

Recap of the Joint ETBP|MDC Business Forum Toward an Inclusive Downtown

(<https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6.20-Member-Forum-Preso.pdf>)

Thursday, June 20, 2019, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Ryan Companies, 533 South 3rd Street, Northwoods Room
Downtown East Neighborhood of Minneapolis**

I. Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Steve Cramer, President and CEO of the Minneapolis Downtown Council, welcomed the audience and thanked them for taking time to attend today's forum. Then he announced the following MDC member and community events:

- *Thursday, June 27, 4:00-6:00 p.m.:* Summer Social at St. Anthony Falls Visitor Center with tour of Lock and Dam (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/event/summer-social-at-lock-dam-with-meet-minneapolis/>).
- *Thursday, July 11, 7:30-8:45 a.m.:* Coffee & Conversation | Value of Downtowns and City Centers at Santec (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/registration190711/>).
- *Wednesday, July 31, 4:30-6:00 p.m.:* Summer Social | How AdFed Impacts our Community at Carmichael Lynch's rooftop (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/event/summer-social-conversation-how-adfed-impacts-our-community/>).
- *Friday, June 21, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.:* Free to the public Go Skateboarding Day #OnNicollet (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/x-games-local-skateboarding-organizations-host-go-skateboarding-day-on-nicollet/>).
- *Days and times for each downtown farmers market vary:*
 - For the Nicollet between 6th and 9th street, visit <https://www.mplsfarmersmarket.com/FreshNews/nicollet-mall-market/>.
 - For the Government Center, 300 South 6th Street, visit <https://www.mplsfarmersmarket.com/FreshNews/hennepin-county-government-center/>.
 - For the Lyndale, 312 East Lyndale Avenue North, visit <https://www.mplsfarmersmarket.com/FreshNews/minneapolis-lyndale-farmers-market/>.
- *June 1-30, locations for musical performances vary:* Pianos on Parade (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/pianos/>).
- *June 1-August 31, days and times vary:* Go Outside with Hennepin County at Government Center and Target Field Station (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/gooutside/>).
- *Monday, June 24, 7:00 p.m.:* Naked Gun screening kick off to Minneapolis Comedy Festival (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/the-naked-gun-writer-pat-proft-leads-qa-to-kick-off-mpls-comedy-festival/>).
- *Wednesday-Saturday, July 24-27, 8:30-10:00 p.m.:* Aquatennial Torchlight Parade and Life Time Torchlight 5K are now on 2nd Avenue South due to the Hennepin Avenue reconstruction project (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/aquatennial-announces-2019-parade-5k-route/>).

Cramer thanked Ryan Companies for hosting and invited Elizabeth Campbell to say a few words. Campbell welcomed the audience and advised she's a Board member of both the MDC and the ETBP, and as the Director of Emerging Business Inclusion (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/elizabeth-campbell-98487610>), she's excited to be hosting this particular topic at their headquarters.

Lastly, Cramer thanked Dana MacDonald, Event Sales Manager at Shindig (<https://shindigevent.com/>), for catering the forum.

Dan Collison, Executive Director of East Town Business Partnership, announced the following East Town events:

- *Thursday-Saturday, August 1-4:* X Games are returning to U.S. Bank Stadium (<http://www.xgames.com/minneapolis/>).
- *Wednesday, June 26, 5:00-6:30 p.m.:* Coffee with Your Council Member Steve Fletcher at Mojo Coffee Gallery (<https://www.facebook.com/pg/FletcherMpls/events/>). These events are typically held on Wednesdays at varying locations within Ward 3.
- Neighborhood association meetings:
 - For Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association Board and Land Use Committee, visit <http://www.thedmna.org/>.
 - For Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc., Building, Land Use and Housing (BLUH), visit <https://www.elliottpark.org/>.
- *Monthly Saturdays, June-September:* Joint DMNA-NLNA Neighborhood Cleanups (<https://www.thedmna.org/event/dmna-monthly-neighborhood-cleanup-2/>).
- *Saturday, July 20, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.:* DMNA Day at Mill City Farmers Market (<https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/visit/saturday-market/>). Representatives will share information about the neighborhood organization and seek input from residents regarding how they think their neighborhood could be improved for the better. People who participate in a short survey will receive a DMNA-Mill City Farmers Market branded water bottle.
- *Saturday, September 21, 12:00-6:00 p.m.:* Art Pop! Block Party celebrating local businesses, art, music and food (<https://www.facebook.com/ElliottParkArtsQuarter/>).
- For help in navigating City Hall with your business questions, visit the Minneapolis Business Portal at <https://business.minneapolismn.gov/> designed to connect entrepreneurs and small business owners to the information and resources needed to plan, launch and grow a business.

II. Inclusive Downtown Think Tank Community Report

Collison commented as a white cisgender straight male in a world increasingly diversifying, it was critically important that as we thought about the conversation of inclusion to have meaningful partnerships and mentorships. Two of the people he calls mentors are here today who will be his co-panelists:

- Dr. Hedy Lemar Walls, Chief Social Responsibility Officer for the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities (https://www.ymcamn.org/about/leadership/hedy_lemar_walls); and
- Dr. Ramón Pastrano IV, President and CEO of ImpactLives (<https://www.impactlives.org/about/who-we-are/staff.html> and <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-ramon-pastrano-iv-d-min-mats-msm-b184525>).

Collison advised diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) now appears to be landing on most executives' tables. This morning he attended a Twin Cities diversity roundtable at General Mills which included Christine Kim, their Global Diversity & Inclusion Manager, and about 100 people who serve across the region, and they said the same thing. As we are a global community, global economy, and as the Twin Cities are diversifying, leaders now have this consciousness to have DEI on their desk, but simultaneously the leaders and cultures of institutions are slow to begin to understand what it means.

Two and a half years ago, the MDC began asking itself what DEI means as a business association, and the ETBP has always had the desire to recruit more diverse businesses to East Town district. But what does it mean to get into the space and activate DEI? To answer that question, you first need to know why DEI is important.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (<https://mn.gov/deed/>) and Greater MSP (<https://www.greatersp.org/>) reported the following statistics that unveil the importance of DEI:

- By 2023 there will be a projected worker shortage of 200,000;
- Since 2010 there's been a 20% increase in MN residents of color, but the Twin Cities ranks near last in racial disparities amongst 25 high population cities;
- Estimate there are 6,000 homeless youth in MN, 73% of which are of color;
- Estimate lifetime impact of one homeless youth is \$1,000,000; and
- Estimate the economic impact for the 6,000 homeless youth is \$6,000,000,000.

Pastrano then provided an overview of the cultural and civic function of downtown, its economic impact, and physical and spatial space. There's City Hall, several administrative buildings that provide a lot of the social services that are needed, and it attracts a high concentration of diverse people with a lot of different social behaviors so we can have a pretty accurate picture of who's traveling in and out of downtown. Since 2013, 75 new corporations moved here and now there's over 200,000 people working downtown employed by 6,000 different companies so most of the traffic coming in and out is related to working here. Downtown has 37% of all office space and generates 40% of the City's tax base.

According to the Metropolitan Council's Thrive MSP 2040 (<https://metro council.org/planning/projects/thrive-2040.aspx>), the Twin Cities continues to have an impressive social and economic profile; however, significant disparities are revealed when compared to the 16-county metro areas and other cities across the U.S., i.e., out of the 25 largest cities in the U.S., the Twin Cities ranked No. 1 in disparity in employment rate, living below the poverty line, and home ownership (<https://metro council.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Census-and-Population/Behind-the-Curve-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparities-in.aspx>).

To address the question is downtown welcoming and accessible to all, Collison advised the MDC created the 2025 Plan for growth (<https://www.mplsdown town.com/2025plan/work/>) which has 10 core initiatives that focus on downtown development, greening and public realm, downtown experience, transportation, ending street homelessness, and launching a festival of ideas. At the May 9th quarterly forum (<https://www.mplsdown town.com/registration190509/>) they reviewed the more than half initiatives that were accomplished, and the work yet to be done which was a reboot conversation as to where they're going; today's topic is part of the reboot.

Recalling comments he made at the Inclusive Downtown Think Tank (IDTT) kickoff, Collison explained when talking about people, it's a different coefficient and bell curve. He's like a left brain, front lobe, linear sequential, Myers Briggs ENTJ (<https://www.16personalities.com/entj-personality>), so he approaches everything with a success mentality, detailed and assertive and assumes everything will work out, but this is about people not products, and we need to recognize this is a challenging space and takes courage to get into it.

Walls explained when she first spoke with Collison about the work that had already been started around the MDC and what does it mean as a community long term, she thought it would be a great opportunity to bring to the table some expertise along with experts within the community and have an old fashioned conversation around how we envision downtown being inclusive and what does that mean for us as we grow. When they moved into Gaviidae, it was with an intentional model around community engagement through a lens of equity. They had a list of equity experts – over 100 participants applied representing over 70 cross-sector industries – who joined in the conversation about what the future might be for an inclusive downtown.

Collison advised, after the first three IDTT sessions, they learned downtown is diverse but not inclusive.

Pastrano advised the greatest challenge he gets when bringing DEI forward is what am I going to lose? If you don't do anything right now, you can lose a lot because in 2026 there'll be a remarkable demographic shift, i.e., the majority of everyone aged 46 and under will be of color and if they don't feel represented,

some of these companies will become totally irrelevant. If dealt with now, you'll realize as you begin to look at case studies a diverse group where there is cultural competency is more effective, productive and innovative than a homogenous group; diversity and equity without cultural competency will not work. Consequently, IDTT developed the **Common Agenda**:

*We believe
All people belong downtown,
That an inclusive downtown is possible,
In the economic case for inclusion,
If we increase cultural competency, we will increase inclusion,
In the values of equity, innovation, sound economics, leadership, collaboration, and
accountability*

And Impact Statement:

Our work is to identify and address systemic barriers and redesign our systems to create a more inclusive Minneapolis downtown, lead by culturally competent leaders who are committed to making a community that is an equitable place to live, work, and play and where all people have the opportunity to thrive, contribute, and belong.

To understand how the IDTT used its impact statement to develop a prototype/program, which was a 6-month process working in three subgroups – Systems Change (Chameleon Consortium), Culturally Competent Leaders, and Thrive, Participate and Belong – Pastrano guided the audience through the human-centered design approach developed by IDEO (<https://www.ideo.org/approach>) that they revamped with other methodology to ensure there were no gaps.

After each subgroup developed its prototype, Collison advised the group transitioned from a Think Tank to Action Group which will: Learn, Network, Ally, Align, Bridge Systems, Advocate, Dialogue, and Communicate.

Collison described how the Chameleon Consortium (<https://www.chameleonconsortium.com/>) was formed and how it launched its inaugural pop-up this past April and early May in Gaviidae Common with marketing support by Neka Creative. They learned: businesses wanted to be here; could clearly articulate the barriers to being here; it's challenging to run four retail spaces and as a consequence are developing multiple programs including turnkey; many who applied expressed they hadn't thought about being downtown; need more volunteers and sponsors.

Then he described several women of color-owned businesses to illustrate why the CC matters: House of Talents (<http://houseoftalents.com/>), a global social enterprise that sells high-quality artisan products developed in Ghana that's been successful in B2B but not B2C; ArtWest (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/rugboajah>), a global social enterprise cultivating emerging and established artists in Nigeria; and Billie Staton (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/billie-staton-24407917>) who dreams of opening her own salon and has gone through a series of professional technical training through the Neighborhood Development Center.

Collison advised the CC conducts monthly meetings, encouraged those interested to become a part of the team, and quoted an astonishing statistic from a report on small businesses in America:

In terms of small business ownership and the ability to increase wealth in communities of color that despite the financial risk of starting small businesses, business ownership in minority households can increase household wealth by more than 600%.

Hence, the Systems Change prototype is laser focused on ensuring we can remove as many barriers to allow proprietors and entrepreneurs the chance to increase wealth for themselves, neighborhoods and around the world.

Referencing the brochure placed at the tables, Walls described the Equity Leadership Institute's Cohort sessions, dates, topics and costs and benefits, as well as that for the 1-day Executive Leadership Institute.

They have also partnered with the Science Museum of Minnesota to install a race exhibit (<https://www.smm.org/race>) at the Equity Innovation Center customized to their approach.

Thereafter, they entertained several questions from the audience.

III. Closing Remarks

Collison thanked the audience for attending, Ryan Companies for hosting, and his co-panelists for their expertise and enthusiasm for today's topic.