

Media Advisory

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Downtown Minneapolis Raises the Bar

New Downtown Improvement District aims for cleaner, greener, safer downtown

Minneapolis, July 18, 2009 –120 blocks of downtown are getting a well-deserved makeover, resulting in a downtown that will be cleaner, safer and friendlier for people who work, live and visit the area. New services include recently deployed Clean and Safe Ambassadors, or hosts, trained to welcome and provide information to visitors in order to make the district more inviting.

The Ambassador program was created to provide a welcoming, safe and clean atmosphere in the District. All Ambassadors are trained as downtown concierges – helping people to navigate the City, find places of interest, and make everyone feel welcomed. On the street 7 days a week, they will be moving about on foot, Segways, and small cleaning carts, roaming the area with a watchful eye and friendly smile.

The Clean Ambassadors also do more: they remove trash, sweep up litter, abate graffiti, remove handbills, pressure-wash sidewalks, etc. The Safe Ambassadors, while unarmed, serve as extra eyes and ears on the street, addressing aggressive panhandling and coordinating with the Minneapolis Police Department, Transit Police, outreach programs and other services to address various issues occurring in the District.

Around 500 people applied for an ambassador position and that number was narrowed down to about 60 by Block by Block, a management company hired to establish the program based on their experience running ambassador programs in districts in over 30 cities nationwide.

The results of our Ambassador program were adding up fast. Following are some quick results for the first three weeks of clean and safe ambassador operations:

For the week of July 1 – July 18, 2009	
Pedestrian Assistance	4,142
Business/Place of Interest Recommendations Given	752
Property Owner/Building/Manager Contacts	223
Passive Panhandling	173
Aggressive Panhandling	28
Request for Police Assistance	53
Trash removed (pounds)	41,825
Graffiti Removed	2,503
Pressure wash (block faces)	30
Weeds Removed (block faces)	223

As the DID phases in, more services will be added such as maintaining other streetscape elements (enhanced sidewalks, irrigations systems, shelters, kiosks, etc.). By 2010, DID services will include a greening program.

The City of Minneapolis continues to provide its existing public works and public safety services, and the additive DID services enhance the vibrancy and livability of downtown, making it the place to be!

The DID follows a proven model as over 1000 districts exist nationwide. Other districts have resulted in more competitive areas that attract businesses, employees, residents and visitors: people want to be in areas that are cleaner, safer, greener and more vibrant.

The new Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID) was founded in early 2009 in order to raise the standard of care and behavior the Downtown area. The DID is funded via a special assessment to all commercial properties within the 120 block area. Many government and exempt properties are also voluntarily paying into the DID as they too will receive benefit from DID services.

For more information on the DID, including detailed service launch packets, operating plans, and governance information, please go to: www.MinneapolisDID.com



Safety Ambassador at work



Before



After