

STEERING COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 15, 2015

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

MPRB Headquarters

Meeting Notes

Committee members present: Deepak Advani, Nick Cichowicz, Jay Cowles, Steve Cramer, Joanne Kaufman, Richard Mammen, Nancy Nasi, Neil Reardon, Philip Schwartz, Carletta Sweet, Ted Tucker, Sally Westby, Jo Vos, Craig Wilson, David Wilson

Committee members excused: Paul Reyelts, Dave Tinjum
[Please see [website](#) for Steering Committee Member affiliations]

Guests: Adam Arvidson, John Erwin, Paul Forsline, Meg Forney, Dave Hile (alternate), Jana Metge

Staff/consultants present: Lydia Major, Kjersti Monson, Tyler Pederson, Jody Rader, Jennifer Ringold, Michael Schroeder, Lacy Shelby, Marsha Wagner, Sarah Weeks

1. Welcome

The second meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Jennifer Ringold, Deputy Superintendent, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). She welcomed the people in attendance, then invited the Steering Committee members, Park Board and City staff, and others in attendance to introduce themselves.

2. Update on Community Engagement Plan

Jennifer reported that discussions from Steering Committee Meeting 1, along with Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) discussions, resulted in the following best strategies to meet the needs of different stakeholder groups:

- Vested individuals/groups to consult on this project
- Networks, blogs, social media users interested in Downtown that could spread the word
- Existing visitor surveys or research efforts, underway or planned
- Connections to property management companies Downtown
- Contact with providers of social services/faith-based organizations Downtown
- Ideal locations/events for intercept surveys

Information gathered from these groups will ultimately result in balanced information that will be used to generate a complete and cohesive plan. Community engagement will be a big focus at the next SC meeting. Jennifer then turned the meeting over to Kjersti Monson to summarize Technical Advisory Committee Meeting 3.

3. Report on Technical Advisory Committee Meeting 3

Kjersti Monson, Director, Long Range Planning, Minneapolis, said that the TAC did the same small group exercise that the SC would be doing at this meeting, with great success. Staff is working to illustrate each group's map of districts, corridors, happenings, and landmarks in digital form so that all of the input can be overlapped to reveal patterns, commonalities, and gaps. The group mapping exercises will help staff to identify priorities with regard to significant places and corridors. This information will be presented to committee members at an upcoming meeting.

CPED staff has been working with City Communications staff to come up with a shared name for this joint initiative (something more meaningful than “DPRF/DSASMP”) that will highlight the initiatives goals around placemaking and partnership. The new name will be announced shortly. Kjersti said the remaining agenda items to be presented are intended to inform and prepare SC members and guests for the placemaking/mapping exercise which will take up the bulk of the meeting time.

4. Small Group Exercise Preparation

- **Park Assessment.** Lydia Major, Landscape Architect, LHB, gave a brief update on the parks assessment. The MPRB has engaged a consultant to look at all elements in all of the parks that are being incorporated in the Downtown Service Area Master Plan and the South Service Area Master Plan. They have gathered information on the following items in the interest of better understanding their assets and current state of those assets [[PPT Page 5](#)]:
 - Athletic fields and courts (baseball, basketball, handball, horseshoe, shuffleboard, soccer, tennis, volleyball)
 - Furniture (benches, bike racks, charcoal grills, game tables, trash bins, drinking fountains, picnic tables)
 - Signage and lighting
 - Playgrounds and workout equipment
 - Building structures
 - Dog parks
 - Skate-parks

MPRB will be working with its maintenance staff to review and assess the condition of these items, and will conduct an analysis of the existing condition of parks.

Lydia was asked by a Steering Committee member if public art and monuments would be identified. She replied that the MPRB’s work will include public art and monuments that are in the parks. Previous to this beginning of this process the City did similar work, and looked at public art in the public realm across the entirety of Downtown. All of the data collected by MPRB and the City will be used together to get a comprehensive look at these things.

- **Physical Framework Analysis and Enhancement Matrix.** Lacy reviewed the physical inventory of streetscape elements that was undertaken by the City, resulting in the collection of over 2800 data points and providing baseline information about some of the features and street elements Downtown in the following categories [[PPT Pages 6-11](#)]:
 - Art: including bike racks, cultural/historical, murals, performance space, statue/sculpture, surface art, including art that could be on private property but experienced as one is standing in the public right-of-way
 - Bike racks, identified by type: lollipop, ladder, u-rack, wave
 - Street furniture: seating, newspaper stands, garbage/recycling bins, flagpoles
 - Seating types: with backs and backless, US Bench Corp; distribution of seating
 - Vegetation: does not represent street trees but does include elective vegetation, i.e. hanging baskets, decorative landscaping, freestanding planters, green infrastructure/functional landscaping, raised/attached planters; diversity of landscaping treatments
 - Wayfinding: different types of systems, i.e. banners, directional signage, kiosks, maps, audio

Lacy then presented the city standard streetscape elements, and described the difference between what is already in the city's toolkit in a standard street reconstruction as compared to some of the features that could be added to enhance the public realm [[PPT Pages 12-14](#)]:

- Lighting: could be more artistic and contemporary
 - Wayfinding/signage: custom, lighted
 - Seating: flexible, custom/modern styles
 - Bike racks: custom bike racks/storage
 - Surfaces: materials and custom patterns
 - Green infrastructure: curb cut inlets, rain gardens, vegetated infiltration systems
 - Street trees/plantings: native plantings, infiltration basins/gardens
 - Trash/recycling: “smart” bins with more options for composting
 - Public art: interactive, multi-sensory
- **Downtown Minneapolis Corridors, Destinations, & Placemaking.** Kjersti explained that questions about how to deliver these enhancements will be deferred for now; the focus of today's exercise will be on building a shared vision for qualitative outcomes and placemaking. The purpose of the exercise is to identify what makes places meaningful to people, i.e.: available mobility and access, clear wayfinding, destination shops and commerce, social gathering opportunities, events and programming, play and recreation, urban agriculture, and green infrastructure, and other features that provide image and identity to a city and places within the city. [[PPT Page 15](#)]

Placemaking includes consideration of many factors, and how all of those things are mutually enhancing one another to make a legible place that people value. Although the focus of this plan is on the public realm, placemaking is really about how public realm elements enhance other urban characteristics like global competitiveness, public health, livability and so on. In the best case scenario, placemaking contributes to all of those things and those things contribute to placemaking. [[PPT Page 16](#)]

“Paths and places” is a landscape architect's phrase that is used to describe meaningful destinations and qualitative corridors in a city. This group will discuss meaningful corridors: what features and places give our corridors definition, and what activities will therefore take place there. Kjersti showed several slides depicting current paths and places. Fifth Street is a corridor for LRT and large gathering venues where people congregate: Target Field, Target Center, Government Center Plaza, The Commons, and Multi-purpose Stadium. The waterfront contains a number of destinations; knowing what is there and getting there should be a primary goal. Nicollet Mall will be re-energized with plans developed by James Corner Field Operations; this discussion should include expansion of Nicollet from Downtown across the river to Nicollet Island and St. Anthony Main. [[PPT Pages 17-20](#)]

Examples of existing or proposed “paths and places” with meaningful features include the Zombie Pub Crawl area in the Warehouse District, Loring Greenway, Nicollet Mall, LRT station, St. Anthony Falls. [[PPT Page 21](#)]

Four core, fundamental elements will be used in the mapping exercise. Each small group will create a trace map showing the following, adding more categories and symbols as needed [[PPT Pages 22-23](#)]:

- Corridors: event/activity, arts and cultural, point of arrival
- Districts: venue, shopping/dining, character, amenity
- Happenings (events): farmers markets, civic gathering, street or district, big venue
- Parks and landmarks: important buildings, parks, iconic features, views

Jennifer added that in addition to identifying features, another trace map should be created with the following information about parks within the Downtown area:

- Define existing park character: indicate the dominant character or use of the existing parks
- Identify corridor gaps: articulate the key corridor gaps within and to Downtown; this includes trails, paths, greenways, sidewalks, bridges, etc., and they can be connectors to or through parks or key public spaces in and of themselves
- Identify park search areas: indicate search areas for future parks, including location and types of activity

5. Small Group Workshop: Mapping Downtown

- **Mapping Methods:** Using a large map with trace overlay, each small group created two maps. Each group designated someone to report back to the others at the end of the allotted time period.
- **Small Group Work** [facilitated by staff and consultants]
- **Group Map Presentations and Discussion**

Members of the public were invited to join SC members at one of three tables. Staff members were available to facilitate each group.

Group 1: Nick Cichowicz, Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association; Jay Cowles, MPRB Commissioner Olson; Steve Cramer, Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District; Joanne Kaufman, Warehouse District Business Association; Sally Westby; Minneapolis CM Goodman

Streets Layer: Identified corridors, gaps, events, districts

- North Loop/Washington Avenue: restaurant and boutique shopping district
- Events: First Avenue/North Loop for potential events, Boom Island, Nicollet Island; bridge wasn't on the map
- Gaps: missing corridors out of North Loop, connecting to First Avenue nightclubs, Target Field, Target Center, "Target Town, Farmers Market"
- Hennepin Avenue: Aquatennial activities and events; heart of entertainment/theater district
- South: Sculpture Garden, Loring Park – active events; need more connections; establish corridor to lead out and connect with Grand Rounds
- Landmarks: Loring Park, Sculpture Gardens, Peavey Plaza, Vikings Stadium
- Events/Happenings: Nicollet Mall Farmers Market, Stone Arch Bridge
- Convention Center: events, i.e. Northern Spark
- Fifth Street event corridor makes sense
- Arts and Culture District: Guthrie, Mill City Museum, MacPhail, The Commons
- Connect Vikings Stadium to the River

Parks Layer:

- Stone Arch Bridge/Waterworks: crossroads for city, connection to University, Farmers Market gathering space
- Active use of River Road
- Elliot Park is isolated; how connect?
- Freeway overpass: need stronger connection between Seven Corners and East Downtown
- East Bank connection to Third Avenue
- Need throughout Downtown for better signage, storytelling, history markers, information kiosks, more than just wayfinding
- Gateway District/Hennepin: should connect to River
- New Parks: North Loop
- Civic plaza in entertainment district: surface parking lot behind Cowles Center?
- Loring Greenway (great people-watching), Loring Park, Nicollet Mall, Convention Center – connect better down Hennepin Avenue

Group 2: Deepak Advani, MPRB Commissioner Wielinski; Adam Arvidson, MPRB; Meg Forney, MPRB; David Hile, Friends for Loring Park; Richard Mammen, Minneapolis School Board of Education; Jana Metge, Citizens for a Loring Park Community; Nancy Nasi, Elliot Park Neighborhood; Carletta Sweet, East Downtown Council; Ted Tucker, MPRB Commissioner Forney

Streets Layer:

- Districts: North Loop; East Hennepin; Mill City and entire riverfront corridor; Elliot Park; Ninth Street – historic district; Convention Center – designated activity district, tourists, needs attention; Loring Park district – events
- Connections: missing multiple connections to river
- Landmarks: St. Anthony Falls, Stone Arch Bridge
- Events: Nicollet Island, Boom Island, Target Field, Vikings Stadium, Loring Park

Parks Layer:

- Attributes of specific parks:
 - Walker: destination, landmark, programming, MPRB ownership
 - Loring: historic, high-maintenance, beautiful, under-programmed, inviting, natural environment, family-friendly
 - Stevens: programming/events, dogs, meeting place, neighborhood, a little scary
 - Franklin: a little scary, drunks, new equipment, small
 - Elliot: historic, run-down/dusty, new soccer, well-used, diverse, neighborhood, public/private partnership, hidden jewel
 - Currie: different world across highway, Somali, community, Hennepin County investments
 - Gateway: Disconnected, non-gateway
- Barriers: freeways, river, Post Office parking ramp
- Links: Gateway is not currently, from river to Nicollet
- North Loop needs more connections
- New trail from East Hennepin to Downtown
- Parks should be integrated in the public realm; every street should do the job of a park

Group 3: Neil Reardon, Citizens for Loring Park Community; Philip Schwartz, MPRB Commissioner Young; Jo Vos, North Loop Neighborhood Association; Craig Wilson, MPRB Commissioner Tabb; David Wilson, Minneapolis Downtown Council

Street Layer:

- Connections: Downtown core to surrounding neighborhoods
- Barriers: river, freeway trenches
- Places: North Minneapolis, Lakes District – Cedar Lake Trail, Walker/Sculpture Garden, MIA, Hennepin/Lyndale, Uptown, Main Street, Boom Island, University, new Stadium district – how connect into other parts of Downtown, Cedar Riverside

Parks Layer:

- Gaps: North Loop needs a park; Farmers Market at Royalston area – public realm, more welcoming; Gateway at Hennepin is not currently a gateway
- Natural Corridors: Cedar Lake Trail, Northeast rail corridor, river extending to RiverFirst and down into the University
- Land bridges/potential parks: connecting Cedar Riverside/Washington/Seven Corners; Elliot Park to South Minneapolis; Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Trench – Farmers Market
- Skate Parks: overpasses/parking lots could be vibrant skateboard parks

Kjersti closed the small group exercise by saying that all of the information gathered here and at the TAC meeting will be pulled into a larger report and shared at a future meeting.

6. Public Comment

There were no public comments from the guests present at the meeting.

7. Adjourn

After a review of the upcoming meeting schedule, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

This constitutes my understanding of items discussed and decisions reached.

If there are any omissions or discrepancies, please notify the author in writing.

Submitted by:

Marsha Wagner, CastleVisions

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