

A Positive Outlook

PROGRESS AND PATIENCE



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Vegas. Some might have questioned whether Las Vegas should even be following in the footsteps of Denver, San Diego and other metropolitan cities that have turned around their dilapidated downtowns through the years.

Those critics are missing the forest for the trees. They are missing the many successes that have already begun to transform and improve downtown Las Vegas. They are missing the patience that's required to see such large, transformative redevelopment efforts through to the end.

Look at how much has changed on East Fremont Street in just the three years since Downtown Project was born. Hsieh moved the Zappos headquarters from Henderson into the vacated Las Vegas City Hall. Downtown Project invested \$350 million in land acquisitions, tech startups and small businesses. New shops, bars and restaurants replaced vacant lots, weekly motels and dilapidated buildings. Thanks to the project's investment, downtown Las Vegas is home to more than 1,000 new jobs, popular spots like the Container Park, and the Life is Beautiful music festival. That's progress.

In less than a decade at Symphony Park, the city of Las Vegas has added several major developments on what once was a Union Pacific rail yard. The Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health provides leading-edge treatment and research in brain care; The Smith Center for the Performing Arts draws world-class music acts, Broadway plays and other entertainment. The Discovery Children's Museum attracts fun-seeking families from all over the valley. That's progress.

After decades of economic decline, the transformation that has already come to downtown Las Vegas cannot be overlooked in the long road to renewing the city's urban center. Downtown revitalization is a process of fits and starts, ups and downs, successes and failures. It is not a straight line, and it is certainly not a sprint. Las Vegas officials and Downtown Project will keep pushing forward with their ambitious plans, a few failures will be overshadowed by far more successes, and downtown Las Vegas will change for the better with each passing year.

Progress takes patience.

