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## **minneapolis downtown council “platform” statement, 2017 municipal election cycle**

*Downtown Minneapolis is the key driver of economic prosperity and opportunity in Minneapolis, but its continued success is not inevitable. An unrelenting commitment to both commerce and living downtown that is supported by **safety for the downtown community**, the promotion of an **active and welcoming environment**, and the continued growth of a **competitive business climate** are essential building blocks for future success. The Minneapolis Downtown Council looks forward to dialogue with candidates for municipal office on these important topics with the goal of continuing a tradition of private – public sector cooperation and collaboration which has served our City well.*

Minneapolis is a great City, playing a leading role among American cities during this period of urban renaissance. At the heart of our great City is a vibrant, growing, extraordinary downtown which accounts for a large share of the record setting five consecutive years of billion dollar plus construction activity in Minneapolis. Our economy is booming, and downtown is leading the way to the benefit of every resident living here. And maintaining a vital downtown is critically important to the economic health of the region and the State, creating a special responsibility for Minneapolis business and policy leaders.

Employers located downtown across the breadth of the for-profit and non-profit economy provide over one-half of the jobs in Minneapolis. Downtown properties contribute 36% of real estate tax receipts. An ever growing number of visitors, residents and workers are responsible for a significant share of city sales tax and parking revenues. Downtown is the key driver of economic prosperity and opportunity. And the Minneapolis Downtown Council, as a strong business community voice and partner, provides

important guidance through our *Intersections 2025 Plan* on goals that must be met to extend this success.

Our successful downtown provides Minneapolis an identity nationally and internationally. It is a civic gathering place. A source of pride. The mix of diverse people and activities downtown is unique in the region and creates the City's competitive advantage.

But a successful downtown can't be taken for granted. In a hyper-competitive environment Minneapolis can fall behind in the blink of an eye. Success can be undermined, either by lack of attention to positive opportunities and/or emerging negative conditions or in the worst case, adoption of policies and practices at the municipal level that are antithetical to a healthy downtown community. Recent Downtown Improvement District Perception Survey results have shown a downward trend in feelings of safety reported by workers, residents and visitors as one important and concerning indicator.

Once growth slows and vibrancy wanes, it's hard to restart and regain positive momentum.

The continued success of downtown is built on a foundation that must be maintained and enhanced. Key building blocks include:

- **Safety** – an unrelenting commitment to insuring public safety and a high degree of livability throughout the downtown community based on a comprehensive strategy of *enforcement, outreach* and *engagement* is “first among equals” in terms of conditions to insure continued success. A strong, visible presence on the street of public safety related resources including police is essential to achieving this success;
- **Active, welcoming environment** – walkable, well-lit, “green” and active streets with attractive retail options, a vibrant “24 – 7” vibe no matter what the season, and a downtown where all who come to work, live and play are mindful of the respect everyone has a right to enjoy, creates the experience we want. Significant downtown public spaces – Nicollet Mall, Commons Park and Peavey Plaza as examples – should model the activity and program filled environment that is ideal, supported by public and private resources; and
- **Competitive business climate** – businesses seeking to locate and grow downtown, thereby creating economic opportunity in Minneapolis,

- will be less successful in doing so if the City is a singularly costly and complicated location to operate due to layers of regulation and mandates that don't apply elsewhere in the region. In a time we are debating as a community how to meet future workforce demand, policies which foster a strong and growing economy combined with intentional efforts to connect residents with jobs will best meet our needs and address persistent employment disparities.

As the 2017 municipal election cycle begins, we look forward to a constructive dialogue with candidates seeking public office on these important topics. Business leaders are anxious to meet to share thoughts and experiences, and to hear and understand the perspective and priorities of those running for election. Minneapolis has a well-earned reputation for effective private – public sector cooperation and collaboration, an approach which has served our community well for decades. We trust and believe this spirit will prevail, and look forward to working closely with policy leaders in City Hall during coming months and years.