



DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

**NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM**

2014 Annual Report

**ANNUAL REPORT APPROVED BY THE DMNA BOARD OF
DIRECTORS BY ON 06/15/15**

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association

Contact person: Christie Rock Hantge

Date of Board Approval: 06/15/15

1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2014, Please provide information about:

- **What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2014?**
 - Held 12 board meetings over the past 12 months. The board meetings were well attended by board members, with minimal absences. In addition, the meetings were attended by downtown residents, downtown workers, downtown business owners, and people who work for other organizations trying to improve the safety and livability of the downtown community. On average, there were 15 to 20 people who attended monthly board meetings.
 - Hosted an Annual Meeting on October 21, 2014, at the Minneapolis Depot. Over 225 people attended the event. Elected four new board members, two of whom are new to the organization.
 - DMNA Board members actively participated in the following groups :
 - Above the Falls Citizens Advisory Committee
 - Downtown Improvement District – Hot Spots Advisory Committee
 - Downtown Court Watch
 - Downtown Families / Webster School Initiative
 - Downtown Neighborhood Associations Leaders Group
 - East Downtown Council
 - East Downtown Development Committee (A task force of the 2025 Plan Development Committee)
 - Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc.
 - Gold Medal Park Conservancy
 - Mill District Neighborhood Association
 - Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District Tactical Urbanism Task Force
 - Minneapolis Downtown Council
 - 2025 Plan Residential Taskforce
 - 2025 Plan Homelessness Taskforce
 - Minneapolis Riverfront Corporation
 - Minneapolis Parks Foundation
 - Pathways to Places: Shaping Downtown Together
 - Tailgating Task Force

- 2020 Partners

The DMNA also helped coordinate one joint downtown neighborhood organization meeting in 2014 (in partnership with the East Downtown Council business association, Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc., and the Mill District Neighborhood Association) to provide updates on the Vikings stadium construction and Ryan Companies redevelopment project.

- **How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2014?**

The two most challenging under-represented groups to do outreach to in the downtown community are renters and homeless people, or those transitioning out of homelessness. These groups tend to be transient in nature.

The DMNA seeks to engage renters via posting information about the organization's Annual Meeting on bulletin boards in common areas of apartment buildings, as well as through social media. The DMNA also shares information with the First Precinct's Crime Prevention Specialist, who has connections with apartment managers. The DMNA also advertises the organization's Annual Meeting in *The Journal* newspaper.

The DMNA cares deeply about the homeless population and people transitioning out of homeless who live in the downtown community. The DMNA Board actively supports the work of Aeon, Catholic Charities, People Serving People, RS Eden and the Salvation Army by sharing information about volunteer opportunities, fundraising events and other activities. The DMNA has also provided letters of support for grant applications submitted by Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army.

In 2014, the DMNA received a generous donation of Minnesota Twins game tickets from the Twins organization as a thank you to the downtown community for supporting the All-Star game. The DMNA donated all 800 tickets to the social services organizations named in the paragraph above to share with their clients, residents and volunteers.

Most important, in 2014 the DMNA contributed \$60,000 in NRP Phase II funds to St. Stephen's Human Services to increase the number of street outreach workers to identify and address the needs of the downtown homeless population.

- **Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?**

The DMNA used the following methods to reach out to the neighborhood:

- Web site: <http://www.thedmna.org>
- Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Downtown-Minneapolis-Neighborhood-Association/73030277778>

- Email list – Over 300 people on the list
- *Mill City Times* blog
- *The Journal*
- *Minneapolis Connects*
- First Precinct Crime Prevention Specialist Renee Allen
- Direct communication with surrounding Downtown neighborhood organizations, i.e. Elliot Park, North Loop, Loring Park and the East Downtown Council business association.

All of these methods worked well to inform community members regarding DMNA meetings, activities and to gather input on specific neighborhood issues.

- **What did not work so well? Why?**

The DMNA does not use door-knocking due to the fact that the majority of downtown residents live in apartments or condominium buildings with security entrances. DMNA Board members help spread the word about events and activities via their homeowners associations and bulletin boards in common areas.

- **How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)?**

Depending on the agenda items, between 15-20 people attend monthly board meetings. Over 225 people attended the 2014 Annual Meeting.

- **How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?**

The DMNA has eight volunteer board members. There are also a handful of other dedicated residents who regularly attend DMNA Board meetings and who participate on related boards noted in item 1 above. The DMNA is continuing to explore the possibility of establishing committees. This is a high priority for 2015.

- **How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?**

Depending on the agenda items, between 15-20 people attend monthly board meetings. Over 225 people attended the 2014 Annual Meeting. The DMNA also supports the Riverfront National Night Out event, which attracts several thousand downtown residents, and the Mill City Farmers' Market which attracts several hundred downtown residents and visitors every Saturday between May and October.

- **How many people receive your print publications?**

The DMNA does not have any print publications. The DMNA does advertise its events and annual meeting in the *Downtown Journal*. The circulation for this publication is nearly 30,000.

- **How many people receive your electronic communications?**

The DMNA distributes information regarding board meetings, neighborhood events and City of Minneapolis programs via its email list, Web site and Facebook page.

The DMNA has over 300 names on its email list and it has 250 friends on its Facebook page. The reach on the organization's Facebook page ranges from 75 to over 400 depending on the topic.

The DMNA also shares information with the Mill District Neighborhood Association via the *Mill City Times* blog. According to DMNA Board members who also serve on the MDNA Board, the blog reaches over 1000 Mill District residents.

2. 2014 Highlights

Please describe one or two major highlights, and if possible, please include digital photos or illustrations:

- What was the issue or opportunity the neighborhood was facing?
- Who was impacted?
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
- What was the outcome?

1. October 21, 2014, Annual Meeting

The biggest highlight of 2014 was the organization's Annual Meeting held on October 21, 2014, at the Minneapolis Depot. Over 225 people attended the 2014 Annual Meeting. This was the best Annual Meeting turnout the organization has had in the past five years. The board is looking forward to building on this success in 2015. Elections to the DMNA Board of Directors took place at the October 21, Annual Meeting. The community elected four new board members to the DMNA Board of Directors. All of the new board members are committed to growing the organization and increasing the engagement of hard to reach populations, as well as growing populations such as families and seniors.

2. Helping Address the Needs of the Homeless Population in Downtown

The DMNA continues to be engaged in finding ways to meet the needs of the homeless population in downtown Minneapolis. Over the past 18 months, the DMNA has met with representatives from numerous other downtown organizations that are also seeking to address the problem; including the Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness or Heading Home Hennepin, St. Stephen's Human Services, Youth Link, and the Minneapolis Downtown Council's Downtown 2025 Plan Taskforce to End Homelessness. As a result of these meetings and conversations, the DMNA Board voted to allocate \$60,000 in NRP Phase II monies to support the hiring of additional St. Stephen's street outreach workers.

3. 2014 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2014:

- **What were your organization's major accomplishments?**
- **How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?**

Some of the DMNA's major accomplishments in 2014 include the following:

- Held 12 board meetings over the past 12 months. The board meetings have been well attended by board members, with minimal absences. In addition, the meetings were attended by downtown residents, downtown workers, downtown business owners, and people who work for other organizations trying to improve the safety and livability of the downtown community. On average, 15 to 20 people attend monthly board meetings.
- Held an Annual Meeting on October 21, 2014, at the Minneapolis Depot. Over 225 people attended the event.
- Renewed membership in 2020 Partners.
- Renewed membership in the East Downtown Council.
- Contributed \$7,500 in CPP funds to the Mill City Farmers Market in 2014.
- The DMNA contributed \$10,000 to the Humboldt Lofts Tree Planting Project and agreed to serve as the fiscal agent for the project.
- The DMNA also agreed to serve as the sponsor and fiscal agent for the North Star Lofts Minnesota Historical Society's Legacy Grant application.
- Elected three members of the Mill District Neighborhood Association to the DMNA Board on October 21, 2014.
- Provided numerous letters of support for land use and liquor license applications for downtown developments and businesses.

In addition, a current and a past DMNA Board member were instrumental in the successful efforts to re-open Webster School, which will serve as an elementary school for children living in the downtown community. The DMNA Board also continues to cultivate a relationship with the Downtown Families group in an effort to ensure the downtown community provides the necessary resources and amenities for people of all ages.

4. *Housing*

What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities?

The DMNA Board spent 40% of its time between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014, discussing housing related issues. The DMNA Board continues to consider how to use its NRP Phase II Housing dollars to address the issue of homelessness in the downtown community. The DMNA maintains ongoing communications with representatives from the following organizations to strategize about how the NRP funds could best meet their respective organizations' needs:

- Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness / Heading Home Hennepin
- Minneapolis Downtown Council Downtown 2025 Plan Taskforce to End Homelessness
- St. Stephen's Human Services
- Youth Link

The DMNA Board held a strategic planning session in December, and housing was identified as a top priority for 2015, whether it be supporting the development of affordable and life-cycle housing, or working to eliminate the issue of homelessness in the downtown community.

5. *Financial Reports*

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year. (Please include all funding sources).

Please see attached document.

In addition to your annual report, please take time to describe your interactions with City departments and other jurisdictions.

1. *Impact*

What interactions with City departments occupied a major part of your time? What worked well? What could be improved?

The DMNA staff spends quite a bit of time reviewing land use applications and liquor license applications. As a result, DMNA staff spends quite a bit of time interacting with City staff people from CPED; including Planning and Zoning and Heritage Preservation, as well as Regulatory Services. The DMNA staff also works closely with City staff people at CPED Finance related to preparing scopes of service and contracts for NRP funds, as well as payment requests for NRP and CPP contracts. Finally, the DMNA Board spent quite a bit of time communicating with the neighborhood specialist within the NCR Department at the end of 2014 related to hiring new staff. In addition, the neighborhood specialist also helped facilitate a strategic planning session with the board in December of 2014.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate your overall experience with your interactions with the City? __5__

2. *City Communications - effectiveness*

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful?

Yes

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? __5__

3. *City Communications - timeliness*

Do you receive adequate notice of City activities in your neighborhood? If not, did your organization inform somebody at the City of this? Did the City respond in a positive manner? Please explain.

Yes

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the timeliness of communications from the City? __5__

4. City Departments

How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood?

There has been a tremendous amount of redevelopment activity in the Downtown East and Downtown West neighborhoods over the past 12 to 18 months. The DMNA is generally notified by the developer when there is a land use application involved with the project. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes the DMNA does not hear about a project until receiving the public hearing notice. The DMNA would like to be engaged in development projects early on in the process, so the developer can create the best project possible for the neighborhood.

In addition, the City has issued a number of RFP's for properties with the DMNA boundaries over the past 12-18 months. The DMNA would like to have the opportunity to review and comment on RFP's before they are issued.

Finally, the DMNA communicates frequently with the City's Regulatory Services Department with regards to liquor license applications, expansion of premises applications, and extended operating hours applications. The DMNA has been mostly satisfied with the communication related to liquor license applicants, but would encourage the department to require all licensing applicants to contact the neighborhood directly, well in advance to the public meeting notice being mailed and prior to the public hearing. The DMNA appreciates meeting with the applicant in advance of the public hearing. The DMNA is hopeful the Regulatory Services Department will take this request to heart.

5. City Assistance

How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a community participation group?

At this point, the DMNA is satisfied with the assistance the NCR Department provides to the neighborhood.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? ___5___

6. Other comments?

NA