



Community Planning and Economic Development

News Release

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City of Minneapolis to Launch Public Realm Planning Process Downtown

Thursday, October 30, 2014 (Minneapolis, MN) - The City of Minneapolis is launching a planning process to develop a Downtown Public Realm Framework Plan (DPRF). The DPRF will be a guiding policy document for the management of the pedestrian experience downtown. It will be focused on guiding the enhancement of priority streets and public spaces.

“As Downtown Minneapolis continues to grow, it is important that our streets and public open spaces create an environment in which people will want to work and live,” said Mayor Hodges. “The Downtown Public Realm Framework Plan will leverage our collective interest in making Minneapolis an even greater city for residents and visitors alike.”

The purpose of a Public Realm Framework strategy is to provide unified guidance to inform and coordinate the work of public and private entities that shape the public realm within a certain geographic area, in this case downtown. A Public Realm Framework includes an inventory of existing policies, practices, and elements in the public realm. The Downtown Public Realm Framework will be the first plan of its kind to be adopted by the City, and is notable for the strong collaborative commitment it demonstrates on the part of both the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the City of Minneapolis to look at the entire system of public spaces and corridors downtown as an integrated whole.

The DPRF will be a public sector document, but coordinating private partners are an essential component of its success. Private entities at the table include the Downtown Council, Downtown Improvement District, the Greening Downtown Conservancy, the Downtown Skyway Advisory Committee, and others with committed interests in the success of Downtown. The identification of new tools and processes that will enable private dollars to come to the table in the public interest is a key element of the DPRF. Such tools could include a clear and legible enhancement plan that identifies key corridors and destinations, innovative programs to encourage and enable more private sector participation in delivering enhancements in the public interest, coordination tools and mechanisms to advance shared goals for programming and activation downtown, and the exploration of new funding and dedicated revenue models to advance enhancement goals. The Downtown Public Realm Framework is intended to inform and guide outcomes in capital planning, site plan review, and public/private partnership toward the coordinated enhancement of the public realm.

“A successful downtown public realm does not operate in a vacuum, and should not have boundaries congruent with publicly owned space,” said Council Member Jacob Frey. “If we expect developers and businesses to make investments that benefit the public realm (and we do), the City must get everyone on the same page. This framework is a great step towards that end.”

The City of Minneapolis’ Downtown Public Realm Framework will run on a parallel and integrated track with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board’s process to create a Downtown Service Area Master Plan (DSAMP). The two processes will result in separate but integrally related documents, the DPRF and the DSAMP, which will jointly create a plan for the entire network of downtown public spaces and corridors. The DPRF and the DSAMP will each be adopted by their respective elected bodies. Other public entities at the table will include the downtown neighborhoods, Metro Transit, Hennepin County, the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, the Ballpark Authority, Meet Minneapolis, and the National Park Service.

The Public Realm Framework is a new type of thematic plan. It has been developed by the City of Minneapolis department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED), which added Urban Design capabilities to the enterprise in 2013 and has since coordinated with other City departments on enhanced livability outcomes through the provision of urban design services, 3D modeling and visualization, co-creation of the Parklet Program, and Urban Design Assessment services at a neighborhood or corridor level. The Public Realm Framework will build on the efforts outlined in Access Minneapolis, the City’s 10-Year Transportation Plan, and other adopted guiding policies including The Minneapolis Plan (TMP), the City’s comprehensive plan.

The project is launching this fall and will extend into December next year, when the DPRF document will be forwarded for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption. For more information on the process, contact [Kjersti Monson, Director of Long Range Planning](#).

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