

Community Forum

1960s Street Riots

“Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter “
The decades of the 1960s and 1970s presented Minnesota and the nation with many challenging social, political and economic problems. Some of the events generating those challenges were:

The Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1964-1965

The Street Riots 1965-1970

1968 assinations of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy

1971 Attica Prison Riot

National Response

- ▶ President Lyndon B. Johnson convened a group of civic, business, civil rights, religious, nonprofit and public officials in Washington, D.C. to address the urban crisis.
- ▶ The President urged these leaders to return to their respective communities and form urban coalitions inclusive of the people and their organizations who are directly affected to develop solutions to the problems of race and poverty.

Local Response

- ▶ Minneapolis responded overwhelmingly to the president's call
- ▶ Over 40 people attended the President's convocation
- ▶ Following the President's call for forming urban coalitions a group of 14 Minneapolis top corporate executives formed a steering committee to explore forming an urban coalition
- ▶ The Steering Committee hired T. Williams and Larry Harris to conduct the study
- ▶ Williams and Harris recommend creation of an urban coalition (February 1968)

Minneapolis Urban Coalition

- ▶ The goal of the urban coalition will be to unite and utilize the total resources of our community in attacking the problems of race and poverty
- ▶ Board of director of not less than 60 nor more than 100; only organizations could have a board seat; 1/3 of the board members would represent organizations serving the poor and racial minority communities
- ▶ All board meetings were open to the public
- ▶ Board chair would be a top executive from the founding corporations

Street Riots / Urban Coalition Legacies

- ▶ Major corporations began to change recruitment, promotion and hiring practices (1966)
- ▶ The Way, Inc. (1966)
- ▶ TCOIC/Summit Academy OIC (1966)
- ▶ Pilot City/North Point Wellness Center established (1966)
- ▶ Control Data Corp. locates manufacturing plant in North Minneapolis (1967)
- ▶ American Indian Movement (AIM) established (1968)
- ▶ Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMHC) established (1969)
- ▶ Legal Rights Center established (1970)
- ▶ Metropolitan Economic Development Association (MEDA) established (1971)
- ▶ Operation De Novo established (1971)
- ▶ Project for Pride in Living established (PPL) 1972

Religious Institutions Responses

- ▶ Religious institutions represented on Urban Coalition board
- ▶ American Lutheran Church launched new program initiatives
 - Committee on Inner City Ministries (CICM-1968)
 - Project Summer Hope (1970)
 - Minority Scholarship and Grants Program (1970)

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Value an inclusive process ... find seats at the table for all who want to be a part of the solution
- ▶ Dissatisfaction drives change ... confrontation can be a useful tool
- ▶ Make maximum use of existing resources
- ▶ Build bridges across racial, cultural and socio-economic divides
- ▶ Networking is a critical tool, value and use it often
- ▶ Patience is more than a virtue, it's a necessity ... change can be a slow and tedious process, especially if it is to be sustained
- ▶ Know the difference between the capacity to confront and the capacity to implement and respect it