

CITY OF COLUMBUS



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**

2019

ANNUAL REPORT

Columbus Economic Development Authority

The City of Columbus Economic Development Authority (EDA) is a 7-member body made up of 5 elected officials and 2 “at-large” community representatives. The Mission of the EDA is to promote the business districts in Columbus with the goal of creating new jobs and increasing tax base. Columbus’ EDA and City Council work together to make final decisions on how to best attract new business and expand current businesses. In 2019 the members of the Columbus EDA included:

Jesse Preiner (President, Mayor)
Jeff Duraine (Vice President, Council Member)
Shelly Logren (Treasurer, Council Member)
Janet Hegland (Commissioner, Council Member)
Denny Peterson (Commissioner, Council Member)
Jon Rausch (Commissioner, At-large)
Mark Daly (Commissioner, At-large)

At their 2018 meeting, the EDA elected the following officers for 2019:

Elizabeth Mursko (Executive Director, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary)
Jessica Hughes (Assistant Secretary)

The EDA has recognized that Columbus is on the brink of significant development coming to the area and is focused on ensuring the City is well prepared. This effort includes the completion of a massive infrastructure project, branding the City in a more focused way, and supporting new and existing businesses in the community.

Anoka County Economic Development

Since 2018 the Anoka County Economic Development Specialist, Jacquel Hajder, has been working on the City’s behalf to engage potential stakeholders and partners. She has been an asset to the community.

Part of Hajder’s work has been establishing the Minnesota Technology Corridor, a collaboration between public and private entities to attract technology companies to the north metro (including multiple locations in Columbus’ Freeway District). The area benefits from an abundant electrical

capacity, unlimited fiber optic bandwidth, large parcels of available land, and a talented workforce. These benefits along with the north metro's proximity to the Twin Cities, as one of the top tech cities in North America (according to Cushman & Wakefield's Tech Cities report), makes the Minnesota Technology Corridor an ideal location for technology companies of all types. The Technology Corridor project won an Association of Minnesota Counties Award at their annual conference in December of 2019.

In 2019, Hajder also helped launch the Anoka County Regional Economic Development website. A first of its kind for Anoka County, this website is a valuable resource. Visitors to the site can learn about the region's benefits, property for sale, and Anoka County's economic development news. Overall, the Anoka County Regional Economic Development team is committed to bringing economic opportunities to the region.

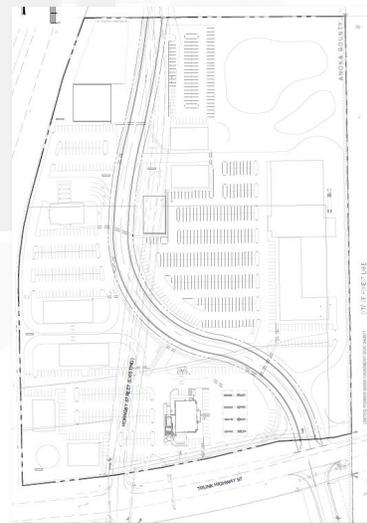


Transportation Projects

In 2019, there was significant progress made on transportation projects in the City. The TH 97/Lake Drive bridge over I-35 was mostly completed, the Hornsby Street realignment was completed, and initial work to install the traffic light at Hwy 97 and Hornsby Street has begun.

Replacement of the Hwy 97/Lake Drive bridge over I-35 has been a priority of the City of Columbus for about 20 years. As the project stands today, the bridge and new diverging diamond interchange is almost completed, finishing touches will occur in Spring 2020. A new City of Columbus logo is imprinted on multiple locations in the bridge, alerting motorists on I-35 that they have reached the City of Columbus, Exit 129.

Many have likely also noticed that Hornsby Street north of Hwy 97 has been reopened with a new alignment. The new alignment sets the stage for development in the NE Quadrant, especially since public utilities have also been extended along the new road. HyVee Inc. has purchased property in this area for the future development of a



*Hornsby Street Realignment
Courtesy: City of Columbus*

Fast and Fresh store. The City of Columbus is excited to see how future development occurs in the NE Quadrant.

In conjunction with the final items of the Bridge Project being completed, we will also see the installation of a traffic light at the intersection of the realigned Hornsby Street and TH 97. This traffic light will aid in decreasing congestion as well as increase walkability throughout the Freeway District.

Current Business Expansion

In November of 2018, Running Aces Harness Park broke ground on their new hotel. The 116-room, five story hotel has begun taking reservations for April 1, 2020 and beyond. The hotel includes a mixture of standard rooms, extended stay rooms, and high-end VIP options. Also included are amenities such as an



Aces Hotel Exterior Design
<runaces.com/Hotel>

indoor pool, exercise area, and business center.

Running Aces signed a franchise agreement with Brooklyn Park-based GrandStay Hospitality for the project.

The hotel has been designed to meet the needs of the area; serving casino and racetrack guests while also providing lodging for events happening at the National Sports Center and golf courses in nearby Blaine. It will be a welcome feature for people attending the Racetrack's concerts, car shows, poker tournaments, and other events. Aces Hotel will also offer space for residents and businesses to hold meetings, events, and receptions.

The City of Columbus commissioned a hotel feasibility study in 2016 which stated that the area was well suited for a 75-room hotel. When the hotel is completed, Running Aces will become a well-rounded entertainment destination in Columbus and the north metro trade area.



Aces Hotel Under Construction, 2019
<runaces.com/Hotel>

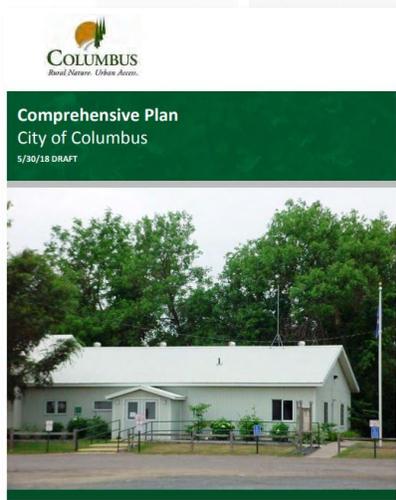
EDA Branding Strategy

In 2019 the Columbus EDA created a Branding Subcommittee, to tackle the task of developing a new brand for Columbus. The subcommittee consists of Council Members, marketing experts, and local business representatives. The group has been meeting regularly and will be holding networking events with local business leaders in an effort to understand and capture the essence of the City of Columbus.

Once the branding process is complete, a marketing campaign will be initiated to launch the City's new brand. Things like ordering new banners for the Lake Drive corridor, developing a new City logo, and creating a new tourism bureau with dollars from the Hotel Lodging Tax will be completed.

2040 Comprehensive Plan Approval

Also in 2019, Columbus' 2040 Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Metropolitan Council. The City's Planning Commission and City Council worked diligently to approve a Comprehensive Plan that best meets the needs of Columbus' growing community.



City of Columbus 2040 Comprehensive Plan
<columbusmn.us>

A big change that was made with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan was the addition of Mixed-Use districts in the City of Columbus. Mixed-Use districts allow for residential and commercial entities to be located in the same zoning district. This will create opportunities for higher density housing than the rest of the City as well as the integration of commercial and residential areas. The City's Mixed-Use districts are located in the NE I-35 Quadrant, surrounding the Zurich Street and Lake Drive intersection, as well as off 135th Avenue and Humber Street in the Lake Drive district.

Those interested can view the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan on Columbus' website: columbusmn.us.

2020: Looking to the Future

In 2020, HyVee and Viking Industrial will be breaking ground and adding their gas, food services, coffee, and retail safety equipment and fasteners to the Columbus Freeway District. The EDA is excited to welcome new additions to the area.