

Commons Avenue, S.W.

When it opened on July 11, 1968, Campau Commons was Grand Rapids' first low-income housing project. The project was intended to be centered around the Campau Park School and recreation area, including the large above-ground circular public swimming pool. When completed in the early 1970's, it had taken up much of the former Campau Park with its walkways and gardens; completely vacated Ionia Avenue between Franklin and Albany, all of Agnew Avenue and Ryerson Street, and Antoine, Delaware, and most of Albany west of Ionia; and further eliminated all the buildings on the west side of Division from Franklin to Albany, on the south side of Franklin west of Division, on the north side of Albany, and on all the remaining portions of Antoine and Delaware Streets. The project's townhouses, duplexes, and single units were all poorly built, and quickly came to be regarded by many as a slum. The homes were addressed on Division Avenue, Franklin Street, Antoine Street, and Commons Avenue, a new north-south thoroughfare connecting Antoine and Delaware west of the old Ionia Avenue. A few tenants were long-time residents, and Campau Commons was home to some 350 people in 112 households. They were gradually moved out in the first part of 2006, and the old project was demolished in the late summer of that year. Completion of a newly developed Campau Commons was anticipated for November, 2007. It was to include 60 townhouses, 32 duplexes, a new community center, and an expanded park.