

Minneapolis Partnership to Create a Safe and Inviting Hennepin Avenue

Spring/Summer 2017 Plan



Photo: Meet Minneapolis

City of Minneapolis

Meet Minneapolis

Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce

Greater Minneapolis Building Owners & Managers Association (BOMA)

mpls downtown council & Mpls Downtown Improvement District



A Message from the Workgroup Co-Chairs

We want everyone to come to an inviting, welcoming, and safe Hennepin Avenue in downtown Minneapolis.

To achieve and sustain this goal, we convened a workgroup of local government and business community leaders to design a plan to create a safe and inviting environment where everyone is welcome on Hennepin Avenue.

We began our work with a set of agreed-upon facts, including the fact that the rate of crime downtown is down, including violent crime. However, behaviors that have a negative impact on livability on Hennepin Avenue during the daytime, which include public intoxication, catcalling, and others, have increased, as have concerns and complaints about them. While these behaviors are not illegal, they are unpleasant, and have left people feeling unsafe and unwelcome downtown.

We believe that the best way to address these concerns is by ensuring that the public, private, and non-profit sectors are working together, along with law enforcement, on solutions that increase positive interactions, positive engagement, and activation of underutilized spaces.

Together, we created a plan that encompasses four key categories: outreach, activation, law enforcement and legislative solutions. Two-thirds of this plan is about activation and outreach. What is most needed is the intentional facilitation of human connection and interaction with people. We also get to create inviting spaces up and down Hennepin Avenue so that people know they are welcome and safe.

This plan focuses on addressing concerns on Hennepin Avenue during daytime hours. Many strategies are already underway to address nighttime violence and issues at bar close, including SafeZone, the Hospitality Zone Assessment, the Nighttime Mobility Management Plan, and Group Violence Intervention (GVI), along with additional law-enforcement strategies.

We would like to express our thanks to those leaders from the business community who joined us in this work, Steve Cramer, President and CEO of the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District; Kevin Lewis, Executive Director of the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA); and Melvin Tennant, President and CEO of Meet Minneapolis. Each brought not only their own concerns to the table, but offered ideas for collaborative solutions. Additionally, we want to thank all of the partners who came together to complete this team: the Hennepin County Administrator's Office, Hennepin County Probation, the Minneapolis Police Department, the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office, and the Minneapolis City Coordinator's Office.

Because this is a living document, this workgroup will meet throughout the spring and summer to evaluate the plan and our shared progress. In addition, the Downtown Improvement District has developed a survey which has been seeking input from downtown stakeholders prior to the plan's implementation and after.

Mayor Betsy Hodges, *City of Minneapolis*

Jonathan Weinhausen, *President and CEO, Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce*

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Outreach

Many people who are hanging out along Hennepin Avenue might use services if they were offered as an alternative to poor behavior choices. Outreach has proven an effective strategy in the past with people experiencing homelessness and with our young people: issues they were facing have been better addressed through outreach than through contact with police. The same is true for livability issues such as public intoxication, catcalling, and other troubling conduct. This plan provides for the following steps:

- MADDADS, the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District Livability team, and Summit Academy are adding outreach teams to Hennepin Avenue.
- The Youth Coordinating Board is extending the hours of its Outreach Team.
 - The work of these teams is in addition to the ongoing work of St. Stephen's and YouthLINK outreach teams, who already do important outreach downtown.
- Hennepin County is assisting with providing rapid chemical dependency assessments on a voluntary basis for individuals who are willing to seek help.
- Hennepin County is also providing more resources to help families and children needing shelter or other child welfare intervention.
- The Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District recently expanded and upgraded its Safety Communication Center, which dispatches outreach teams.
- The DID has also unveiled a new smartphone app that will help outreach teams better coordinate their work.

Activation

Because active blocks are safer blocks, our plan includes creative activation in targeted sections of Hennepin Avenue from 3rd Street to 10th Street. These activities include:

- Creative place-making projects at the 7th Street bus stop.
- Youth dialogue and engagement at key nodes along Hennepin Avenue, including the Warehouse District light-rail stop and Central Library.
- Seeking funding for activation of a former bus shelter at 3rd Street as a youth placemaking center.
- Bringing back the popular "Pianos on Parade" project sponsored by the Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District.
- Seeking funding to extend Hennepin Theater Trust's "5 to 10" program.
- "Tactical urbanism," design solutions developed by DID to make changes to physical spaces to improve safety and promote positive interactions.

DID will regularly convene organizations to plan and promote activities. The partners involved in and contributing resources to these activation efforts are:

- Green Minneapolis,
- Hennepin Theater Trust,
- Metro Transit,
- Minneapolis Downtown Council,
- Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District,
- Youth Coordinating Board.

Legislative Solutions

We are also looking to our legislative leaders for their help in making sure that the heart of Minneapolis along Hennepin Avenue is inviting, welcoming, and safe.

- We support a bill at the State Capitol (SF1732/HF1429), authored by Minneapolis legislators Sen. Jeff Hayden and Rep. Karen Clark, that would allow officers to enforce court orders to restrict some criminal defendants from being in areas where they have repeatedly offended, including downtown.

Law Enforcement

Understanding that arrests alone will not end or solve unwelcoming behaviors downtown, the Minneapolis Police Department designed a strategy that emphasizes beat officer presence along Hennepin Avenue. It enables officers to interact with residents, commuters, and visitors with greater frequency and in more positive ways. In addition to these MPD beat officers:

- The First Precinct will initiate a new “Commuter Block Post” program consisting of Minneapolis Police Department personnel and DID Ambassadors during the morning and afternoon commute hours. Additional patrols will be assigned during evening post-rush hour/theater prime time.
- Hennepin County Juvenile Probation officers and MPD First Precinct officers have joint beats underway that are focused on building relationships with youth on probation.
- Metro Transit police are adding joint beats with MPD, beginning earlier than in previous years.
- As in years past, the Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office will have an increased presence downtown from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The DID’s Safety Director will work directly with First Precinct leadership to oversee these various patrol and enforcement strategies.

