

Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association (DMNA) Facilitation Guide for Conversations with Community Groups

1. Introduce the DMNA Representatives Present

2. Explain Who DMNA Is *(the below doesn't have to be read verbatim; just ideas for things we might want to mention as an introduction)*

DMNA is one of 70 neighborhood associations in the City of Minneapolis. It exists to promote the common good and general welfare of the Downtown West (core of downtown) and Downtown East (primarily the Mill District) community, to enhance its quality of life, and to promote the attractiveness of the neighborhood for present and future residents, workers, property owners and business owners. In many ways we are “the voice” of downtown residents. (Maybe clarify who we do not represent – North Loop, Loring Park, Elliot Park)

As a neighborhood association recognized and funded by the City of Minneapolis DMNA achieves its purposes through promoting active citizen engagement, discussion, and education, as well as often advocating for particular positions. Major areas of focus include holding public meetings, as well as studying, reviewing, and offering comment on all Land Use, Public Realm, and Public Works projects downtown. The Association also speaks for resident overall quality of life issues like crime, special events (i.e. Super Bowl), and homelessness.

The Association is governed by a 9-member board of directors which is elected at an October annual meeting. Anyone living, working, or owning property downtown is eligible to be a member of DMNA and to vote for its board. Staffing is provided by one contract employee. Information about DMNA can be found on its website and Facebook page.

Before we continue our conversation, are there any questions about DMNA that we can answer?

3. Explain the Purpose of These Meetings

DMNA is charged by the City with having an active program of citizen engagement so we can determine what residents would like and what priorities they have for their downtown neighborhoods. We have done this through forums on specific issues like the development of , 205 Park, 800 Washington and street crime in the warehouse district. We have also conducted on-line surveys of residents to get their opinions.

However, we wanted to have a few face-to-face meetings with interested residents with no pre-determined agenda other than to simply hear what they care about and get their ideas for ways to improve downtown life for all of us. The ideas we hear will help us prioritize and shape DMNA's work.

4. Questions for Discussion

a. To be honest, how many of you were even aware that the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association existed? How many of you have been involved with DMNA in one way or another?

(BTW, if you aren't already on the distribution list for e-mails from DMNA and would like to be, please be sure to sign up on this sheet.)

b. What do you like best about living downtown? What do you hope never changes?

c. What do you think are the biggest challenges to living downtown?

Follow up - Now that we've heard everyone's ideas about that, let's see if we can agree on some sense of priority. Of all the things we've talked about, which three are most important to you?

(This section might be led as sort of a "testing of the mood" of the group, or might require a formal voting process – at least a raising of hands.)

d. The DMNA receives Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) and Community Participation Program (CPP) funds from the City of Minneapolis. While the funds are limited and used mainly for administration of the DMNA, we should be able to have \$500,000 or so available for downtown improvements between now and 2020. Some of those funds must be spent on affordable housing. What other ideas do you have for how the funds might be used? What are your priorities?

e. Thank you for giving us some of your time and your opinions. Is there anything else you'd like to say or have us to know about as we wrap up the evening?