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## Exploring a Special Service District

**A common** theme in our community, especially on the heels of the economic summit, has been the push for the private sector to play a stronger lead role in defining Duluth's economic future. As budget constraints become more and more of an issue at the state and local level, the reality of the need for private sector leadership becomes more visible.

Due to these circumstances, the timing appears appropriate for the Greater Downtown Council to conduct an exploratory campaign on creating what's known as a special service district or business improvement district in the downtown. Such districts are being utilized to revitalize central urban cores and finance enhanced services within a geographic area. And the phenomenon is spreading as more than 1,000 BIDs or special service districts have

been created throughout the United States and Canada. These districts are formed with the participation of stakeholders, and are based upon a benefits assessment concept that must be supported by the private sector business and property owners.

In researching such a concept, the downtown may open the door to additional opportunities. Other communities, both large and small, have utilized BIDs to enhance services—from maintenance and security, to marketing, parking and economic development. However, the most important factor to remember in this financing mechanism is that a BID is not created to replace existing basic municipal services, only to enhance them.

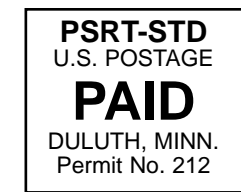
Recently, the GDC's board of directors voted to assemble a steering committee to begin

the initial exploratory campaign. This committee will be gathering and analyzing information from other communities and it will help lead the effort in determining if a BID can work in our downtown. We will concentrate on an open and inclusive process as we seek out focus groups and hold forums and one-on-one meetings to encourage input from any and all downtown stakeholders. It will be up to all participants to help determine priorities, raise questions and outline parameters.

We look forward to learning more about this possible tool for our downtown district and hope you will actively participate in this exploratory campaign. Please watch for an upcoming survey to help us assess our needs in the downtown. **GDC**



5 West First Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802  
218-727-8549  
[www.downtownduluth.com](http://www.downtownduluth.com)



## GDC CULTIVATES PARTNERSHIPS TO GROW AND MAINTAIN FLOWERS

A recent budget cutting decision by the City of Duluth prompted the GDC to take quick action in hopes of saving a program. Due to the impending reduction in Local Government Aid for Minnesota cities, the City has begun to cut back on purchases and services. As part of that move, the City announced in late February that it decided to forego the purchase of annual flowers that would have been planted in gardens and streetscape planters along Superior Street and Canal Park, along with other business districts.

The GDC board of directors showed unanimous support that our organization needed to step to the plate this year to maintain this positive component of the summer streetscape. The flowers add a slice of color, warmth and beauty to our streets, enhancing the overall image of our central business district.

We are pleased to have gained strong allies in the Canal Park Business Association and the Duluth Garden Flower Society. All three groups are chipping in financially to help cover the purchase and maintenance costs of the planters and gardens. In addition, students from such schools as Harbor City International Charter School and the Secondary Technical Center will assist in planting the flowers under the supervision of volunteers from the society. It's expected that planting will take place in early June and the City will assist in moving the planters back out onto the streets at that time.

**If you are interested, we are still accepting donations for the flower fund. Please contact the GDC office (727-8549) if you are willing to volunteer your time or offer a financial contribution. **GDC****



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.  
Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

## PRIDE PROGRAM SEEKS ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS

**Volunteers** will be returning to the downtown streets again this summer as part of our partnership with the Duluth Police Department. In its second season, the Downtown Duluth Pride Program aims at helping to promote a safer, friendlier central business district.

streets, and they are ambassadors for the downtown. From providing visitors with maps or directions, to reporting suspicious activity to the Police Department, these volunteers commit a minimal amount of time to help build a stronger and healthier downtown business district.

Much like neighborhood block watch programs, volunteers with the Pride program serve as an extra set of eyes and ears out on the

If you are a current volunteer, or you are seriously interested in this walking ambassador program, please join us for the "season kick-off."

**QUESTION:**  
Are you ready to help make a difference?

**Pride Program kick-off lunch at the GDC**  
5 West First Street  
Wednesday, April 30, 2003  
Noon-1:00 p.m.  
Please RSVP to 727-8549

## National Grant Targets Old Downtown

**Old Downtown** will be in the spotlight thanks to a grant recently awarded to the City of Duluth. The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Knight Foundation have selected Duluth and three other communities to receive Preservation Development Initiative grants.

Under the award, the Trust will provide up to \$1.8 million in assistance, much of which will come in the form of technical assistance, strategic assessments and planning to be focused on the creation of market-rate housing in the upper levels of historic buildings.

A Maxfield Research study recently commissioned by the GDC and its partners—LISC, Wells Fargo Bank and US Bank—found that there is substantial demand for housing in the downtown. And across the country, cities are discovering that developing

housing in the urban core aids in creating a more active and vital downtown, plus it provides a desirable use for older buildings.

Because of the anticipated major medical district expansion on the east end of the Old Downtown, the City has said the timing of this initiative is key. Leaders of the National Trust are working to schedule a preplanning visit to Duluth and will then assemble a team to help move the initiative forward.

Our community is in good company as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Jose, California; and Columbus, Georgia were also selected to receive the grants. Developed last year, the Preservation Development Initiative program was created as a means to leverage historic preservation tools to foster economic development. **GDC**



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April/May Calendar

**APRIL 29, 2003 (TUESDAY)**  
GDC Board of Directors Meeting  
7:30 a.m.  
Greater Downtown Council

**MAY 6, 2003 (TUESDAY)**  
District 5 Comprehensive Planning Meeting  
7:00 p.m.  
Central Hillside Community Center


**MAY 27, 2003 (TUESDAY)**  
GDC Board of Directors Meeting  
7:30 a.m.  
Greater Downtown Council

## JOIN THE CLEANING CAMPAIGN



In recent discussions with community members, the cleanliness of our neighborhoods came up as a topic. We are fortunate to have responsible citizens and business owners who take it upon themselves to ensure they are surrounded by a clean and inviting environment. But those who do not respect their community also surround us. And those are the individuals who don't think twice about leaving a trail of litter and debris behind for someone else to clean up after them. In late March, the Greater Downtown Council jumped into action and got an early start on spring-cleaning for the Downtown and Canal Park. Our organization, in partnership with the City of Duluth, provides a Clean and Safe program for our central business district.

Through a cooperative effort, we are able to utilize work crews from Northwood Children's Services to scour the district and ensure litter and debris are cleared from our sidewalks and parking lots to provide the most positive image for our Downtown Waterfront. This is a mutually beneficial partnership as the Downtown gains a clean environment, and the youth gain responsible work experience and a sense of pride in their community. This was the first full clean sweep of the neighborhood this year and what the group was able to accomplish was remarkable. In one weekend, nearly 20 youth from Northwood took to the sidewalks and open areas collecting 45 bags of trash. I don't know what was more remarkable; that they were able to

conduct such thorough work or that so much litter was left behind by disrespectful individuals. It's time for all of us to show our pride in our community. When I stopped on the street the other day to pick up and throw away an empty bottle, someone asked me why I was taking on that responsibility, after all, it wasn't my job. That person was right; it wasn't my job. But I take pride in our Downtown and it's in the best interest of all of us to keep it looking its best. Some of you give your sidewalk a clean sweep everyday, and for that, I applaud you! But, let's all work together, fend off the litterbugs and keep our district looking clean and safe. 

*Kristi Stokes, President*

PLEASE JOIN THE EFFORT April 21-26 during the

**Citywide Clean & Green** CAMPAIGN


Take a moment to sweep your sidewalk, pick up litter and reap the rewards of an inviting and healthy environment.

## REPUBLIC BANK BRINGS POSITIVE CHANGE TO DOWNTOWN

Over the last eight months, Republic Bank's downtown office in the Alworth Building has undergone a dramatic face-lift. The addition of staff created a need for more office space which led to the remodeling. "By remodeling our offices, we have enhanced the quality of service our customers receive," said David Gaddie, president. "And, this is just the beginning of other remodeling projects throughout our system."



Retaining the beauty of the original marble floors and pillars as the main focal points of the remodeling was an essential element of the design.

Mayor Gary Doty was on hand for a ribbon cutting ceremony, followed by an open house for the community and customers. 

"We wanted to tie the natural elements of the marble into the design to enhance our employees' working environment and create a more customer-friendly space," said Gaddie.

To celebrate its new look, new attitude and new direction, Republic Bank held a grand opening celebration in late February.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE DOWNTOWN

### CHANGE OF PACE/ BENNETT'S DINNER THEATRE

**"Clue: The Musical"**  
April 25-27; May 2-3  
(Friday, Saturday, Sunday)  
(Friday and Saturday)  
Dinner: 6:30 p.m.  
Show: 8:00 p.m.  
(Sunday)  
Dinner: 12:30 p.m.  
Show: 2:00 p.m.  
Fitzer's Brewery Complex

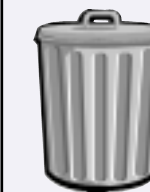


### DECC

**Shrine Circus**  
April 25-27 (Friday-Sunday)  
**Lion's Pancake Day**  
May 8 (Thursday)  
6 a.m.-8 p.m.  
**Minnesota Ballet (Student performance)**  
May 9 (Friday)  
7 p.m.  
**Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra "Tour Destination, France"**  
May 3 (Saturday)  
8 p.m.  
**Duluth/Superior Entertainment League "Saturday Night Fever"**  
May 15 (Thursday)  
7:30 p.m.

### THE DEPOT

**Family Day**  
May 5 (Monday)  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
**Free Antique Appraisal**  
May 21 (Wednesday)  
Noon-3 p.m.  
**Duluth Art Institute Ceramic Studio Sale**  
May 10  
9 a.m.-12 Noon  
Depot Great Hall  
**Duluth Playhouse "Sylvia"**  
May 9-11, 14-18  
7:30 p.m. (Wednesday-Saturday)  
2:00 p.m. (Matinee show: Saturday and Sunday)



### RENEGADE COMEDY THEATRE

**"The Maiden's Prayer"**  
April 24-26 (Thursday-Saturday)  
7 p.m.

### CLEAN & GREEN CLEAN-UP

April 21-26  
City-Wide

**ARC NORTHLAND (Gala & Silent Auction)**  
May 9  
Technology Village

## SIGN ORDINANCE ALLOWS A-FRAMES, WITH REGULATIONS

At the urging of the Greater Downtown Council, the City of Duluth has made a temporary change to its sign ordinance.

Last fall, dozens of Downtown and Canal Park businesses were notified that they were in violation of the City's sign ordinance. This was because they were displaying portable A-Frame signs on the sidewalks in front of their storefronts. The GDC received complaints from several members who were notified about their non-compliance, prompting the organization to work with the City to develop a positive solution. Thanks to additional support from the Mayor's Downtown Task Force and the Canal Park Business Association, Duluth's sign ordinance has been amended to allow for A-Frame signs in commercial zones under certain circumstances.

The Greater Downtown Council advocates for a healthy and vibrant central business district, and it is believed that such signage provides character, helps promote business and serves as an inviting tool for the district. We are pleased to have worked with the above organizations and the City to agree upon the following regulations:

**Section 3.** That Section 44-26 of the Duluth City Code 1959, as amended,

be amended to read as follows: **Sec. 44-26.** Regulations in C-1 commercial zoning districts.

The following signs are permitted to be located in the C-1 districts set forth in Chapter 50 of this Code:

- (a) All signs which are permitted and as limited in Section 44-25;
- (b) Portable A-frame signs. The total dimensions which are not less than 24 inches wide by 36 inches tall nor more than 30 wide by 40 inches tall; limit of one per store front, no more than three feet into the public right-of-way and provide an unobstructed sidewalk width of at least five feet for pedestrian passage subject to an individual permit; subject to a certificate of insurance approved as to form by the city attorney evidencing that such person or organization has in force insurance in the minimum amounts of \$1,000,000 for bodily injuries or property damage in any one year protecting such person or organization and the city of Duluth against liability for injuries or damages resulting from the placement of such objects or materials on public sidewalks or boulevard areas.

To obtain a permit application, visit or contact the Building Safety Division Office, Room 210, City Hall (723-3301). 

## DOWNTOWN RETAILER EXPANDS

Arthur's Men's Formal Wear is taking on a satellite location. Owner Paula Saxin says the First Street store has enjoyed such strong business in the downtown that they are expanding to capture a broader market. Arthur's will be testing out a second site at the Village Mall starting later this month. The downtown store will remain the "heart" of the business in the heart of the downtown. With a storefront and more than 4,000 square feet of space downtown, Arthur's is able to offer customers the only in-town, in-stock warehouse of formal wear. They have enjoyed their location downtown for more than 45 years and hope to have the satellite shop open just in time for prom season.



## WELCOME NEW GDC MEMBERS

- Barcodes Plus
- M & I Bank
- Sammy's Pizza & Restaurant
- St. Luke's Hospital
- Jitters Coffee & Tea House