

# **The Effects of Prostitution on Businesses in North Minneapolis**

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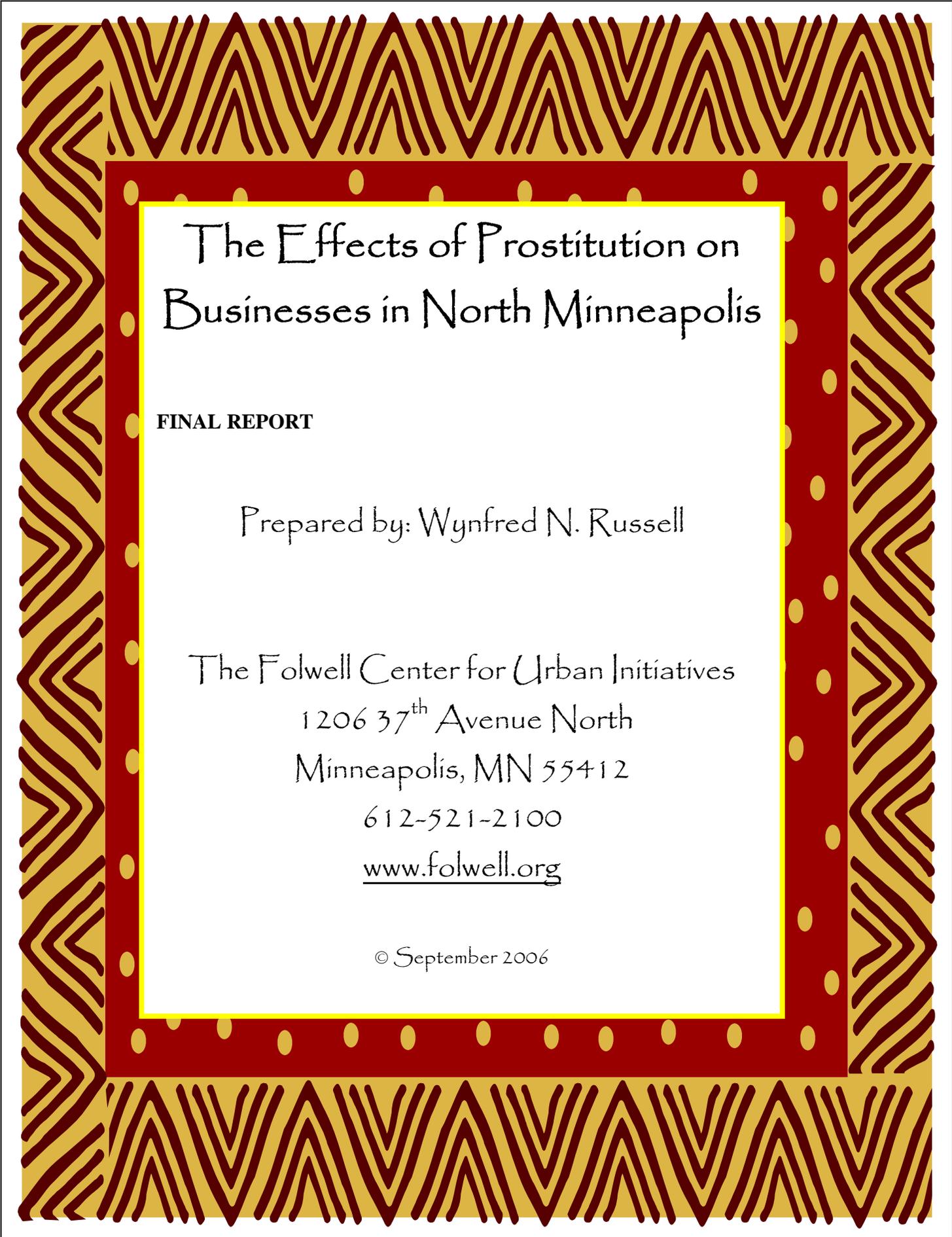
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**FINAL REPORT**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As is often said, prostitution<sup>1</sup> is the oldest profession in the world. Sex workers<sup>2</sup> are trafficked in many other parts of the developed and developing world, but majority of street-based prostitutes are often indigenous to their own environments. According to the Folwell Center for Urban Initiatives and the Minneapolis Police Department Fourth Precinct, there are approximately “30 to 40 habitual prostitutes roaming the streets of North Minneapolis at no specific hours of the day or night, with visible concentration between 4am to 7am and 3pm to 7pm. This is when johns (clients) are known to drive through the area on their way to and from work.”

Street-based prostitution is a growing problem in North Minneapolis, largely concentrated around West Broadway, Penn, Lowry, Emerson, and Lyndale avenues north, and the connecting streets and alleyways. Prostitutes solicit customers while waiting or walking alongside these streets, sometimes dressed in sexually provocative outfits. Often, the prostitute moves about leisurely and waits for their johns to initiate contact. The sex act is usually performed in the client’s vehicle, nearby alley, or behind a building. This type of sex work offers the most freedom while it can sometimes be the least respected and most dangerous form of prostitution. Many prostitutes are homeless or live in unstable housing, and are susceptible to violence, harassment and/or intimidation.

This report examines the tensions and intersections between prostitution and issues related to businesses development in North Minneapolis. The study was conducted from May – August 2006. It identifies and catalogs the devastating effects of prostitution on businesses, the peripheral impact on families. The effects on the entire community of North Minneapolis are also considered, but secondarily.

The report emphasizes the economic bases of prostitution and highlights the strong economic incentives that drive women to enter prostitution, despite the social stigma and danger attached to the work. Prostitution is often better paid than most of the options available to young, often-uneducated women who engage in prostitution. The report stresses that in order to come to terms with the problems of prostitution, it is necessary to view the issue holistically. It argues that the growth of prostitution is probably linked, albeit inadvertently, to the macro-economic policies of the city, which have a tendency to spawn rapid gentrification projects at the expense of the poor and downtrodden. This combined with the pervasive lack of social safety nets and deep-rooted gender discrimination against females; probably contribute to the growth of prostitution on the northside.

This report also seeks to promote reasoned, fact-based, and informed debate regarding street-based prostitution and its adverse effects on the business climate of the catchment's area where the study was conducted. Public discussion of prostitution usually occurs in flashy headlines that are meant to titillate rather than to probe the underlying causes and consequences of policy decisions in depth. We propose recommendations based on programmatic possibilities that can create effective interventions for prostitutes and the broader business, and civic communities.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Prostitution has been widely studied in Minneapolis and many other cities around the world. A large volume of literature covering the intersectionalities between prostitution and stable neighborhoods, but very little is reported about its effect on businesses – the subject of this study – is available (Trumbull, 2001; Edlund & Korn, 2001; and Lim, 1998).

Prostitution, pornography, and other forms of commercial sex are a multibillion-dollar industry. They enrich a small minority of predators, while the larger community is left to pay for the damage (Edlund & Korn, 2001). People used in the sex industry often need medical care as a result of the ever-present violence. They may need treatment for infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, Syphilis, and Gonorrhea (Persell & Fritz, 2000). Survivors frequently need mental health care for post-traumatic stress disorder, psychotic episodes and suicide attempts.

The normalization of prostitution in the humanities and social sciences literature, the tendency to blame the victim of sexual exploitation, and the ways in which racism, drug abuse, violence and poverty are all inextricable parts of prostitution are discussed here. The social invisibility of prostitution needs of women escaping prostitution, and an overview of the criminal justice responses to prostitution are summarized in many of the literature reviewed for this report.

The social sciences have been limited by a failure to adequately articulate the harm of prostitution to women and the larger community in which the prostitutes live. This

prompted Vanwesenbeeck (1994, page 33) to observe: "Researchers seem to identify more easily with clients than with prostitutes..."

Much of what has been written about prostitution says little about its effects on businesses. However, a few studies have noted that prostitution involves a lifelong continuum of sexual exploitation and violence, which begins with sexual assault or prostitution in childhood (Thukral et al, 2003).

Most authors between 1995 and 2001 failed to address the impact of prostitution on the business community, which is the economic engine that drives the community. Instead, there has been an almost exclusive focus on sexually transmitted diseases (STD), especially the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the recent social science literature on prostitution. Although, HIV has certainly created a public health crisis, the violence and crime in prostitution have also resulted in health crises for the prostitutes.

Trumbull writes that prostitution plays an active role in promoting alcohol, drug proliferation, and other societal vices. The community must pay for chemical dependency treatment, intervention programs, health insurance costs and incarceration (2000, page 368).

In addition to these costs, Edlund & Korn maintains, that the community loses the contributions, which might have been made to legitimate business productivity by those that indulge in a life of prostitution. The operators of sex businesses not only do not pay for these expenses, associated with their illegal acts, operate in the informal economy, thus not contributing to the tax base of the community (2001, page 5). No business can afford to create a product for which there are no buyers. The first step in understanding prostitution is to understand the customers, the johns.

Real sexual relationships are not hard to find. There are plenty of adults of both sexes who are willing to have sex if someone treats them well, and asks. But there lies the problem. Some people do not want an equal, sharing relationship. They do not want to be nice. They do not want to ask. They like the power involved in buying a human being who can be made to do almost anything.

The business of prostitution is the use of real human beings to support the fantasies of others. Anyone working in prostitution that tells a "john" too much about who he or she really are interferes with the fantasy. They risk losing a customer, and may get a beating as well. In real relationships with real people, you are stuck with the limitations of who you are, who your partner is, and what you can do together without hurting each other (Murthy, 1999).

Some people do not want real relationships, or feel entitled to something beyond the real relationships they have. They want to play "super stud and sex slave" or whatever, inside their own heads. If they need to support their fantasies with pictures, videotapes, or real people to abuse, the sex trade is ready to supply them. For a price, they can be "a legend in their own minds". The most common type of prostitution customer is the user – john.

He is quite self-centered, and simply wants what he considers to be his “needs met” (Scott, 2002).

The role of the “john” was covered extensively in the literature. According to a number of studies, he would deny any intent to harm anyone, and might even claim some empathy for the sex workers he uses. However, his empathy does not extend to discontinuing his manipulative behavior, or to helping anyone escape from the sex industry. He does not care whether the person he is using is unwilling or unusually vulnerable. He simply feels entitled to whatever he wants, whenever he wants it. If someone is hurt, that is not his problem.

He sees himself as a respectable person, and works to protect that appearance. Users provide a large, safe, and steady income for the pimps and other “businessmen,” of the sex industry.

The sex industry ultimately is about power. This is best demonstrated by the care, which the “pimps” take to ensure that those it uses are powerless. The predators are neither irrational nor stupid. They watch carefully for those that seem weak and vulnerable, and avoid anyone who may be uncontrollable or dangerous (Scott, 2002).

They focus on vulnerable women coming out of families that are abusive, broken, or non-existent. One fundamental function of the family is to protect its members, especially its children. If a member is abused or victimized in anyway, others in the extended family or community must step in to carry on. When one or more adults in a family are absent, addicted, mentally ill, or severely demoralized, the children are in danger (Thukral et al, 2003).

When the family is poor, or part of a devalued minority group and opportunities for education and good jobs are limited, some members of those families may be willing to take risks. Prostitution in North Minneapolis doesn’t occur in a vacuum. It bring along a host of other destructive issues that affect businesses and the outlook of the community in which the businesses operate.

The researchers focus on businesses and institutions in North Minneapolis primarily because prostitution has the greatest contact with business owners and operators and with the community at large. Most prostitutes are economically deprived and vulnerable. Current law enforcement approaches include arrest or giving a summons or desk-appearance ticket, often during the course of police sting operations or sweeps (the practice of arresting all women or all people in a known prostitution area, temporarily removing prostitutes from the street).

However, this Police strategy has been ineffective in riding the North of prostitution. Consequently, the prostitutes and their patrons operate with impunity as law enforcement authorities focus on more serious crimes. As a result businesses have seen their customers avoid shopping at stores on streets that are known to have a high concentration of prostitutes, some business customers have been solicited, prostitutes and johns leave used

condoms and other sex paraphernalia around that business owners have to clean up, all this have had a direct impact on the businesses and their bottom-line. In some cases, some businesses have had to install video surveillance equipment or hire additional security guards to monitor their premises.

Businesses are not alone – families and children in the study area have had to deal with prostitutes conducting their activity near homes, near churches, and near playgrounds and neighborhood parks. This problem is compounded by the fact that Police do not always respond to the complaints of the prostitutes. In some instances, this has led to violence against prostitutes being ignored even when it is reported to Police.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Multiple methods including interviews and ethnography were used in the collection of data for this project. The study utilized a qualitative research methodology, which consisted of 35 diverse businesses and institutions in North Minneapolis within the 55411 and 55412 zip codes (Jordan, Hawthorne, McKinley, and Folwell neighborhoods) that were selected from a broad list<sup>3</sup>. Geographically, this included areas from I-94, west to Penn Avenue north and between Broadway and Dowling avenues north (see Appendix I). Selected interviewees were chosen with cooperating organizations (FNA and the Minneapolis Police Department 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct) that directed researchers to currently active prostitution corridors.

The data used for this study comprised of field notes and transcripts from ethnographic life-history interviews that we conducted with 25 business owners and operators, six women, with four religious leaders, representing two Lutheran churches and two non-denominational congregations. The researchers did do some telephone interviews largely to clarify certain comments or to do follow-ups, when face-to-face meeting could not be arranged. The interviews (see Appendix II for questions asked) were recorded digitally and audio files kept confidentially in a locked cabinet at the FNA offices.

This research project made no efforts to interview sex workers, as this would have been outside the scope of this phase of the study. None of this research pertains to those sectors outside of North Minneapolis.

Interview after interview recorded specific and recurrent patterns of the effect of prostitution on the community that are similar to those reported to the researchers by those who work with this population. We were often able to corroborate some of the specific information given with representatives of several organizations who interact with street sex workers in North Minneapolis on a daily basis.

Most every interview was taped, except three respondents who didn't want their voices recorded; however, each interviewee signed a consent form (see Appendix III). Although the sample size was small, the researchers were consistently told very similar things from subjects with very different demographic profiles. This supports a conclusion that the information presented here is indicative of the general situation of street-based

prostitution. Additionally, business owners and operators were able to corroborate some of the information we received and attest to the general reliability of the respondents. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations made based on the information given by respondents, including service providers and religious leaders.

## **FINDINGS SUMMARY**

### **Demographics**

Out of the 35 businesses interviewed, 5 were African American, 3 were African immigrant, 10 were Caucasian American, 13 were Asian and of mixed heritage, and 4 business owner/operators declined to answer the questions.

29 respondents were men and 6 of who were women.

All subjects were in age ranging from 18 to 55 years old.

### **Business Mix**

Out of the 35 businesses contacted to participate in the study, 3 were big national chains, 2 were liquor stores, 5 were restaurants/take-outs, 1 was a hardware store, 1 was a coffee shop, 2 were beauty salons, 3 were churches, 14 were convenience/corner stores, 2 were gas stations, and 1 was a barber shop.

Among the many reasons identified by business owners and operators about why the city should be concerned about street-based prostitution, and supported by literature are:

### **Moral Issues**

Prostitution offends some citizens' moral standards.

Prostitution is a nuisance to shoppers, passersby and to residents and businesses.

Prostitutes and clients offend uninvolved people in the area when they solicit them.

Children expose to the sex peddling may become prostitutes.

### **Public Health Issues**

Prostitutes and clients may spread sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Used condoms, syringes and other paraphernalia left on the ground are unsightly and potentially hazardous.

Prostitutes who are often homeless and do not have access to proper facilities may urinate, defecate or bathe in public.

### **Personal Safety Issues**

Clients may harm prostitutes.

Clients may be assaulted, robbed or defrauded.

Pimps may financially and physically exploit prostitutes.

### **Spillover Effect Issues**

Street prostitution and street-based drug dealing are often linked.

Prostitution may provide the seedbed for organized crime.

Prostitutes create parking and traffic problems where they congregate.

Prostitution attracts strangers and criminals to a neighborhood.

### **Economic Issues**

Businesses lose customers who refuse to shop in area due to prostitution.

The presence of prostitutes negatively affects the area economy, reducing property values and limiting property use.

Financial burden to businesses that have to clean up after prostitutes and their clients, or have to purchase surveillance equipment, or have to pay for extra security.

### **Civil Rights Issues**

Prostitutes, as citizens, have rights that need to be protected.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

The findings indicate that there are many challenges facing businesses relative to prostitution, crime, panhandling, drugs, homelessness, robbery, shoplifting, and inadequate Police response in North Minneapolis. It shows that there are substantial issues related to business-client relationships, particularly African American clientele versus business owners, who are predominately Asian or white. All of the issues presented in this report were gleaned from interviews and conversations with business owners, operators, head of institutions, and other stakeholders in the project area.

Survey participants indicated the kinds of programs they believe are feasible to resolving the challenges found. The strategies can be streamlined to include: developing a positive relationship between business owners, community members, religious leaders, city and law enforcement authorities. Many people see prostitution as a reprehensible phenomenon that needs to be reversed. This view is especially common among older business owners and operators. They believe that prostitutes do not want to work, and that they refuse to make the sacrifices that society demands. It is difficult for those who have played by the rules to see the younger generations abandon their education and jobs for prostitution. A convenient store operator said, "These women do not have to turn to prostitution. This is America. There is food, there is clothing, and there is medicine. They are not the best food or clothes, but prostitution is never necessary."

Others were more ambivalent. The constant fight for business survival and economic success, in the face of increasing city taxes, has blurred their opinions of right and wrong. Some business owners were more apt to calling the Police at the sight of anything remotely illegal taking place in the neighborhood, while others were more empathetic about the plight of the women. In the past, a network of neighborhood informants deterred much illegal activity. Today, however, the vast majority of the population turns a blind eye to prostitution and other social ills gradually eating up North Minneapolis. The city government is not seen as the provider for the people, but as the hand that takes away. Some business operators understand the need to engage in prostitution activity to survive, and even the Police response is shady at best, and poor at worse. With a crime 'pandemic' in North Minneapolis, prostitution is not seen as a priority by some business owners/operators, and many citizens, for that matter, prefer that the Police tackle what is generally perceived as more serious crimes.

Prostitution is not only the concern of businesses and its impact on the bottom-line; children are also being affected. To the extent children benefit from living with their parents in North Minneapolis, they suffer from prostitution. The children are exposed to and witnessed sex workers conduct their activity in alleyways near their homes. One rather disturbing finding is how prostitution has infiltrated the innocence of the children at a church-run after school program on Lowry Avenue north to the point where it is part of their weekly conversations. The young head pastor of the church avouched: “When they [children] see the women, they know who they are and they know which ones are prostitutes and they talk about it. They have asked about it, sometimes, they tease each other. They tell their friends, you are going to grow up and do that [point to the prostitute on the street].”

Many stakeholders find it difficult to condemn prostitution; they see the women as victims, or suffering from a malady that needs to be cured, but not scorn. The few religious leaders and pastors we interviewed largely shared this view, even though in a few cases they have witnessed prostitute’s propositioned worshippers from the steps of the church. Prostitution is just another way of survival. A middle-aged beauty salon operator conveyed this attitude: “Those women aren’t prostitutes. They are fighters! They are fighting to help their families.”

Some respondents prefer to view prostitution as a "lifestyle choice," or even an "addiction" to a lifestyle. They think most people in the sex industry are there to support their drug habits, when actually the drugs are used to cope with what is happening to prostitute lives. Some business owners and operators assume that nothing can be done to help the women, so there is no need to try.

Moreover, macro development policies in North Minneapolis also contribute to the proliferation of prostitution. The virtual disintegration of the public sector, lack of viable employment, crime, the "ghettoization" of female labor in poorly paid, low-wage service-industry work has contributed to the "feminization" of poverty amongst the economically disadvantaged women of the northside.

Public health concerns have also played into the view of prostitution. Prostitution is commonly viewed to aid the spread of venereal diseases, including HIV/AIDS. This is also substantiated by data analyzed by Thukral et al (2003, pages 72 – 73) that suggests drugs, alcohol, financial matters; unstable homes and personal motivation all have an impact on whether the sex worker will practice safer sex<sup>4</sup>. However, contrary to popular belief, prostitution has not been demonstrated to be a primary means of HIV transmission, at least not in the United States, largely because most street prostitution sex acts are oral rather than vaginal (oral transmission is less likely), most prostitutes insist that clients use condoms (less true of drug-dependent prostitutes), and transmission is more difficult from female to male. Of course, fear of contracting HIV has likely changed the sex practices of some prostitutes and clients. HIV transmission among prostitutes is more likely to occur from sharing needles for drug use<sup>5</sup>.

Sex for money is so common in portions of North Minneapolis that many ordinary women are mistaken for prostitutes. A female business operator reported being propositioned by a balding man with a \$50 bill at the bus stop between Lowry and Penn. She said, with eyes rolled back, “The majority of us are not as you think”. Any single woman that enters an establishment in the study area is likely be propositioned.

After leaving Broadway Dollar and Tobacco, a female hailed a taxi and asked what the fare was. The driver responded, “The better question is how much do you charge?” The emergence of prostitution ultimately is symptomatic of deeper changes in Minneapolis: namely, the socio-economic disparity.

Trumbull 2001, Edlund & Korn 2001, and O’Leary & Howard 2001 suggest that society offers help to people in trouble largely based on the value set on that person. It is much easier, many minority respondents believe, to get help for a married, white, English-speaking, Judeo-Christian, middle class, domestic violence victim, than, say a prostitute. Nevertheless, the face of prostitution on the northside cuts across racial and ethnic demarcations, but prostitutes do share socio-economic backgrounds – they are poor.

Many of the respondents complained about the problems they face as a result of prostitution, including helplessness, anxiety, customer complaint, lack of effective city policy, and extreme frustration and desperation at levels that are far worse than seem to exist in the general population. According to the subjects, “these problems are significant factors underlying the continued presence of this population on the streets.” The majority of respondents also reported Police concentration on what is perceived as more serious crimes than on prostitution.

The researchers also faced resistance from a number of businesses in participating in the survey. A few viewed the researchers as an extension of city government or the Police, even after emphatically explaining our role. Others expressed research-fatigue from being study and research over and over by various groups to produce an academic paper that they see has to real benefits to the community, thus they refused to be interviewed for the project.

Other expectations that were highlighted included strategies to mitigate the prevalence of street-based prostitution in the study-area corridor by providing programs for sex workers. Among stakeholders, the perceptions range from fair to poor the interest of the Police or city planners to design transformative programs. Most businesses interviewed put strong emphasis on succinct strategies for service delivery or for community-based agencies (including faith-based organizations) to administer such efforts tied to measurable outcomes. Analysis of the findings showed some reluctance and even remonstrance among many business owners and operators to solving the important prostitution challenges facing North Minneapolis. They prefer to see the city do more, like funding more foot or bicycle-patrol Police officers.

## **INTERVENTIONS PROPOSED**

The following interventions are based on findings derived from this study, including the recommendations made by the business owners and operators. They address ways to achieve humane and realistic treatment of street-based sex workers in North Minneapolis. The interventions proposed run the gamut from liberal, moderate to outright conservative approaches to solving prostitution in North Minneapolis.

It is critical to create funding streams at the federal, state, and local government levels, and to allocate funding to support law enforcement initiatives and community-centered interventions.

**Police should enforce laws prohibiting soliciting, patronizing and loitering for the purposes of prostitution.** The Police should use available laws and ordinances on the books to control street prostitution are enforcing laws prohibiting soliciting, patronizing and loitering for the purposes of prostitution.

**Establish a robust law enforcement presence in study area.** A visible Police presence, including alternative patrols will discourage prostitution. That the area is unsafe. A strong Police presence will serve as a confidence-building approach. Private security guards could also be deployed to supplement Minneapolis Police officers.

**Increase fines/penalties for prostitution-related offenses.** The penalty enhancements are intended to dislodge street prostitution from the neighborhood.

**Educate sex workers and client populations.** Design intervention programs to provide life-skills development training for prostitutes, while sending a stern warning to the “johns” and “pimps” to desist from the practice.

**Mediating conflicts between prostitutes and business owners.** Street prostitutes have responded positively in several communities where the police and community have requested that they stay away from certain areas or reduce their nuisance behavior in exchange for some tolerance. Many business owners and operators said they would volunteer their time, if asked, to working on anti-prostitution initiatives.

**Expose johns and pimps to the public.** Shame the johns and pimps by disseminating the pictures to the general public. This can be done by photographing or videotaping clients, calling clients' families or employers, writing down license plate numbers of vehicles seen picking up prostitution, mailing warning letters or postcards to registered vehicle owners, or posting clients' names or photographs on street posts, billboards, telephone hotline fliers, and Internet sites. In high traffic area, use closed-circuit TV cameras to discourage potential clients from indulging in any kind of illegal acts.

**Helping prostitutes to quit. Street prostitutes typically need help if they are to quit prostitution.** Prostitutes often need drug and alcohol treatment, mental health care,

transitional housing, case management, peer support/mentoring, child care, job training, health care, confidential HIV and STD testing, psychological counseling, transportation, self-defense training, legal aid, and employment assistance. Although these programs may not necessarily persuade many prostitutes to quit, they seem essential to business owners and operators for those who maybe motivated to do so, and they can be effective in reducing some of the risks to street prostitutes, such as sexually transmitted disease and assault.

**Divert traffic, close streets and alleys or regulate parking.** Traffic flow and patterns influence potential clients' perceptions about their chances of negotiating a transaction and their risks of getting caught.

**Conduct sting operation.** The respondents say that the Police should conduct more stings and sweep operations. However, Sweeps have long been a police strategy to control street prostitution, particularly when they have few legal alternatives for dealing with the problem, yet be pressured to do something about it. There is little evidence that sweeps are anything other than temporarily effective at removing prostitutes from the street, and they do considerable harm to the integrity of the criminal justice system. It is not uncommon for police to arrest innocent people during sweeps.

**Create transitional housing.** Such specific shelters for prostitutes should be able to house residents for extended periods, with shelter staff assisting residents in finding and moving into permanent long-term housing. It is critical that this population, because they often operate at such a low threshold, has a safe place where they will not feel stigmatized and which will ultimately allow them to move into permanent housing. The shelters must provide on-site counselors who can concurrently provide case management and multiple services. By meeting their accommodation needs, shelters may remove the financial burden associated with short-stay accommodation and thus reduce the incentive to engage in prostitution.

**Collaboration.** Police should collaborate and partner with community-based organizations to utilize their contacts with prostitutes as an opportunity for referral to appropriate services. Rather than arrest a street-based prostitute, Police should have resources available, so they can send the prostitute to a home-based program for treatment. Community and faith-based entities can be valuable partners in such programs. These services can be modeled on Police liaison programs and domestic violence precinct programs that incorporate victim advocacy into the Police process.

**Case management and allied services.** Create a comprehensive case management and direct services for street-based prostitutes. Significant services include substance abuse treatment; mental health and counseling/support; job training; money management; HIV/STD testing; and healthcare. It is critical to address all the issues in an integrated, intensive and long-term manner, combined with long-term and permanent housing.

## CONCLUSION

This report shows that street-based prostitution has a significant effect on businesses and families in North Minneapolis, including but not limited to:

- High business overhead due to costs associated with controlling prostitution;
- Children or families proximity to prostitution; and
- Lack of housing and intensive supporting services, which could assist sex workers.

The failure to address these problems is an obstacle to the goal of finding a long-term, viable, and humane solution to the problems that face street-based sex workers in North Minneapolis that in turn directly affects the business climate. Current policy and law enforcement efforts are not effective, as indicated by the prevalence of the problem. At best, Police temporarily remove people from the street and garner headlines. Only targeted and substantial programs will accomplish the goals of making the streets safe for everyone, thus increasing business traffic in the study area.

Not every business leader or advocate in the project area agrees that prostitution represents a priority among those in the greatest need, or minimizing the proliferation of violent crimes, especially during the current citywide fiscal crisis. However, the city administration, Police, churches, and residents in the study neighborhoods continue to prioritize control of street-based sex workers (either directly or through quality of life initiatives.)

While the data in this report cannot be generalized to the entire population of businesses and institutions in North Minneapolis, the similarities in the respondents' interviews and the fact that their reports are reinforced and echoed by statements of community advocates and residents, gives the researchers confidence that the data presented may reflect systemic phenomena.

Unfortunately, the methods chosen, involving a cycle of arrests and ticketing, consume Police, court and other government resources but fail to create any appropriate long-term solution. Furthermore, to the extent that law enforcement responds to neighborhood resident's complaints about street-based prostitution and want people off the streets, this goal should be balanced against the harm done by sweeps and carried out in a way that is humane and will support people who currently live on the margins of society to move into self-sufficiency.

Street-based sex workers are a marginalized, transient, and difficult-to-reach population, they urgently need help in the form of properly case-managed, intensive and seamless services spanning such areas as substance abuse treatment; mental health and counseling/support; job training; money management; and healthcare. They also need long-term, stable housing situations. But many prostitutes are reluctant to seek help, because of the stigma associated with prostitution, or because services are not flexible and tailored to their specific needs. Prostitutes also may not see themselves as ready for

services because of their problems with substance dependency, or they may lack confidence that any change in their lifestyle might improve their situation.

In addition to their needs with respect to housing, health and other related issues; street-based sex workers also have specific legal needs that must be addressed in order to create stable lives, especially with respect to criminal and child welfare issues. As a population, they generally lack knowledge of the law and of how to pursue their legal rights. Street-based sex workers have limited job opportunities outside of sex work, and almost no access to employment that offers a living wage. The majority of subjects had held many different jobs in the past, and the majority of those respondents cited unlivable wages in other work. Other occupations held by subjects were usually low-paid, entry-level positions that did not provide enough money to live. Choice of street-based sex work is an aspect of a broader issue of economic justice and the lack of real economic options for earning a living wage among people from economically marginalized communities.

From our interviews with business owners and operators, including religious leaders, respondents reported that “pimp” relationships, have all the basic ingredients of women living in situations of domestic violence, where the “pimp” exerts enormous psychological control the prostitute. Such control may make it difficult for prostitutes who work on the street in organized networks to access and take advantage of services. Based on this finding, arrest does not appear to be the most useful intervention to get prostitutes off the street. Rather, it is more appropriate and effective to treat prostitutes as other victims of domestic violence (O’Leary & Howard, 2001).

In order to address the problem of street-based prostitution’s effect on the businesses of North Minneapolis, it is critical that the city explores and devises policies that offer an alternative to the current cycle of interdiction. Favoring and expanding more program interventions where street-based prostitutes are empowered to come forward when they need help, and where this marginalized population can have a sustained opportunity to abandon prostitution. Prostitutes will restore their dignity, the community will be come wholesome, and businesses will thrive.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix I – coverage map

Appendix II

### Interview Questions

1. How widespread do you believe prostitution is in North Minneapolis?
2. Do you see prostitution in or near your business?

3. How many women, men and youth do you believe are involved in prostitution?
4. How do you as a business owner/worker feel about prostitution?
5. How do you think the Police can help you?
6. How does prostitution impact the community of North Minneapolis?
7. Are you willing to work with the community and law enforcement on the issue of prostitution?
8. What are law enforcement and community organizations doing right and what can they do to improve the situation?
9. How does prostitution affect your customers?
10. How does prostitution affect your business?

### Appendix III

#### **CONSENT FORM**

##### North Minneapolis Prostitution Research Project

You are invited to be in a research study about prostitution in North Minneapolis. You were selected as a possible participant because you work, live, or own a business in North Minneapolis. We are interested in the ways prostitution impacts your life and your community. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Lauren Martin of Folwell Center for Urban Initiatives is supervising this study. Ms. Martin has a Ph.D. in Anthropology and is dedicated to working in community activism. Wynfred Russell, a researcher provided by the Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization at the University of Minnesota (NPCR), will assist her. Mr. Russell is a trained community researcher/advocate and a graduate student at the University of Minnesota.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is to best understand the impact of prostitution activity on the North Minneapolis Community. Your insight will help neighborhood organizations and community stakeholders plan and react to this issue to best serve the community as a whole.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to:

- Complete the interview. This will take approximately 10 – 15 minutes, depending on how long you feel like talking and how much you have to say.
- If necessary we can schedule a follow-up interview.
- Allow us to digitally record the interview.
- Interview notes and tapes will be completely anonymous, and will not contain your name or any identifying information.

**Compensation:**

In exchange for your time, you will be offered refreshment during the interview process.

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records, including notes and digital recordings, will be stored in a locked file cabinet and all digital data will be in password-protected files, and erased once they are transcribed.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Folwell Center for Urban Initiatives, Folwell Neighborhood Association, or any other agency or group associated with this research project. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time with out affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researchers conducting this study are: Lauren Martin and Wynfred Russell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Ms. Martin at Folwell Neighborhood Association, 612-521-2100. Mr. Russell can be reached at 612-554-0134 or via email: wynfred@umn.edu.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records if you would like.*

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> From Webster dictionary, we learn that prostitution is the “act or practice of engaging in sexual intercourse for money; the act or practice of engaging in promiscuous sexual relations especially for monetary gain.”

<sup>2</sup> Sex worker is a term used to refer to all aspects of the legal and illegal sex industry. In this report, however, the term sex worker and prostitute are used interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> We received a broad list of all businesses and institutions, including churches in North Minneapolis from a database provided by Folwell Neighborhood Association, but we narrowed the list to include businesses and institutions in our research focus area.

<sup>4</sup> Contributing to the knowledge base that HIV/AIDS is prevalence among prostitutes is a “Sex Workers Assessment Project: A HIV Prevention Needs Assessment of Sex Workers in the Twin Cities, December 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Weitzer, R. (ed.) (2000). *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry*. New York: Routledge.