

**Recap of East Downtown Council's Business Forum**  
**Thursday, November 21, 2013**  
**11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**  
**Best Western Normandy Inn, 405 South 8th Street**  
**Downtown West Neighborhood of Minneapolis**

- ***Welcome and introductions***

EDC President Dan Collison introduced himself, welcomed the audience to the November business forum, and explained that the EDC is an organization committed to the economic vitality of the East Downtown District [this area is comprised of the neighborhoods of Elliot Park, Downtown East, and Mill District that is located within the greater Downtown East].

Then on behalf of the EDC board, Dan extended gratitude to the Normandy Inn and its team for providing space and hospitality for the forum, the EDC member businesses, and the three newest members — National Association of Minority Contractors, Brick Development Business and Real Estate Investment, and The Mill City Clinic.

Dan explained that today's forum topic "Envisioning Downtown Minneapolis in 2025" represents an important partnership with the Minneapolis Downtown Council and demonstrates how the EDC leadership is reaching out to become a more integrated and collaborating organization with the other key stakeholders in downtown. What the EDC membership base will begin experiencing in the coming months is introductions to and involvement with all that is going on in the entire downtown. Of course, the Minneapolis Downtown Council has a reputation for being a very important stakeholder in the business community and, therefore, is important to the EDC.

Thereafter, the audience was asked to introduce themselves.

Then to exemplify the importance of today's topic, Dan read an excerpt from the *Star Tribune's* September 2013 four-part series entitled "Growing Minneapolis" (for the full text of his excerpt visit <http://www.startribune.com/opinion/editorials/222748561.html>). There is this sense of incredible optimism at this moment and time that Dan believes is due to downtown organizations partnering together around the best ideas. The 2025 Plan is one of those best ideas.

- ***Downtown 2025 Plan Initiative: End Street Homelessness***

Mikkel Beckman, the new Director of the Office to End Homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County and Chair of the 2025 Plan Committee to End Street Homelessness recalled a time in Minneapolis when there were no homeless shelters, certainly not family shelters or a situation like last night where there were literally 2,200 men, women and children in a shelter system that they've been operating as a community since 1980.

Beckman explained that the Office to End Homelessness does have a business plan to end homelessness in the community called Heading Home Hennepin and they are in year 7 of the 10-year plan. A lot of people have been working very diligently on this business plan and it has five major strategic goals and a lot of benchmarks that call for all types of interventions they think are the effective ones, the right ones to do and they continue to move ahead with this plan.

In addition, the downtown community has come up with a wonderful vision for downtown Minneapolis that encompasses all sorts of great ideas, one of which is that they can be the first city in North America to end street homelessness. When he refers to the homelessness, they are those who don't access shelters who live pretty much outside. And there's also a subset of people who choose not to enter a shelter and choose not to get up and go after what they need off the street. These people will be the focus of his discussion today.

Americans tend to look at the topic of homelessness through three lenses: sin, sickness or system. But

Martha Burt, the leading researcher on homelessness in the U.S., says that homelessness exists because of the mismatch of a person's resources with the availability of housing they can afford. But this occurs only about a third of the time and speaks to the resiliency we have as human beings to take care of our problems. So homelessness doesn't happen to everybody, it happens to people with very low income, a personal vulnerability or a crisis of some kind and is a very fluid situation. Housing is the platform and the solution to homelessness. The reason that homelessness exists is our community and around the U.S. is because of a market failure for the lowest income people, i.e., households that earn \$15,000 and less.

Because the Minneapolis Downtown Council has a vision and plan to live in a community free of street homelessness, a Committee to End Homelessness was formed. For more information on its charter, scope, impact on the downtown community and their success-to-date, read Beckman's 19-page Ending Street Homelessness slide presentation.

Beckman believes that his committee has done a pretty good job of drawing out solutions from business people, people of faith, social service providers, and people experiencing homelessness. They know how to end homelessness and hope you support them. They are looking toward victories in the coming year and hope there are opportunities for you to engage in this work. Thereafter, he responded to questions from the audience.

Dan advised that he has been told that Hennepin County and Beckman's leadership and other stakeholders have led some of the finest coordinated efforts to end homelessness in the country so there is much to commended and much more work to be done. Part of the business community in understanding and engaging in this is why we appreciate the efforts of the 2020 Plan by the business community and the Minneapolis Downtown Council to enfold all aspects of the city.

- ***Downtown 2025 Plan Initiative: Downtown Development***

Dan reported that Colin Barr, Chair of the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District, was unable to attend but will be invited back to give a presentation. Then he presented the 33-page slide presentation regarding the development and initiatives of the 2025 Plan. It flowed from the 2010 Plan that included outcomes related to enhancing the skyway system, increasing the downtown population, the Hiawatha LRT corridor, and new cultural assets (the Guthrie, upgrades to the Walker, relocation of the MacPhail, etc.). This has all been due to the business community working together with an array of other stakeholders on the 2010 Plan, a complete community effort.

The ideas that are now in play involve this notion of live, work and play. The community is organizing around a major rethinking on how the whole hub works to create place-making, to create a sense of cohesion that you're drawn into and seeing it as a part of the whole, about developing meaningful density.

Dan hopes that as the 2025 Plan is talked about the audience can nest it within a broader understanding of what it is.

- ***Conclusion***

Dan thanked Beckman for his presentation and reminded the audience that the next business forum is scheduled for Thursday, December 19th at the Guthrie Theater. The topic will be "Envisioning Downtown Minneapolis in 2025 Part Two: Development" and will feature both Mike Ryan and Rick Collins of Ryan Companies.