (primarily council president Jackie Cherryhomes and Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton). They were aided in this by one of the African American newspapers with wide circulation on the city’s north side, the *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*. The *Spokesman-Recorder* began running a regular column called “The Hollman Forum,” which was not so much a forum as it was the direct mouthpiece of NNJ. It was written by a housing advocate who had been active in the JAHC campaign and who was also part of NNJ. From the end of December 1998 and for several very active months thereafter, the paper carried prominent articles on *Hollman* that outlined the NNJ position in great detail. The accuracy of the claims made in the forum did not always match the enthusiasm with which they were made, and Legal Aid attorneys felt compelled to write corrections on more than one occasion.

It should be noted that the other African American newspaper based on the north side, *Insight News*, was just as self-consciously supportive of the city as the *Spokesman-Recorder* was critical. Throughout the next 18 months, *Insight News* would carry prominent articles written by the mayor and by council president Cherryhomes on the redevelopment issue. It also carried articles describing the positive experiences of families who had relocated to better neighborhoods. The volume of supportive stories in *Insight News*, however, came nowhere near matching the regular barrage of criticism carried by the *Spokesman-Recorder*.

Northside Neighbors for Justice and the opposition movement also benefited from exposure through KMOJ, the north side community-based radio station. KMOJ, although not as editorially explicit about its opposition to the redevelopment as was the *Spokesman-Recorder*, did provide various opportunities for critics and supporters alike to discuss their perspectives. Council president Cherryhomes appeared several times on the station’s public policy forum throughout 1999 and 2000, as did John Powell and several members of the NNJ coalition.

## Hollman v. Cisneros

The *Insight News/KMOJ* Community Forum that regularly takes place at Lucille's Kitchen was another venue for community discussion of the north side redevelopment. Lucille's Kitchen is a restaurant located on the north side, just over a mile from the heart of the redevelopment site. The restaurant regularly hosts forums for the discussion of important community issues. A portion of each of these forums is aired live over KMOJ. Throughout early 1999, the *Hollman* redevelopment and the merits of the deconcentration of poverty argument were discussed at Lucille's Kitchen. Typically, the crowd at the forum was tipped in favor of the NNJ position.

The distrust of deconcentration among opposition groups was tied to a concern that the redevelopment of the project site was the first wedge in a gentrification strategy on the part of the city. To opponents, the effort to demolish Sumner-Glenwood and replace it with mainly market-rate housing was an attempt at a land grab, an effort to expand the renaissance that was taking place in the adjacent warehouse district, the area that stood between the housing site and downtown. In effect, NNJ and other groups began to assert that they wanted the north side to remain hospitable to middle and lower income families of color, and they felt the redevelopment plans would not permit this. One of the organizing sheets reproduced by NNJ to call people to a meeting in 1999 quoted directly from the words of city council president Jackie Cherryhomes, before adding its own twist. The flyer read:

Five years from now the drive down  
Olson Highway will look much different  
than it does today.  
New parks, ponds and  
playfields . . .  
Mixed income housing . . .  
Jobs and training . . .

TOO BAD YOU WON'T BE  
HERE TO ENJOY IT

Concerns about gentrification and displacement of current residents increased when news spread that the city was considering the demolition and disposition of other subsidized housing projects that surrounded the project site. The CityView Apartments, the Park View Apartments, and the Cecil Newman Apartments, accounting for close to 600 units of affordable housing, sit just to the north and west of the project site. By 1999, it was clear that the city envisioned the north side redevelopment as one part in a larger plan for the entire Bassett Creek area that offered the potential for a new gateway to downtown Minneapolis from the west. After NNJ quickly sounded the alarm in an effort to protect these other affordable units and expand their organizing base, the city beat a hasty retreat and announced that these units would not be demolished.

## The Problems of Relocation and Displacement

Northside Neighbors for Justice also wished to publicize more widely the adverse experiences of many displaced households. By the end of 1998, over 300 families had been relocated from the project site, and NNJ felt that many had been disadvantaged by the process. The Urban Coalition study of the relocation, which had been released in 1997, provided evidence of some problems with the relocation process. Some families felt they had been rushed out of their units; others felt they had not been given enough information about what their options were.

Northside Neighbors for Justice used these experiences to attempt to undermine public confidence in the entire deconcentration strategy. The more problems they could document with the relocation process, the more concern they could raise about the intrusiveness of the north side redevelopment. Problems in relocation also helped to symbolize how poor families—those on whose behalf the

lawsuit was filed in the first place—had, in NNJ’s view, come to be pawns in a much larger conflict over land and the future of the near north side in Minneapolis.

The group’s biggest success on this issue occurred in February 1999 when organizers obtained an MPHA interoffice memo that traced the relocation experiences of the 17 plaintiffs listed on the original *Hollman* complaint. The e-mail memo that fell into the hands of the organizers indicated that several of the original plaintiffs were homeless, and that the agency had lost contact with others.

## **Fighting Demolition of Affordable Housing**

The messages of NNJ and other opponents of the redevelopment process gained the greatest currency when they were placed in the context of the city’s growing affordable housing crisis. As the crisis developed, it became the focus of the organizers, and ultimately of the legal efforts to stop the demolition. Halting the further demolition of public housing on the site became the principle objective of NNJ and the other activist groups, and was seen as necessary to achieve a series of objectives including halting the need for continued relocation of residents, stopping further depletion of the affordable housing stock, and stalling the redevelopment process in general. The activists came to realize that once the units came down, most of their fight would be lost, and any leverage they might have over the city would be gone.

## **NAACP**

The unlikeliest aspect of the political battle over the north side redevelopment was the changing positions of the Minneapolis branch of the NAACP. It was unlikely in that the branch was a co-plaintiff and partner with Legal Aid in the original lawsuit, yet, before the issue was resolved, the organization had abandoned its support of the north side redevelopment and moved to stop the demolition of the public housing on-site. The political contortions of the Minneapolis NAACP illustrate perfectly the tensions within the north side and African American communities on this issue, and thus are emblematic of the larger political divides generated by the deconcentration of poverty approach.

In 1992, the Minneapolis NAACP, under the leadership of Matt Little and Bill Davis (longtime allies of Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, and established leaders within the African American community), decided to join the *Hollman* lawsuit as co-plaintiffs. The lawsuit and the negotiated settlement addressed an issue of central concern to the African American community in Minneapolis and countless other cities—that of the history of segregationist and discriminatory housing policy pursued at the national and local levels. The mayor herself was a longtime member of the Minneapolis NAACP, and the ties between the mayor’s political machine and the local branch were strong.

In 1996, Bill Davis was defeated in his candidacy for president of the Minneapolis branch by Leola Seals, a job counselor on the north side and an outsider to the established NAACP power structure. Seals came to office promising to take a new look at several positions the NAACP had taken in recent years. In the end, she oversaw a dramatic change in organizational strategy. Prior to her election, the organization had been dominated by old-school leaders who were publicly prominent and had ties to the mayor and the local Democratic party. Under Seals’ leadership, the NAACP directly confronted and challenged the mayor on three important fronts. First, it continued to advocate a 1995 school desegregation suit against the state that had been filed under the previous regime. But the Seals NAACP broadened its attack to include the city’s policy of returning to community schools. The organization packed several school board meetings throughout 1996 and 1997 and loudly disrupted the proceedings by demanding that their issues be addressed by the board. This change in tactics was controversial for an organization that had previously pursued its objectives in a lower profile manner.

Second, the NAACP under Seals’ direction was vocal in its reaction to the Minneapolis Police Departments’ Computer Optimized Deployment—Focus on Results (CODEFOR) program,

## **Hollman v. Cisneros**

a computer-directed anticrime initiative that the organization called racially discriminatory for its focus on minor offenses among African American males in core neighborhoods of the city.

Finally, under Seals' leadership the organization modified its role in the *Hollman* lawsuit. Initially, the Seals-led NAACP focused its concerns on channeling redevelopment resources to the community. Seals' lieutenants, who were watching the redevelopment process, were eager to monitor the flow of funds. Their objective, at least initially, was to see that local residents benefited from the process. The organization openly questioned whether the city could be trusted to spend the settlement funds in the best manner. Citing the need to ensure that benefits of the redevelopment reached the families directly affected by the redevelopment, the NAACP requested in 1998 that it receive \$23 million from the settlement funds to put into housing and employment efforts aimed at the public housing residents and neighbors of the site (Brandt 1998b).

These three visible and controversial stands put the organization in direct conflict with two of the most prominent African American officials in the city, the mayor and the newly appointed school superintendent Carol Johnson. It also triggered the formation of an opposition slate of candidates for the branch's November 1998 election. Because of disputes over the eligibility of some of the challenging candidates, the election was postponed until January 1999. The results of the election showed that Seals had lost the election to her opponent, Minneapolis firefighter Rickie Campbell, by 16 votes. However, the results were suspended by the state chapter because of a dispute over the eligibility of candidates and of some of the votes cast. Seals remained in place as president until the dispute was resolved.

During this time, Seals began writing a series of articles for "The Hollman Forum" in the *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*. In these articles, she made a series of strong claims about the settlement and how it was being implemented. These articles represented a dramatic escalation of criticism of the decree by the organization. She claimed that its co-plaintiff, Legal Aid, had effectively abandoned its representation of the class and had "bent over backwards to accommodate city officials" during the implementation process (Seals 1999, 1A). She sounded the alarm on the issue of gentrification in her first article, and she wrote about the potential loss of additional subsidized housing in projects surrounding the *Hollman* site in a second article. In the last two articles she wrote, Seals returned to the organization's main theme during her tenure, the channeling of settlement resources back into the community. Seals (1999) complained that although the plaintiff class was "99% people of color, white people controlled all the money and the community planning process" (1A). She wrote about the absence of people of color from the planning process, and about the amount of money set aside in the project for training site residents for jobs produced by the project and by businesses formed during the redevelopment process.

With the organization's internal situation becoming an ever-greater preoccupation throughout the first few months of 1999, however, the NAACP disappeared from the *Hollman* process for a period of time. The national NAACP office sent an administrator to monitor branch operations while the election dispute was resolved. The NAACP was not present when the opposition campaign took off in February, it was not represented when the North Side Implementation Committee interviewed the three competing developers in March, nor was the organization at two important demonstrations in opposition to the redevelopment in June and July.

## **The Anti-Hollman Campaign**

On February 16, 1999, Lucille's Kitchen was packed with people to hear the forum on the north side redevelopment. With council president Jackie Cherryhomes and MPHA executive director Cora McCorvey in the audience, the panel included one spokesperson from NNJ, another from JAHC, and an attorney for Legal Aid. The growing controversy over relocation and redevelopment had put the Legal Aid attorneys in an unexpected position. They had entered into the lawsuit almost a decade earlier in an attempt to force redress of decades of housing discrimination experienced by the African

American community in Minneapolis. As noted earlier, they had not entered the suit with the intention of deconcentrating poverty. In the end, however, Legal Aid attorneys had a settlement that was, essentially, a poster child for national deconcentration efforts, and one that they felt included significant benefits for the plaintiff class as well as the north side community. When the redevelopment issue blew up in 1998 and 1999, the position Legal Aid occupied in the political terrain shifted significantly even though the organization had not changed its views at all. Instead of being viewed as a defender of the community and as the organization that had helped make the city, the Metropolitan Council, and the federal government accountable for past transgressions, Legal Aid became, in the eyes of the redevelopment opponents, lumped together with the city, MPHA, and HUD in trying to foist an anticomunity resettlement and gentrification plan upon residents who did not want it. Even the fees charged by Legal Aid were questioned by those who opposed redevelopment—fees that amounted to less than one-half of 1% of the settlement amount (Lane 1999). It must have been with some degree of trepidation that Tom Streitz, a Legal Aid attorney involved in the suit, took his seat as a member of the panel at Lucille's Kitchen on February 16, 1999.

Relocation had receded in importance as the 1996 Sumner and Olson resettlements became more distant, and the demolition of the remaining units in the Glenwood and Lyndale projects was still several months in the future. Instead, the opponents focused on the gentrification issue. For example, Travis Lee, a panelist and member of NNJ, claimed at the forum that “it's still a mystery to most people just who will benefit most [from] the millions invested in this project” (Brandt 1999a, 1B). There were two fears expressed by community members. First, as expressed by NAACP officials in the Seals faction, there was the concern that redevelopment would be controlled by outsiders; that the work would be done by outsiders; and that the millions of dollars dedicated to redevelopment, and the jobs and new business opportunities created by that redevelopment, would accrue primarily to outsiders. But more central at this community forum was the second fear of opponents. This was a fear that when the dust cleared and one looked around at who was living in this brand-new development with its park amenity, its link to the Guthrie Theater and Loring Park neighborhoods to the south, and its \$200,000 homes, the faces would be those of outsiders.

For his part, Streitz defended Legal Aid's position. He noted that the organization had threatened to take the city back to court when the city council had attempted to reduce the percentage of affordable housing in the redevelopment (“Lucille's Kitchen Cooks *Hollman*” 1999). He also assured the crowd that Legal Aid was continuing to monitor the relocation process to see to it that all families were provided adequate services. No accommodations between the parties were made at Lucille's that morning.

From this point forward, the campaign to alter redevelopment plans on the north side hit high gear, and the city became embroiled in front-page controversy that lasted for many months. In February, JAHG leaders came upon the internal MPHA e-mail memo that outlined the current status of the original 17 plaintiffs in the case. The memo stated that three of the plaintiff families were homeless at the time, and at least two others, and possibly a third, had been evicted from their new homes. Two additional plaintiffs were no longer in communication with MPHA and their status was unknown. MPHA later said the memo was a draft that had errors in it, and city officials accused the advocates of stealing the document (Furst 1999). The memo had the effect of thrusting relocation back into the center of the advocates' consciousness. The advocates made great use of the original memo, a Legal Aid statement about the status of the original plaintiffs, and a subsequent statement by MPHA, all of which offered different details about the fate of the original plaintiffs.

The campaign in the *Spokesman-Recorder* picked up momentum, with multiple stories in each edition. In March, the *Spokesman-Recorder* devoted an entire edition to the *Hollman* redevelopment in which it reprinted previous stories it had run and added some new stories. A letter in the issue from eight Hmong residents of Glenwood-Lyndale called the redevelopment another “Secret War” against their people, a



## Hollman v. Cisneros

reference to the U.S. secret bombing of Hmong territory in Laos during the Vietnam War. Referring both to the barrage of U.S. bombs during that war and the redevelopment plans for the north side, the writers asked, “Why did we find ourselves in the middle of all this? Because we were living on strategically important land, land that other people wanted to take from us” (Vang et al. 1999, 5c).

The issue also contained statements by NNJ, reprints of the articles written by Leola Seals, and a statement from residents of the nearby Park Plaza apartments in which they voiced their opposition to the potential demolition of their building as part of the city’s larger plan for the north side area. The issue contained a small item under the headline “Hollman cover-up alleged” that summarized the controversy over the e-mail memo.

A letter to the editor from Jackie Cherryhomes defending the redevelopment plans was also included in the issue. Contrary to the *Spokesman-Recorder’s* normal distribution procedures, thousands of copies of this issue were distributed door-to-door throughout the north side.

In April, NNJ organized a march outside MPHA headquarters at which about 80 protesters decried the displacement of families from the north side. The Reverend Curtis Herron of Zion Baptist Church in north Minneapolis, and a member of the Northside Pastors group, likened the resettlement of the project site to the “ethnic cleansing” in Kosovo, Albania, that had been receiving worldwide attention during the Bosnian conflict of 1998 (Furst 1999). The protesters again mentioned the MPHA memo, and produced one of the original named plaintiffs in the *Hollman* lawsuit, who described her housing travails since being relocated. Earline Robinson said she’d been homeless at times since she left the north side projects, and had only recently found an apartment (Furst 1999). Robinson had, in fact, left the projects well before the relocation services were in place and thus did not receive any assistance in her moves. Northside Neighbors for Justice called for an independent investigation of the relocation of families.

In response to the protesters’ claims, the lead attorney for Legal Aid explained, “At the time we settled the lawsuit, in 1995, the vacancy rate [for apartments in the Twin Cities] was six or seven percent, which was quite healthy, and no one could have anticipated that we would now be dealing with a vacancy rate of one percent” (Furst 1999, 6B). This was acknowledgment of perhaps the single most vexing problem for those shepherding the north side redevelopment. The growing acuteness of the affordable housing crisis in the city and region would, during the next few months, throw their efforts at demolishing public housing into a completely different and much more difficult context. The lack of affordable housing in the region and the difficulty that relocatees were having using household-based Section 8 certificates in the suburbs brought all three of the opposition’s arguments together. (A Legal Aid attorney at the Lucille’s Kitchen community forum in December had likened the certificates to confederate money; see “Lucille’s Kitchen Cooks *Hollman*” 1999.) Relocation and the assistance families were given while being forcefully displaced were of prime importance in a market so difficult for low-income households. The planned demolition of more than 300 additional units of subsidized low-income housing in the Glenwood and Lyndale projects, on top of the more than 300 already demolished on the site, seemed to make much less sense in light of the critical shortage of low-cost housing in the region. Concerns over the possible gentrification of the site also gained potency when combined with the affordable housing crisis. Where, if not on the north side, were these low-income families to live? Given the rapidly escalating housing prices in the region and (according to newspaper accounts and realtors) on the north side itself, fears of gentrification were much more realistic in 1999 than they had been even two years earlier.

The housing crisis handed the opponents yet another issue in their fight against the redevelopment—the excruciatingly slow pace of replacement housing construction. This was an issue on which Legal Aid readily agreed with the advocates. Although the *Hollman* defendants had been quick to demolish the Sumner and Olson projects, were emptying the Glenwood and Lyndale projects and relocating those families, and were proceeding to identify a developer to manage the remaking of the

north side site, very little headway was being made in constructing the more than 700 units of replacement housing called for in the *Hollman* settlement. By June 1999, more than four years after the signing of the consent decree, only 47 replacement units had been built, and eight of them were in a nonimpacted part of north Minneapolis. At that rate, the last replacement units would be in place roughly by the year 2050.

There were compelling reasons why progress in building replacement housing was so slow. MPHA had no authority to build outside of Minneapolis, and had to rely on the voluntary cooperation of other agencies. The consent decree limited the number of “*Hollman* units” within a given housing development to no more than 10%, a provision that was aimed at avoiding further concentrations, but that also had the effect of requiring a large number of separate developments and separate agreements. Many suburban jurisdictions were not eager to take these units, and many had no housing development agency in place to undertake such development. The Metropolitan Council had agreed to step in and facilitate the development of *Hollman* units in suburban areas without their own authority, but the council dragged its feet on this issue for more than a year (see *Report No. 7: Mobility Certificates*) before mounting a serious effort. As valid and vexing as these obstacles were, they were relatively unimportant considerations in political conflicts such as the one erupting over the north side redevelopment. The pertinent facts for many people were that the *Hollman* defendants had moved swiftly to displace and relocate low-income families from the north side, and seemed to be making almost no progress in building suitable replacement housing for them elsewhere. This fact was underscored by the region’s affordable housing crisis. One advocate argued:

Wouldn’t it have made more sense to build new units and then demolish? Wouldn’t it have shown more consideration for these families if they could have moved right from their Northside homes into *Hollman*-funded replacement housing? Instead, they have been relocated into apartments other people desperately need in a rental market so tight it’s about to bust. (“*Hollman: What It’s All About*” 1999, 1A)

There was more public relations trouble for the redevelopment efforts when the city’s major newspaper, the *Star Tribune*, ran a story on Lucy Mae Hollman, the plaintiff for whom the entire lawsuit and redevelopment effort was named (Brandt 1999b). Hollman had originally been relocated into scattered-site public housing. She moved from there with a tenant-based Section 8. Unable to keep that apartment, she purchased a home in the north side Hawthorne neighborhood. In that transaction, however, she became the victim of a “flip.” A flip is a real estate swindle in which a real estate operator purchases a home and immediately resells it at an inflated price to an inexperienced homebuyer. In Hollman’s case, the seller had held the property for two years, but had paid only \$7,000 for it and had taken permits for \$3,600 worth of improvements. The assessor valued the property at \$43,000. Hollman, who said she never saw an appraisal, paid \$80,000 for the house (Brandt 1999b).

After an illness, Hollman fell behind on her inflated payments, and, in May 1999 when the story was printed, was in the process of losing her home through foreclosure. The story illustrated for opponents virtually all of what they wanted to say about the deconcentration efforts on the north side. Hollman, the person for whom the lawsuit was known, and therefore the personification of the displaced low-income resident, had bounced around the housing market for years after being displaced, her inexperience and earning power (made fragile by both the low-wage job she held and her health problems) exposing her to the mercy of a housing market that had none. Ironically, had Hollman kept current on her home payments, she would have been displaced anyway because the city was demolishing all of the homes on her block to build a new school in the neighborhood.

As summer came, enough families had been moved out of Glenwood and Lyndale that demolition could begin. The imminent demolition brought the controversy to its peak. On June 9, the demolition crews arrived at the site to begin tearing down portions of the development. Sensing that the

## Hollman v. Cisneros

demolition would attract protesters, the MPHA had not announced the date ahead of time. Learning of the planned demolition the night before, opponents quickly assembled at the site and attempted to stop the bulldozers from tearing down the townhomes. Fourteen protesters were arrested, including eight prominent ministers from north side churches. After the arrests, a group of protesters went to city hall and demanded a halt to the demolition. Upon hearing their arguments, Mayor Sayles Belton agreed to a temporary interruption of the demolition. By this time, one building had a gaping hole through it the width of a bulldozer. Further progress on the demolition had stopped when workers discovered that the hydraulic hoses on a backhoe had been slashed. Following the quick arraignment and release on bail of the “Hollman 14,” the protesters gathered at Lucille’s Kitchen where an *Insight News/KMOJ* Public Policy Forum was in progress. As the *Spokesman-Recorder* later reported, “the events of the morning had already been broadcast by KMOJ and the Lucille’s crowd gave a warm welcome to those who had volunteered for arrest . . . A collection on the spot was taken to pay their fines” (“Hollman Protesters Arrested” 1999, 1A).

The mayor halted the demolition so that the parties could begin to discuss alternative scenarios for the Glenwood-Lyndale units (Diaz 1999a). The mayor was hoping for a reasoned resolution of the issue; the “dialogue” that ensued, however, did anything but clear up matters. Instead, the number of participants in the controversy increased, and the roles that each played became confused and contradictory.

The African American Leadership Summit and the Council of Black Churches, two groups with strong ties to the mayor, entered the fray with their own plan for redevelopment. Their recommendations, titled “The Whole Man Way,” called for a moratorium on demolition until more progress had been made on replacement housing development. The plan also called for more affordable housing units to be put back on the north side site than the city council had agreed to.

Meanwhile, NNJ and others began to urge the temporary reuse of the vacated Glenwood-Lyndale units, and possibly even their permanent rescue from demolition. It was at this point that NAACP came out of its shell. Its long internal leadership dispute had finally ended, and although the presidency of Leola Seals was over, the momentum of community opposition to the *Hollman* demolition was too great for the organization to ignore even if it wanted to. Furthermore, there is evidence that despite the election of a more conciliatory governing board, a majority of active members had come to view the *Hollman* redevelopment with misgivings. In the organization’s first official statement about *Hollman* in months, the attorney for the group expressed his concern with “the disruption and the gutting of the North Side’s black community” (Diaz 1999b, 1A).

The mayor, by stepping into the middle of the conflict with her June 8 action, had actually put the city in violation of the decree by unilaterally stopping the demolition, and thereby made it legally vulnerable. Furthermore, it became clear early on that she had little power to force the other defendants to change their actions to resolve the dispute that was raging in her city and within her constituency.

The area in which she did act was in pledging more aggressive city action in developing replacement housing within the city limits. The decree called for at least 88 units to be built in nonconcentrated neighborhoods in Minneapolis, but with the exception of a single development on the north side, nothing had been done in the four years since the agreement was signed. Shortly after the stoppage of demolition, Sayles Belton announced that the city would create 74 new scattered-site public housing replacement units by April 2000 (Diaz 1999b). Combined with the 14 units that were already built or were in advanced planning, the city’s obligation of 88 units would be fully met. This action was welcomed by the housing advocates, but it did not do much to ameliorate the political crisis that the city faced. This was the one issue, after all, about which everyone agreed—the pace of replacement housing development to date had been far too slow. The mayor’s announcement broke no new ground, and did not address the critical issue of the fate of the public housing at Glenwood and Lyndale, or the fate of the 73-acre north side site.

On the issue of saving, even temporarily, the remaining public housing on the north side site, the prospects for achieving an agreeable resolution were slim. Most of the units were vacant by June 1999, and in preparation for demolition, many had been systematically stripped of their internal systems and amenities. Furthermore, all forms of regular maintenance had been suspended for months. All of this left the units uninhabitable without significant rehabilitation.

During the second Clinton administration, Sharon Sayles Belton had been considered as a possible successor to Henry Cisneros as secretary of HUD. She had strong ties to the administration, and a close relationship with agency officials. Thus, there was some hope among advocates that she might be able to use that cache to wriggle rehabilitation funds from the agency to make Glenwood and Lyndale inhabitable again, at least in the short term. It must be remembered, however, that HUD was pursuing similar strategies of demolition and redevelopment all across the country. The *Hollman* way was HUD's way. The agency quickly indicated that it would not provide funds for the rehabilitation of the Glenwood-Lyndale units.

On July 9, 1999, the city's North Side Implementation Committee recommended a large increase in the number of housing units to be rebuilt on the north side site, from the originally planned 450 units to 750 units. The implementation committee also capped the market-rate units at 50% of the total. The committee's action had the effect of significantly increasing the number of low- and moderate-income housing units planned for the site, and was a bow both to pressure from the housing advocates and to the realities of the housing shortage in the city. This move, supported by housing advocates, was called a "retreat from the *Hollman* mandate of deconcentrating poverty" by one planning commissioner who worried that it might "choke off demand for the market rate housing" to be built on-site (Diaz 1999c, 1B).

In the meantime, pressure from the north side protesters drove the mayor to make a trip to Washington, D.C., to appeal for rehabilitation funds for the public housing units still standing. Officials at HUD again turned her down. The mayor returned to the city saying that HUD would put no new money into the projects, and that the agency had given her 60 days to find new funding to save the Lyndale units. Even if she were successful, according to HUD, the Lyndale units would have to be demolished nine months later, by April 2000. It is unclear under what authority HUD could have given the mayor a deadline since the court, and not the agency, had the final say in *Hollman*-related activities. Ultimately HUD did agree to continue operating and rent subsidies until the units were demolished, an obligation so fundamental that it does not qualify as much of a concession.

The trip to Washington, however, gave the mayor some needed political cover on the issue. She could demonstrate her effort to save the units, and point to the intransigence of her federal partners as the chief obstacle. She came back with a short deadline for funding, however ambiguous its authority, and the news that even if successful, reoccupation of the units could only last for nine months. In addition, it had been pointed out to the mayor during this period that the demolition of the Glenwood units was necessary under any scenario to allow the redevelopment plan to go forward. As a result, the Glenwood units were taken off the negotiating table. The mayor at this point was considering saving only the 86 Lyndale units. Days later, the number was reduced to just 70 units based on an assessment of the actual number that were still salvageable. In a very short period of time, the mayor had managed to redefine (and in the process reduce the scope of) what was possible in relation to saving the Glenwood and Lyndale housing projects. Reoccupation would only be temporary if it occurred, no HUD funds would be made available to restore the units, and only 70 units out of more than 300 still standing were even under consideration.

Protesters kept up their pressure nonetheless, and by the end of the month, the mayor announced her plan to seek \$300,000 of city money to save the units. The mayor called it a "short term strategy based on the fact that there's no place for some families to find decent shelter" (Diaz 1999d, 1B). This

## Hollman v. Cisneros

was a strategy that no one liked. The city council's Ways and Means Committee rejected the proposal, while the Reverend Herron of the Northside Pastors group said "saving only the Lyndale units would not meet our needs" (Diaz 1999d, 1B).

Two days later, the Hollman 14 appeared in court, providing another opportunity for north side protesters to rally. Close to 150 people marched outside of the Hennepin County Government Center calling for an end to the demolition.

As July came to a close, the protesters had few possible avenues for saving the public housing units still standing on the north side. Although the affordable housing crisis had provided them with a platform from which to argue that the demolition was not in the best interests of the community, by August the mayor's maneuverings had ensured that any remedy to the protesters' demands would be short term and limited—at best, a response to the present-day difficulties of finding replacement housing for families displaced during the demolition. The larger issues of gentrification, the future of the north side site, and the greater legitimacy of deconcentration had, ironically, been overshadowed by the overwhelming concern for the availability of affordable housing for the displaced.

There were still discussions about these larger issues, to be sure. The Reverend Herron continued to talk about the "immorality of gentrification" and about deconcentration as "ethnic cleansing." The policy discussion, however, centered rather narrowly around the issue of the current lack of affordable housing. As will be seen, this became a trap into which opponents of redevelopment ultimately fell, a trap that doomed their efforts.

In early August, the NAACP held a meeting at which members heard about the controversy from various sources. At an August 15 rally for the Hollman 14, the NAACP announced that it would begin legal action to stop the demolition. This was the first time that the NAACP had participated in a public action protesting the redevelopment. Their announcement of impending legal action was a major development in the process insofar as the NAACP was a co-plaintiff in the suit, and already had standing with the court. Second, this was a legal strategy and not simply a political strategy. The success of the efforts of the protesters to date had always been subject to the ultimate approval of the court, to the extent that they modified already agreed to elements of the consent decree. The NAACP would take the issue directly to the judge. The irony of this decision is all too clear. The NAACP, a plaintiff in the original suit, was now preparing to ask the presiding judge to stop the defendants from carrying out the court-ordered remedy.

Aware of this peculiarity and to make sense of it, NAACP spokespeople had to question the position of the Legal Aid attorneys, the attorneys for the plaintiffs who continued to seek demolition, redevelopment, and the deconcentration of poverty on the north side. The NAACP pointed to the Legal Aid attorneys and claimed that it was "unclear who they are really representing here"—the city and the developers, or their low-income clients (Freeman 1999).

The reentry of the NAACP into the fray reinvigorated the debate over redevelopment. The *Star Tribune* coverage highlighted the various political positions being staked out by participants. An August 15 article in the newspaper is notable for the range of issues it identifies (Diaz 1999e). Herron and others decried the forced relocation of the poor. Bill English, leader of the African American Leadership Summit, called for the revitalization of the north side, not a complete redevelopment. English was invoking the larger debate over whether deconcentration or community development was a better strategy for dealing with concentrations of poverty. Another north side pastor argued against the presumption that a concentration of African Americans was, per se, a problem to be corrected (the consent decree identifies "concentrated" census tracts by both poverty and minority status). Echoing this sentiment, Pastor Paul Robinson of the north side Community Covenant Church was quoted as saying that "folks of color have never had a problem living with folks of color. Somebody outside the community decided that" (Diaz 1999e, 1B).

On the other side, the mayor and council president Cherryhomes reiterated the deconcentration of poverty argument, the mayor suggesting that deconcentrating poverty and building strong neighborhoods are legitimate policy objectives, and Cherryhomes suggesting that the “hard working people” whom she represented supported deconcentration (Diaz 1999e, 1B). The *Star Tribune* itself editorialized in favor of deconcentration, noting that “plowing every dollar into affordable housing would only further concentrate poverty and perpetuate the image of Minneapolis as a client city” (“Affordable Housing” 1999). “Plowing every dollar into affordable housing,” of course, characterized none of the proposals being suggested by any of the parties, but the rhetorical intent is clear. It places the pursuit of affordable housing at odds with the pursuit of a healthy community, and states explicitly what many proponents of deconcentration sometimes find difficult to say—that deconcentrating poverty and central city affordable housing strategies are, at some level, opposed to each other.

Meanwhile, events continued to unfold, and the higher principles of the deconcentration debate dissolved into an increasingly desperate and more narrowly defined attempt to save a few hundred affordable housing units to ease the city’s shortage. Demolition was scheduled to resume on August 18. Eighteen hours before that deadline, the mayor and Cherryhomes agreed to delay the demolition so that NAACP could prepare legal motions to save the remaining 200 units (Diaz 1999f). While preparing the motion, NAACP leaders met with city officials to convince them to reconsider their position on the remaining 200 units at the Glenwood project. The city did not change its position, and instead tried to get NAACP leaders to accept their “compromise” position that Lyndale be saved and Glenwood torn down. As it was, the mayor had said that even if all parties agreed on this position, she did not know at this point where the \$300,000 would come from to complete the rehabilitation.

On August 28, just days before the hearing in U.S. District Court in Minneapolis to consider the organization’s motion, the NAACP–Minneapolis branch membership voted to reaffirm the position that both the Glenwood and the Lyndale units be rehabilitated (Diaz 1999g). In taking this vote, the membership was explicitly rejecting the idea that the Glenwood units be torn down. This vote made what happened days later in Judge Rosenbaum’s private conference room all the more inexplicable.

On the following Thursday, September 2, with a crowded courtroom awaiting the hearing, the attorneys from Legal Aid, NAACP, MPHA, and HUD met privately in Judge Rosenbaum’s conference room and agreed to exactly the same deal that the NAACP had rejected in its talks with city officials and that its membership had rejected five days earlier. The NAACP lawyers suggested, in announcing the agreement, that it contained several concessions they had been looking for. The three that were mentioned included an accelerated pace of replacement housing development, provisions for extended use of Section 8 vouchers for displaced families, and stronger guarantees for minority participation in the redevelopment.

Regarding these as concessions, however, is a generous interpretation of events. The city, and especially the mayor, had been aware for many weeks that it was vulnerable on the issue of replacement housing. In fact, the city had already made a pledge to step up the rate of replacement housing development in June, immediately after the demolition had been halted the first time. Essentially reiterating the same pledge almost three months later was not much of a concession. As for allowing displaced families more time to use their Section 8 vouchers, this was a minor administrative move that was easily accomplished. Finally, stronger guarantees for minority participation, while a laudable goal (and perhaps even a goal shared by many redevelopment opponents), was in fact a *primary* objective only for the NAACP. Minority participation in the redevelopment was not a central item on the agenda of NNJ, MICAH, or the Northside Pastors group. In fact, there is something ironic about this item given that it regards the demolition of the units and the redevelopment as a *fait accompli*, and merely allows the participation of the community in the action. The Northside Pastors and NNJ had been looking to, in some sense, “save” their community, something quite different than ensuring that the community be allowed to participate financially in its own dissolution.

## Hollman v. Cisneros

The lawyers emerged from the judge's office saying that the deal had to be ratified by officials at HUD, the Met Council, the City of Minneapolis, and the NAACP before it became effective.

As for the embarrassing fact that the NAACP membership had already voted down essentially this same agreement, proponents of redevelopment within the organization questioned the validity of the membership vote (the vote was 15 to 10 for an organization that has slightly more than 1,000 members) and the validity of the meeting at which the vote was taken (the Mayor and council President Cherryhomes, both members of the NAACP, claimed that they had never received notice of the meeting). Furthermore, it was unclear to organization members whether the general membership or the executive council had the right to approve or reject the deal (Diaz 1999g).

On September 18, the Minneapolis City Council did its part to ratify the agreement reached in Judge Rosenbaum's office; it reversed its earlier position, and voted to spend \$300,000 to temporarily renovate the remaining Lyndale units (Diaz 1999h). Two days later, however, the executive committee of the NAACP rejected the plan. In the span of three weeks, the organization had managed to reverse itself twice. The recently elected president of the Minneapolis branch, who had 16 days earlier called the deal "acceptable," now said, "it's time to rumble" (Diaz 1999i, 1B). According to the *Star Tribune*, at the eleventh hour the NAACP offered in secret to settle (i.e., accept the demolition of the Glenwood units) if the city provided the organization with \$500,000 annually to finance an NAACP-based organization to track *Hollman* residents, assist them in relocating to the new housing to be built on-site, and to help them "adjust to the new community" (Brandt 1999c, 1B). City officials rejected the idea, noting that these functions were already being provided.

One week later, Judge Rosenbaum heard arguments on the motion. The NAACP attorneys had decided that they would make the severe affordable housing crisis the basis of their motion. The organization's lawyers argued that in the midst of the tight housing market in the region, the demolition of Glenwood and Lyndale would add to homelessness in the city. This strategy was peculiar in that it did not allege any violation of the decree on the part of the defendants, but instead asked the judge, in essence, to amend the decree on the basis of changed conditions. Judge Rosenbaum wondered out loud whether he had the power to address these "new issues." Although the NAACP lawyer assured him he did, the judge moved on to another argument. Rosenbaum asked the MPHA lawyer about the lack of progress on replacement housing. Although the MPHA could not very well defend the slow pace of replacement housing development, the lawyer did point out that the NAACP motion did not address the issue of replacement housing, a point with which Legal Aid attorneys agreed. It became clear that the replacement housing—a requirement of the consent decree and an obligation of the defendants—was an issue on which the defendants were vulnerable. Furthermore, because it was a requirement of the consent decree, the city's record on replacement housing was something about which the judge could rule. The NAACP strategy, however, did not address replacement housing. It argued that the judge should save Glenwood and Lyndale because the city now needed those affordable units. As the city's lawyer said to Rosenbaum in summation, "the NAACP want you to take over the city's affordable housing program. With all due respect your honor, you don't have that authority." In the end, Rosenbaum agreed.

After the hearing, perhaps sensing the weakness of their legal position and belatedly realizing the judge's inclinations, the NAACP offered the city yet another deal. This time the organization suggested that 140 units be temporarily saved instead of the 70 that the city had pledged. The deal was rejected by the city.

Unsurprisingly, on September 31, Judge Rosenbaum rejected the NAACP motion to stop demolition. Reacting to the NAACP's focus on the lack of affordable housing, the judge wrote, "The NAACP's motion asks the court to order changes in the consent decree because of a changed economic environment. But the lawsuit before the court, and the decree that resolves that dispute, are not based on questions of rental economics" (Hawkins 1999, 8). He added, "The court cannot be a

social and community planner empowered to solve all of the community's ever-changing problems" (Brandt 1999d, 1B).

On October 26, 1999, four-and-a-half years after the signing of the *Hollman* decree, three years after the focus groups had called for the demolition of the north side units, and four-and-a-half months since the Hollman 14 had stood in front of the bulldozers, the remaining units of the 39-year-old Lyndale and Glenwood public housing projects began coming down. About half of the units were demolished that very day with "about a dozen subdued opponents gathered outside the fences to watch" (Brandt 1999e). There was still a handful of families living in some of the other units. The last family would be moved out in April 2000, and the last unit razed the following week.

In January 2000, Richard Baron of McCormack-Baron, the developer of the north side project announced his plans for 800 units of new housing on the site. Fifty-five percent of the housing would be rental, and 200 units would be public housing. Another 90 units would be subsidized for low- to moderate-income households, and 150 would be rented at market rates (between \$835 and \$1,225 for two- and three-bedroom apartments). Of the 360 homeownership units, 250 would be sold at market rates, ranging from \$90,000 for smaller two-bedroom homes to as much as \$200,000 for some four-bedroom homes. Another 110 homes would be subsidized for sale to income-qualified buyers. The distribution worked out to exactly what the focus group had recommended three years before—25% public housing, 25% subsidized housing for low- and moderate-income families, and 50% market-rate units. The only concession to the events and protests of the intervening years was that the number of units to be built on-site had been increased from 450 to 800.

## **CONCLUSION**

The consent decree in *Hollman v. Cisneros* represents a framework for action on a set of policy objectives that were shared by the plaintiffs and the defendants. The deconcentration of Minneapolis public housing families was the agreed-upon goal of all parties to the lawsuit. On the question of the reuse of the north side site, the consent decree established a community-planning process that attempted to incorporate broad segments of the north side community.

By most accounts, the focus groups established to provide advisory recommendations for the north side redevelopment ran smoothly. According to most of the focus group participants, the process was regarded seriously by the defendants, and the group was able to influence final outcomes. One participant felt the group had power and demonstrated it dramatically:

I think \_\_\_\_\_ and other staff members felt the need to respond positively to the requests because they knew the visibility of the process. So I am not going to suggest that they did it out of the kindness of their hearts necessarily but there was a certain self interest in it, and by being open to the process, when someone asked for something it was their compulsion to try to get it done.

For the most part, there was agreement about redevelopment objectives. The focus groups did, however, debate the degree of demolition and the mix of incomes for the housing that was to be put back on-site. A small number of focus group participants would later claim that the process was manipulated in favor of full demolition and less affordable housing. There is some evidence that the claim is at least partially accurate in the case of affordability. These debates within the focus group presaged larger political problems that the redevelopment plan would encounter in the months after its unveiling.

The consent decree enjoyed widespread support when it was first announced. It seemed to many that it represented the best of all possibilities. The 73-acre site, the location of the oldest and most troubled public housing in the city, would be redeveloped with federal funds that allowed for a



## Hollman v. Cisneros

remaking of the neighborhood, the relocation of all residents, and the replacement of all of the lost units of affordable housing on a one-for-one basis. The agreement reflected the accepted wisdom that high concentrations of poverty are bad for a community and bad for the people resigned to live in them. Support for deconcentration was widely shared by federal and local officials, as well as by the attorneys for the plaintiffs.

In the years following the signing of the decree, several factors combined to produce significant community-based opposition to the redevelopment plan and to the idea of deconcentration of poverty. One of these factors was simply the difference between the lofty goals of the decree on one hand, and the reality of displacement, relocation, and demolition necessary to make them happen on the other hand. That is, deconcentration may seem acceptable in the abstract, but when it is carried out, some people lose their homes, are involuntarily moved out of their communities, and witness the destruction of the community in which they had lived.

In addition, there were other factors that led to a growing level of community opposition to the redevelopment plans. First, a large percentage of the families living on the north side site at the time of relocation were recent Southeast Asian immigrants. Many in this community valued the spatial concentration of their community and the web of supports that had been established around it. Opposition to relocation was centered in the Southeast Asian families. Second, a change in the leadership of the NAACP replaced a group that had been supportive of deconcentration with another set of activists who were concerned about the possibility of the redevelopment leading to gentrification of the north side. Finally, a rapidly growing housing affordability crisis in the city emerged at exactly the time when the city was demolishing the hundreds of affordable public housing units on-site. The opposition movement that emerged as a result of these factors revealed some important criticisms of the deconcentration of poverty approach.

First among these is the observation that not all families will want to leave the targeted community. The lead attorney for the plaintiffs admitted that they understood that some people would not want to leave. The attorneys tried to fashion a settlement that would allow the relocatees to move where they wanted (i.e., to remain in the neighborhood if they desired) and to move back into the neighborhood when the replacement housing was built (Furst 1996a). Regardless of how much this type of resistance was anticipated, its existence was a political problem for defenders of the redevelopment plan. Opponents were able to argue that the relocation was something that was being done *to* the people who had resided there, rather than *by* them. This image was amplified when a portion of the African American community came out against the redevelopment plan, albeit for slightly different reasons.

A portion of the north side community voiced concerns early on about gentrification. Ron Edwards, a Black activist in the city, said demolition of the north side projects was “shattering the political bases of blacks and Southeast Asians” (Furst 1996b, 3B). Edwards argued that physical proximity is important for preserving a community and its culture, and deemed it racist to say that concentrations of poor and minority populations breed crime and social problems. Harry Boyte of the University of Minnesota said that deconcentration theory makes “an implicit assumption that poor communities are pathological and we have to break them up, scatter the individuals to healthy communities where they will develop good habits, where the right, middle-class values will rub off” (Furst 1996b, 3B).

Efforts to deconcentrate poverty must walk a fine line. On one hand, such efforts are designed to improve neighborhood conditions by reducing social problems in the community and attracting more private sector investment in housing and commercial activities. If the neighborhood becomes too attractive for that type of investment, however, the nature of the neighborhood could change from one that serves the needs of a low- and moderate-income population to one that is dominated by higher income groups. In the case of *Hollman*, there was an additional concern that gentrification would also lead to a racial transformation of the area.

The unforeseen crisis in housing affordability produced the most difficult problem for proponents of the redevelopment. Extremely low vacancy rates and a regionwide lack of affordable housing made the demolition of hundreds of units of public housing seem counterproductive. Coupled with a lack of genuine progress in the building of replacement housing during the first four years after the decree was signed, the housing crisis became the focus of significant opposition.

In the end, the opposition groups could not stop the demolition of the north side units, although they did influence the process and increase the number of housing units slated to be put back on the site. The redevelopment on the north side is going forward much as the parties to the lawsuit imagined, and much as the focus group recommended back in 1996. But the tough political battle that took place in Minneapolis over the redevelopment plans provides a textbook example of the contradictions inherent in deconcentration policy.

## WORKS CITED

- Affordable Housing—Seeing Beyond the Hollman Decree (editorial). 1999. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 22 August, <http://www.startribune.com>.
- Anderson, Elijah. 1991. Neighborhood Effects on Teenage Pregnancy. In C. Jencks and P. E. Peterson (eds.). *The Urban Underclass*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Bauerlein, Monika. 1996. Hollman Lurches On. *City Pages*, 3 April, p. 6.
- Bennett, Larry, and Adolph Reed Jr. 1999. The New Face of Urban Renewal: The Near North Redevelopment Initiative and the Cabrini-Green Neighborhood. In Adolph Reed Jr. (ed.) *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality*. New York: Westview Press.
- Brandt, Steve. 1995. Plans Would Invest in Green Spaces. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 18 July, p. 5B.
- Brandt, Steve. 1996. At High-Rises, Many Face High Anxieties. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 1 December, p. 1B.
- Brandt, Steve. 1997. Moderate Housing Is Axed from Plan. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 13 December, p. 1A.
- Brandt, Steve. 1998a. Redevelopment Reimagines Minneapolis' North Side. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 30 November, p. 1A.
- Brandt, Steve. 1998b. Battle for Control of NAACP May Land in Court. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 8 November, p. B1.
- Brandt, Steve. 1999a. Residents Question Possible North Side Developers. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 7 March, p. 1B.
- Brandt, Steve. 1999b. A Symbol of Public Housing Loses the Roof Over Her Head. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 4 May, p. 1B.
- Brandt, Steve. 1999c. Minneapolis Rejects Last-Minute Offer to Settle with NAACP. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 28 September, p. 1B.
- Brandt, Steve. 1999d. Judge OKs Demolition of Housing Projects in Minneapolis. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 1 October, p. 1B.
- Brandt, Steve. 1999e. Hollman Demolition Resumes This Morning. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 26 October, <http://www.startribune.com>.
- Case, Anne, and Lawrence Katz. 1991. The Company You Keep: The Effects of Family and Neighborhood on Disadvantaged Youth. NBER Working Paper 3705. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Chapin, Stuart F. 1938. The Effects of Slum Clearance and Rehousing on Family and Community Relationships in Minneapolis. *American Journal of Sociology* 43 (5): 744–763.

## Hollman v. Cisneros

Cisneros, Henry G. 1995. *Regionalism: The New Geography of Opportunity*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

City of Minneapolis. 1998. Request for Proposals for a Lead Developer to Assist in the Creation of a Mixed-Use, Mixed-Income, High-Amenity Community on the Near Northside of Minneapolis. Minneapolis: Near Northside Implementation Committee.

Crane, Jonathan. 1991. The Epidemic Theory of Ghettos and Neighborhood Effects on Dropping Out and Teenage Childbearing. *American Journal of Sociology* 96 (5): 1226–1259.

Diaz, Kevin. 1995. \$100 Million Coming from HUD. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 14 January, p. 1A.

Diaz, Kevin. 1997. Few Steps Taken to Resolve Enormous Housing Crunch. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 26 August, p. 1B.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999a. With Demolition at a Halt, Dialogue Planned. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 10 June, p. 1B.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999b. Sayles Belton Pledges to Speed Housing Plan. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 19 June, p. 1A.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999c. Hollman Panel Calls for Bigger Affordable Housing Guarantee. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 10 July, p. 1B.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999d. \$300,000 City Plan Would Re-Open Housing Projects. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 27 July, p. 1B.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999e. Once-Heralded Deal to Demolish Projects Now Faces Criticism. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 15 August, p. 1B.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999f. Glenwood Public Housing Demolitions Postponed Once Again. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 18 August, p. 1B.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999g. NAACP Compromises with City on Hollman Demolitions. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 3 September, p. 1B.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999h. Minneapolis Ratifies NAACP Deal on Demolishing Projects. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 18 September, p. 1B.

Diaz, Kevin. 1999i. NAACP Rejects Public Housing Compromise. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 21 September, p. 1B.

Draper, Norman. 1993. Twin Cities' Core Has Worst Poverty Rate for Minorities. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 13 December, p. 1A.

Freeman, Jerry. 1999. Hollman Hits the Fan. *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, 18 August, <http://www.spokesman-recorder.com>.

- Furst, Randy. 1996a. Southeast Asians Protest Housing Demolition. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 30 May, p. 3B.
- Furst, Randy. 1996b. Sharing the Wealth or Cutting Ties? *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 12 July, p. 3B.
- Furst, Randy. 1997. Hmong Ask Judge to Reopen Housing Settlement. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 19 July, p. 3A.
- Furst, Randy. 1999. Dozens Decry Public-Housing Relocation in Protest Outside Minneapolis Agency. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 10 April, p. 6B.
- Goetz, Edward. 1996. The U.S. War on Drugs as Urban Policy. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 20 (3): 539–549.
- Hartman, Chester. 1995. Shelterforce Interview: Roberta Achtenberg. *Shelterforce*, January/February, p. 7.
- Hawkins, Beth. 1999. Let's Break a Deal. *City Pages*, 6 October, p. 8.
- Hollman/North Minneapolis Human Development Coalition. 1998. Minutes from September 2 meeting.
- Hollman Protesters Arrested. 1999. *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, 21 June, p. 1A.
- Hollman: What It's All About. 1999. *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, 7-13 January, p. 1A.
- Inskip, Leonard. 1996. Southeast Asian Council Helping Hmong Prepare for Life after Sumner-Olson. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 27 February, p. 11A.
- Jackson, Kenneth. 1985. *Crabgrass Frontier*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jargowsky, Paul A. 1996. *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Jargowsky, Paul A., and Mary J. Bane. 1991. Ghetto Poverty in the United States, 1970 to 1980. In C. Jencks and P. E. Peterson (eds.). *The Urban Underclass*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Johnson, William C. 1998. *Growth Management in the Twin Cities: The Politics and Performance of the Metropolitan Council*. Minneapolis: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.
- Keating, Larry. 2000. Redeveloping Public Housing: Relearning Urban Renewal's Immutable Lessons. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 66 (4): 384–397.
- Lane, Jeremy. 1999. Legal Aid Funds Explained. *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, 25 February–3 March, p. 3.

## Hollman v. Cisneros

- Lucille's Kitchen Cooks Hollman. 1999. *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, 25 February–3 March, p. 1.
- Mack, Linda. 1995. What Makes a House a Home? *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 27 February, p. 1B.
- Martin, Judith A., and Antony Goddard. 1998. *Past Choices/Present Landscapes: The Impact of Urban Renewal on the Twin Cities*. Minneapolis: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.
- Massey, D. S., and N. A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Massey, Douglas, and Shawn M. Kanaiaupuni. 1993. Public Housing and the Concentration of Poverty. *Social Science Quarterly* 74 (1): 109–122.
- Massey, Douglas S., Andrew B. Gross, and Mitchell L. Eggers. 1990. Segregation, the Concentration of Poverty, and the Life Chances of Individuals. *Social Science Research* 20: 397–420.
- Meyer, Stephen G. 2000. *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Minneapolis Public Housing Authority. 1996. *Action Plan for Redevelopment of the Sumner Field, Glenwood, Lyndale and Olson Public Housing Developments and Adjacent Land in Minneapolis*. Volume 2. Minutes of April 8, 1996 Sumner Field Focus Group. Minneapolis: Minneapolis Public Housing Authority.
- Morrison, Blake. 1995. Projects' Residents Finally See Escape from Roaches, Bullets. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 18 January, p. 1A.
- Popkin, Susan J., George Galster, Kenneth Temkin, Carla Herbig, Diane K. Levy, and Elise Richer. 2000. *Baseline Assessment of Public Housing Desegregation Cases*. Volume 1. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Ricketts, Erol R., and Isabel V. Sawhill. 1988. Defining and Measuring the Underclass. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 7: 316–325.
- Rosenbaum, James E., and Susan J. Popkin. 1990. *Economic and Social Impacts of Housing Integration: A Report to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation*. Evanston, IL: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research.
- Rubinowitz, Leonard S., and James E. Rosenbaum. 2000. *Crossing the Class and Color Lines: From Public Housing to White Suburbia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Seals, Leola. 1999. Hollman, Uncut. *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, 14–20 January, p. 1A.
- Thompson, Timothy. 1996. Promoting Mobility and Equal Opportunity: *Hollman v. Cisneros*. *Journal of Affordable Housing* 5 (3): 237–260.
- U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota, Fourth Division. 1995. Consent decree in *Hollman v. Cisneros*. Civil 4-92-712.

Urban Coalition. 1997. *Relocation and New Housing Study of Summer Field Public Housing Residents in 1996*. Report to the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis. St. Paul, MN: Urban Coalition.

Vang, Tong X., Chou S. Moua, May Vue, Mee Vang, Ka Khang, Cher X. Yang, Yia Thao, and Phia Moua. 1999. Northside Redevelopment Called Secret War: An Open Letter from Hmong Residents of Glenwood-Lyndale. *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, 25–31 March, p. 5C.

Washington, Wayne, and Duchesne Paul Drew. 1995. Home Is Where the Hardship Is. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 26 January, p. 1A.

Watson, Thomas. 2000. Nothing Changed/Everything Changed: Reflections on the Northside Neighbors for Justice and the Affordable Housing Movement in Minneapolis. Unpublished paper.

Wilson, William J. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zeisel, John. 1997. “Resident Housing Preferences: Northside Housing.” Final summary report. Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority.

## **APPENDIX 1**

# **CHRONOLOGY OF NORTH SIDE REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

**1995**

- April *Hollman* consent decree signed  
 December Relocation of first family from Sumner-Olson housing projects

**1996**

- February Phase I (Sumner Field) focus group begins meeting  
 March Phase II (Glenwood, Lyndale, Olson) focus group begins meeting  
 May Southeast Asians protest the planned demolition of Sumner  
 June Phase II focus group votes for “maximum amount of public housing” to go back on-site  
 August Phase I and Phase II focus groups begin to meet jointly  
 August Joint focus group decides on goal of 25% public housing, 25% moderate-income housing, and 50% market-rate housing  
 November Focus group completes its deliberations and votes on final recommendations  
 Relocation of last family from Sumner-Olson housing projects  
 Leola Seals elected president of Minneapolis NAACP

**1997**

- January The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) authorizes demolition of Bryant Highrises; relocation of residents begins  
 March New soil study shows larger area of poor soils, limiting the amount of land available for replacement housing on-site  
 April Urban League releases study of relocation from Sumner Field  
 June Relocation of last family from Bryant Highrises  
 July 100 Hmong submit letter to U.S. District Court Judge Rosenbaum to reopen *Hollman* settlement negotiations  
 September Demolition begins at Olson Townhomes  
 Bryant Highrises demolished  
 October Draft of North Side Action Plan sent to plaintiffs, defendants, and focus group members  
 Sumner demolition delayed by application for historic preservation  
 December Minneapolis City Council approves North Side Action Plan, with amendments

**1998**

- January Legal Aid Society formally objects to the amendments to the North Side Action Plan  
 April Settlement reached on North Side Action Plan  
 North Side Implementation Committee created; begins meeting  
 July Demolition of Sumner Field Townhomes begins  
 August Development objectives created for near north side  
 November Request for Proposals issued for developers of north side site  
 December Northside Neighbors for Justice (NNJ) formed; begins advocacy campaign in opposition to redevelopment plans  
*Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder* begins “The Hollman Forum”



## Hollman v. Cisneros

### 1999

- February Three finalists for north side development chosen  
NNJ makes public Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) internal memo indicating three plaintiffs homeless
- March *Spokesman-Recorder* runs special edition on *Hollman*
- April Opponents of relocation plan rally outside of MPHA offices
- May *Star Tribune* story on Lucy Mae Hollman and her experiences since relocation
- June Opponents protest beginning of demolition of Glenwood-Lyndale projects;  
“Hollman14” arrested  
Mayor suspends demolition at Glenwood-Lyndale projects  
City agrees to step up rate of replacement housing development
- July North Side Implementation Committee recommends increasing housing units from 450 to 750  
Mayor goes to Washington to ask HUD for rehabilitation funds for Glenwood-Lyndale projects, HUD says “no”  
Hollman 14 appear in court, while protesters demonstrate outside  
Rally for Hollman 14
- August NAACP makes public statement in opposition to redevelopment  
Mayor agrees to postpone demolition again to allow NAACP time to prepare legal motion  
NAACP membership votes down compromise that would save Lyndale units, but not Glenwood units
- September Parties reach agreement in Judge Rosenbaum’s office on compromise deal to spare Lyndale units but demolish Glenwood  
City council approves \$300,000 for rehabilitation of Lyndale units, ratifying the compromise deal  
NAACP again votes down compromise deal  
Judge Rosenbaum hears NAACP motion to stop demolition, and rules against it
- October Demolition resumes on Glenwood-Lyndale units

### 2000

- January Developer announces plans for 800 units of new housing on-site
- April Demolition of Glenwood-Lyndale projects completed
- May Relocation of Glenwood and Lyndale families completed
- June Dedication ceremony for redevelopment site