

Welcome, Neighbor!**Allina Will Anchor Midtown Exchange Development at Former Sears Site**

Allina Hospitals and Clinics announced on February 18 that the company will consolidate its corporate operations in the Midtown Exchange on Lake Street in south Minneapolis. The decision by the state's largest nonprofit healthcare provider solidified the Midtown Exchange developer's plans to convert the former Sears site into a mixed-use, multi-modal center. And it rewarded years of improvement efforts by groups in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The new headquarters, called Allina Commons, will house 1,000 employees and include an educational conference center.

"While cost savings were a primary factor, Allina's mission and values were key in our decision," said Richard Pettingill, CEO.

Close proximity to Allina's Abbott Northwestern Hospital, located across the street from the Midtown Exchange, and the community renewal opportunity for the Phillips and Powderhorn Park neighborhoods were major factors, added Pettingill.

"We will be part of the fabric of the community. Whether that be through supporting economic development or through community improvement initiatives, we want the community through our good deeds to know us and trust us as good neighbors."

The Allina Foundation and Abbott Northwestern Hospital, the largest facility in the Allina network, have



The former Sears site in South Minneapolis, seen redeveloped as the Midtown Exchange. Courtesy Ryan Companies

Reaction from the community

"With Allina joining our community, it's like putting the final pieces of a puzzle together. Their company will bring stability to an area that needs it, and we look forward to new Allina jobs drawn from the local community. This is a major accomplishment for south Minneapolis. Allina has been a part of years of efforts by large groups and individual residents to turn the Phillips West neighborhood around."

—Muriel Simmons, Phillips West Neighborhood Association

"We at the Lake Street Council and the Bloomington Cedar Lake Commercial Association are terribly pleased by Allina's decision, and look forward to working with them as another partner in the continuing redevelopment of Lake Street, building a south Minneapolis community we can all be even more proud of."

—Julie Ingebretsen, President, Lake Street Council

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Midtown Greenway Update

CEPRO Elevator to Fall; Phase II Opening Set for October

Before the snows set in, construction crews hauled fill into the trench from the current Greenway terminus at 5th Avenue eastward to Hiawatha Avenue. Crews are now set to build retaining walls and the paved trail. Installation of lighting, surveillance and emergency-call stations will complete Phase II of Greenway construction.

This new stretch of trail is expected to open in October 2004, extending the Greenway's length to 2.5 miles.

The demolition of the old CEPRO grain elevator at 10th Avenue will occur from March through May in coordination with Greenway construction, and crushed concrete from the CEPRO structure will be reused to build the Greenway.

Meanwhile, the MCW Partnership has urged the State Historic Preservation Office's active cooperation with staff from the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and Ryan Companies in developing landscaping, artwork and publicly accessible open space at the Greenway's interface with the Midtown Exchange development.

"All of us have recognized that the historic nature of the Greenway landscape dictates respect for the shape of the excavated trench and the elegant linear armature of the bridges over the Greenway," noted MCW chair Jim Campbell in a letter to SHPO.

"We are committed to preserving these historic qualities, while we also seek to design and promote the Greenway and adjacent properties as a vital multi-modal corridor that supports transportation, recreation, and economic development." ■

Lake Street Update

Roadway Layouts Due for Decision in March

Roadway design, which has been the planning focus for the past year, topped the agenda at four well-attended public meetings held in late February for the Lake Street Reconstruction & Streetscaping project. The Project Advisory Committee (PAC), a 30-member body representing neighborhood, business and institutional interests, has narrowed the field of road layouts and will consider input collected at the meetings when making its final recommendations in mid-March. The February meetings also introduced streetscaping concepts that will be a focus of this year's planning.

The McKnight Foundation recently retained local consultants to review the concept alternatives with

the project team and PAC members. The design review will figure into the PAC's deliberations in March to recommend a preferred alternative, and also help to inform Minneapolis' policy on design of urban arterial corridors.

"With a project of this scale and lasting impact, we need to make sure we have the best affordable design possible," said Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman. "We're fortunate that McKnight's president, Rip Rapson, understands the multiple community benefits of good urban design, and that he has made foundation resources available here."

The \$25 million construction will take place in 2005-2007. ■



Community members discuss Lake Street reconstruction issues in small groups facilitated by PAC representatives and project staff.

MCW Partnership

Mayor of Minneapolis
Mayor R.T. Rybak

Hennepin County Commissioners

Commissioner Peter McLaughlin
Commissioner Gail Dorfman

Minneapolis City Council Members

Council Member Robert Lilligren
Council Member Dan Niziolek
Council Member Dean Zimmermann
Council Member Gary Schiff

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Commissioner Marie Hauser

Abbott Northwestern Hospital

Denny DeNarvaez, President

Target Corporation

Nate Garvis, Vice President
Government Affairs

LISC

Paul Williams, Senior Program Director

Midtown Greenway Coalition

Bob Corrick, President

Wells Fargo Bank

Kate J. Gosz, President and
District Manager, Twin Cities Banking,
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“Carne Asada” Grand Opening Highlights Chi-Lake

The MCW Partnership joined with the Phillips Partnership to present the grand opening celebration for Carne Asada, a new Mexican cantina at Chicago-Lake and the latest in a series of major improvements at the intersection, which has been a major focus of effort by both partnerships.

Carne Asada is co-owned by Dr. Isaac Felemovicus, a surgeon practicing at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, and the grand opening underscored the hospital’s long history of community involvement.

Speakers at the event saluted the blend of neighborhood action and strategic investments that has had proven dramatically successful in creating jobs, lowering crime, improving the housing stock and providing public amenities like the Midtown Greenway.

Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin were among the partnership members who turned out to celebrate the grand opening.

Kudos to Community

“Carne Asada is a great result of the efforts by many in the community to fight crime and build entrepreneurship,” said Mayor Rybak.

“At a time when we’re doing all we can to persuade Allina to move hundreds of jobs just across the street, the timing of this gathering couldn’t be better,” added Commissioner McLaughlin. “The whole community is here showing its support and recognizing the years of efforts that have gotten us to this point of recreating Chicago-Lake as a great corner once again.”

MCW Partnership members Robert Lilligren and Eric Eoloff both elaborated on the community’s concerted effort to improve the intersection.

“A lot of people in this room have invested a lot of elbow grease in turning this neighborhood around,” said Eoloff.

Carne Asada is in Lilligren’s City



Left: Mayor R.T. Rybak swaps Chi-Lake stories with Sandra and Isaac Felemovicus. Below left: Dr. Felemovicus and co-owner Ernesto Reyes thank their friends in the Latino community. Below right: County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin spoke of “recreating Chicago-Lake as a great corner once again.”



Council ward and part of the neighborhood in which he has lived for 22 years.

He said of Carne Asada co-owner Ernesto Reyes, “Ernesto was one of the very first people to come in here and invest his dollars and energy. When he opened up Me Gusta at Fourth and Lake, he was truly a pioneer for the kind of entrepreneurship we see flourishing today.”

Mexican Values

Both Reyes and Felemovicus are natives of Mexico.

“I am very proud of what my people are doing here with hard work and a belief in this community,” Reyes said as he introduced the gathered crowd of more than 50 to several members of the Latino community.



“This restaurant gives the example of our values and the way we want to live in this area, and I thank all of you who have turned out to honor our contribution.”

Dr. Felemovicus said that Carne Asada would help to connect the Latino community with the major employers in the vicinity. “We have made this place something special,” he said. “And we look forward to your stopping by to support us.” ■

Meet the African Development Center

New Organization Wants to Talk Business

You see that building?” asked Hussein Samatar on a recent walk down Lake Street, pointing across 13th Avenue to a squat industrial building on the northeast corner.

Samatar’s question was of course rhetorical, but the nondescript building is the kind you could pass by for years without noticing. There’s a sign up high for the Jimmy Jingle beverage service that, like the building itself, has that left-behind 1960s look of much of the old central Lake Street. At street level, a brown and yellow sign in a vaguely Arabesque script reads “Shingani Restaurant,” but a glance into the dim illumination behind the storefront windows revealed little about the nature of the place.

“There are seven Somali businesses in there,” Samatar said, illustrating the point he has been making during the bitter winter walk: south Minneapolis is the region’s largest center of African-owned business, yet this growing commercial base remains largely invisible to the untrained eye.

Seeking Greater Visibility

Samatar is the executive director of the African Development Center (ADC), an organization intent on providing support for business, housing and financial literacy efforts to the 150,000 native Africans in Minnesota, the majority of whom reside in the Twin Cities. The ADC has been organizing itself over the past year.

An offshoot of St. Paul’s Neighborhood Development Center (NDC), the ADC is pursuing the partnership model that has proven highly effective for the NDC and the Latino Economic Development Center, another NDC offshoot.

“We are not an organization that is focused on promoting our roots. We serve fellow Africans, but the goal is to create successful Americans among our numbers.”

The ADC’s mission statement is tied to a sense of belonging in the local commu-



Above: This building at 13th Ave. and Lake houses seven African-owned businesses. Left: Hussein Samatar with Mustafa Ducoleh of Hamdi Restaurant at Chicago-Lake.

nity. One of the organization’s key goals is to “unleash the energy and vitality of emerging African immigrant communities to revitalize aging Lake Street as one of the best commercial corridors in the country.”

In the Shingani Restaurant and several other easy-to-overlook businesses, Samatar stopped to chat with friends and introduce himself in Somali to proprietors he had not met.

At one emporium inside the building at Lake and 13th, Samatar said, “This store has fine imported goods—Italian shoes, beautiful silks, fashionable clothing—but from the outside it looks a bit dump. The fact is that many African immigrants still carry a Third World mindset toward operating their businesses. I try to talk with the shop owner about this. I say, ‘Make a nice sign out-

side, put down new tile in the hall here,’ but he just shrugs the shoulders. In time, if we continue to press the case, the general level of sophistication will rise and the market for African-owned businesses will open up.”

Investment and Trust

Samatar said the ADC will fill the organizational gap in the African business community, providing representation as well as training in hard skills and direct financial assistance. Much of the local African population, he said, arrived as refugees from lands devastated by corrupt and punishing totalitarian rule, and is understandably disinclined to accept help from anyone not in a trusted circle.

Likewise, he said, fallout from the September 11 attacks has severely injured relations between Somali immigrants, who are predominantly Muslim, and the general population of Minnesota.

Yet Samatar implores both sides that investments in African commerce will bear fruit for the community at large.

“We Africans are very capable people. We are a market economy people. We are naturals at it, we have been so for many hundreds of years,” he said.

“But as a whole, we are still strangers

here, and we still lack the understanding to plan American businesses, find quality housing for our large families, participate in civic affairs and do the PR needed to raise our profile in the community. These abilities are all teachable, and in the African community you find very eager learners.”

African Identity, Latino Example

Samatar noted that 125 African-owned businesses, including 18 groceries and bakeries and nine restaurants, can be found in the corridor. Further, he says, south Minneapolis is home to two *suuqs*, or marketplaces, that are as large or larger than El Mercado Central, the largest and best known of the local *mercados*.

Yet the prolific mural-work on buildings housing Latino businesses has had great success in identifying the corridor with Hispanic culture and commerce.

“Latinos have shown a great flare for reaching out to the broader market on Lake Street. There are many lessons for Africans in the trajectory of Latino business here,” said Samatar.

“We are concurrent waves of immigrants settling in many of the same neighborhoods, and while our cultures have very different identities, both place great value on family and on pooling resources.”

This ethnic synergy, peculiar to the Twin Cities, is being put to work at the heart of Lake Street, where the ADC, the Neighborhood Development Center and the Latino Economic Development Center are partners in developing the Global Marketplace inside the Midtown Exchange at the former Sears site. The Global Marketplace will be the largest public market in south Minneapolis and an incubator for ethnic entrepreneurship.

“I believe that, in time, Lake Street will be as famous for African culture as Latino culture,” Samatar said. “Looking farther down the road, Africans will be represented among the top movers and shakers of the region.” ■



More about the African Development Center @ www.midtowncommunityworks.org

African Development Center’s Director Leads by Example

Hussein Samatar, Executive Director of the African Development Center, says that getting the word out about the African community’s business and housing goals is the essential first step toward forging community partnerships.

“I am working to help my fellow Somalis and all of the Africans living in Minnesota,” said Samatar. “People do not know enough about us. They may know that we are different, that we ask certain things of the system, but very few know how genuinely we are struggling to be self-sufficient.

“There is a great divide we must cross. We are far from everything that we knew. Yesterday, very hot. Today, very cold. Yesterday, tribal villages and civil war. Today, big city and civil government. Yesterday, cash and barter. Today, credit and lending. We have a great deal to learn and be responsible for, and we will not succeed until Main Street Minnesota has begun to learn our true nature and our situation.”

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—HUSSEIN SAMATAR

Samatar says he has become a Minneapolitan with a quite typical life. “If I changed my name to John Smith, you could read a lot of my resume and I’d seem very familiar. I’m an executive with a family and a house and car. I’m involved in my neighborhood. I worry about saving for my children’s college. It’s this experience of achieving an American life, with the help of many friends here, that I seek to pass on to fellow African immigrants.”

Samatar came to Minneapolis in the early 1990’s to escape Somalia’s bloody collapse into anarchy. Like many in what he describes as the “second wave” of Somali refugees, he settled here because he had relatives among the original group of Somalis that missionaries in the Lutheran Church relocated to the United States after the outbreak of civil war in 1991.

Many more waves of Somalis have followed, bringing the local population to an estimated 50,000, the largest of any U.S. city. The



Hussein Samatar wants to pass along the lessons of his success to fellow Africans.

metro’s total African population is estimated at 70,000, Samatar says.

Samatar arrived here “without five words of English” (He, like the majority of Somalis, speaks Somali and Arabic; Italian, he said, is his third language, owing to Italy’s former colonial presence in Somalia; he also notes that he has begun to learn Spanish to aid his outreach to partners in the community). But he had a college degree and an appreciation for the city’s strong job

market, education system, and social services.

After completing ESL courses, he was able to “Americanize” his credentials, earning an MBA from St. Thomas University. He then entered an eight-year career in commercial banking with Norwest Bank and then Wells Fargo.

“In my work with the bank, I helped individuals advance their businesses. And I began to realize my job skills could help in community economic development.”

Samatar left the bank in 2003 to join the Neighborhood Development Center, where he became the organization’s senior leader and special projects manager. He now splits his time evenly between the NDC and directing the African Development Center.

“The ADC is really just getting going,” Samatar said. “I am very busy organizing resources both within the African community and in the broader community development system.” ■

NDC Lays Out Vision for Global Marketplace at Midtown Exchange Small Businesses Will Support Ethnic, Economic Diversity

With Allina's decision to move its corporate headquarters to the Midtown Exchange, Ryan Companies has landed a big fish in its redevelopment plans for the former Sears site. But the developer says that small business will provide some of the critical qualities needed to make the project a commercial success.

As part of a richly blended redevelopment scheme for the mammoth building, Ryan has turned to the St. Paul-based Neighborhood Development Center to create the Global Marketplace, the largest public market around and an incubator for local entrepreneurship. The market will open to Lake Street, providing an international commercial gateway to the Midtown Exchange.

Ryan's Challenge

In January the City of Minneapolis awarded Ryan Companies exclusive development rights to the former Sears site on Lake Street. Ryan now has six months to produce a development agreement that meets a range of economic and social goals defined by the city.

Rick Collins, Vice President of Development for Ryan, says the stakes for all concerned have never been higher.

"We're talking about the redevelopment of the biggest building in the city, plus adjacent sites, at the intersection of four challenged neighborhoods, with myriad uses and stakeholders and investors. The cost will go over \$150 million. I think it's fair to say that this is the greatest challenge to date for Ryan Companies and the most complex infill planning initiative for our friends at the city and county.

"The Midtown Exchange will have housing, commerce, professional office,



The Global Marketplace is being developed on the first floor of the Midtown Exchange. Courtesy Ryan Companies

hotel, recreation and multi-modal transit. This diversity is the key to our success. We have neighbors all around us, and we have local government with very large hopes for this project in terms of creating economic opportunity. There are a whole lot of people who want to see the Midtown Exchange succeed on all fronts. This is a big task, and getting it done will be a total team effort."

Thinking "Globally," Selling Locally

Ryan's development team includes the Neighborhood Development Center, which for 10 years has provided training, lending and technical assistance to budding entrepreneurs in the inner cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Largely below the radar of news headlines, the St. Paul based NDC has prepared 2,200 local entrepreneurs, 320 of whom are now in business. Working with 18 community and ethnic groups, NDC has helped its graduates command a combined payroll estimated at \$5 million.

The NDC will build "an International themed, owner-operated, fresh and prepared food global marketplace on the first floor of the Midtown Exchange. Vendors would offer fresh foods and craft items such as tortillas, polish sausages, sushi, cheese, and meat." To supply these goods, NDC will stock the 80,000-square-foot Global Marketplace with 60-70 stores, ethnic groceries, restaurants and stalls.

Mihailo Temali is NDC's director and



Mihailo Temali: Global Marketplace will be the Neighborhood Development Center's largest effort to date.

a veteran of promoting street-level entrepreneurship in the Twin Cities. His 20 years of involvement also includes the dual role of president of Western Initiatives for Neighborhood Development (WIND), a subsidiary to Saint Paul's Western Bank. He said that the Global Marketplace presents the NDC with its largest and most publicized opportunity for tightly focused, community-based economic development.

"The average NDC alumni business has created 2.8 jobs in the Twin Cities," said Temali. "Most of these jobs are held by neighborhood residents. We stress the fact that these people are visible role models in their communities.

"The Midtown Exchange is in an Empowerment Zone. It needs local success stories, needs better services, and now, instead of the jobs and the stores developing way outside the area, we have the chance to put them right in the heart of the area," said Temali.

Linking Large and Small Business

"Vendors and customers are both eager to provide what the other one needs. What's been missing is the venue, and now we can create that venue. It's like we did with our partners at Mercado Central, it's like what we're doing with partners at Antiques Minnesota. But at the Global Marketplace the scope is bigger, and it'll be much more in the public eye. People will be living and working above it, beside it, passing by every day.

"It's a great setting to incubate and grow local business, and we bring a talent for business development that makes the most of local resources. The Midtown Exchange will place emerging businesses in an amazing proximity with other successful small businesses and the biggest employers around." ■



More about the Global Marketplace @ www.midtowncommunityworks.org.

Neighborhood Development Center:
www.windndc.org.

Midtown Exchange:
www.ryancompanies.com/midtown.

Allina decision

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been among the institutional leaders of the unique public-private partnerships, including the MCW Partnership, that have guided major improvements in the inner-city core of south Minneapolis since the 1990s.

Working with neighborhood groups, these partnerships have helped to launch successful crime fighting initiatives, improve the local housing stock, create leading employment train-



Richard Pettingill, CEO of Allina

ing programs, and guide major improvements to infrastructure and public amenities.

The Midtown Exchange site has sat vacant for more than a decade.

In January of this year the City of Minneapolis awarded Ryan Companies exclusive development rights pending a final development agreement in June. With Allina as the anchor component, the development plan has received the boost it needs to move forward, said Rick Collins, who heads Ryan's Midtown Exchange development team.

Allina will sign a 20-year lease to occupy seven floors in the original 1928 structure. The move will consolidate corporate employees from 11 locations in the metropolitan area. The sale of two nearby real estate holdings, one at 1801 Nicollet and the other on Willow Street near Loring Park, will help to offset relocation costs. ■

Reaction from the community

"There's no turning back for Lake Street. With Allina as part of the Midtown Exchange, our neighborhoods have a bright future — more jobs and a higher quality of life. Everyone can be proud at this announcement. Our neighborhoods provided the vision of a revitalized Sears complex, our team at the City shouldered the hard negotiations and Allina stepped up as a model of corporate leadership."

—Council Member Gary Schiff

"Together with Wells Fargo's investment in their Home Mortgage campus and Abbott Northwestern's Heart Hospital, Allina's decision completes a trifecta of major private sector commitments that grew out of our public-private partnerships. Add the public investments in light rail transit, the reconstruction of Lake Street, I-35W Access, and housing, and you have an amazing story of patient, hard work leading to historic results that will transform our city for generations."

—County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin

"Allina's decision is great news for the neighborhood and Wells Fargo. We have been working together with Allina and Abbott Northwestern for years in the Phillips neighborhood. It was our mutual commitment to the neighborhood and the Partnership that led Wells Fargo to invest over \$175 million in our Home Mortgage offices at the former Honeywell site. Over 4,000 people will be working here by the end of next year, and we are thrilled that 1,000 Allina employees will now be coming to the neighborhood at the Midtown Exchange building."

—Susie Davis, Vice President, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage

"It's one of the great success stories of the city today. And it's a product of years of effort by community groups to revitalize an area that had been written off."

—Mayor R.T. Rybak

PARTNER PROFILE

Kelly J. Gosz

President and District Manager Twin Cities Banking, Wells Fargo Bank Minnesota, N.A.



“Midtown Community Works is a terrific example of how to bring many groups together to keep our city and county vibrant! The Greenway will be an important amenity for many years to come. A place for people to connect and enjoy the city.”

Kelly J. Gosz joined the board of the Midtown Community Works Partnership in April 2003 to represent Wells Fargo Minnesota in place of Jim Campbell, who retired as the company’s CEO.

Gosz became president and district manager for the Minneapolis city market in 2001. He is responsible for eight banking stores in the downtown and uptown neighborhoods. He has held several management positions within Wells Fargo Bank Minnesota since 1986.

Gosz currently serves on the board of the Greater Minneapolis Convention and Visitors Association and the board and executive committee of the Minneapolis Downtown Council.

Gosz is a native of the Twin Cities and graduated from the University of St. Thomas with a degree in finance. He and his family have been residents of Minneapolis for several years.



The 4th Annual Arbor Day tree planting in the Midtown Greenway will take place Saturday, May 8, starting at 9:30 a.m., rain or shine.

Last year’s event drew more than 100 volunteers and added 80 trees between Chowen Ave. and Lyndale. This year, with help from our friends at Tree Trust, we will plant more than 150 trees at four locations between Wooddale and Stevens Avenues. That means we’re looking for an even larger crop of volunteers!

All the details can be found at: midtowncommunityworks.org



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Business Leadership
Public Commitment
Citizen Involvement