

**Executive Director's Report
January 21, 2021 [VIRTUAL MEETING]**





2021 NÜLOOP PARTNERS SPONSORS



General Updates



message from mdc president & ceo steve cramer

hello,

We are [excited to share that today we announced](#) 102 recipients of the mpls downtown council small business grant program. We had incredible interest in the program, and the selected small and independently-owned businesses met all the necessary criteria to be chosen. All play a central role in our downtown's vitality, and we are so happy to help provide a little much-needed relief as we move closer to downtown's expected reanimation.

Thanks to contributions from Target, Xcel Energy Foundation, Thrivent and RBC Wealth Management, this program awarded over \$1.5 million to help the businesses with their cost of occupancy downtown.

The final group included:

- **all eligible woman and/or minority-owned applicants were funded**
- **4 percent were venues**
- **16 percent were retail**
- **80 percent were restaurants/bars**

Businesses needed to be in the central core to qualify, with the boundaries being Washington Avenue to the Northeast, Park Avenue to the Southeast, 12th Street to the Southwest and 1st Avenue to the Northwest.

We hope this grant program helps provide these businesses—all of which are vital to the downtown ecosystem we love—a positive boost as we start the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steve Cramer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "Cramer" clearly distinguishable.

steve cramer
president & ceo, mpls downtown council



Meet **Minneapolis**
City by Nature

THE STATE OF THE MINNEAPOLIS TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Focus: Meet Minneapolis Lobbyist

Meet Minneapolis Monthly Partner Webinar Series
December 17, 2020



Meet **Minneapolis**
City by Nature

Business Events Recovery Dashboard: A Light at the End of the Tunnel?





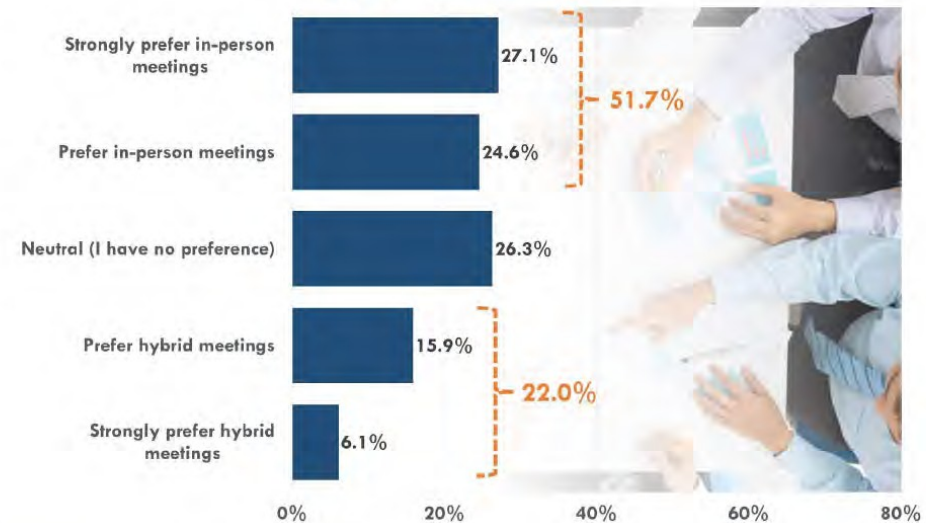
GOOD NEWS FOR THE RETURN OF IN-PERSON MEETINGS ... IT'S STILL PREFERRED

Convention Travelers' In-Person vs. Hybrid Meetings Preference

In our many recent interviews of meeting planners, it looks like hybrid events will be a norm in 2021.

It is also important to track the level of threat virtual events pose to the recovery of the convention industry. **Fortunately, among those who have traveled for conventions in the last two years, 51.7% say they prefer in-person events.** Yet, greater than one in five of these travelers (22.0%) say they prefer hybrid meetings. However, the destination in which a meeting is held could still sway a preference for in-person. 56.7% of convention travelers say that where a convention is held would affect their preference for an in-person versus hybrid meeting.

CONVENTION TRAVELERS' IN-PERSON VS. HYBRID MEETINGS PREFERENCE AS OF DECEMBER 13TH



Question: If given a choice between in-person and hybrid meetings, which would you generally prefer? (Select one)

(Base: Wave 40 data. Respondents who have traveled for a convention/conference in the last 2 years, 364 completed surveys.
Data collected December 11-13, 2020)



Meet **Minneapolis**
City by Nature



MEETINGS & EVENTS

Download the 2021 Global
Meetings and Events Forecast

GLOBAL TRENDS



Making Meetings Work in 2021

Meeting planners are looking forward to resuming in-person events over the coming year. In the meantime, they are adapting to the current environment by making the most of technology.

SAFETY AND SECURITY ARE PARAMOUNT

Top two factors influencing:

Whether to hold an in-person event

Confidence in
attendee health
and safety
components

68%

Flexible
cancellation
and attrition
terms

59%

Meeting location choice

Capacity to
accommodate
social
distancing

77%

Disinfection
protocols

52%

VIRTUAL MEETINGS PRONE TO DISRUPTIONS AND “FATIGUE”

Top 3 challenges



40%

Lack of
experience

32%

Technical
issues

18%

Lack of
engagement

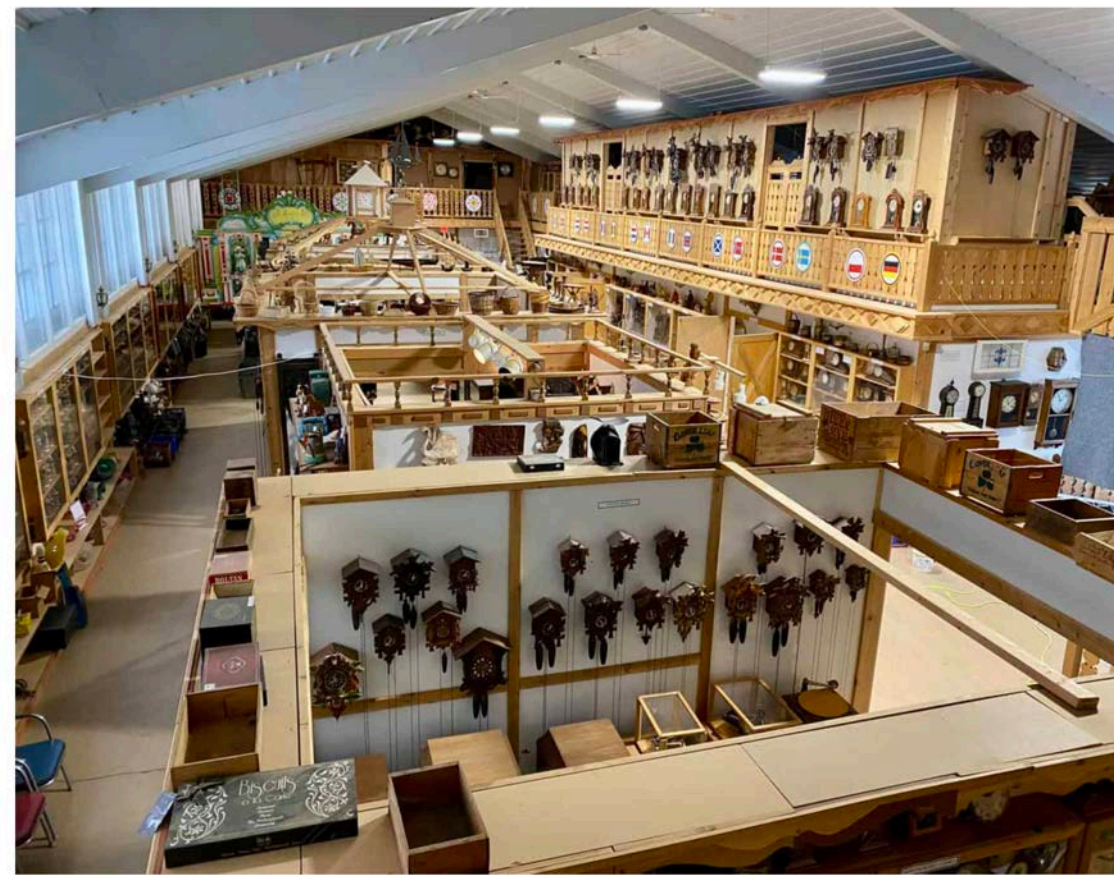


Cuckoo Clock Museum Slated To Open This Summer

January 13, 2021

Newcomers to the North Loop have probably passed by the old brick building on First Street many times without any idea of the vast collections inside. The drawing of a clock over the door—and gear symbols in the windows—would've been clues.

This summer, the building will reopen as a free museum to showcase the hundreds of hand-crafted clocks, rocks and old-time music players that Jim Fiorentino collected before his death in 2017.



Three New Restaurants Open At Graze

January 1, 2021

It's not ideal timing to open a new restaurant during a pandemic when the state has placed heavy restrictions on dining spots, but three new restaurants have opened at Graze in recent weeks—including the latest, **B.A.D. Wingz** which is having its official grand opening today, January 1st. They, along with the new breakfast/brunch spot **It's 7AM Somewhere** and the avocado bar, **Avocadish**, are getting by with takeout and delivery orders for now.

"The most difficult thing is getting people to realize that we're here," said 7AM's co-owner, Kyle Nichols. "I mean we've had people walk in and they're like, 'oh, you guys are here'."

For B.A.D. Wingz owner Gerard Klass, this is his second restaurant at Graze. He also owns Soul Bowl on the second level. Before the pandemic hit, he saw enough potential with the crowds at Graze to feel good about opening a new spot. "The North Loop has shown us a lot of love," he said, "so a space opened up and it was good timing for us to kind of slide in."

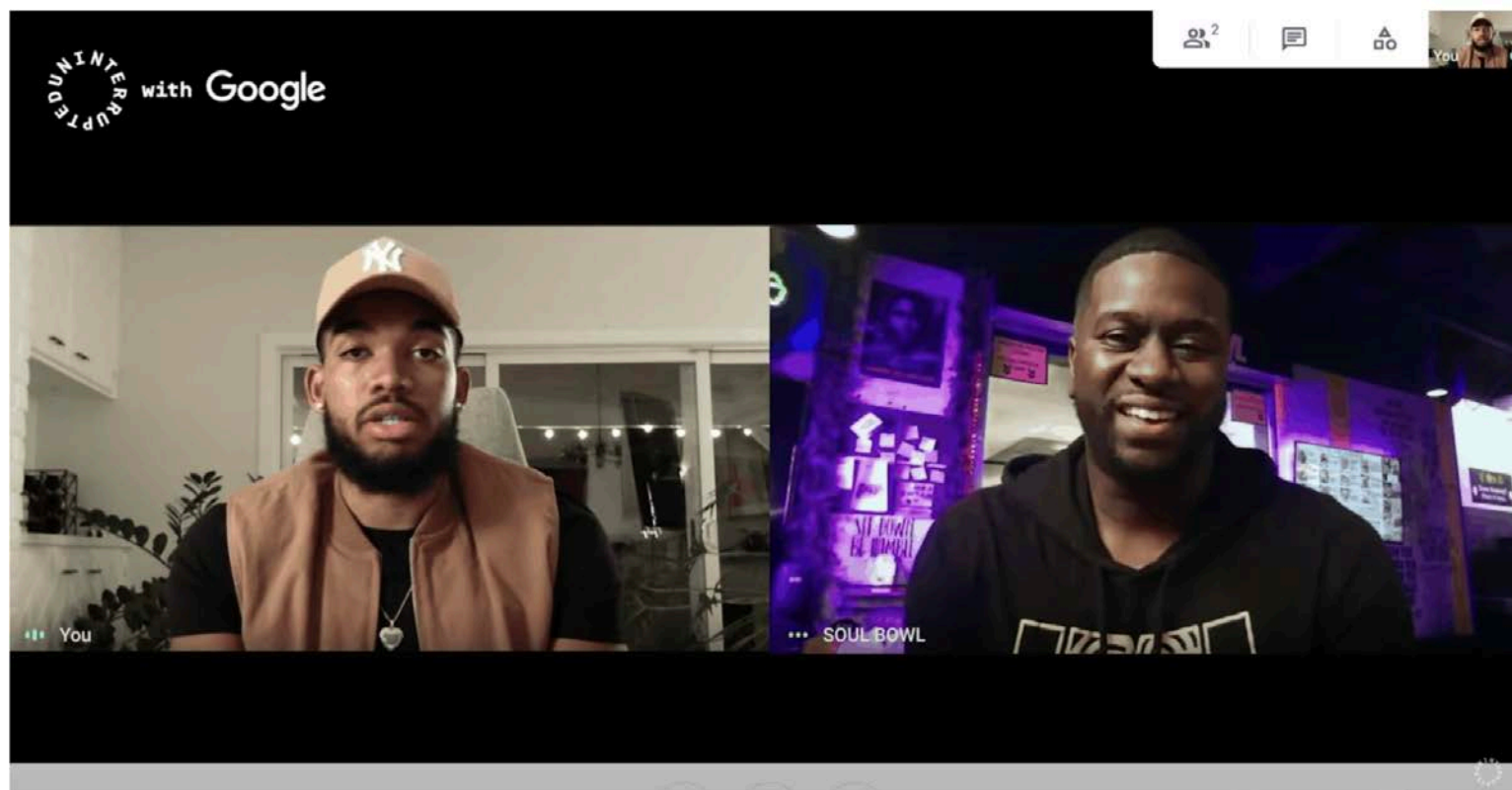


Klass and Nichols are both looking forward to the eventual return of baseball at Target Field, concerts at The Fillmore and just the general buzz of the entertainment district.

"It's a great area and you've got all the apartment buildings and condos," said Nichols, who co-owns the restaurant with Ed Devine. "It's literally just a matter of time."

By Mike Binkley, North Loop Neighborhood Association





Timberwolves Star Shows Love For North Loop Restaurant

December 4, 2020

Well-known athletes and entertainers are helping support small businesses through the new online platform, Google Uninterrupted, and Timberwolves star Karl-Anthony Towns used his appearance to shine a light on Soul Bowl in the North Loop.

In a [videoconference call with Soul Bowl co-owner Gerard Klass](#), Towns said he's gotten so accustomed to ordering food in Minnesota and not seeing a person of color, "I was so touched when I heard Soul Bowl was even a thing. I never thought I would see the day." And he pledged to buy \$5,000 worth of food from the restaurant to share with one of his favorite non-profits, HopeKids.

Soul Bowl is on the second level of Graze, and serves fusion soul food in a fast casual setting. In their conversation, Towns asked Klass how he's adapted to the year of COVID-19. "One of the big things for me was always like, how do I create something where people can order collard greens on their phone," Klass said. "We were able to pivot into tech and to doing curbside and delivery."

Soul Bowl has also found ways to get free food to those who need it through their "Food For Your Soul" program. Donors helped them serve Thanksgiving boxes to more than 120 families.

"I always say when I'm having a difficult time if I can find myself serving somebody else, that's where I can kind of get some peace and joy myself," Klass told Towns.

The video finishes with Towns writing a 5-star Google review for Soul Bowl. "The most authentic African-American food you're gonna find in all of Minnesota," it says.

By Mike Binkley, North Loop Neighborhood Association

November 4, 2020

5 Retailers Thinking Outside the Box

These businesses are reconsidering how they attract—and retain—their customer bases.

by Madeline Nachbar



photos: Wing ta/canary grey (Thao Nguyen), Caitlin Abrams (Jaxon Grey)
Thao Nguyen and Jaxon Grey

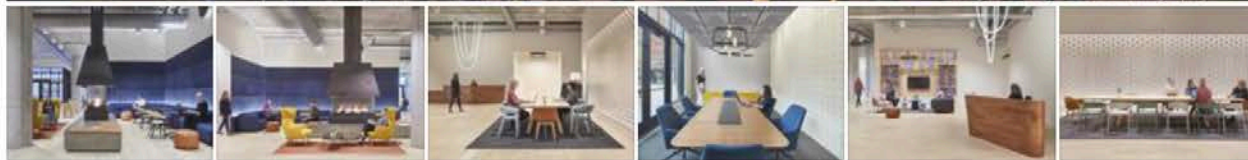
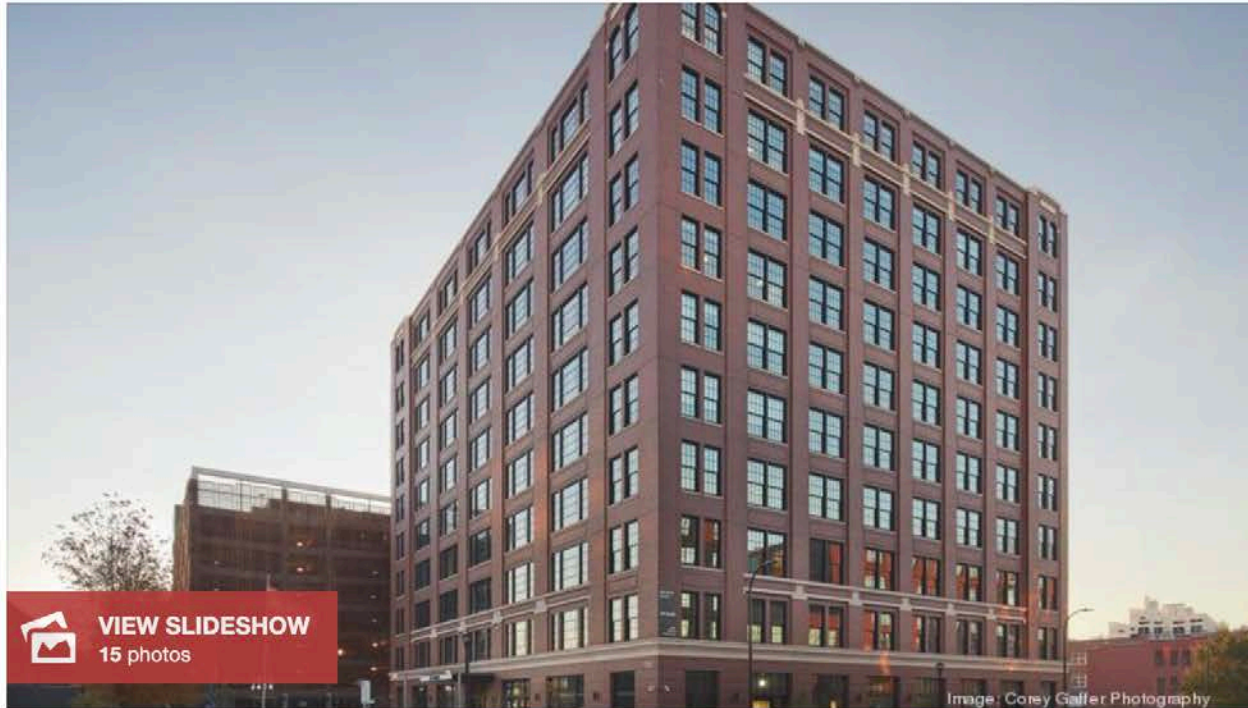
1) Parc Shop

It's no secret that Thao Nguyen's North Loop storefront is a true haven for lovers of high-quality, minimalist pieces with a trend-forward edge. She and her social media-savvy team have spent more than a decade connecting fashionistas with cult-following indie labels from the coasts, plus apothecary, jewelry, and gifts that fit the shop's signature modern aesthetic. Last June, Nguyen was also among the first of many local shopkeepers to pledge 15 percent of shelf space to Black-owned businesses by summer 2021 as part of the national #PullUpOrShutUp initiative dedicated to standing against racism and injustice and amplifying BIPOC voices. *212 N. 2nd St., Mpls., 612-353-4966*

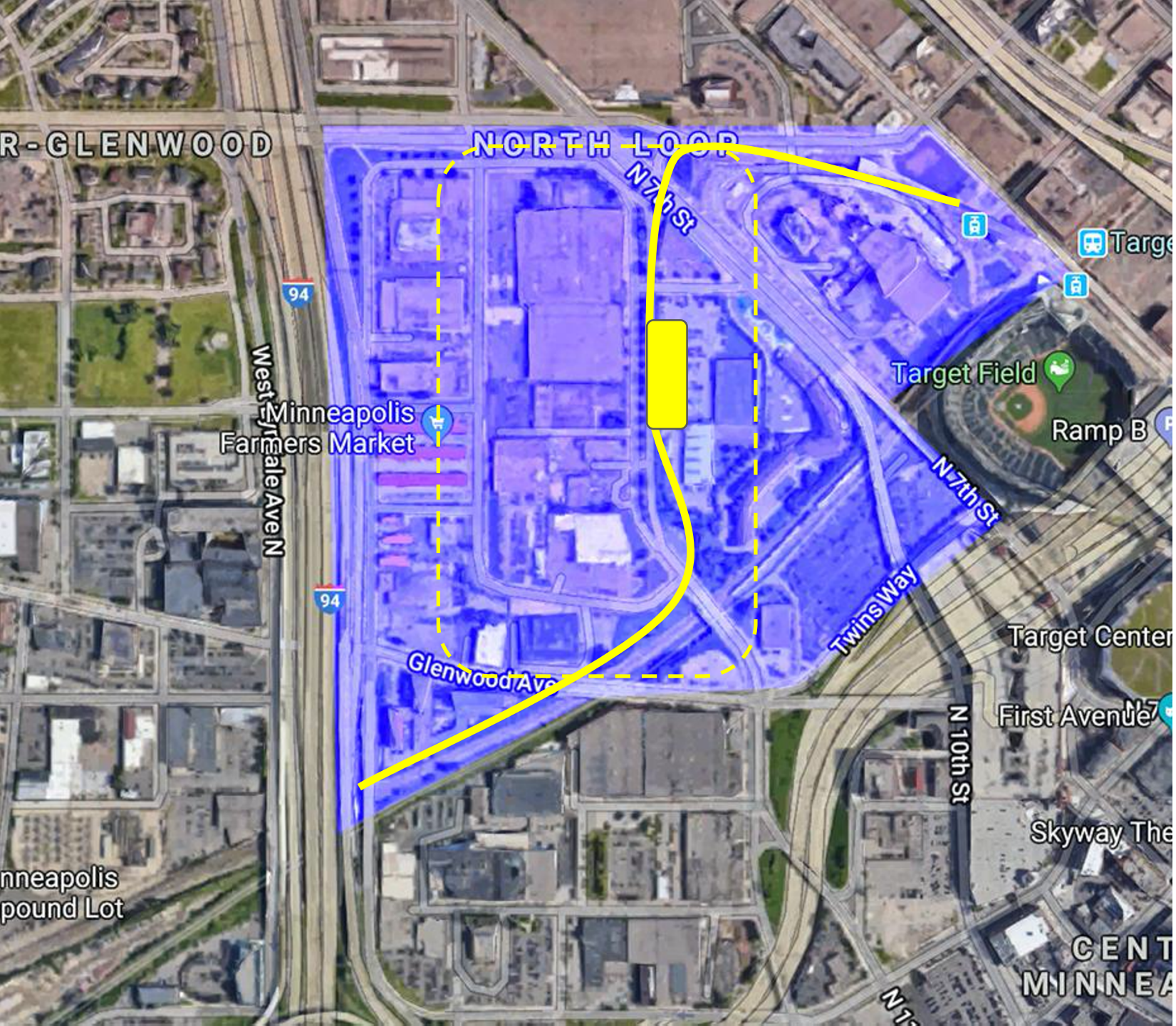
4) Jaxon Grey

Unable to hit the shops? Jaxon Grey's Michael Druskin has you covered. Druskin has pivoted in more ways than we thought were possible, somehow managing to raise his customer service game in the middle of a global pandemic. He's added doorstep deliveries, local "try before you buy" drop-off programs, and even socially distanced cul-de-sac pop-ups. "Before deliveries, we didn't get to talk to our customers as much," says Druskin, who's noticed a shift in connectivity with his JG family in addition to a spike in followers on Instagram, a platform he heavily leans on to engage and sell. Now more than ever, he's texting with customers, dropping packages, and building personalized boxes for men who favor the brand's selection of comfortable athleisure-inspired gear. "We want people to feel connected to more than just clothing—we are seeing exactly that happening." *219 N. 2nd St., Mpls., 612-399-9973*

Cool Office (Building): North Loop office building tapped into Scandinavian design for inspiration

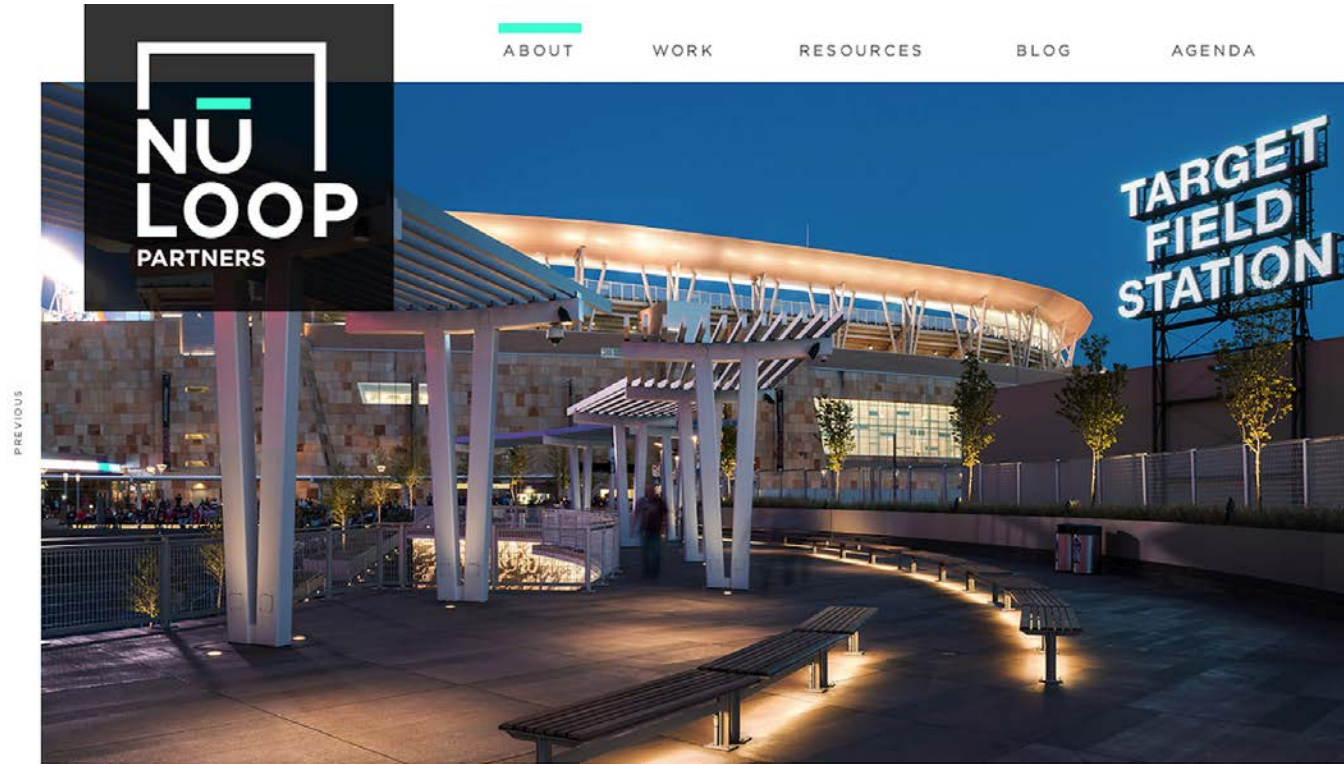
[Email](#)[Share](#)[Share](#)[Tweet](#)[Share Article](#)[Print](#)[Order Reprints](#)

By [Carter Jones](#) – Digital Producer, Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal
Nov 24, 2020, 7:00am EST



Root District

art.food.culture.



**Executive Director's Report
January 21, 2021 [VIRTUAL MEETING]**

