

**Recap of the East Town Business Partnership Business Forum**  
**Thursday, October 19, 2017, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**  
**Radisson RED Minneapolis, 609 South 3rd Street**  
**Downtown East Neighborhood of Minneapolis**

- **Welcome, Introductions and Announcements**

Paul Mellblom, President of the East Town Business Partnership, welcomed the audience to the October business forum and advised four distinguished speakers will be presenting their perspectives on transit in East Town. Then he encouraged those interested in learning more about the ETBP and participating in one of the following three committees to contact:

- Chris Fleck, ETBP Board Member and Membership, Marketing and Communication Committee Chair, in person at the event or after via email at [cjfleck@northcentral.edu](mailto:cjfleck@northcentral.edu); and
- Dan Collison, ETBP Executive Director and Chair of the Business Forum Committee and East Town Development Group, in person at the event or after via email at [dcollison@mplsdowntown.com](mailto:dcollison@mplsdowntown.com).

Then he thanked the Radisson RED for hosting, and asked the audience to introduce themselves.

Carina Aleckson, Catholic Charities Opportunity Center  
Nancy Aleksuk, Swervo Development  
Neil Alexander, Leo A. Daly  
Marc Berg, J. Selmer Law  
Peter Bruce, Pedestrian Studies Consulting  
John Campobasso, Kraus-Anderson Construction  
Robert Clapp, Downtown East resident  
Rick Crispino, Downtown East resident  
Chris DeLaurentis, ICCM Life Center, 9th Street Historic Brownstones  
Jerry Dustrud, Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc., Friends of Triangle Park  
Cori Erickon, Hilton Garden Inn Minneapolis  
Chris Fleck, North Central University  
Daniel Gummit, People Serving People  
Laurel Hansen, Metropolitan Alliance of Connected Communities  
Brent Hanson, Wells Fargo  
Supenn Harrison, Sawatdee  
Tammy Hartman, Clear Channel Outdoor  
Tom Hayes, Hennepin County Medical Center  
Daniel Jacobson, Unleashed Displays  
Gena Janetka, Allied Parking  
Matt Johnson, Leo A Daly  
Phil Kluesner, Carlson Commercial  
Michele Molstead, BikeMSP  
Ashley Peterson, Doherty Staffing  
Lynn Regnier, Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.  
Christie Rock Hantge, ETBP Staff  
Braden Scheeler, Bobby & Steve's Auto World  
Cathy Schmidt, Surfacequest Solutions  
Ann Schneider, Allied Parking  
Michael Severson, Hyatt Place  
Ben Shardlow, Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District  
Elizabeth Sherry, Guthrie Theater  
Jeff Sommers, Izzy Ice Cream  
Carletta Sweet, Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association  
Al Swintek, CenterPoint Energy  
Matthew Weiland, Clear Channel Outdoor

Bert Winkel, House of Charity

Collison also welcomed the audience and commented every member plays an incredibly important role and then he extended gratitude to those who have leaned in to become members at the platinum level which allows the ETBP to enhance its staffing and programming capacity:

- Allied Parking
- CenterPoint Energy
- Clear Channel Outdoor
- ESG Architects
- Hennepin County Medical Center
- House of Charity
- Kraus-Anderson
- Minnesota Vikings
- NRG Energy
- Padilla
- People Serving People
- Thrivent Financial
- U.S. Bank
- Valspar
- Wells Fargo

Collison then announced the following upcoming events, three of which are related to Super Bowl LII:

- *Thursday, November 16th, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.* East Town Business Partnership business forum on Super Bowl 52, Let's Get the Party Started! with featured presenters Kyle Chank, Vice President of Operations and Logistics; Alex Tittle, Vice President of Corporate Affairs and Business Connect; and Amanda Koonjbeharry, Administrative Manager Anti-Sex Trafficking Response Plan for Super Bowl 52, at the Guthrie Theater, 818 South 2nd Street.
- *Monday, October 23rd, 5:30-7:30 p.m.:* Mississippi Minute Film Festival at the Mill City Museum, 704 South 2d Street (<http://www.minneapolisriverfront.org/riverfront-initiatives/mississippi-minutefilm-festival/>).
- *Tuesday, October 24th, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.* Super Bowl LII Host Committee community information session at the Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Pohlad Hall (<https://northloop.org/event/super-bowl-lii-community-information-session/>).
- *Tuesday, October 24th, 6:00-8:00 p.m.* The Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association's annual meeting featuring a public forum on 800 Washington Avenue at Open Book, 1011 Washington Avenue South (<https://www.thedmna.org/dmna-annual-meeting-on-october-24/>).
- *Friday, October 27th, 7:30-9:00 a.m.* Good Morning Minneapolis: Tourism, Wayfinding and Super Bowl LII, a Minneapolis Downtown Council joint event with Meet Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce at The Grand Hotel, 615 2nd Avenue South (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/event/tourism-wayfinding-super-bowl-lii/>).
- *Saturday, October 28th, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.* Washington Avenue Cleanup, a joint community event of the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association and the North Loop Neighborhood Association (<https://www.thedmna.org/dmna-nlna-washington-avenue-cleanup-on-saturday-october-28/>). Meet at Whole Foods, 222 Hennepin Avenue.

➤ *Events by North Central University*

- *November 10-12 and 16-19.* Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka (<https://allevents.in/minneapolis/roald-dahls-willy-wonka/360782227691243#>); and
- *Friday, December 1st and Sunday, December 3rd.* Songs of the Season annual Christmas concert (<https://northcentral.ticketbud.com/songs-of-the-season--december-1-1c3a8745d5ad>).

➤ *Neighborhood Organization Meetings*

- For DMNA information, visit <http://www.thedmna.org/>.
- For EPNI information, visit <http://elliottparkneighborhood.org/>.

Collison intentionally left a slide blank as an invitation to the membership to provide information about their organization's events to promote at the ETBP business forums.

• **Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District Greening Lab**

Ben Shardlow, Director of Urban Design for the Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/benshardlow>), advised we are entering a golden era for the Minneapolis downtown forest and all of us can be a part of that work.

Using a slide presentation, he provided a quick background of the DID and its mission, i.e., to make downtown cleaner, greener and safer. Greening is accomplished by maintaining enhancements to landscaping on corridors; celebrating and incentivizing investments in the public realm through their Greening & Public Realm Awards program (for the winners of 2017 go to <https://www.mplsdowntown.com/mps-downtown-improvement-district-announces-2017-greening-award-winners/>); and, typically in partnership with the City and County, advocating for effective greening investments in capital projects (e.g., Nicollet Mall, Washington Avenue).

Despite these efforts with a lot of people at the table to make things better, street tree outcomes on most downtown streets remain poor because:

- Most downtown street trees were not planted according to Best Management Practices;
- Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) owns and maintains street trees, but does not control or design the planting sites;
- MPRB Forestry cares for 600,000 trees, but is working under budgetary constraints;
- Standard maintenance regimen includes watering a new tree twice in total; and
- The downtown environment is harsh for trees – there's a lot of hardscape, it's hotter, dryer, and a higher likelihood of damage.

With these factors in mind, DID, in partnership with a number of other organizations, wanted to do some small things this year to achieve better outcomes for streets in downtown, hence the Greening Lab pilot project for improving public realm greening outcomes in the downtown Minneapolis community (<http://www.mplsdid.com/greeninglab>), which focused on:

- *Research.* University of Minnesota research assistants mapped out every sidewalk and every constraint (e.g., light poles, driveways) contained thereon in downtown in order to understand where opportunities lie to invest in the downtown tree canopy, hence the "Weighted Opportunity Analysis of Sidewalk Greening Within Minneapolis DID" map which is guiding their work.

Also, they have been engaging directly with the MPRB which has a state-of-the art data tool for

managing its inventory, but they can only vouch for it being about 75% accurate. Nonetheless, they now have direct access to this data in order to be able to track the performance of each tree in downtown.

- *Enhanced maintenance.* Based upon the analysis of the above research, in order to improve the survival rate of downtown street trees, they have:
  - Instituted supplemental watering to street trees planted in 2016/2017.
  - Raised \$10,000 from DMNA to support this program and the MPRB watered new downtown trees weekly in June at their own expense.
  - Tagged trees with auto-populated information: species, inventory #, invitation to automated text system. The MPRB assigned dedicated tree inspector to downtown.
  - Research and communications effort being supported by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization.
  
- *Funding to support streetscape improvements this fall.* New smaller capital investments include:
  - Received \$142,000 from City of Minneapolis
  - Private fundraising support from Green Minneapolis
  - Contributed to the planting of 16 new trees on Washington Avenue streetscape project

They accomplished what they wanted to do in 2017 by getting started and what they'd like to do in 2018 is continue to partner with those interested in supporting public realm improvements and the benefits it will provide. There have been major capital investments that have happened (e.g., the Commons, Washington Avenue, Nicollet Mall) and will continue to happen (e.g., Hennepin Avenue, 4th and 8th Streets) with greening as an important component of these public spaces. If more people pay attention to specific trees and ensure they get the attention they need to grow, the downtown public realm will become a forest.

The connection this has to transit is homegrown research from the University of Minnesota suggests transit riders at bus stops where there are trees perceive waiting time by 1/3 less time. The experience of being a transit rider or getting around by any mode is more pleasant when there is a beautiful, inviting and green public realm.

During Q&A, Shardlow advised they decided not to base their efforts on finding individuals to adopt a specific tree because they can do some things, like watering, at scale, but do see opportunities for individuals to step up and keep an eye on trees around their property and know how to communicate when there's a problem.

Collison noted there is empirical data indicating human beings are healthier around living matter and in December 2016 [Green Infrastructure Foundation Co-founder Michael Krause] presented before the East Town Development Group on "Green Infrastructure and a Biophilic Vision for East Town," and his insights on this topic and why biophilia ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biophilia\\_hypothesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biophilia_hypothesis)) should be integrated into urban design were helpful.

- **Getting Around in East Town Now and for the Next 25 Years**

Collison began by acknowledging East Town is a multimodal area, in addition to the various modes the speakers will be addressing, it has helicopter service provided by HCMC when an emergency need arises, and several established and effective parking companies that are always improving technology and access for vehicular traffic.

Related to parking, because of the compression and convergence of residential growth, retail, Target Field, and the Warehouse District, he has been working with the [2020 Partners' Access North Loop

task force], and then displayed a napkin below an empty coffee cup that read *North Loop a quaint historic warehouse district with a parking problem* to illustrate the severity of the problem in that area. There is a lot of connectionality to today's panel and understanding what East Town could be like, i.e., *East Town the newest district in downtown that sometimes has a parking problem but will need to stay ahead of the learning curve to avoid being like the North Loop in 5 years*. For the past 9 months, the ANL task force has been looking at national studies and understanding an integrated model on parking and access, the best practices for which are:

- Embracing innovation
- Leverage technology
- Community partnering
- Advancing program branding, marketing and communications
- Reinventing the urban environment
- Creating sustainable programs
- Enhancing the EXPERIENCE.

Collison believes we can be ahead of the curve. As a part of the Transportation Management Plan for U.S. Bank Stadium (<http://www.vikings.com/news/new-stadium/article-1/Transportation-Plan-Vikings-Tailgate-Options-Announced/a52foe00-9514-490d-a4b8-28cb7eb8e6e9>), the analysis was we have plenty of parking in East Town to service all that is going on. Ultimately it will be about coordinating growth, understanding new development, and as autonomous vehicles arrive keeping them a part of an active and open conversation.

Collison then introduced the following esteemed leaders who understand access and transit by providing a brief biography on each:

Jessica Treat, Executive Director of Transit for Livable Communities (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jessicatreat>);

On behalf of Adam Harrington, Director of Service Development at Metro Transit, who could no longer attend, Kristin Thompson, Assistant Director of Scheduling, Analysis and Data Collection at Metro Transit (<https://ca.linkedin.com/in/kristin-thompson-1262b830>), and Top 40 under 40 in Mass Transit magazine;

Mary Morse Marti, Executive Director of Move Minneapolis (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marymm>); and

Ethan Fawley, Executive Director of Our Streets Minneapolis (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ethan-fawley-347845a>).

**A. Transit for Livable Communities.** Jessica Treat advised in January TLC merged with St. Paul Smart Trips and they are still building the ship they will sail so there is no new name and brand yet; they recently engaged a firm to help them with that task. SPST, where she was for 8 years, is the transportation management organization in St. Paul as Move Minneapolis is the transportation organization in Minneapolis. When she joined TLC at the beginning of last year, the two organizations had been talking about aligning their efforts, then pursued a merger and are moving forward. They are about transportation options, not just a walk or bike or transit group, and how they can all fit together and by having them all can improve communities throughout the state. This merged organization is the largest nonprofit in the state working on transit options and they have local as well as statewide programs as they recognize options vary throughout the state.

Car ownership is still the default choice, but they recognize that choice doesn't work for everyone, e.g., for those who can't drive, can't afford to drive, no longer want to drive and need better options, so they try and connect with individuals and tell their story.



In order to provide options, they need long-term dedicated funding to be able to expand options and this is the critical work they do through the Transportation Forward campaign (<http://www.transportationforwardmn.org/>). In Minnesota, funding transportation has become a partisan issue, but it is not the case across the country (reference her chart entitled Comparison of Sales Tax Rate Across the County, 2017). We've got work to do in helping people understand transit, biking and walking are transportation, it's not just roads, bridges and cars, and that people from all walks of life want these options all over the state.

Securing long-term funding takes people power and they are trying to build a statewide, multigenerational, multiracial coalition to push for this at the legislature. They are on the ground talking to people to amplify voices and get them plugged into the process; voices matter and can have an impact on the type of transportation network being built. During the last legislative session, there was a proposal to cut transit by 40% so they began a campaign to prevent it by: collecting over 3,000 postcards from riders and delivered them to the Governor; phone banking to legislators particularly those on the Transportation Committee; taking individuals before legislators to tell their story; and held rallies. As a result of those efforts, they were successful and received one time funding to fill the budget gap, but the cost for Metro Mobility is ballooning and cannibalizing the rest of the bus system and, as a consequence, will need the continued support of volunteers to join their campaign.

For more information, visit <http://www.tlcmnnesota.org/> or <http://www.smart-trips.org/>.

**B. Metro Transit.** Kristin Thompson advised she's a resident in the North Loop and spends a lot of time in East Town; she's a Guthrie subscriber, loves the riverfront and what's happening in the neighborhood as well as what they're doing at MT which has been operating continuously under various names and entities for over a century. Rather than talk about the past, she's here to talk about what they're doing in the next few years to develop their system as the region.

MT grounds itself by understanding its customers and what they want by conducting rider surveys every 2 years. The last one completed in 2014 found:

- Half are millennials (ages 18-34)
- 73% traveling to work or school
- Half don't have a driver's license
- 318,000 potential riders within five blocks of transit (these are the low hanging fruit)
- Want better bus stops
- Want fast and reliable service

Based on these findings, in order to make the experience better for their customers and bring more people onboard is to have more people who live near transit. Multifamily development along transit can have a synergistic effect and MT is seeing this along its LRT lines in particular, i.e., since 2010 a third of multifamily development has been built along existing and future rail lines.

For a long time downtown Minneapolis has been a huge driver of MT's ridership. On the Weekday Ridership by Stop map key corridors merge: the pink dots are the two rail lines; orange dots are the local bus services on Hennepin Avenue; purple dots are the express and commuter bus services to/from the suburbs on Marquette and 2nd Avenues; and on east/west streets more local services can be found. The density of development in downtown has traditionally supported strong transit use relative to peer cities of the same size, i.e., a 40% mode share for transit.

It is predicted that more than 800,000 people will be moving to the Twin Cities by 2040 and the region will also become older and more diverse. With limited capacity for road expansion and growth in the urban cores, transit will become increasingly important. MT is committed to

expanding and improving its service so the Twin Cities can continue to grow and thrive. MT has a 5-year vision guiding its work, the tenants of which are:

- Attracting and retaining riders
- Expanding service
- Improving speed, safety and reliability
- Increasing efficiency through data and technology
- Developing transit-oriented communities
- Equity
- Sustainability

Thompson believes these tenants correlate to the Best Practices that Collison mentioned earlier. Then she shared some of the successes MT has had recently:

- Service improvements, e.g., A Line implemented
- Bus stop improvements, e.g.,
- Technological improvements, e.g., App, mobile ticketing, WiFi, NexTrip, Go-To Cards
- Safety and security improvements, e.g., expanding and diversifying MT police department

Thompson then described the following two projects MT will launch in the next couple years:

- C Line Rapid Bus service (<https://www.metrotransit.org/c-line-project>)
- Orange Line (<https://www.metrotransit.org/metro-orange-line>)

In the near term, they are looking forward to a lot of exciting developments including:

- Reopening of Nicollet Mall and the reintroduction of MT bus services; and
- What transit will be like during and around Super Bowl LII.

With all that is happening, MT continues to be excited about being a partner with the audience in this regional growth.

**C. Move Minneapolis.** Mary Morse Marti advised she was born in East Town at St. Barnabus Hospital and thus knows the area well. A lot of what was discussed before her is the same, i.e., the future of transportation and how to prepare for it. Yes, the car is still king and will be here for awhile, and they are managing transportation through this lens of everybody driving. Not so many people driving downtown, which is great for her since she's pushing to reduce the number, but everywhere else you've got to drive, e.g., from Stillwater to Eden Prairie every day.

There are 160,000 downtown employees (her market), 61% of whom drive alone to work, adding 98,000 cars to downtown streets. But the car is about to be dethroned. We're adding a lot of people, i.e., regional growth is expected to be 417,406 additional people by 2030, and we can't build our way out of congestion. Plus the high cost of vehicle ownership, operation, and storage to individuals and communities averages \$8,500 annually as of 2017 according to AAA.

Marti noted her job is trying to get people to not drive downtown, and when they do, to park on the edges or drive downtown less frequently. The opportunity to make downtown better by changing the way people drive is huge. We have this really expensive asset, i.e., Metro Transit, how do we get people to lay cars aside. That's where Kristin Thompson comes in; MT has been thoughtful about building a system that allows people to live outside of the urban core, get to a Park & Ride and come into downtown.

What's more interesting now, because of people's business-related activities they can't take transit every day, is they are promoting the multimodal idea and will need public policy that supports

multimodalism. Depending on the City, we're going to have free ranging bicycles and autonomous cars she believes should be shared. Marti then recommended reading the Shared Mobility Action Plan (<http://sharedusemobilitycenter.org/news/twin-cities-leaders-release-shared-mobility-action-plan-to-increase-transportation-options-take-50000-cars-off-the-road-in-10-years/>), an astonishing document that talks about getting 50,000 cars off the road in the metro region in the next 10 years, and other intense goals. If there are 30,000 new transit riders, 600 car sharing vehicles, 800 bike sharing vehicles, and 1,000 new vanpools, we don't add any traffic to the roadways; and it is doable. At Move Minneapolis we're helping employers help their employees discover this multimodalism so that they don't have to drive every day via focused employer outreach, downtown commuter mode split survey, and commuter support. Multimodalism is the future, so let's make sure everyone knows their options.

For more information, visit <http://moveminneapolis.org/>.

**D. Our Streets Minneapolis.** While displaying images of pet animals, Ethan Fawley advised seeing animals doing cool things make you happier and more productive. From the employer's perspective, having happy productive employees is important. Walking and biking plays an important role and the world's happiest commuters are people who walk and bike. If you walk or bike to work you're more likely to feel energized on sunny or snowy days than if you drive or take transit. You're also more likely to show up on time for work. To attract talent, especially in the younger generation, a lot more people are interested in living in a place where they don't have to rely on a car all the time and this trend is increasing over time.

On the biking side, we're making progress because of the investments the City has made in making it safer and more comfortable for people to bike on our streets and, as a result, biking in Minneapolis has tripled in the last 15 years; it is the fastest growing mode by far. While biking has tripled, the number of crashes have diminished, i.e., more than 3 times safer to bike in the City. Minneapolis gets a lot of recognition nationally for biking; it's part of our brand, what differentiates us and what can be used to attract talent from other regions. A lot of that recognition comes from the Midtown Greenway and not focused on downtown, but we're working to change that through partnerships with the Minneapolis Downtown Council and the ETBP.

On the pedestrian side, we have a rapidly changing sidewalk and street environment, especially in East Town, but there are still many that are not attractive to walk. When we think about where we could go, he displayed an image of the Stone Arch Bridge, where it is safer and comfortable for people of all ages and backgrounds. He also displayed an image of the Indianapolis Cultural Trail (<http://indyculturaltrail.org/>) that is competing with us, and the Capital City Bikeway in downtown St. Paul (<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/bicycles/capital-city-bikeway>). He gave credit to BKV Group for highlighting the opportunities in East Town, and to Kraus-Anderson, Wells Fargo and others who are changing the streetscape and impacting the quality of life for those living here.

Fawley described the City's new Complete Streets policy which is committed to building a complete and integrated public right-of-way for everyone no matter how they get around (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcmSP-200631.pdf>). Recognizing for a number of generations they were focused predominantly on cars in their transportation decision making, looking forward they will now focus on (1) pedestrian and the wheelchair bound, (2) biking and transit, and (3) driving in their approach to transportation planning and programming.

Then he described the City's Vision Zero policy to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on Minneapolis streets by 2027 (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/TransportationPlanning/WCMSP-205002>).



All of these efforts affect East Town in how they're approaching the reconstruction of 8th Street with more greening and more space for walking; pilot bumpout project to make it safer at intersections cost effectively (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cip/2017/WCMSP-203687>); upgrading of the protected bike lane on 11th Avenue South with planted buffers to provide an extra level of safety and comfort; plans to extend the protected bike lane on the newly redesigned Washington Avenue; and reconstruction of South 4th Street.

For more information, visit <http://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/>.

- **Closing Remarks**

Collison thanked the speakers for presenting, Radisson RED for hosting, and the audience for attending. To stay ahead of the curve, particularly with the new Armory event center coming online that will be bringing even more people to the community, he encouraged the audience to reach out to the speakers for solutions to their transportation issues.