



For Immediate Release
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Downtown Detroit Property Owners Approve Business Improvement Zone Catalyzing Downtown Revitalization

Detroit – It was announced, today, that Downtown Detroit property owners have voted to create a Business Improvement Zone (BIZ), passing with ##% approval. The announcement came from the Downtown Detroit Partnership, which has been working with property owners to usher the Downtown Detroit BIZ through the legislative process.

“The fact that City Council voted unanimously to approve the Downtown Detroit Business Improvement Zone is one more example of the growing partnership we have in city government today,” said Mayor Mike Duggan. “This BIZ is a huge win for Detroit and shows how strong collaboration between the business and civic communities and elected officials can make a real difference in our city.”

BIZ funds will support supplemental litter control and landscaping initiatives, plus new safety/ hospitality ambassadors and marketing programs. The Downtown Detroit BIZ includes 230 commercial property owners and will generate an estimated four million dollars annually, making it the largest district of its kind in Michigan. Downtown Detroit now joins the ranks of other major American cities that use similar programs to ensure high-quality urban environments. The BIZ includes the area inside of the three freeways that perimeter Downtown: M-10, I-375 and I-75, and the Detroit River.

“The creation of the BIZ represents a major milestone in Downtown Detroit’s revitalization,” said Dave Blaszkiewicz, DDP president and CEO. “This successful vote was hinged on an extensive year-long outreach process that included substantive discussions with all segments of Downtown Detroit’s diverse business and civic community. Because of this collaborative process, those who live, work and visit Downtown Detroit can expect to experience an outstanding urban environment that reinforces its role as the heart of the region.”

The 15-member Downtown Detroit BIZ board is comprised of downtown property and business owners and includes an appointee nominated by the mayor of Detroit. As a new nonprofit organization, the BIZ board will spend the next several months developing its operational structure, while continuing outreach to assess and determine the optimal complement of services to serve the Downtown community.

“The approval of the BIZ is a real testament to the commitment that stakeholders, both large and small, have made to sustaining and improving the quality of life in Downtown Detroit,” said David Di Rita, BIZ



board member and principal of the Roxbury Group, a property owner in Downtown Detroit. "This vote reflects the optimism Downtown property owners have in their investments and in the city's future."

The Downtown Detroit BIZ will receive its first allotment of revenue in October of this year and will have full operating funds by March of 2015. The Downtown Detroit Partnership will continue current services, such as cleaning and landscaping programs, with voluntary funding sources until the Downtown Detroit BIZ is fully funded.

"With the Downtown Detroit BIZ in operation, smaller businesses will have a partner to rely on every day to help generate sales," said George Barnes, owner of Heritage Optical and BIZ board member. "It will also enhance their ability to attract customers by providing an excellent shopping experience in a place that is clean, beautiful and safe at all times."

Mandatory assessments for commercial properties average just under \$0.10 per square foot annually, consistent with similar programs in downtown Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Non-assessable properties benefitting from BIZ services will be requested to voluntarily contribute payments in lieu of assessments. The BIZ is enabled by Michigan state law for a 10-year period, at which time property owners must vote to renew.

For more information about the Downtown Detroit BIZ, visit www.downtowndetroitbiz.com.

About the Downtown Detroit Partnership

The Downtown Detroit Partnership is a private/public partnership of corporate and civic leaders that supports advocates and develops programs and initiatives that create a clean, safe, and inviting Downtown Detroit community. More information is available at www.downtowndetroit.org.

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