

STEERING COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 19, 2015

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

MPRB Headquarters

Meeting Notes

Committee members present: Deepak Advani, Jay Cowles, Steve Cramer, Joanne Kaufman, Jamie Schumacher, Philip Schwartz, Carletta Sweet, Dave Tinjum, Ted Tucker, Jo Vos, Craig Wilson, David Wilson

Committee members excused: Nick Cichowicz, Richard Mammen, Nancy Nasi, Neil Reardon, Paul Reyelts, Sally Westby

[Please see [website](#) for Steering Committee Member affiliations]

Guests: Bruce Chamberlain, Paul Forsline, Michael McLaughlin

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

1. Welcome/Introductions of new participants

The third 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). After quickly reviewing the agenda, she welcomed the people in attendance and invited first-time SC members to introduce themselves. Jamie Schumacher, West Bank Business Association and appointee of Minneapolis City Council Member Abdi Warsame, was the only new SC member present. Jennifer then asked the project team (Park Board, City staff and consultants from LHB) to introduce themselves.

2. Project Identity

Jennifer introduced the proposed new name that has been developed for this initiative which will replace “DPRF/DSAMP.” It is “Pathways to Places – Shaping Downtown Together.” She showed several graphic depictions [[PPT Page 3](#)], adding that the new name/logo addresses this group’s focus on identifying and linking places within downtown, and creating places within pathways, both park spaces and those within the public realm. In response to a request for initial feedback, two SC members said they preferred the wordmark on the upper right because it shows both path and place, and they liked the inclusion of the Stone Arch Bridge which links the Park Board and City. A short survey will be sent out so SC members can vote on their favorite version of the wordmark.

3. Report on Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

Jennifer reported that at the last TAC and SC meetings work was done to find the gaps for parks and corridors. TAC meetings continue to be strong, and the last one contained an interesting discussion about activities that could be included in parks. The project team is interested in seeing how activities proposed by the SC might be different.

4. Report on Community Engagement Process

Jennifer referenced several documents that were on each table. The Downtown Service Area Master Plan | Downtown Public Realm Framework contains draft text of the engagement plan. Both TAC and SC members were asked to identify key stakeholders within the downtown area who should be

contacted about this project. That information was presented to the consultant team, MIG, which used it to define three broad categories of audience [[PPT Page 6](#)]:

- Dwellers/neighbors – work, go to school, or live in or near downtown; people who spend a good portion of their day downtown
- Investors – have a stake in downtown through business or property ownership, or investment in human or social capital; might not ever be in the downtown area but are deeply committed to it
- Visitors – frequent and infrequent visitors, and those who recognize its importance to the region; either driving or flying in, here on a temporary basis

Jennifer continued by indicating the engagement tools and methods that will be used. The list includes things that the project team already has access to and others that they are anticipating will be created to access these groups [[PPT Page 7](#)]:

- Steering committee
- Contact list
- Project comment email
- Public information updates
- Social media campaign
- Blog
- Websites
- Online questionnaires/Mapita
- Stakeholder interviews
- Focus groups
- Intercepts/popup meetings
- Workshop kit
- Speakers bureau
- Charrettes/workshops

The second handout will help the project team track their progress and efforts in reaching out to the target groups. It is a graphic depiction (“dashboard”) of target agencies and organizations divided into eight groups: government entities, recreation groups, visitors/tourism, under-represented populations, interest groups, downtown residents, downtown workers, and business interests, and includes descriptions and qualifiers. At the bottom of the handout a graph shows a way of tracking target populations by gender, race and age.

The third handout is a graphic depiction of the schedule/timeline of these projects, containing engagement activities and deliverables.

In response to a question about whether or not the entities (stakeholders) have already been set, Jennifer replied that the community engagement plan proposes several initial groups (“dashboard”) but it is still in process and we will share the SC group once finalized. The question specifically concerned Hennepin County because of their extensive work with the issue of homelessness downtown. Lydia Major, Landscape Architect, LHB, added that this is good feedback and exactly what the project team is looking for from the SC members.

Lydia said that SC members will be asked to complete a short online survey that contains the following five key questions [[PPT Page 9](#)]:

- Do the tools described seem like a reasonable range of methods for engaging the community?
- Do you have specific additions or changes to the existing organizations list?
- Are the targets described on the dashboard generally reasonable?
- Are you willing to help with any specific community engagement outreach methods?
- Do you have any other comments?

The project team is already implementing some of the community engagement plan (CEP). Focus groups and stakeholder meetings will begin the week of April 6. MIG, the consultant from Oregon, will be in town for a packed week of events.

Several SC members had questions about the specific information contained on the dashboard. In response to a question about the target population bars at the bottom, whether they represent target population goals or actual, Lydia responded that they represent actual goals. They will get to 100 percent eventually, and imbalances will be evident and can be addressed. Jennifer said that the target populations were determined using census data of downtown residents, so it will be more resident-based than visitor or worker. Lydia added that the target population bars do not represent numerical goals in the same way as filling in the circles.

On the right-hand side of the dashboard, Descriptions and Qualifiers, the goals set for minimum target contact represent true goals. Jennifer asked the SC members for feedback as to whether the goals are too low or too high. She added that those categories will match up with the engagement target column in the CEP document.

Another question dealt with the data in the circles representing target agencies and organizations. Descriptions and qualifiers of these groups are shown on the right-hand side of the page. Sarah Weeks, LHB, added that the data in the circles and elsewhere on the dashboard is not actual but is there as an example demonstrating what it could potentially look like once the engagement process is complete. As actual data is added it will allow them to ensure that target groups are not being left out of the process.

Regarding use of Facebook, Jennifer said that the Park Board and City have Facebook pages that link to this project, but neither entity has capacity to do Facebook pages by project.

Jennifer noted that MPRB has not used a tracking method like this to reach different constituencies in the past. This is an opportunity to be as inclusive in capturing input but also make sure that specific interest or target groups are not being left out.

SC members were invited to read these documents on their own and offer any feedback they have. The project team wants to know if they are on target, or if there are any areas that they need to look into a little deeper.

In the meantime, the project team is moving ahead with some of the stakeholder pieces, scheduling focus groups, identifying events, and amassing materials that will be needed to solicit feedback. Jennifer said that if any SC members are going to a board or community meeting, they will be able to use the following tools or bring someone from the project team along [[PPT Page 8](#)]:

- Targeted engagement (workshop kits)
- Project updates and talking points
- Ground “truthing” and feedback
- Deliverable-driven working groups

5. Small Group Exercise

Lacy Shelby, Principal Urban Designer, Minneapolis CPED, reviewed the feedback generated from the small group mapping exercises at SC Meeting #2. All of the layers of trace were collected and compiled in an Illustrator file, layering in the data provided from the different groups. SC members were asked to look at parks and also the public realm. Following are some of the main themes that came out of the groups:

- Residents Group [[PPT Page 11](#)]
 - Parks:
 - Improve connectivity to parks and river
 - A single park, constellation of parks or linear park?

- Differentiate use of parks vs. plazas
- Accommodate a range of users
- Public Realm:
 - Address ground level retail gaps in Mill District
 - Explore and plan for a Loring Park to river connection
 - Identify “recreational” routes through downtown
- Visitors Group [[PPT Page 12](#)]
 - Parks:
 - Destinations for kids
 - Neighborhood scale parks
 - Wayfinding improvements to parks
 - Public Realm:
 - Differentiate between the day trip/drive-in vs. fly-in visitor experience
 - Plan for nightlife
 - Emphasize LRT connections (especially to Airport, University, St. Paul)
- Workers Group [[PPT Page 13](#)]
 - Parks:
 - Events catered to worker constituency
 - Improve connectivity to river
 - Untraditional parks
 - Public Realm:
 - Clarify shopping, health club, happy hour type destinations
 - Improve east/west corridor legibility
 - Enhance perception and access to river core

These maps will be uploaded to the website so SC members can reference and look at them more closely. This information will be used to inform the next steps and identify priorities. It was interesting to observe how the SC sees the city versus how the TAC sees it. There were some differences, so it was great to get this wide range of viewpoints.

6. Implementation Tools

Lacy introduced and briefly went through several slides [[PPT Pages 14-31](#)] reinforcing the narrative on the value of investing in the public realm. The slides document the following:

- Net domestic migration; people are moving for economic reasons from first tier cities (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles) to second tier cities (Houston, Austin, Portland, Minneapolis, etc). This is happening for several reasons, one of the major ones being quality of life. People can have similar amenities and opportunities in second tier cities while maintaining a much higher quality of life.
- People are most mobile in their twenties and thirties, and these years are critical as the competitive-set cities position themselves to attract residents. As cities consider their success in attracting this demographic, they recognize that they have different tastes and interests than the generations who have come before them. They like to live in urban environments, and businesses—particularly startups—who want to hire them are moving into the urban core.
- In nineteen of the twenty-five largest metropolitan areas, 25-to-34-year-olds with a college degree account for the majority of the net population increase.
- Minneapolis offers many of the particular features and quality-of-life interests sought by this demographic, i.e. events like the zombie pub crawl and festivals, craft beer culture, and a creative economy. Minneapolis’ creative value index outpaces the national average by almost five times. We have the number one park system, representing an incredible capacity for bikeability, walkability, natural beauty and recreation.

- Minneapolis is diverse and progressive. A recently-released report by the Brookings Institute speaks to the growing demographic renaissance.
- Minneapolis residents are healthy and fit, notwithstanding their fondness for craft beer.
- We have huge strength in the backbone of our regional economy with many Fortune 500 companies. They are here because Minneapolis offers a great deal of amenity and quality-of-life features. Minneapolis has surpassed Detroit, becoming the second-largest economy in the Midwest behind Chicago. We have the 13th largest GDP in the country. We have the lowest unemployment among large metropolitan areas in the country. In terms of large metropolitan areas, Minneapolis has the fifth highest median household income, but accounting for cost of living we're number one because every city ahead of us on the list has a much higher cost-of-living ranking.

In spite of all of the cultural and physical assets we have, and our superior income to cost of living ratio, Minneapolis is performing below average in attracting this key demographic and could be doing better. Placemaking and public realm is important; we need to create legible places and have purposeful access to places and experiences. Competing better is about self-awareness as a city, and how we want people to experience our public spaces.

One of the SC members commented that this all looks so very positive, but while lauding the diversity of our population nothing was mentioned about the increase in disparities; not all of this is positive for everyone. Lacy agreed, citing the [Brookings Institute Report](#) that spoke highly of our diversity but also mentioned that there were huge disparities in the workforce. We need to look at a more equitable distribution of the assets.

Bringing this back around to placemaking, these second tier cities have established some standards and procedures for how the public realm is managed. Looking at how investment happens in the public realm, we have several implementation options available. [Implementation Toolkit, [PPT Page 32](#)] Some of these—e.g., special service districts, tax incrementing financing, encroachment permit, parkland dedication, and grants [[PPT Page 33](#)]
—we already have in Minneapolis, but we are limited. SC members are encouraged to consider other models in other cities that we can adopt in our plan to leverage investment in the public realm. Several examples were given [[PPT Pages 34-37](#)]:

- Revenue programs/Event Revenue: Bryant Park in New York has a huge operating budget that allows the park to fund and operate
- Developer Contributions: Chicago has an open space impact fee that is charged to developers, New York has privately-owned public space programs that allows investing in the public realm that serves the public good
- Increment or penny tax: Atlanta has a tax allocation district, Chicago has tax increment financing; adding a percent of a penny onto certain purchases that goes back into the public realm
- Credit/abatement programs: i.e. Atlanta's urban enterprise zone

One SC member asked about the [Parkland Dedication Fee](#). Lacy responded that it is a new tool but it wasn't included on the list because it's for parks only, not for the public right-of-way or public realm. Another SC member refuted that, saying that with approval from the City and MPRB a developer can apply funds toward green space development. Lacy said she would follow-up and that this fee will be added to the existing toolkit. It was also suggested that a soccer stadium be included on the map at some point.

7. Existing Parks and Services

Tyler Pederson, Design Project Planner for the MPRB, presented on our existing parks and services. [[PPT Page 39](#)] MPRB has 12 active gardens, 60 wading pools, and 215 playground structures. There

are 51 miles of contiguous bike trails encircling the city (Grand Rounds), with many other segments interconnecting with them. There are two million visits a year to the downtown riverfront. We have the number one park system in the nation (2013 and 2014). There are 48 recreation centers, doing things like RecPlus (daycare), Nite Owlz (to keep kids off the streets, open until 11:00 or 12:00 at night), sports leagues, and pop-up parks. Last year the recreation centers provided 135,000 meals to kids under the age of 18. Recreation centers are key to neighborhood parks in bringing people together. MPRB foresters care for 600,000 trees, on boulevards and in the parks. They mow 4,660 acres of land using 75 riding mowers and 85 push mowers; a lot of infrastructure goes into maintaining the parks.

A question was posed about who provided the meals, the park board or other agencies utilizing the recreation centers. Tyler answered that MPRB partnered with the public schools, but was not sure who provided funding. Jennifer explained that MPRB has gone from being just parks and recreation to increasingly providing social services as well.

8. Urban Park Trends and Programs

Lydia said that while we have been focusing on all the things Minneapolis and the MPRB have to be proud of, we want to look outside of what we are doing to what other cities are doing. Focusing on the areas where we might shape new parks and corridors, Lydia referenced the map that will be used in the small group exercise [[PPT Page 40](#)]. Several park need areas have been identified, along with possibilities for land bridges, greenways and corridors.

Looking at other parks around the country, in both first and second tier cities, some urban park trends have been identified with examples given for each [[PPT Pages 41-48](#)]:

- Sustainability: community, ecology, water, energy, materials, site selection, waste; storm water and habitat are becoming an integral part of the design as an asset, aesthetic or recreational aspect
- Management: park conservancies as management entities, public/private collaboration that are philanthropic in nature (fundraising, grants for long-term maintenance).

A question was asked about Bryant Park, whether it was nonprofit or for-profit. Lydia answered that it generates revenue which is returned back to the park system. Another SC member said Bryant Park is part of a special assessment district, and Lydia agreed, but added that it rides the line of real estate and businesses forming the foundation for these parks. She said Bryant Park is a hybrid, and offered to do more research and report back to the SC.

- Management: transition parking lots to parks, or creation of parks on top of structured parking
- Funding: real estate development model, where parks are required to be self-sustaining through development or revenue-generation
- Temporary and found spaces: pop-up spaces, pavement to parks/parklets; Minneapolis has a parklet program in place which has garnered revenues of \$250,000 for the first year
- Public gardens and art: edible landscapes, horticultural gardens and art installations integrated into parks
- Programming partnerships: arts, fitness, and education partners deliver programming
- Additional examples were given, including job training, volunteering, educational opportunities, mobile recreation, and others

9. Small Group Workshop: Park Possibilities

Jennifer introduced the small group exercise, explaining that what we will be designing are features that will attract people to this area. The map contains seven search areas that have been identified by letter, A through G, plus two additional categories: existing parks and non-MPRB owned spaces.

[[PPT Page 49](#)] SC members were invited to spend some time brainstorming about the different user

groups, coming up with as many ideas as possible and writing them on Post-it notes, using the following questions as guidelines:

- Imagine the downtown parks or public space 20 years from now. Who is using them? What are they doing?
- What types of new activities would bring different people to the downtown parks and public spaces?
- If you were creating the perfect space just for downtown workers, what would it look like/include? Where would it be? What about downtown residents? Visitors?

Once that has been done, the groups will determine where those features might best be placed within the downtown area. The Post-it notes were to be placed in the corresponding box(es) on the side of the map.

[LHB compiled the results of the small group exercise in a document which is appended to these meeting notes. Please see Appendix A for small group members and findings categorized by area.]

Jennifer concluded the small group exercise by thanking the SC members, adding that this work will be the perfect beginning to some of the design work that will be done in April. MIG will be in town April 6-8 to facilitate work around stakeholders and focus groups, and work will begin to put some of these ideas into actual spaces to see how they might work or look in different configurations.

10. Public Comment

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

11. Upcoming Activities/Adjourn

Jennifer mentioned several upcoming events or activities that might be of interest to SC members:

- Community Engagement Online Survey. The link will be emailed to SC members.
- East Commons Survey. The link will be emailed to SC members.
- Placemaking Workshop at the Convention Center on Saturday, March 21.
- City Parks Alliance conference in San Francisco on April 10-15. The City Parks Alliance conference will be held in Minneapolis-St. Paul in 2017. FFI <http://www.cityparksalliance.org/>.
- Upcoming TAC meetings: April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 8, October 6
- Upcoming SC meetings: May 21, July 16

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 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:

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