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Focus



A view of the riverfront and Gold Medal Flour reflections from the Guthrie. Photo by Janelle Nivens

## Walking through the past, present and future of East Town

By **JANELLE NIVENS**

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## *The rise of East Town*

Bordered by the Mississippi River on the north, I-35W on the east, I-94 on the south, and 5th Avenue South on the west, the recently named East Town is made up of 120 square blocks (about 300 acres.) After years of stagnation, this area of Minneapolis is rapidly changing. It's a great time to explore on foot to remember the past, capture the present, and envision the future.

Minneapolis maps and guides cannot keep up with the fast-paced changes happening in East Town and this article is no exception. It should also be noted that the suggested route for this walk may require detours as construction is ongoing in this area for several years. It is not possible to capture every point of interest within two large neighborhoods for one article. I bet you'll find many more places to love within East Town when you go on your own walk!

### **The Route**

**Distance:** 6 miles

**Duration:** 2 hours (factor in more time to make stops along the way)

**Starting point:** Northeast corner of 4th Street & Chicago Avenue near the East Downtown LRT station

**Getting here:** If it is not practical for you to walk to the starting point, you've got lots of options: Metro Transit Green or Blue Line to the East Downtown LRT station, bike parking around the perimeter of U.S. Bank Stadium, ride a Nice Ride to a nearby station, or park at the new ramp at 3rd & Chicago.

**Tip:** If you happen to park at the new ramp on 3rd Street and Chicago Avenue, go to the top of the ramp for great views of the city and an aerial view of the new park.



## Maps:

**Google:** <https://drive.google.com/open?id=18UPZtmua4zUqKYPM9dUiS3TZ-PI&usp=sharing>

**Strava:** <https://www.strava.com/activities/630092393>

## *Walk highlights*

**U.S. Bank Stadium**  
**900 S. 5th St.**



Celebrating its grand opening July 22-24, the U.S. Bank Stadium is home to the Vikings football team and will host other sporting and cultural events such as an International Champions Cup match and a Metallica concert.

>> After you're done taking photos of the reflection of the downtown skyline on the side of the stadium, continue walking north on Chicago Avenue.

### **6th Street & Chicago Avenue**

Big changes are coming for this corner of East Town. The building that used to be Hubert's Sports Bar & Grill is set to become home to Erik the Red, a new restaurant by Erik Forsberg. East Town Apartments , a six-story building with first-floor retail is also planned on this block by First Covenant Church in partnership with Community Housing Development Corporation. Groundbreaking for the new development is slated for September 2016.

### **First Covenant Church**

810 S. 7th St.



Built in 1974, what we now know as First Covenant Church was originally designed for a Swedish congregation by Warren H. Hayes, an architect responsible for several Minneapolis churches. Evidence of this history is the inscription “Svenska Missions Tabernaklet” carved into the building on the 7th Street side (best viewed from the south side of the street).

>> Walk across 7th Street and turn left (east) to walk toward 11th Avenue South. You'll pass Hope Community Church, which holds services in two buildings (west and east) with beautiful flowers within view of the sidewalk. Turn left (north) onto 11th Avenue South.

### **Valspar murals**

#### **Hiawatha Trail & 11th Avenue South**



**Photos by Janelle Nivens**

The bright abstract mural featuring bold Valspar paint colors was recently redesigned and repainted. I get to see this daily on my commute to work and it always brings a smile to my face.

>> Be aware of trains before crossing the tracks. Turn left (west) onto the Hiawatha

Trail. Cut through the parking lot to 10th Avenue South. Before walking north on 10th Avenue, take a moment to view the juxtaposition of the old small buildings and the Minneapolis skyline. I took the time to document some of the old surface parking lot signs as I'm sure they are on borrowed time (no love lost for me!).

**Periscope mural and colorful window art**  
**South and east sides of 921 Washington Ave. S.**



The only thing that makes the giant surface lot tolerable for me on my walks through this part of town is the view of the Periscope mural and the colorful abstract design added to the windows.

**Private Residence**  
**247 10th Ave. S.**

Despite its unique details, it would be easy to walk past this private residence which has been described as “Tim Burton meets Lord of the Rings” by its current owner, Jeff Arundel. Local artist Paul Tierney helped Arundel realize his vision by adding handcrafted elements throughout the interior and exterior. Originally converted into a residence by John and Sage Cowles, the former storefront is a two-story brick building with the words “Electric Flash Company” written on it.

>> From 10th Avenue South, turn right onto Washington Avenue South.

### **Open Book**

**1011 Washington Ave. S.**

The Open Book building is beautiful inside and out and is home to The Loft Literary Center, Minnesota Center for Book Arts, and Milkweed Editions. The windows serve as a street gallery and lettering on the window says “The Outlook Gallery at Minnesota Center for Book Arts – A street-view nook for book art.”

### **Day Block Brewing**

**1105 Washington Ave. S.**

Stop in for a handcrafted beer and a slice of pizza (several unique options are available.)

>> Cross 11th Avenue South and turn left (north) to cross Washington Avenue South. Turn around to see the Day Block Building, which was built in 1883 for Leonard Day. Continue walking north on 11th Avenue South.

### **Former Ida Dorsey Brothel**

**212 11th Ave. S.**





Built in 1891, this brick building has always caught my attention. The brick arches and script lettering on the doors are the types of architectural details that can cause me to stop in my tracks. The juxtaposition in size and style with its condo neighbors makes it even more attractive. To top it off, this is last standing bordello from Minneapolis's late nineteenth century red-light district.

>> Cross South 2nd Street and continue walking north on 11th Avenue South.

**+ Izzy's Ice Cream**

**1100 S. 2nd St.**





Home of the Izzy Scoop, a  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce scoop added to your order. Izzy's has a constant rotation of unique flavors many of which are inspired by other local traditions and companies like Birchwood Cafe, Peace Coffee, and the Minnesota State Fair.

>> Continue walking north on 11th Avenue South (Gold Medal Park is on your left). Cross West River Parkway to reach the Grand Rounds Trail. Turn left (west) onto the trail. Consider paying your respects to the victims of the I-35 Bridge collapse at the Remembrance Garden. Continue walking along the path and keep to your right so that you walk down closer to the Mississippi River. You will cross a parking lot and reach trails leading you to the Mill Ruins Park.

### **Mill Ruins Park**

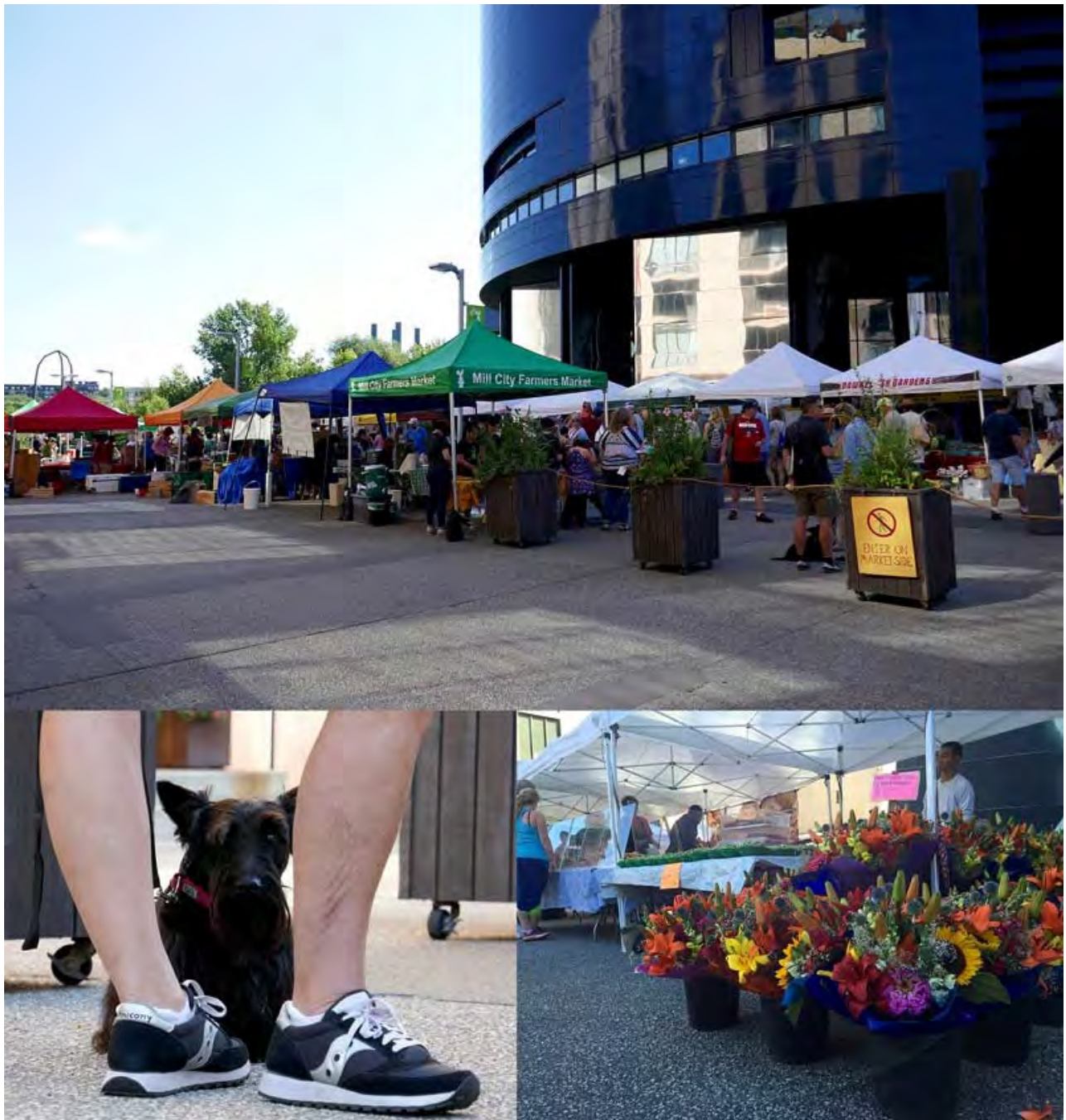
**102 Portland Ave. S.**

This unique park lies within the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District and features accessible trails allowing visitors to view the exposed structures that once powered the city's flour milling industry.

>> After exploring the Mill Ruins Park, walk through the parking lot near the St. Anthony Falls Visitor Center and follow signs for the Stone Arch Bridge and walk up the ramp. As difficult as it may be, walk past the Stone Arch Bridge to continue this East Town adventure. Cross Portland Avenue to walk east on West River Parkway. You will pass Mill City Museum (don't worry, we'll be back!). Walk up the stairs to reach the gathering place between the Mill City Museum and Guthrie Theater. There is an accessible public restroom available at the St. Anthony Falls Visitor Center. (Note: A more accessible route avoiding stairs would be to turn right (north) onto Portland Avenue. Then turn left (east) onto 2nd Avenue.)

### **Mill City Farmers Market**

**2nd Street and Chicago Avenue between Mill City Museum and Guthrie Theater**



It's a great idea to plan your East Town walk around the Mill City Farmers Market, which is open rain or shine every Saturday, May through October, and every second Saturday, November through April, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. This year-round farmers market was founded in 2006 by chef Brenda Langton in collaboration with the Mill City Museum. In addition to fresh produce and flowers, you'll find local purveyors of foods like meat, cheese, and honey. You'll also discover artist made jewelry, clothing, and housewares — great gifts for loved ones (or yourself). You can fuel up for the rest of your walk thanks to food vendors offering everything from pastries to wood fired pizzas.



## Guthrie Theater

818 S 2nd St.



Built in 2006 and designed by French architect Jean Nouval with Minneapolis-based Architecture Alliance, the Guthrie is a must stop on the walk along the riverfront. While checking out the calendar of performances, treat yourself to spectacular views of the riverfront area via the Endless Bridge on level 5 and the Amber Box on level 9 (make sure to go to the north side of the lobby for views of downtown). Self-guided tour podcasts are available: <http://www.guthrietheater.org/visit/tours>.

A recipient of a \$1 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the theater is working to become more accessible to new audiences including \$9 tickets for performances in the Dowling Studio. A performance this September relevant to this article is “Home Street Home: Minneapolis,” a project of St. Stephen’s Human Services is described on the theater’s site as “a hyper-local conversation regarding housing and homelessness in Minneapolis and our neighborhood of East Downtown.”

>> After exploring Guthrie Theater, walk west on 2nd Avenue South toward the Mill City Museum.

## Mill City Museum



## 704 S. 2nd St.

Built within Washburn A Mill, a National Historic Landmark, the Mill City Museum serves as a link between downtown Minneapolis and the Saint Anthony Falls on the Mississippi River. The award winning design by Thomas Meyer, principal architect of MSR is a stunning example modern building elements tied into an existing historical structure.

>> Walk on South 2nd Street and turn left (north) on Park Avenue South. I love what the homeowners at Park Avenue Lofts have done with their front entrance gardens. You will walk past the future home of the first Radisson Red Hotel in the United States. At South 4th Street, turn right (west) toward Portland Avenue South. Turn left (north) onto Portland Avenue South.

### **Downtown East Commons Park**

**Between 4th and 5th streets, and Portland and Park avenues**



The greening of downtown Minneapolis has been a sight for sore eyes. Regular walks

through East Town allows first-hand observation of this remarkable transformation. Though the park's amenities will evolve as budget allows, the experience of walking in this part of Minneapolis is drastically improved with the addition of grass, trees and flowers.

>> Continue walking north on Portland Avenue South

### **Corner of South 8th Street and Portland Avenue South**



At the time of my walk, there was a massive hole in the ground where a huge surface parking lot used to be. I'll trade parking my car for staying at a brewtel any day of the week. This block will be home to Kraus Anderson's headquarters, a boutique hotel, apartments, restaurant and bar and a brewery.

>> Continue walking on Portland Avenue South. You will walk past several beautiful residential buildings including Rappahannock Flats (built in 1895), The Balmoral (built in 1917), and The Roselle (two buildings built in 1888 and 1895). Among these historic buildings is a newer residential option in Elliot Park — 27-story Skyscape Condos which were built 2006.

>> Cross East 15th Street and turn left to walk on the north side of the street. This provides a view of the ruins of First Church of Christ Scientist (614 E. 15th St.) which will be demolished to make way for a new housing development.

>> From 15th Avenue S, turn right onto Park Avenue S. After crossing E 16th Street, you will walk by a couple of old Victorian homes on the east side of the street. Further down the block if you look across the street to the west side, you will see Meshbeshier & Spence, a unique building that was used as a filming location for the 2009 Coen Brothers film, "A Serious Man."

>> Turn left onto East 17th Street. At the corner of East 17th Street and Elliot Avenue is Liechty Hall, a beautiful building owned by North Central University and used for the business administration and international studies departments. On the opposite side of the street is a gorgeous home facing Elliot Avenue and a carriage house facing East 17th Street being restored and renovated by its owners.

>> Turn left onto 10th Avenue South. You will walk by a stretch of beautiful homes and gardens along this street.

>> At Elliot Park, turn left (west) onto East 14th Street. You will pass the Elliot Park Recreation Center and the new soccer field.

### **Elliot Park**

**1000 E. 14th St.**



One of the first parks in Minneapolis, the park's namesake was Dr. Jacob Smith Elliot. He and his wife Sarah donated their land after moving to California. The park has a history of responding to the needs of the neighborhood. In 1980 with the help of federal grants, it created the first fully accessible recreation center in the park system. More recent amenities include a skateboard park, NiceRide station, and a soccer field.

>> Continue walking on East 14th Street.

**T.J. Jones Information Resource Center (Originally Tourtellotte Memorial Deaconess Home)**  
**915 E. 14th St.**

Built in 1914 by Mrs. Harriet Arnold Tourtellotte in memory of her husband Dr. Jacob F. Tourtellotte was originally a home for the deaconesses that worked at nearby Asbury Hospital (which is now Miller Hall, 910 Elliot Ave. S.)

>> Continue walking through North Central University's campus on the north side of East 14th Street. Cross Chicago Avenue South. Veer toward the right and you'll be on South 10th Street. In the triangle where South 10th Street and East 14th Street meet, a small red and white diner serves as a beacon for this walk.



## **Band Box Diner**

729 S. 10th St.



Opened in 1939 by Harry and Bert Wyman, Band Box is the oldest operating diner in Minneapolis and is on the Heritage Preservation Commission's list of local landmarks. Though not open all night, Band Box remains a gathering place for people from all walks of life.

>> Continue walking on the south side of 10th Street.

## **Storefronts**

**Gamut Gallery, 717 S. 10th St.**

**Fades of Gray, 715 S. 10th St.**

Gamut Gallery and Fades of Gray make up two of four storefronts with large windows ready to engage passerby. The "for rent" signs in the vacant spaces invite those with an entrepreneurial spirit to call for leasing information. I look forward to seeing this area develop as thriving local businesses add a lot to a neighborhood's vibrancy and walkability.

>> Walk on South 10th Street and at Park Avenue South look to your left and you'll see Drexel Apartments at 1009 Park Ave. S. Turn right onto Park Avenue South

## **Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Ambulatory Outpatient Specialty Care Center**

**South 8th Street, between Park and Chicago Avenues**

HCMC is building a new 367,000-square-foot clinic across from its emergency department. From the sidewalk perspective, I am excited to learn that HCMC is planning to create a public pocket park on the corner of 9th Street and Park Avenue.

>> From Park Avenue South, turn right onto South 9th Street and you're walking in a section of the Ninth Street South Historic District. A couple of great examples of historic buildings within the district are Heritage (Mayhew) Apartments, (614-626 S. 9th St.) and Lenox Brownstones (519 S. 9th St.)

>> Turn right onto 5th Avenue South and walk north until South 6th Street. Turn right (east) and walk along the south side of 6th.

## **Minneapolis Armory**

**500 S. 6th St.**



Look up “PWA Moderne” and you’ll find the Minneapolis Armory listed as an example of this architectural style. Built for the Minnesota National Guard between 1935-36

with support from a Public Works Administration grant, this building is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Armory was purchased in 2015 by Ned Abdul of Swervo Development Corporation. His plans to convert the space into an entertainment center are on hold as the property has been nominated for local historical landmark designation by the city's Heritage Preservation Commission.

>> At Portland Avenue, walk north until South 5th Street which leads you back to U.S. Bank Stadium where you can return to the East Downtown LRT station, your bike, or your car.

Learn more about East Town and get involved: East Town Business Partnership ([edcmpls.org](http://edcmpls.org)) and Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc. ([elliotparkneighborhood.org](http://elliotparkneighborhood.org)).

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