**2020 North Loop Neighborhood Association Highlights**

**Community Engagement**

* Drew a capacity crowd (350+) to the Muse Event Center for our 2020 annual meeting, where a record 21 candidates were vying for seats on the board. North Loop businesses contributed more than $2,500 worth of goods and services to give away as prizes
* Held several safe outdoor events, though due to Covid we were forced to cancel many of our planned annual events:
	+ August movie night at Target Field Station (*It’s a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*)
	+ Food trucks on 1st Street in September
	+ Halloween movie at Target Field Station (*Jurassic Park*)
* Launched our monthly Service Saturday events!
	+ Expanded monthly trash, park clean-ups and sidewalk weed removal – also established a table at Corner Coffee for neighbors to pick up bags and gloves whenever they were able to pick up litter on their own
	+ Hosted two blood drives for Memorial Blood Centers
	+ Hosted four donation drives to support communities impacted by the civil unrest, focusing on school supplies, food and household goods and diapers
	+ Hosted "tree census" event to help document and identify new trees and ones that need to be replaced
	+ Registered voters and provided key information to residents about the census and key dates on the electoral calendar
	+ Hosted a flu shot clinic
* Purchased and donated 60 books on racial justice and equity to our Little Free Libraries – including adding a new LFL on 1st Street North and relocating another to the dog park.
* A volunteer group of residents is working with the city and property owners to establish organics recycling in the neighborhood.

**Streets & Pedestrian Safety**

* After much lobbying from board members, the city installed stop signs at a dangerous intersection – 2nd Street and 5th Avenue
* Placed several of our pedestrian crosswalk signs around the neighborhood

**Neighborhood Safety**

* Kept businesses apprised of safety issues in the North Loop and surrounding neighborhoods – and helped owners determine best courses of action for issues impacting them

**Parks & Beautification**

* With more than 100 new trees + sod planted (mostly along 3rd Street), we helped coordinate volunteers to do regular watering and placed little signs reminding dog owners to steer their pets away.
* As steward for James I. Rice Park, our work to beautify the riverfront continued:
	+ Efforts included 40+ volunteers and 700+ volunteer hours
	+ Engaged Friends of the Mississippi to help North Loop volunteers identify, remove and replace the invasive species and overgrowth along the river (in cooperation with Minneapolis Park Board and staff)
	+ Added a new west entrance to James Rice Park using 8th St. by the Star Tribune building and groomed and opened up the wooded walking trails
* Engaged neighborhood volunteers to work on refreshing the plantings, adding wildflower seeds and mulch around the James Rice Park playground area (in cooperation with Minneapolis Park Board and staff) 23 Volunteers, 53 volunteer hours
* Saved the dog park from closing by taking over management and gave it a much-needed new coating of gravel—four truckloads worth – Also produced and installed new banners on the fencing and trimmed the trees
* Worked with the Minneapolis Park board on adding a new park to the North Loop on 3rd Street. It is possible that this summer we may have a new park in the North Loop!

**Business Community Partnership**

* When businesses started to reopen after 3 months, we produced and placed “The North Loop Is Open. Come On In,” stickers outside dozens of businesses.
* Provided businesses information updates on Covid notifications and PPP

**Planning & Zoning**

* Reviewed and approved numerous projects, from affordable housing and homeless shelters to public parks, office and multi-use buildings, conversion of several historic buildings, approval of liquor and distillery licenses for new bars and restaurants, and a number of residential developments

**Historic Preservation & Public Art**

* Commissioned and installed the new Welcome Park monument at Washington and 3rd Avenues in May – with funding provided by neighborhood businesses
* Created and installed plaques on 14 historic buildings with photos, brief histories and QR codes that connect people to more information on our website

**Historic Preservation & Public Art - Continued**

* Expanded the Historic North Loop section of our website to 34 entries – plus added an online map to help people conduct walking history tours
* Added Tower Tunnel entrance signage and helped fund and install three large public art pieces and North Loop map

**Root District**

* Raised $27,000 through private and non-profit partners for JXTA Arts murals at the Farmers Market.  Murals to be created summer 2021.
* Provided feedback and support for a new affordable housing project, Shelby Commons which received City approval and funding from Minnesota Housing – to be completed 2022
* Construction of the Southwest LRT Royalston Station ongoing as the area is poised for large scale redevelopment
* Welcomed new business Unleashed Hops and Hounds to the area, a dog park bar.

**Civic Engagement**

* Hosted a meet-and-greet event for those running for local office, including candidates for the MN State Legislature and school board
* Registered voters and provided voter registration information at Service Saturday events
* Provided voter registration information and links on the North Loop website

**Online Presence**

* Day after day, we used our Instagram and Facebook accounts to shine a positive light on the North Loop – and get our neighbors to safely help one another during the pandemic
* Supported North Loop businesses during the restrictions by posting dozens of mini-profiles with photos, compiling online lists of which businesses were still operating – and regularly updating them on our website
* Helped promote the cheering for healthcare workers from balconies, drawing coverage from all 4 local TV stations – Governor Walz mentioned it at a news conference and Mayor Frey joined us one evening
* Promoted mask-wearing with our online mask contest – and bought gift cards from North Loop restaurants to give out as prizes
* Helped promote and distribute candle votives for the windows of North Loop restaurants as a sign of hope and solidarity – Votives were produced by Hennepin Made which is owned by one of our board members
* Worked with Ovative, a North Loop business, to revamp our website, northloop.org, increasing functionality and giving it a more current, user-friendly look
* Grew our Instagram followers to by the end of the year