

## notes from steve cramer | march 29, 2019

With the legislature in full swing and the snow almost melted, April is upon us! As always, there is also a great deal happening downtown.

### **transit update**

At the Capitol, the mpls downtown council provided support for **increased investment in transit** as represented in Governor Walz's budget proposal. Continued build-out of the region's multi-modal transit system is a key goal reflected in *Intersections: The Downtown 2025 Plan* and central to the continued growth, vitality and competitiveness of downtown. Insuring stability and reliability for Metro Transit operations is also a key goal.

### **legislative session conversation**

On March 26, Dave Johnson from Faegre Baker Daniels provided an overall **session update** to interested mdc members. Quick summary: There are many issues on the table for resolution and no clear indication yet of what will rise to the top in terms of priorities that all actors – the Governor, DFL House, and IR Senate – can come to agreement about. It's interesting that among all fifty legislatures Minnesota is the only state with divided power! We'll see in coming weeks if that helps or hurts in terms of resolving key policy and budget issues.

### **MN film tax credit proposal**

On behalf of the organization, I also testified in favor of a tax credit proposal by the **Minnesota Film and TV Board** which would boost production activity in the state. This industry is alive and well with incredibly talented professionals living and working here, and we offer a wide array of settings given the physical diversity of areas in the region and across Minnesota. But we have lost ground to jurisdictions that provide stronger financial advantages. The MN Film & TV Board's proposal seeks to level that playing field a little more. If you have an interest in this topic please attend our upcoming April 10 [happy hour presentation focused on MN Film & TV](#).

### **work to end street homelessness continues**

The Star Tribune recently ran a front-page story on the **increase in homelessness** reported over the past few years, which set the stage for a great panel discussion we organized along with the East Town Business Partnership on this important topic. Moderated by Daniel Gumnit from the state's largest shelter serving families, People Serving People, panelists from the Federal Reserve (Ben Horowitz), United Way (Acooa Ellis), Youthlink (John Quincy), and Hennepin County (Commissioner Angela Conley) provided insight into the challenges this issue presents along with the most promising solutions. This topic will remain a priority for our 2025 Plan committee co-chaired by Mark Hamel of Dorsey & Whitney (who hosted and sponsored the forum) and Joseph Desenclos from DID and Block by Block.

### **Emilio Estevez screens The Public film in mpls**

We also had a special visitor in downtown mpls this month. Emilio Estevez hosted a screening of his new film, "The Public", at the Mpls Central Library on March 17. After the screening, he held a Q&A and discussed why he was so passionate about writing, starring and directing in this particular film. "The Public", set in a library in Cincinnati, sheds light on those experiencing homelessness. It was a fantastic event that put a spotlight on the work we're doing here in downtown mpls.

### **delegation from Santa Monica visits**

The issue of homelessness is becoming more prominent as a challenge for cities across the nation. A **delegation from Santa Monica, CA** visited with DID and other officials in March to learn about the strategies we are employing to address the human aspect of the issue with compassion and effective action while concurrently addressing the realities that can exist for businesses, residents and visitors. Not an easy balancing act, but one that organizations like mdc and DID must engage with.

### **Chameleon Shoppes opens April 1**

Our **board of directors** meeting in March at the YMCA's Equity & Innovation Center covered a number of important topics, including an update on activities of Green Minneapolis and a report on the work of the Inclusive Downtown Think Tank partnership with the

YMCA. A spin off of that work is [Chameleon Shoppes](http://www.chameleonthoppes.com), a pop-up retail initiative located on the first floor and skyway levels of Gaviidae Common and opening the week of April 1, in part to coincide with Final Four visitors. Please stop by this very diverse and interesting collection of small business entrepreneurs, many drawn from Minneapolis neighborhood. Details about the program can be found at [www.chameleonthoppes.com](http://www.chameleonthoppes.com).

### **Final Four week is finally here!**

Even though my brackets were busted early in the tournament, I'm growing more excited as the **"Road to the Final Four"** leads ever closer to mpls downtown! Signs of the event, which will kick off on Friday, April 5 and run through the championship game the evening of Monday, April 8, are becoming more evident all around downtown. For all the details you need to know, visit <https://www.mplsdowntown.com/finalfour>. And remember Final Four Friday offers free admission to U.S. Bank Stadium for team practices and a college All-Star game.

### **mark your calendars: explore downtown living returns may 18**

Explore Downtown Living is back for a fifth year on Saturday, May 18. From 10 am-5 pm, visit up to 20+ residential properties in downtown Minneapolis' five neighborhoods and get a chance to see what living in the heart of the city is like. Explore Downtown Living is free and provides the chance to see residential units, roof decks, party rooms, fitness centers and more—all while getting to know local restaurants, shops and businesses through great partner offers. Sign up today and join us in downtown Minneapolis on May 18. More info: [www.exploredtliving.com](http://www.exploredtliving.com)

### **doors open launches may 18-19**

On that same weekend, Doors Open Minneapolis will launch and offer a similar experience at non-residential locations. Doors Open is your chance to explore the buildings that tell our city's story. From theaters to business hubs, sacred spaces to private clubs, sports complexes to engineering wonders, historical gems to not-even-open-yet buildings, Doors Open Minneapolis will give visitors a FREE behind-the-scenes look at over 100 exciting venues. We're hoping to enrich experiences by presenting meaningful conversations with many of the people who make these venues the marvels that they



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are. Learn more at [www.doorsopenminneapolis.org](http://www.doorsopenminneapolis.org)! If you are **interested in volunteering** with Doors Open, visit <https://www.doorsopenminneapolis.org/volunteer>. Enjoy the milder weather ahead, and as always thanks for what you do to make our downtown extraordinary!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steve Cramer'.

steve cramer  
president & ceo, mpls downtown council and Mpls Downtown Improvement District