

City of Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee Field Walk

Summary Notes

Wednesday, October 6, 2010

3:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Location

Warehouse District Heritage Streets

Participants

James Andrew, PAC member

Neal Baxter, PAC member

Beth Elliott, Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Dept.

Anna Flintoft, Minneapolis Public Works Dept.

Anna Gillette, PAC member (and son Charles in stroller)

Matti Gurney, PAC member (and daughter Tessa in stroller)

Martha Hage, PAC member

Elizabeth Haugen, PAC member

Tony Hull, PAC member

Dan Herber, PAC member

Lonnie Nichols, Park Board

Karen Nikolai, Hennepin County

Liliana Rivera, Bike/Walk Ambassadors

Karen Rosar, North Loop resident

Brian Schaffer, Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Dept.

John Slack, North Loop resident

Sarah Stewart, Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support

Kelly Wilder, PAC member

Observations

(Participants rated the following factors on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is a poor pedestrian condition and 5 is a good pedestrian condition. The overall rating was an average of 2.)

- PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES (Average rating: 3)
 - E-W streets (3rd St N, Washington Avenue N) have continuous sidewalks, but N-S streets (5th Avenue N, 6th Avenue N, 7th Avenue N) have major gaps in sidewalk continuity due to loading docks and truck doors. Varies widely block to block. 6th Avenue N has virtually no sidewalks.
 - The loading dock at SE corner of 6th/3rd was shaved to provide a sidewalk; however, Brian Schaffer observed that this is not desirable from a preservation standpoint (see photo).
 - The loading dock at Washington/7th Avenue N does a better job of maintaining the historic integrity of the loading dock, while also providing for accessibility, via a combination stair/ramp (see photo). However, this location should have had a ramp at the other side of the loading dock, as well. The railings also match the historic character of the building.

- The loading docks/ramps need to have a continuous railing from floor level to hand railing level to prevent children from falling under the hand railing; this is a problem on many existing loading dock railings.
- Having to zig-zag from one side of the street to another is very inconvenient for pedestrians. It would be better to have a continuous path of travel on at least one side of the street for several blocks than what is existing.
- Some sidewalk gaps (where there are no loading docks) exist and need to be filled in (end of 3rd St N 10th Avenue N).
- Super blocks made convenient walk access an issue.
- There is a dirt path west of the intersection of 3rd Avenue N and Traffic St connecting the I-394 on-ramp and the alley between Washington and 3rd St N.
- PEDESTRIAN CONFLICTS (Average rating: 2)
 - Lack of sidewalks presents high conflict potential between pedestrians and vehicles.
 - Observed buses honking at pedestrians.
 - Observed semi-trucks blocking entire street to back into building.
 - 6th and 7th Avenues are probably the worst streets for ped/bike and vehicular conflicts because of the numerous loading docks and use by trucks and buses.
 - The brick streets not only add to the historic character, but also help to manage traffic speeds.
- CROSSWALKS (Average rating: 2)
 - There are no marked crosswalks in this area.
 - Pedestrians generally cross where they feel most comfortable, which may not necessarily be at intersections, particularly where there are loading docks interrupting the continuous sidewalks network.
 - Pedestrians shouldn't have to push the button to get a "walk" when the light turns green anyway.
- MAINTENANCE (Average rating: 2)
 - Neither sidewalks nor the street are being maintained.
 - The sidewalks are severely cracked in many locations.
- PATH SIZE (Average rating: 3)
 - Where there is a continuous sidewalk, the width is fairly comfortable (at least 6 feet wide in most places).
 - Areas adjacent to 8th and the end of 3rd St have narrower walks.
- BUFFER (Average rating: 2)
 - Good buffer with trees along Washington Avenue.
 - No buffer on streets with a lack of continuous sidewalks.
- UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY (Average rating: 2)
 - Loading docks impede accessibility. On existing loading docks, the stairs, steep ramps, or lack of ramps/stairs impede accessibility.
 - Cannot always tell visually whether the end of a loading dock has an accessible ramp or not.

- There are curb ramps in one direction in many locations. This, in combination with other accessibility issues, such as vertical obstructions, cracked sidewalks and steep slopes, create difficult crossing issues.
- Sidewalks are cracked and heaving, impeding accessibility.
- There are a growing number of children in the North Loop neighborhood, and safe and convenient access for strollers is a big issue.
- There is a large pole in middle of ramp at 3rd St and 5th Avenue.
- AESTHETICS (Average rating: 3)
 - The historic character of the warehouse district creates an interesting pedestrian environment, and it should be preserved. The brick and wooden pavers, in particular, are cool.
 - This is a very urban environment that is active with businesses and residents. This makes it an appealing place to be a pedestrian. People especially like the areas with outdoor seating.
 - The surface parking lots, noise, and lack of trees creates an unappealing pedestrian environment and negatively impacts the livability of the area.
 - There is a particularly uninviting environment on 5th Avenue under the 3rd/4th viaducts.
- SHADE (Average rating: 2)
 - There are very few trees in this area. Buildings provide the only shade.
 - There are definitely opportunities for more trees. Trees contribute to shade, stormwater management and aesthetics.
 - Trees are particularly needed along 5th Ave N, as this is a major feeder to LRT/Northstar and ballpark, and there is no shade provided by either buildings or trees.

Selected Photos



Washington Avenue @ 7th Avenue N



3rd Street N @ 6th Avenue N