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Minneapolis Downtown Council To Honor 2025 Plan Leadership Awards Recipients At Annual Gala On Thursday, October 20

MINNEAPOLIS (October 11, 2016) — The Minneapolis Downtown Council (MDC) announced today the winners of its annual [Intersections: The Downtown 2025 Plan](#) Leadership Awards, all of whom will be honored at MDC's Gala taking place Thursday, October 20 at Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel, The Depot (225 South 3rd Avenue). The awards ceremony will begin at 7:30 pm.

The 2025 Plan Leadership Awards, now in their third year, celebrate individuals, organizations and initiatives that helped advance the 2025 Plan's mission over the past year. The awards focus on specific efforts that fall under the six 2025 Plan committees focused on Development, Downtown Experience, Greening & Public Realm, Transportation, Ending Street Homelessness and Festival of Ideas (MiX). MDC also honors a group or initiative that made an exceptional impact on downtown through its 2025 Plan Impact Award.

"We have an exceptional network of people and businesses within our community that volunteer their time, talents and efforts toward helping us create a vibrant and extraordinary downtown," said Steve Cramer, President & CEO of the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District. "The 2025 Plan Leadership Awards are our way of saying thank you while honoring those that went above and beyond over the past year."

This year's 2025 Plan Leadership Awards recipients include:

- **Development:** University of Minnesota Task Force co-chaired by David Marquis and Paige Rickert
- **Downtown Experience:** Northbest: Ads of Minnesota in collaboration with Doug Spong & AdFed MN
- **Greening & Public Realm:** The Commons
- **Transportation:** Commissioner Charlie Zelle
- **Ending Street Homelessness:** YouthLink Peer Street Outreach Program
- **Festival of Ideas (MiX):** John Sweeney
- **2025 Plan Impact Award:** U.S. Bank Stadium

The Minneapolis Downtown Council issued a call for nominations for this year's 2025 Plan Leadership Awards in August, asking its members, 2025 Plan committee leadership, volunteers, and the public to nominate individuals, organizations, or initiatives that have impacted the 2025 Plan's 10 main goals over the past 12 months. Those nominations were compiled and one winner was selected for each of the six 2025 Plan committee areas.

The 2025 Plan Impact Award is an additional award given to recognize an individual or organization that has had significant impact and greatly advanced the 2025 Plan in several areas of its initiatives over the past year.

The **University of Minnesota Task Force** co-chaired by David Marquis and Paige Rickert focuses on the 2025 Plan's mission to forge a strong connection with the U of M. This year, the task force worked on projects that helping connect university students and faculty with the downtown business community. In an effort to help our downtown community attract and retain top, up-coming talent, this task force delivered opportunities to accentuate shared objectives and points of connection between potential future employees and the local business community.

Northbest: Ads of Minnesota, a partnership between MDC, AdFed MN and The 2025 Plan's Downtown Experience Committee, was a new event in 2016 that highlighted the local creative advertising community. The event took place at The Commons in downtown Minneapolis on October 4 and included a big screen that showcased a reel of locally made ads. Doug Spong chaired a curation committee, which also included Sue Crolick, Nancy Rice and Steve Wehrenberg. After a call for nominations, the curation committee received 138 advertisement submissions from 19 local agencies. They then selected the 27 best from the group. Northbest also included food trucks, local craft beer, lawn games and networking, and it led into AdFed MN's Silver Medal Award presentation.

The Commons, a new 4.2-acre green space located on two city blocks in East Town, opened this summer and provides a new park for the downtown community. The Commons offers a place for people to take a break during the work day, a gathering and connection point, an entertainment destination and much more. The park was designed by Hargreaves Associates, and was a public and private collaborative effort. The Commons is open to the public but can also host events.

Minnesota Department of Transportation **Commissioner Charlie Zelle** has been a longtime supporter of transportation enhancement. Commissioner Zelle was appointed by MnDOT in 2012 and has served as a 2025 Plan volunteer since the plan was initially conceived in 2010. He has been an advocate and a supporter of enhanced transportation options in downtown Minneapolis and the surrounding region.

The **YouthLink Peer Street Outreach Program** is a collaborative effort that places youth outreach workers on the street throughout downtown Minneapolis in an effort to connect with and provide resources for youth ages 18 to 23 years old who are experiencing homelessness. The youth outreach workers all have a background of experiencing homelessness themselves. The program offers them a job that helps direct those in need to vital resources in the community. It also offers the youth outreach workers a scholarship to cover the cost of a class at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

John Sweeney of The Brave New Workshop has been a strong advocate and supporter for the innovation and community gathering nature of the Minneapolis Idea eXchange. He has a passion for putting a spotlight on innovation and solving challenges within our community. Over the past year Sweeney has provided a voice of directional leadership for MiX and is always willing to volunteer and help with upcoming MiX initiatives. This year, Sweeney and Brave New Workshop hosted MiX at their comedy theater and led insight and improvisational exercises to initiate conversation and develop ideas related to MiX's topic of design thinking within the community.

U.S. Bank Stadium opened in July 2016. Securing the Minnesota Vikings' new home in downtown Minneapolis was one of the 10 initiatives that the 2025 Plan laid out in 2010, and this goal became a reality when the gates opened this year. The Minneapolis Downtown Council will recognize the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, Minnesota Vikings, Mortenson Construction and U.S. Bank for their collaborative efforts in making this stadium a reality. Not only did it secure a venue that will host both major and daily events, but it also ushered in a wave of development in the East Town area that includes new office space, residential properties, greening, transportation amenities and overall neighborhood vibrancy.

This year's Minneapolis Downtown Council Gala will include networking, dinner, updates on the 2025 Plan and musical entertainment. Registration is available through October 13 by visiting www.downtownmpls.com/2025awards.

Following the event, photos and logos will be available at www.downtownmpls.com/media. For more information on the Minneapolis Downtown Council Gala featuring the 2025 Plan Leadership Awards, follow @MplsDowntown on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#), or use the hashtag #2025Plan.

About the Minneapolis Downtown Council:

Founded in 1955, and one of the most historic central business associations in the nation, the Minneapolis Downtown Council (MDC) is a membership-based entity that works to create an extraordinary downtown. The MDC's collaborative developments of *Intersections: Downtown 2025 Plan* was designed to help downtown businesses, community leaders and citizens build on downtown assets and implement future goals. For more information, please visit www.downtownmpls.com.

About the 2025 Plan:

The [Downtown 2025 Plan](#) is a vehicle to help leaders and citizens build on Downtown's assets and guide its development in ways that reflect the community's aspirations for a Downtown Minneapolis that is thriving, livable, green, connected and welcoming in the decades ahead. This includes initiatives to double downtown's residential population, transform Nicollet Mall into a must-see destination, implement a Gateway area and other green elements throughout downtown, create a compelling and walkable environment around the clock, lead the nation in transportation options, end street homelessness, forge connections with the University of Minnesota and more. The 2025 Plan is a Minneapolis Downtown Council initiative established in 2010.

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