

A letter from our ULI Minnesota Chair

Jeremy R. Jacobs

ULI Minnesota, Management Committee Chair

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Managing Director & Market Leader, Colliers International



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What can I do? What can we do together?

These questions have guided ULI MN for nearly two decades. Combined, they are our *raison d'être*. They guided the formation of the Regional Council of Mayors over a decade ago and, more recently, Minnesota Mayors Together. They have joined members of our community, across lines of politics, professions, race and gender, to dive into the problems that define us through our Product Councils and Technical Advisory Panels. And they explain how the Real Estate Diversity Initiative (REDi) and UrbanPlan were originally conceived.

For these reasons and many more, the Twin Cities are the envy of many other Cities in the US — and for good reason. From our park system to our diverse and strong economy, we have so much to be proud of and grateful for. Yet despite efforts from engaged, passionate, and well-meaning people, Government entities, non-profits and Corporations in our community, serious systemic problems continue to prevent the benefits of being a Minnesotan from being enjoyed by *all* members of the Communities within which we live.

Nine months ago I wrote to you to inform you that, among other things, diversity, equity and inclusion is our top priority at the Management Committee. Since then, we have been hard at work exploring what more ULI MN can do to impact our Cities and our Region along the lines of DE&I.

The senseless killing of George Floyd serves as a potent reminder that the battle is far from won. The rioting and looting that ensued has been a sad, visible reminder of the disconnect between the Minnesota we all love and the Minnesota we often fail to recognize.

Never before have we seen two crises collide like we have in the past week. The economic uncertainty of Covid ramming directly into the social uncertainty arising from the death of George Floyd has given us all pause in how we manage our personal lives and our businesses. From dinner tables to conference room tables, conversations have changed.

Without a doubt, there is quite a bit more left that we can do — WE MUST DO — together.

Rather than start with answers, ULI MN will double down with questions. How can we leverage our Platform to Deliver to make a difference? How can we accelerate the work already being done by REDi and UrbanPlan to build more bridges between minority members of our community and the real estate industry? What role should we play in facilitating desperately needed conversations in our Communities? What do we aspire to be? Who else should be at our table?

And, how do we do it all as ULI MN itself transitions from the only Executive Director we have ever known in Caren Dewar to a new, yet unnamed leader who will bring new energy, ideas and excitement?

To that last question, I emphatically suggest we do it — together.

Thus, your support of ULI MN has never been more relevant or more urgent. Whatever you're able to do, whether it's an investment of time or money or ideas, we will cherish it. An investment in ULI MN is an investment in our shared future of more access, more equity, more inclusion and more prosperity for all.

Let's have greater collective impact — together!

Jeremy Jacobs

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URBAN VISIONARY



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ULI Minnesota
 81 South 9th Street, Suite 310
 Minneapolis, MN 55402
minnesota.uli.org

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