

## **Recommendations for Plan-It Hennepin**

The Plan-It Hennepin document recommends that the City:

### **i) Endorse the plan:**

- Endorse the plan created by the Plan-It Hennepin process, while recognizing that some of the specific actions and recommendations made by the Plan and City commitment of financial resources will need further consideration.

### **ii) Recognize the District:**

- Recognize the Hennepin Cultural District, an area following Hennepin Avenue from the Walker Art Center to the Mississippi River and encompassing parallel streets including Nicollet, Harmon and First Avenues (the triple spine with Hennepin Avenue as the central artery) as well as connecting streets. This area mirrors the combined boundaries of the City's Downtown Hennepin and Lyndale Commercial Corridors areas. The four connected zones comprise the District, each with distinct streetscape designs and unifying elements, including directional and informational signage:
  - Hennepin-Lyndale Gateway: Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church and Walker Art Center to the Basilica and Dunwoody College, characterized by spiritual and educational institutions, museum and green space focused on social interaction.
  - Hennepin-Harmon District: the Basilica to 10th Street, characterized as an urban residential area with educational institutions and local retail.
  - Hennepin Theatre District: Tenth Street to 5th Street, characterized by an active urban environment with historic theatres, entertainment, bright signage, sports venues and restaurants.
  - Riverfront Gateway: Fifth Street to Nicollet Island, characterized by the Central Library, residential, retail, civic institutions and green spaces focused on recreation. (see attached District map)

### **iii) Collaborate with the District Alliance:**

- Collaborate with District leadership to facilitate development that is consistent with and complementary to the District; programming vacant storefronts throughout Downtown and encouraging new development that favors cultural uses and complementary commercial uses including galleries, a diverse mix of restaurants and unique, locally-owned retail.
- Reserve a seat for the City on the District Alliance executive board and authorize the Mayor and Ward 7 Council Member to appoint a City representative to fill that seat.
- Authorize the City Coordinator to identify a liaison to the City's special projects committee to work cooperatively with a liaison of the Alliance in identifying and/or facilitating required approvals and assisting with regulatory and permitting needs for projects and initiatives proposed by the Alliance, with the goal of identifying improved processes that can be replicated elsewhere in the City.

### **iv) Provide directions for City Staff**

- Direct staff to undertake the following and to return to the city Council when appropriate for consideration of additional actions:

- **Community Planning and Economic Development, Department of Health and Regulatory Services staff to:**
  - enforce existing surface parking landscaping and screening guidelines from the zoning code as the most desirable option for improving the aesthetics of parking lots along Hennepin, with the first priority being the establishment of the green buffer space along sidewalks. The District Alliance will work with the City to determine the most timely and effective path to implementation of parking lot greening on properties within the defined project area;
  - explore strategies to make existing permitting and regulations easier to understand and access, and further the City's cooperative and creative approach to regulations, permitting and support for events, food options, building permits and business development;
  - re-examine regulations related to murals and expand permissions if needed to foster a more visually stimulating environment;
  - identify opportunities for artist involvement in planning and installing public art now and in the future;
  - consider initiatives that encourage property uses by owners and tenants for arts and cultural purposes and encourage arts-related economic development projects to consider the District for their location;
  - support arts and cultural development within the District, with the recommendation that all first-floor spaces be visible and open to the public at street level;
  - facilitate processing pop-up storefront requests in the District;
  - evaluate revisions to existing signage provisions to activate buildings and walls through artistic lighting that improve overall lighting and safety;
  - explore delegating authority for all street pole banners throughout the district to the District Alliance; and
  - in consultation with Public Works right of way division explore possible changes to City policy (including the zoning ordinance) related to sponsorship recognition on signage, banners and other event signage.
  
- **Public Works Department staff to explore ways for the District to be involved in the following public realm improvements within the District's geography:**
  - establish improved pedestrian markings at intersections along Hennepin and cross streets;
  - enhance bicycle travel;
  - explore lighting improvements to the underside of the skyway located at Hennepin and 9<sup>th</sup> street to improve safety;
  - coordinate with MnDOT to devise long-term lighting and physical improvements to the I-94 underpass between the Basilica and Dunwoody College (See Appendix 'Public Art Site Considerations');
  - collaborate with the Alliance, Metro Transit and Downtown leadership to address Downtown transit circulation to better serve residents, visitors to and employees and facilitate movement between cultural institutions and businesses; and
  - examine current policies and practices for stakeholder and community engagement in the design and operations of public

infrastructure, identify barriers that need to be addressed and discuss with the appropriate public entities.

- **Community Planning Research and City Coordinator's Office staff to:**
  - provide data monitored and gathered through the Creative Vitality Index and CPED Research with *Track It Hennepin*, the assessment and reporting tool of the District around indicators identified within the District's geography that monitor changes in the creative economy, business establishments, employment, local option sales tax and estimated market values.
- **Intergovernmental Relations Staff to:**
  - explore and help secure state policy support of incentives for cultural and creative districts.