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mpls downtown council honors 2025 plan leadership award recipients tonight at annual gala

MINNEAPOLIS (October 11, 2017) – Each year, the mpls downtown council (mdc) honors people, organizations and initiatives making a significant impact on downtown Minneapolis' vitality through its *Intersections: The Downtown 2025 Plan* Leadership Awards. Tonight, mdc will honor its 2017 award recipients at its annual gala taking place at Minneapolis Event Centers (212 2nd Street SE). The awards ceremony begins at 7 pm.

The mdc will honor five 2025 Plan leadership award recipients along with one Impact Award winner, selected thanks to its contributions to downtown that impact several areas of the mdc's 2025 Plan.

"The 2025 Plan leadership awards are our way of recognizing those who are truly making an incredible impact through their initiatives and leadership in our downtown community each year," said Steve Cramer, president & ceo of the mpls downtown council and Mpls Downtown Improvement District. "The key to a vibrant community is a collective belief in helping make a difference, and these honorees tonight are doing their part in keeping our downtown extraordinary."

This year's 2025 Plan leadership awards recipients include:

- BKV Group
- Housing Options Coalition co-chaired by J. Scott Andresen & Mark Becker
- Hippy Feet
- Washington Square
- Hennepin County
- 2025 Plan Impact Award: Minneapolis Sculpture Garden

The mpls 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 selected by the mdc's leadership team.

BKV Group engaged in a year-long pro-bono effort to help facilitate a vision for what the Park and Portland Corridor in East Town could look like in the future. Their work included understanding past master plans and unifying a scope that will enhance the overall experience of pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers alike while helping shape future development of the two avenues from Elliot Park to the Mississippi Riverfront.

The **Housing Options Coalition**, co-chaired by J. Scott Andresen of Bassford Remele and Mark Becker of Fabyanske, Westra, Hart & Thompson, focused on helping lobby for legislation that would change construction-defect laws hampering condominium and townhome construction state-wide. Over 18 months, the Housing Option Coalition forged bipartisan support at the state capitol. Working with chief bill authors Sen. Kari Dziedzic (DFL-District 60) and Rep. Dennis Smith (R-District 34B), along with legislative consultants Faegre Baker Daniels and Northstate Advisors, Urban Land Institute's Regional Council of Mayors, and many coalition members, they helped pass amendments signed by Gov. Mark Dayton that removed critical barriers to the construction of for-sale condos and townhomes downtown and across the state.

Hippy Feet is a local organization launched by CEO and founder Michael Mader in 2016. Its mission is to donate a pair of socks to someone experiencing homelessness for each pair of socks they sell. They've also began a partnership with YouthLink in downtown Minneapolis, which focuses on providing employment opportunities for youth ages 16-23 experiencing homelessness, both to raise awareness about how to help those in need but also to provide an opportunity for those experiencing homelessness to get back on their feet. Mader thought of idea for the business during a time of adversity in his own life—deciding he wanted to help others less fortunate than him. He learned socks are the most requested, but least donated, item at homeless shelters. In its first year, Hippy Feet donated 5,000 socks to those in need.

Washington Square's renovation, a downtown investment by Shorenstein Properties, transformed a 1960s era office building with high vacancy rates into a thriving, shining example of what opportunities renovating downtown space can produce. The new Washington Square includes landscaped outdoor green space, Minneapolis' first food hall with specialty foods from local restaurants, an indoor amenity lounge with a bar, pool table and ping pong, secure bike parking, free fitness and more. The renovation enticed major companies like ECMC and Code 42, among others, to sign leases, and it has created a sought-after tech environment conducive to attracting and retaining businesses and employees alike. Today, Washington Square is a model for how other buildings approach revamping their space.

Hennepin County impacted downtown Minneapolis through several key initiatives in the past year. They led a reconstruction of Washington Avenue that makes it a modern transit artery better serving pedestrians, bikers and vehicles alike while also better bridging the Mississippi Riverfront with downtown's central core. Its renovation of the Government Center North Plaza area, including added lighting and a refurbished water fountain space, helped provide a location for the public and workers alike to meet friends, grab lunch, or hold an outdoor meeting. And its free Go Outside with Hennepin



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County programming offered outdoor movies, music, trivia, lawn games, food trucks, the Downtown Farmers Market and more throughout the year at both Government Center South Plaza and Target Field Station.

This year's 2025 Plan Impact Award goes to the **Minneapolis Sculpture Garden**. A partnership between the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and the Walker Art Center, this year the Sculpture Garden wrapped up a renovation that added new artwork, re-landscaped, planted more than 300 trees and helped re-affirm our city's position as a leader both regionally and nationally through our art institutions and green space. More than 530,000 visitors have stopped by the Sculpture Garden since it re-opened in June.

Along with the award presentation, tonight's mpls downtown council gala will include networking, dinner, updates on The 2025 Plan and musical entertainment.

Following the event, photos and logos will be available at www.mplsdowntown.com/media. For more information on the mpls downtown council gala featuring the 2025 Plan leadership awards, follow @mplsdowntown on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, or use the hashtag #2025Plan.

about the mpls downtown council:

Founded in 1955, and one of the most historic central business associations in the nation, the mpls downtown council (mdc) is a membership-based entity that works to create an extraordinary downtown. The mdc's collaborative developments of Intersections: The 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.mplsdowntown.com.

about the 2025 plan:

Intersections: 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 into a must-see destination, implement a Gateway connection 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 mpls downtown council implemented in 2011. More than 350 volunteers work on helping make The 2025 Plan's mission a reality.

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