

## **Community Planning and Economic Development News Release**

Contact: Rose Lindsay, (Office) 612.673.5015; (Cell) 612.520.8661

# **Downtown East Commons Draft Alternative Approaches Unveiled at Public Meeting**

**Wednesday, April 8, 2015 (Minneapolis, MN)** – On Wednesday, April 8, the City of Minneapolis in partnership with Hargreaves Associates presented draft alternative approaches for the Downtown East Commons at a public meeting held at the Mill City Museum.

“Public input on the Downtown East Commons is essential to ensuring it is not only a beautiful space, but a space that will serve the public,” said Mayor Betsy Hodges. “The focus of the Commons is to serve as a green, thriving space where residents and visitors alike can enjoy a beautiful day, entertainment, activities and more. I’m grateful to all who have taken their time to be part of this process. The Commons is an integral part of the greening of our downtown currently underway.”

The draft alternative approaches presented a range of options for the future Commons, which will be a transformative public open space in Downtown Minneapolis. Integrating feedback from a successful public meeting in February and from more than 2,500 responses to an activities and amenities survey, the design team developed four alternative approaches that responded to priorities identified through this public process. Rather than selecting any one scheme presented, the intent of these alternative approaches was to elicit feedback on the key design elements, such as the character of the open space, programmable spaces, potential café, potential water feature, etc. Discussion of the four options will help the City and design team better understand the strengths of each approach and will inform the development of a preferred scheme.

“The Commons is an enormous opportunity for Minneapolis to create a great urban park that will host day to day life in the city, as well as special events and festivals,” said Mary Margaret

Jones Senior Principal of Hargreaves Associates. “The alternative approaches our team has developed explore a range of possibilities for how the park could be developed, which helps us understand and present the issues and opportunities. We hope to open people's imaginations to all that the Commons could be.”

Following the presentation of the draft alternative approaches, attendees broke into small groups to discuss the alternative approaches. Each group summarized the positives and negatives of each approach, selecting a spokesperson to report their findings to the full meeting. Boards illustrating the four alternative approaches were located around the room and a physical model with inserts of each option also allowed opportunities for discussion and feedback throughout the evening.

“I’m so impressed by the ideas emanating from the community,” said Council Member Jacob Frey. “Broadly speaking, people want the Commons to function as the ‘kitchen table’ for our city – a place of congregation, activity, and respite all rolled into one. The input given will result in a design accomplishing just that.”

The Hargreaves led design team will consolidate the feedback received during the meeting into a single preferred scheme for the Downtown East Commons. The City currently has a public meeting planned for Wednesday, May 27, 2015 to present the preferred approach. For more details on the Downtown East Commons project visit the project [website](#).

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