

**Recap of East Downtown Council's Business Forum**  
**Thursday, January 21, 2016**  
**11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**  
**Day Block Brewing Company, 1105 Washington Avenue South**  
**Downtown East Neighborhood of Minneapolis**

- **Welcome and Introductions**

EDC President Paul Mellblom welcomed the audience to the January business forum, advised he is a principal at MRS Design, and thanked board member Jeff Hahn of Day Block Brewing for hosting. There is a bevy of activity and big projects being developed that will bring a lot more people to the East Downtown district. The EDC itself is very busy due to all that is changing in the district and strives to remain relevant to its membership by deliberating over its strategic priorities for 2016. Mellblom then encouraged the audience to forward their thoughts about what these priorities should be to him or Executive Director Dan Collison at [info@edcmpls.org](mailto:info@edcmpls.org).

Thereafter, the audience was asked to introduce themselves.

Mellblom explained that the EDC derives its strength from its membership and is hoping to grow it even more in order to have a larger voice and be able to represent a broader coalition of businesses within the district.

Collison then thanked and acknowledged the EDC's platinum sponsors:

- Allied Parking
- CenterPoint Energy
- ESG Architects
- Hennepin County Medical Center
- Kraus-Anderson
- Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge
- Minnesota Vikings
- Mortenson Construction
- NRG Energy Center
- PadillaCRT
- Ryan Companies
- Valspar
- Wells Fargo

Collison explained that membership on the EDC is incredibly affordable: \$50 for an individual, \$200 for a small business, and it tiers up from there. His prior pitch was it's as affordable as a nice bottle of wine or as expensive as a cheap wedding dress. Now he needed to update it to be as affordable as an average roundtrip airline ticket to another Midwestern state, or as expensive as a 1999 Buick LeSabre custom car with 164,000 miles. These memberships really make a difference in what the EDC is able to accomplish and its partnership with the Minneapolis Downtown Council is a key way in which Collison is able to stay engaged with the other activities occurring in downtown.

- **Announcements**

Collison announced that now through the April 2016 annual meeting, any new memberships received will remain in effect through the end of the 2016-2017 season and encouraged the audience to reach out to their business colleagues to take advantage of this

early offering. Board member Chris Fleck is chairing the Membership, Marketing and Communication Committee and is available to answer any questions.

As part of the MMC Committee's work, they will begin a quarterly digital newsletter to highlight members' activities, e.g., Izzy's Ice Cream's "13 Days of Giving" (<http://edcmpls.org/izzys-ice-cream-announces-13-days-of-giving-fundraiser/>). Owner Jeff Sommers then described their 3-year program. For the first 13 days in February, they partner with a different nonprofit each day and when a cone is purchased, \$2 is donated to that specific nonprofit. The first year \$3,500 was raised, and last year about \$5,000 was raised, and they hope to raise even more this year. Sommers and his wife, Lara, choose about half of the organizations, staff chooses some and then there's a lottery for the remainder.

Collison encouraged the audience to forward their events to be included on the digital newsletter and highlighted at the monthly business forums.

- **Upcoming Events**

- The EDC's business forum on February 18th at the 1010 Building. The topic will be *Security Considerations for 21st Century Businesses* with featured speaker Glenn Sanders, Protective Security Advisor for the Department of Homeland Security, Minneapolis (Minnesota) District.

Hamse Warfa, founder and principal of Tayo Consulting Group LLC, was invited to bring his perspective on how the business community in the West Bank and largely Ward 6 are addressing the misconceptions and concerns about the Somali community because there have been both national and local conversations about this topic and the Somali community.

- The Minneapolis Downtown Council's 60th annual meeting on February 2nd at the Minneapolis Hilton (<http://www.downtownmpls.com/>).
- The Skyway Open's 10th annual golf tournament from Friday, February 26th through Sunday, February 28th whose proceeds will benefit the 2025 Plan's Committee to End Street Homelessness (<http://www.skywayopen.org/#skyway-open>).
- The MacPhail Center for Music's Winter Wonderland Music Party on Saturday, January 24th (<http://www.macphail.org/events/ecm-winter-wonderland-music-party/>).
- The Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association's Future of Tailgating Community Feedback Session on January 26th at Open Book. The stadium is coming fast and the next game the Vikings play will be there. The EDC will be very engaged in this narrative and was told by Michele Kelm-Helgren there will be a month of festivities including free tours.

Kelm-Helgren will be presenting on this at the EDC's business forum in March and it would be nice to have one of EDC's forums there in the 2016-2017 season.

- Webster Elementary School's Open House on Saturday, January 30th (<http://webster.mpls.k12.mn.us/>). Day Block Brewing is important for all of the public spaces in downtown.

- **Development Spotlight**

Collison explained the purpose of this segment of the business forum is to introduce the membership to leading developments that will have an impact on the district. There's a lot going on in East Downtown and it's getting a lot of news coverage and the EDC is trying to stay ahead of the curve. Although the Armory redevelopment was advertised (<http://www.startribune.com/armory-in-downtown-minneapolis-sold-to-developer-who-plans-events-venue/311488901/>), certain development issues have to be addressed before they can come and present and they will do so once those issues are resolved.

Today's spotlight will be about the Hennepin County Medical Center's (HCMC) Ambulatory Outpatient Specialty Center (AOSC) with Tom Hayes, Director of Public Relations and Marketing, and Nick Balagurchik, AOSC Project Executive Lead (<http://www.mortenson.com/minneapolis/projects/hennepin-county-medical-center-ambulatory-outpatient-specialty-center>).

Hayes led off by explaining HCMC has a downtown presence as well as a community presence in primary care clinics on East Lake Street and in the Whittier Neighborhood, and in the suburban communities of Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Golden Valley, Richfield, and St. Anthony. The big downtown presence is a campus of 46 clinics and specialty services spread over nine building that they lease or own in East Downtown. For patients this is challenging because there are five entrances to the campus and they have to work hard to navigate patients to the right building and to the right floor for their clinical care. The solution to this is the \$220 million Ambulatory Outpatient Specialty Center building to be erected on the block bordered by 8th and 9th Streets and Park and Chicago Avenues directly to the south of its Emergency Department at 730 South 8th Street. This will enable services and specialties to be centralized and consolidated down to 26 clinics that are accessible for people who need a quick visit to their doctor with close parking and skyway access.

Balagurchik thanked HCMC's community partners who have supported this project; it has been in the making for a long time and it's finally happening. Using a slide presentation, he showed pictures of the demolition, and exterior and interior images of the 6-story, 377,000 square foot new building. The overall design will bring in more light into the spaces; a more welcoming environment than the traditional dark corridors. A team center design concept has been incorporated with providers, support staff and interpreters for efficiency. It will have two levels of underground parking for patients and their family only. There will be a skyway, as well as a tunnel under 8th Street, connection to the main campus.

Services offered include: primary and specialty care; physical and occupational therapy; cancer center with radiation therapy; outpatient imaging center; and women's imaging. There will also be pharmacy and a café with outdoor seating (an RFP will go out for this tenant).

- **Pathways to Places**

Collison introduced the featured speakers by reading biographies of each: Kjersti Monson,

Director of Long Range Planning at Minneapolis CPED; and Jennifer Ringold, Deputy Superintendent at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Then he emphasized the importance of this process and how fortunate we are to have their competent leadership in helping to set the priorities for generations to come for what our public spaces will become.

**A. Downtown Public Realm Framework**

Kjersti Monson thanked Collison for the invitation and advised they are getting ready to issue their DPRF for public comment. Since it a new document, she explained how it evolved by using a slide presentation (reference East Downtown Council Briefing dated January 21, 2016).

The City's Long Range Planning Division (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/lrp/index.htm>) is organized into five geographic planning sectors, i.e.: East, Downtown, South, North, Southwest and a principal planner for each sector. Beth Elliott is the Principal Planner for Downtown.

In the last couple years, they began to organize around five core functions: research; data services and civic technology; planning; urban design; and public art. These functions are what brought them to where they are today; let's start thinking in qualitative terms about the goals that we want to achieve to be more livable and technological. The two new core functions are civic technology and urban design.

Civic technology is a developing function focused on data and technology issues in municipal planning, and it supports all four of the division's functions and serves as a liaison to the City's Information Technology Department.

Urban design is to contribute professional expertise in architecture, landscape architecture, sustainability, and graphic visualization to advance the City's goals in shaping a livable, equitable and vibrant City. The first product of this process is the DPRF, the first of its kind and one among other tools being developed to guide development of collective space.

Monson then noted the following key points:

- The DPRF is intended to facilitate collaborative action of public and private actors;
- The City and Park Board are collaborating on a holistic vision, but the City document and the Park Board documents are separate and each entity retains it's own authority;
- The DPRF is being internally reviewed and some changes will be made prior to the release for public comment later this month or in early February;
- The DPRF focuses on downtown, and is comprised of:
  - The Physical Framework, the primary policy guidance for corridors and connections
  - The Implementation Toolkit, a roadmap intended to provide information about process, tools and programs
- The DPRF provide citywide standards, and can be used as a one-stop-shop for information about enhancement activities.

Monson noted that community engagement was a huge part of this process and was done individually and jointly with the MPRB, the Steering Committee, and Technical Advisory Committee. Visitors, workers and residents were the three major constituencies addressed in the DPRF.

The DPRF identifies:

- Destination corridors (Hennepin Avenue, Nicollet Avenue South, 1st Avenue, Main Street SE);
- Activity corridors (Chicago Avenue S, Washington Avenue, 5th Street N/S, 2nd Street N/S); and
- Connector corridors (10th Ave N, 11th Avenue, Portland Avenue, 7th Street N, 9th Street S, 10th Street S).

This is crucial to know when we start to talk about future goals for wayfinding and the shared goals of the MPRB to connect all of the downtown neighborhoods as well to connect people to experiences.

The Implementation Toolkit component of the DPRF is about funding operations and maintenance and this will be the biggest challenge. The first step is identifying where the priority corridors and second, how are we going to achieve this which goes back to public, private, and nonprofit actions and being able to have a shared vision.

What is the roadmap for implementation? A big component of implementation is just knowing what tools are out there, what other cities are doing, and what tools are available here.

The City's focus on this joint process is on the streets and corridors, and is a collection of existing features and programs available for public realm enhancements. It is a citywide standards manual to be used as a one-stop-shop for information about street enhancement. The features are categorized into two sections: Street Trees and Greening, and Street Furnishing. All of this information will be available when the document is released for public comment.

## **B. Downtown Service Area Master Plan**

Jennifer Ringold thanked the EDC for inviting her and then explained the MPRB's role in this joint process. It has a vision for creating master plans for every single park it has within its system. If accomplished, it will be the first time this has been done in the 133 years of its existence.

Using a slide presentation (reference Downtown Service Area Master Plan dated January 21, 2016), she explained that some parks within the system, such as Loring Park, have had a ton of master planning work done and a multitude of people who have collaborated on them over time. Whereas in the North Loop they have yet to even identify where the parks should go much less everything that goes into them. There is a range of need in terms of accomplishing the vision and the MPRB is breaking it down into bite size pieces via "service areas." Operationally speaking, the Downtown Service Area is a connective set of parks (shown in dark green within the purple line on the map on page 1). The other services areas within the system include

South, Southwest, North and Northeast.

Ringold also described the very involved community engagement process; collectively they reached over 1,500 people throughout the past summer at various community events (e.g., Minneapolis Community Connections Conference). The dedicated group working with them was the Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee. The MPRB as well as the City are both very interested in making sure they are not missing those groups that are underrepresented or underserved by conducting a series of focus groups.

Ringold then explained the biggest aha's discovered throughout this process. If you think of downtown parks and park-like spaces that exist, and understand the need not to replicate what exists, they might start to act as constellations within themselves, e.g., the big star is Loring Park then you move to Loring Greenway to Peavey Plaza then head down to the open space by the Convention Center. What they heard a lot about during the community engagement process is how do we activate these spaces, how do we work together, we can't just have spaces sitting vacant especially in downtown because they don't attract the type of uses that is ideal to downtown.

Consequently, they asked what if we worked in partnership with the other landowners and stakeholders who are focusing on those areas and think about creating curated experiences at the six constellations (two of which they play less of a role, i.e., Commons and Twins). What does that look like if we collaborated? And, is downtown different from the rest of the city?

Downtown is different. The rest of the city has pretty traditional neighborhood parks and recreation centers. What would it look like in downtown to have more of a park storefront and figure how to access the system as a whole? Can we create a more concentrated portal between North Loop and Wirth Park or between the Convention Center to Loring Park and accessing the Chain of Lakes? The constellations map shows how park spaces work individually and connectively between each other, similarly to the DPRF in how they integrate together. There are two primary axes that are important in that connectivity and groupings of connectivity. If taken out of the constellation and put it into a plan view, they realized that there are two levels of hierarchy to the park and park-like spaces: the intimate interconnection, and the more grand linkage between them. How does this then support what the City is doing? Take Nicollet Avenue and 5th Street for instance, which are already predisposed for park connections because they are either minimally or not at all focused on transportation, but are more focused on more pedestrian and bikes. This is what the MPRB would like to work with the City on to move it forward. Looking ahead into the future, they suspect the reliance on cars will change and when or if that happens, they want to be able to say they have a vested interest in the existing roads and think of them as park streets a la Milwaukee Avenue in Seward to increase the connectivity and consider different curated experiences among program providers. They are incubating these ideas internally and they are gaining some momentum amongst staff, and she hopes it will plant a seed with the potential partners and stakeholders.

Ringold then described the characteristic designs for each of the primary park nodes,

i.e., North Loop (8th Avenue Stream, Hidden Bridges, Underpass Park); Gateway (Concepts A and B); Loring Park (Concept B, Berger Fountain); Elliot Park; Franklin Steele (Concepts A, B and C); and Triangle Park.

The last Steering Committee is on Thursday, January 28th at which they plan to have final recommendations on the DSAMP, and a sense of prioritization of improvements done to advance to the full report, the public comment period, and finally MPRB approval. By May 2016 they should be back to reveal the approved DSAMP. For more information, visit [https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park\\_care\\_improvements/park\\_projects/current\\_projects/downtown\\_service\\_are\\_a\\_master\\_plan/](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/downtown_service_are_a_master_plan/).

Thereafter, Monson and Ringold entertained questions from the audience.

Lastly, Collison acknowledged Win Rockwell, the first Executive Director of Greening Downtown Minneapolis ([http://www.downtownmpls.com/news\\_article/show/514351?referrer\\_id=225831](http://www.downtownmpls.com/news_article/show/514351?referrer_id=225831)).