

**Recap of the Joint Minneapolis Downtown Council-
East Town Business Partnership Business Forum**
Thrivent Corporate Center Project Tour and Happy Hour
Tuesday, September 27, 2022, 3:30-5:30 p.m.
600 Portland Avenue South, Suite 100

I. MDC Welcome and Announcements

Steve Cramer, President & CEO, thanked everyone for being here and said he's happy to kick off this partnership event with the East Town Business Partnership. It's been probably their longest planned member event in the history of the organization; it started 2 years ago right after the pandemic but they're so happy to be here with Thrivent in their beautiful new building. He remembers saying at the groundbreaking (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/thrivent-financial-breaks-ground-new-corporate-center-mpls-downtown/>) that it's not every day in any major American city that a Fortune 500 company breaks ground on its headquarters, so it was delightful to be there then and it's especially delightful to be here now. Then he announced the following MDC events:

- a. On their website at <https://www.mplsdowntown.com/> they've made a point of developing significant resources to help people know what's going on around downtown, and he encourages us to access it especially as we approach the many post Labor Day daytime activities and great events that continue to occur.
- b. He just saw on his way over here that because of the hurricane the Vikings will be playing in London and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers may be relocated to U.S. Bank Stadium (<https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/vikings-stadium-chiefs-bucs-game-hurricane-ian/>), yet another opportunity to come downtown to see pro sports.
- c. There is programming on Nicollet at U.S. Bancorp Center on Wednesdays through October 26th, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/event/free-activities-at-u-s-bancorp/2022-10-05/>).
- d. Their annual fundraiser is on Wednesday, October 12th, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at The Fillmore (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/event/2022-mdc-fundraiser/>).
- e. The RBC Gateway and Four Seasons Project + Happy Hour is on Thursday, November 10th, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/event/rbc-gateway-and-four-seasons-project-happy-hour/>).
- f. Holidazzle 2022 is on Fridays through Sundays, November 25th through December 18th in Loring Park (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/event/holidazzle-8/2022-11-26/>).
- g. The latest Chameleon Shoppes vendor, Mercado Latino, ends its 2-week run on the skyway level of Gaviidae Common this Friday, September 30th (<http://millcitytimes.com/news/visit-mercado-latino-september-19-30-to-celebrate-latino-own.html>); (<https://www.kare11.com/article/news/community/pop-up-shop-opens-in-downtown-minneapolis/89-c144bb61-c424-4138-8b34-831d7fd3d156>). And just across from this event on that same day will be the opening of the newest Chameleon Shoppes vendor, FX by Edicion Especial (<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6981723422489800704/>); (<https://www.facebook.com/EdicionEspecial.MN/>).

Cramer invited everyone to follow them on Instagram @mplsdowntown where they give away sports tickets, concerts, and other things, and to share our experiences at #mymplsdt.

ETBP Announcements

Cramer then introduced his new colleague, Shannon Fitzgerald, who in addition to being the Director of Downtown Partnerships for the MDC, has shepherded along the Chameleon Shoppes program, and her role today is as the Executive Director of the ETBP (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/smfitzgerald/>). She then announced the following East Town activities:

a. 2022-2023 Platinum Sponsors

Fitzgerald acknowledged and thanked the organizations who help make events like today happen and support other work done in the background with the Board. She also thanked Board members who attended in person.

American Academy of Neurology

Minnesota Vikings

Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
CenterPoint Energy
Clearway Energy
ESG Architecture & Design
Hennepin Healthcare
Kraus-Anderson

Padilla
Sherman Associates
Sherman-Williams
Thrivent
U. S. Bank
Wells Fargo

- b. **Ward 3 Safety Town Hall Meeting** with Council Member Rainville and Minneapolis Community Safety Commissioner Dr. Cedric Alexander is on Thursday, October 13th at 6:00 p.m., at The Depot Hotel, 225 3rd Avenue South (<https://happeningnext.com/event/ward-3-safety-town-hall-meeting-eid3a09cdqhxo>).
- c. **Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association's** annual meeting is on Tuesday, October 24th at The Depot Renaissance Hotel (<https://www.thedmna.org/event/dmna-2022-annual-meeting-on-october-24-at-6-pm-at-the-depot/>). Visit the website <https://www.thedmna.org/> for other meeting logistics.
- d. **Rails and Ales Brewery Crawl** is on Friday, September 30th through Sunday, October 2nd (<https://getknightevents.com/rails-ales/>). FINNEGANS Brew Co is included.
- e. **Hennepin County Attorney Candidates Forum** is on Thursday, September 29th, 7:00 p.m. (<https://lwmpls.org/event/hennepin-county-candidate-attorney-candidate-forum/>).
- f. **An Evening with the Steele Family Fundraiser** is on Thursday, October 20th, 7:00 p.m., at MacPhail Center For Music (<http://millcitytimes.com/news/be-that-neighbor-fundraiser-to-feature-the-steele-family-oct.html>).

II. Thrivent Corporate Center Project

Eric Merriman, Director of Real Estate, Workplace, and Facilities at Thrivent (<https://wiza.co/d/thrivent/71e0/eric-merriman>; https://rocketreach.co/eric-merriman-email_6313684) explained a lot of his presentation is about context of the building in the community, and the first part of that context is Thrivent's history downtown where it's been for over 100 years. Their fourth and last location was one block west in what he nicknamed "the big pink cash register" at 625 4th Avenue South. It was a great building that served them well for 45 years but its backside faced East Town and was something they wanted to correct when they created their new building. The case to build stems from learning they didn't like to renovate in place while renovating at their facility in Appleton, and when they ran the economics, creating a new building seemed viable but a key part of that was selling the old one. Due to their locations and facility needs, two great potential buyers were the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County and it turns out the County was interested. One of the big problems to solve was parking, so they worked with the developer, Doug Hoskin, Principal at Interstate Parking (<https://www.zoominfo.com/p/Doug-Hoskin/5220484>) and came up with a parking solution for both the County and Thrivent, hence the new Thrivent Corporate Center.

Bill Blanski, Design Principal at HGA Architects and Engineers (<https://hga.com/people/bill-blanski/>), gave a thorough overview of the one-block design and the various components within and related thereto. He began by stating it's wonderful and delight when a client calls and says what they really want to do is build a building in downtown that profoundly connects to the neighborhood. Oftentimes corporate headquarters, especially in a downtown context, are a little more insular; they want a great front door and lobby but they're talking about doing that which helps them best perform well in their facility. Thrivent came with a different kind of idea; they wanted to be profoundly connected to the neighborhood that they're embracing. HGA thought that must be in the downtown core and to their surprise and delight it was actually the reverse, they wanted to be a part of the neighborhood where they're going to be and have their address on Portland Avenue. The new building, which had been well master planned by ESG before HGA started its process, had oriented the front door to the east on Portland. They thought that was a marvelous way to think about how a facility could have its face not point toward the urban core but point away toward East Town. Many other factors influenced the design, e.g., their understanding and embracing of the Elliot Park community; Hennepin Healthcare being in a significant expansion mode; the HGA team having looked at the history of Portland Avenue, one of the grand avenues of Minneapolis; the sense of being able to create a relationship to the city that had a lot to do with its history and to where it's going; the dualism problem of the skyway system, i.e., what's better, life on the street or life on the skyway. In our city a few of the buildings in downtown, and the IDS being the best example, has that culture where the architecture innately and intrinsically connects the street to the skyway level and

Thrivent had the commitment they wanted their facility to do the same thing, i.e., tie the skyway to the street and to their main front door.

III. Closing Remarks

Merriman thanked all the partners on the project which took a ton of work from a lot of people working for a lot of different organizations. He himself worked on it for 3 years and it was the most interesting and rewarding project he's been a part of. Then he thanked the Workplace Solutions Team, led by Mary Schwappach (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/maryschwappach27/>) who's been charged with making this totally new environment work and run, for hosting us today. Thereafter, the presentation adjourned into four tour groups, or for those who prefer to go straight to happy hour at the 3rd floor front porch.

IV. Attendees at Thrivent included:

Jacque Berglund, FINNEGANS Brew Co
Rick Crispino, Bridgewater Lofts
Cyndy Harrison, Sawatdee Thai Restaurants & Zushiya
Doug Hoskin, Interstate Parking
Daniel Jacobson, Pixelwerx, The Falls Condominiums
Gena Janetka, Allied Parking
Tom Jollie, Padilla
Brian Maupin, Allied Parking
James Norkosky, Thrivent Financial
Tom Oslund, O2 Design
Roger Raina, National Item Processing
Kathryn Reali, Minneapolis Downtown Council
Mary Schwappach, Thrivent Financial
Al Swintek, CenterPoint Energy
Carletta Sweet, DMNA and ETBP
Marybeth Weisberg, Minneapolis Downtown Council