

In the Q: What I Learned While Canvassing the MedQuarter

When I set out to canvas the MedQuarter on my bicycle, it was my sincere desire to visit all of the properties in the 55-block district to introduce myself. Well, it is clear I under-estimated the time required, so I cannot say 'mission accomplished.' What I can say is that I have started a project proving to be more valuable than anticipated and which I am looking forward to continuing in the coming weeks!



Phil Wasta, executive director of the MedQuarter, bikes the district to engage with local businesses

As I introduced myself to people I received responses ranging from, "What's the MedQuarter?" to "I read about you doing this," to "Are we in the MedQuarter?" It was great to have the opportunity to inform people about the MedQuarter, my role as executive director, and what the Medical SSMID will achieve by implementing our Master Development Plan in the short and long term. Several property owners expressed needs or concerns about the condition of the district, which I immediately added to my 'to do' list. Others just took my business card and flier and thanked me for stopping by. Regardless, they know the Medical SSMID is actively working on the MedQuarter.

While riding from block to block it was obvious there are a lot of positive things happening in the MedQuarter:

- 4th Avenue SE is being re-paved from 5th Street to 19th Street, converted to 2-way traffic, and re-configured to add bike lanes
- 4th Avenue & 10th Street SE intersection is being re-constructed to allow for 2-way traffic and improved crosswalk safety
- 8th Street SE is being re-paved from 3rd Avenue to 8th Avenue in preparation for being converted to 2-way traffic
- Portions of 7th Street SE are being re-paved from 1st Avenue to 8th Avenue in preparation for being converted to 2-way traffic
- Remodeling of the former History Center building at 1st Avenue & 6th Street is completed and the Cedar Rapids Dayschool opened on September 5th
- The finishing touches are being put on the St. Luke's Nassif Radiation Center at 202 10th Street SE scheduled to open on September 21st
- Zio John's at the corner of 1st Avenue & 12th Street SE is nearing completion of a major exterior and interior remodeling

These are all signs the City, the medical community, and private businesses are actively investing in the MedQuarter. That is the most important indicator of a viable market and the activity needed to attract more economic development in and around the district. As I continue my tour I look forward to meeting more people, adding to my 'to do' list, and witnessing more of the positive things that are happening. It is very encouraging and something everyone in Cedar Rapids can be proud of as we develop the Regional Medical District.