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In connection with Tuesday's 31st Annual National Night Out, from August 5-8 the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID) will highlight ways it helps keep Downtown Minneapolis safe through community outreach, law enforcement partnerships and continued environmental improvement efforts. Each day the DID will highlight different themes of these initiatives: prevention, community gathering, engagement, youth outreach and enforcement.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A New Police Reserves Pilot Program Enhances Street Engagement Throughout Summer Months

MINNEAPOLIS (August 6, 2014) — Did you know the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID) works in collaboration with various agencies on safety initiatives?

In connection with Tuesday's 31st annual National Night Out event, this week the DID is outlining some of its partnerships and initiatives that contribute to a safe environment through prevention, engagement and enforcement.

This summer the DID and Minneapolis Police Department unveiled a Police Reserves pilot program that helps increase officer visibility and community engagement in the downtown area while also forging a deeper partnership and providing additional on-site experience.

The program, which runs through August 30, helps explore the opportunity to enhance police reserves for the future by directing efforts to select areas of downtown including First Avenue, Hennepin Avenue and Nicollet Mall. Police reserves work in shifts on Tuesdays and Wednesday from 4-10 p.m. and on Fridays and Saturdays from 8 p.m.-2 a.m. in order to:

- Engage with the community and provide an added visual law enforcement presence
- Communicate or disrupt unruly behavior
- Assist police officers
- Collaborate with the MPD 1st Precinct, School Resource Officers, RadiolINK users and DID Fusion Center, St. Stephen's Homeless Outreach team and more

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“We’re thrilled with how the Police Reserves program is helping to engage the community and add another layer of law enforcement presence,” said Steve Cramer, President and CEO of the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District. “Our collaborative efforts in the public safety realm have made great strides in crime prevention, and the Police Reserves program is a great addition as we continue working to ensure timely engagement and safety.”

Since May, the Police Reserves have assisted in 28 medical responses, engaged citizens with crime-prevention tips, redirected vehicles and pedestrians from Light Rail-related incidents and recovered lost items for citizens in the downtown area. The Police Reserves are trained with the same defensive driving course as the MPD as well as defensive tactics, traffic/crowd control, emergency management and ATV/Segway operation. Some have also taken the MPD Bike Rapid Response Team program for extensive bicycle training.

“The Police Reserves Program has been a wonderful tool in the Warehouse District,” said Joanne Kaufman, executive director for the Warehouse District Business Association. “We love having the extra bodies on the street at a busy time for us and know from our customers and our businesses that they really appreciate it as well. The reserves increase the eyes on the street and are a visible reminder to all that police presence is there.”

Additional DID Supported Engagement Practices:

DID Fusion Center/RadioLINK

The MPD/DID Police Reserves program works in concert with the DID Fusion Center and RadioLINK initiatives to bring community safety together across the downtown area through a centrally-located information and surveillance hub.

Located in the 1st Precinct and collaboratively run with the Minneapolis Police Department, the DID Fusion Center provides a unified and efficient way for law enforcement to continuously oversee activity in the Downtown Minneapolis area and respond to safety-related concerns. DID technicians perform dispatch services based on the wide network of security cameras and radio communication dispersed throughout the downtown area. The DID Fusion Center is a model for other cities’ police departments who visit Minneapolis or call to inquire about how it operates.

The DID Fusion Center works daily to help downtown residents, workers and visitors by:

- Responding to those in need
- Providing emergency news alerts
- Fielding pedestrian requests from DID Ambassadors
- Communicating with outreach services

“The DID Fusion Center operates as an important crime prevention technology resource that encompasses real time camera observation, reporting and public safety information sharing for the 1st Precinct and our downtown business and resident community,” said Minneapolis Police

Chief Janeé Harteau. “What makes the DID Fusion Center so unique is the cutting-edge technology, which includes state-of-the-art Camera Monitoring systems, RadioLINK, Camera Registry and a staff of highly-trained and knowledgeable individuals committed to improving the public safety for all those that live, work and visit Downtown Minneapolis. The DID helps citizens on a daily basis by being those extra eyes and ears that provide an extra layer of preventative safety and security.”

The DID Fusion Center is a hub for the RadioLINK security communications network, which is an initiative that helps keep residents, workers and visitors in the downtown area safe through a radio communications network. The DID Fusion Center connects the Minneapolis Police Department and local security through real-time radios for fast responses. The RadioLINK program is used daily to help maintain and improve downtown safety.

St. Stephen’s Homelessness Street Outreach

The St. Stephen’s Homelessness Street Outreach provides a place of first contact for individuals experiencing homelessness and for community members who are concerned for them. The collaboration efforts help provide housing opportunities as well as food, clothing and shelter, responds to non-emergency calls in the community and more.

Suggested visuals for covering the Fusion Center’s impact on downtown safety and engagement include:

- A Fusion Center tour
- Interview opportunities with DID, Minneapolis Police Department and SafeZONE representatives

About the Minneapolis Downtown Council:

Founded in 1955, and one of the oldest central business districts in the nation, the Minneapolis Downtown Council (MDC) is a membership-based entity that works to create, preserve, and enhance a vital and engaging experience for the people who visit, work, shop, visit and live in Downtown Minneapolis. 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.downtownmpls.com.

About the Downtown Improvement District:

Founded in early 2009, after more than five years of formative planning and advocacy by the downtown business community, the Minneapolis DID delivers higher levels of service to make downtown cleaner, greener, safer and more vibrant throughout a 120-block area, as is the case with most Business Improvement Districts. For more information, visit www.minneapolisdid.com.

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