

LEARNING TABLE #3: SPEEDWAY GAS STATION

Minneapolis Public Works plans to reconstruct the intersection of 38th & Chicago (George Floyd Square) and will begin this effort by engaging with the community. Engagement throughout the project is intended to help redesign the area in a way that reflects community needs.

Learning Table #3: Speedway Gas Station



Learning Table: Speedway
Gas Station
October 24, 2022



Upcoming Learning Table: Metro Transit
November 28, 2022; 6pm; Sabathani Community Center

NEOO Partners and Public Policy Project hosted the 3rd of a series of monthly Learning Tables for the 38th & Chicago, Re-Envisioned project. Created by Public Policy Project, The Learning Table provides the “learning water”; a place to ask critical questions and develop the “learning glue”; a place to develop relationships, create partnership, share ideas, and make commitments, to explore for incorporation in the 38th & Chicago Re-Envisioned Project. At the Learning Table, we Learn Together; Create a Shared Approach; Coordinate Efforts; and Ensure Community Benefit.

The third learning table topic focused on the proposed acquisition of the former Speedway gas station land which is also known as the People's Way. Andrea Brennan and Erik Hansen from the City of Minneapolis department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) gave a presentation of the proposed acquisition. Following the presentation attendees were given question prompts to explore at their tables in small groups. The notes below provide the raw transcription of the public response to the prompts.

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What We Heard

The 75 attendees of the third Learning Table were presented with questions to discuss and answer in small groups.

QUESTION 1: Are the draft Community Site Acquisition Shared Goals on the right track?

*The City, with guidance from Mayor Frey and Council President Jenkins, have a draft set of shared goals for the Community Site, including:

1. Creating space for racial healing and justice in the short term and preserving this site opportunity for a national racial justice healing center in the long term
 2. Supporting efforts led by the Floyd family to create a permanent memorial for George Floyd
 3. Making new investments to support area residents and businesses
 4. Improving public safety
 5. Preserving community gathering space
 6. Preserving the legacy of a deeply rooted African American community, in accordance with the 38th Street THRIVE Strategic Development Plan
- Appears to be on track
 - Not on track doesn't address food dessert and need for gas station
 - Need to improve lighting
 - Need to improve wifi
 - Pedestrian safety
 - Rerouting of buses has caused 41st-35th left out of transit improvements.
 - Affordable housing
 - Not one mention of police
 - Nice words; no evidence of it happening
 - Better if: community purchased site directly, without city intervention (Community Ownership)
 - How can the City own and be responsible for a site which exists as a monument to the continued failures of the City? Which exists explicitly in spite of the City?
 - If you can't define what you mean by community in your plans you need to halt and do that. So many of your plans hinge on community, which means that it is your major mechanism of accountability.
 - Add- invest in the people who live here now. Not the people you want to live here in the future.
 - If you can't define what you mean by community in your plans you need to halt and do that. So many of your plans hinge on community, which means that it is your major mechanism of accountability.
 - Add- invest in the people who live here now. Not the people you want to live here in the future.
 - The current site hosts community meetings, Brass Solidarity Band performances, open meals, pilgrimage tours for visitors, organic street art, growing space for the gardens, free library, free clothing donaters, food donations, resting area, public toilets, many things not offered in other parts of the city, memorials too many stolen lives.



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QUESTION 1 : Continued

- The memorial is not static. It is growing and cannot be seen in time. This is one of the only public spaces in Minneapolis where people, “loitering” is a racist concept.
- For City ownership to be successful beneficiaries- clarity- ie. which programs can receive money. Revenue to support new and existing businesses.
- Weary of how public safety is going to be enforced.
- Resource center
- Clean up (start over)
- Museum of south Minneapolis- redline history, the corridor, 35w highway. Like the civil rights museum in Memphis, TN
- How can the Speedway be a community owned building
- Who sold and bought the Speedway
- A talk to George Floyd family what do they want. Commissioned artwork
- Statute of George Floyd
- Clean up the corner of the four on Chicago
- Get rid of Cup foods
- Businesses that were in Sabathani that want to be in Chicago know.
- Improve public safety
- Community owned art space
- How can the community purchase the property after the city has cleaned the oil tanks for the property
- All stolen lives
- Transparency and access by the
- Space for all the statues
- Financial and environmental land study
- Legal aspects to make sure the City is not a longtime owner
- Community to have ownership/have the land trust
- Event space for racial healing/address trauma
- Apology from the Mayor of Minneapolis
- Goals for the site- art should be preserved, art is protest and community-made, maintaining and increasing green space, People’s way should be by and for the people, not the City. There could be use on the site for easement for the metro transit buses if needed, less parking.
- Goals for the space- real public/affordable housing, Multi-generational housing, Arts and cultural places preserve the public use of the space, serving local reparative efforts and global education, acknowledging the harm and the visioning for the future, centered on black liberation and justice. Community benefits agreement, ensure the goals are supportive in some sort of agreement, incorporate the 24 demands expanded, w/ more community input, mechanism to hold city and/or developer accountable.
- Question bike rack- plan for worldwide outreach for christ church site? Use some more inclusive facilitation tools for the conversations
- Ensure community access from day while long term plans are made
- Where is City accountability to stick to these goals?
- Transparency and accountability.
- Goal 1
- preserving the site is good in theory, but it is jumping too far ahead to decide what it should be. Does the community want a center for racial healing? So many possibilities for what the site can be.
- Anything about healing/justice is premature while police are still killing people with impunity . City can’t mandate healing, economic justice is not addressed, not just about george floyd but about other stolen lives.
- Use of the event space
- How will it relate to the rest of the square?
- Goal 2- yes. Family should lead, could also include families of others killed by police.
- Should specify GFGM- if not it is not on track. The City killed George Floyd.
- We do not believe the family should be the only voice heard for permanent memorial (Cup Foods should be moved permanently.)

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Question 1: Continued

- Goal 3- this is vague- what does investment mean? Investment yes- but what kind? Are there strings attached? Should focus on health, mental health, and creating equity.
- Make sure any contractors or those engaged are from south Minneapolis.
- A new resource center as a black museum music studio, art school
- Goal 4- yes, but that is very vague. "Public safety" could mean pedestrian safety . for some it could mean 0 police.
- Get at root cause- no more police
- Integrative health
- Youth opportunities
- Safety for who?
- Safety needs to include people with disabilities, people with addiction, house-less people, poor people, 24 hour service such as accessible restrooms.
- Ongoing conversations on police reform
- Not "improve" public safety but ensuring police are disciplined and fired as needed
- Goal 5- yes, that is important. Community should retain control. It can be a multi-use space. How much of it is community space vs city controlled.
- Again, still a black neighborhood, anti-gentrification
- Serve the neighborhood- the neighborhood needs transit(accessibility, rider diversity)
- Environmental impacts of removing tanks
- Phillips urban farm?
- Should be #1. This space needs to have amenities that serve the communities, not just look nice".
- They can hold space inside the black museum
- Goal 6- Don't know much about the plan(thrive) legacy is good- historic roots.
- Recognize that intersection has a complicated history around race and red-lining, unlike the historically black neighborhood of 4th Ave. 38th & Chicago should be remembered for solidarity/ activism opposing anti-blackness.
- More black businesses



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QUESTION 2: Who should be involved in this process, how do you define community?

- Youth/elders included in design-involved in the process
- Affected people(living community, floyd family, businesses etc.) african american leaders, youth and elders
- Business owners, homeowners, long-term renters, local schools, more art work
- Power of people-more color, happy place
- George Floyd's family
- Global memorial
- GFS stewards and long term ie. Marcia
- Should involve "bloods"- need buy in
- Everyone who feels apart of the community
- Residents especially when mile radius in each direction.
- Need lot of community engagement, could even let community vote for their wants and must-haves
- GFGM, neighborhood groups and businesses.
- The people who have been holding space there 2x's a per day for the last 29 months.
- Need more outreach to non-white, non-english as first language community
- Addressing trust issues with the City after the harm and trauma caused by George
- Floyd's murder feels like they're trying to play hero and villian
- Lots of separation in the process , feels like checking a box
- Learn from previous disruptions at GFS when trying to reimagine the space
- Apologize and reparations for that
- Please leverage existing discussions in the community to do so
- Need to see some efforts to make right-do the reparative work
- Demonstrate more positive City investment in the community
- City Government not equal to community:how can we trust them to listen to anyone
- People who use the space
- No developers or others that would take money away from people who live, work or spend time in the neighborhood. People who have family roots in the neighborhood local businesses
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- George Floyd Global Memorial and families supporting families
- Local faith groups; Bahai, Calvary, World Wide Outreach
- People who are serviced by mutual aid in the square
- People who live and work in the area
- Anyone affected by what happens in the square
- Especially BIPOC people in the area
- Broadcast opportunities to get involved in a variety of ways people can see them (ie bus signs, ads, social media etc..)
- Pedestrians, transit riders, owners, renters, students, protesters, fellows



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QUESTION 3: What should the City know about the state of the current site; what is important to you to preserve and what should be changed or improved?

- What is going to happen to the gas station?
- Environmental and financial impact
- Find a place for statues other than the street. Remove barriers, open street.
- Defines space that includes pedestrian safety
- I live a block away and don't feel safe and welcome there. It is not clear if it is a public space. It looks messy and dystopian.
- Community should be welcome.
- Move to storage for now, fence it off from crime
- It is disrespectful when people make comments about the memorial looking dirty. It is disrespectful and unproductive. It would be nice if there was a way to reframe it as how they would like to contribute instead of criticizing.
- Indoor and maintained space
- 2-3 story museum-donation
- Preserve community use
- Accessible and free
- Keep gas station as producer- keep the gas station to serve as revenue stream to support indoor museum, culturally relevant trauma resource center, etc.. that is to be built upward on the site. This is a great way to encompass alot at a centralized location.
- What other options for purchasing the building are there?
- The city needs a good answer to the question "how do you plan with "issues that arise at a space dedicated to memorializing the failings of the City without 1. using police 2. Causing more and ending trauma.
- This is a community space
- It is an organic place that is many things
- People find connection here
- People care for the space-make art, clean make music, tell stories, build gardens, host a library and clothing closet Some people do not feel comfortable or welcomed. It can feel chaotic with people double-parking, cars not being aware of traffic rules and pedestrians.
- Publically accessible/available space to the community
- Avoid the usual barriers/bureaucracy involved in using space
- When people are there- the sense of community = safety
- Community owned and cared for
- Sacred site for healing
- City as steward of the site until someone else (a community entity o f some sort)takes it on
- Feels stagnant to some neighbors now. Need the city to instill some confidence that there is progress.
- Is there gas in the tanks?
- Talk to the people there!
- City needs to recognize/acknowledge its multiple failures(ie. to George Floyd, to residents, businesses and community members)
- Protestors advocated for square business
- Speedway is defunct-they left
- People are coming to the square for memorial and patronizing business on the way
- Speedway includes memorial to many people
- Need something there that honors memorial but also supports economic advancement
- If this is an opportunity to do all this, let's forge ahead
- From a practical sense we can start asking for individual elements: what are people comfortable improving, removing, need to keep?
- Grief is not a tidy process; I don't know how to tidy up without removing legitimacy of what people bring to this place
- Don't want top down solutions
- I don't see us leaving it as it is as honoring what has transpired there
- The seed is in the ground; can't change what has grown; but can tidy the garden
- In the past, more respect for what old South Side used to represent; breaks my heart to see struggle of the area now

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QUESTION 3 : Continued

- Need to do something about that - need to brighten it, reduce crime with community policing, get churches involved, community involved
- People need to be willing to help, not just complain
- A lot of people feel a little powerless; we just do what we can
- Investment is more than just money
- Can do both short and long term suggestions
- Doesn't have to be non-profit
- Lorraine Hotel Model
- There needs to be economic support for residence and businesses there
- Need a facelift, area feels dark, not well kept, is an eye sore
- Would like it to be tidier, better lit, someone was killed there
- Don't conflate the killing and how people keep space there
- Challenge of last two years is living with many opinions, we need to care for each other
- Black owned bank site
- Community ownership of arts on local buildings - If monetized, should go directly to community in share
- Space where people have cared for each other; to entrust that with the city with how the city treats the unhoused, don't trust city with that
- Preserve: Resources, community guards, Library, community space, building stays, fire circle, fire circle, gas station sign, any public art, hate to see things demolished
- How can this site of MPD brutality sanctioned by the city be entrusted to them?
- Current state of site: Open streets are not safe with the memorial
- Current memorial for many people
 - Paul Castaway
 - Hardell Sharrel
 - Fong Lee
 - Larry Mosby
 - Possibly more
- Community is paying for 24 access to restrooms
- Little Library and Peoples Closet are used regularly: Mutual aid is active here
- Community volunteers care for the site every day, fixing things that are broken, gardening, etc.
- Goals:
- Should ensure that community led activities (meetings every morning and night) all continue unimpeded
- Be a third space - a place where people can spend time without any money
- Treatment of Memorial:
- Cannot be a healing site and starts with destruction of sacred memories
- Can't be preservation because the memorial continues to grow
- Mutual aid hub; people come for food, clothes, warmth, hydration, bathroom access, books, vegetables, companionship. This is so IMPORTANT
- Preserve the community gathering space - access
- Improvement to site:
- Indoor bathrooms, electrical access for events, water access, warming space (enclosed like bus shelters)
- Preserve a garden, more garden, zen environment vs. a sense of abandonment
- Can we use Speedway as road/bus space to preserve the integrity of the sacred space (we'd rather see vehicles driving on that real estate than over George's death site)
- Regarding "legacy of black neighborhood"
- We want to maintain/continue opportunities for black neighbors to own homes here. Not as a historic legacy, but as a current and continuing legacy.
- Knowing your community makes you feel safe

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Questions and other comments

- For those who can't attend- you should collect online feedback on these questions
- Community not commodity
- City acquire, mitigate pollution, gift to community? Who?
- What's the environmental impact of removing gas tanks? (See Roof Depot site)
- What legal/legislative / contractual mechanisms can you put in place that force the city to hold to the commitment that they will not permanently own the site?
- What real legalese can you include for proof, since so few community members can trust the word?
- Land trust and deed agreement for example it goes to Dakota people and cannot be sold by the City to anyone.
- Get rid of the middle man
- Child Care cooperatives
- Worker cooperatives
- Housing cooperatives food and other resource co-ops
- Garden cooperatives
- Park cooperatives
- Music cooperatives
- Barricades cooperatives

Question: Is this an impending acquisition?

Answer: There is no signed purchase agreement
The timeline is really fast. Feels like it happening to us, not including us in the process.
Are there going to be jobs for those in the community; and resources?

Comment: Example: Winner gas station, it took 4 years to redevelop. The solution is not difficult. The cops are not being disciplined. The community is not safe.



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Group Report back on Questions

Group 1

- What is the environmental impact of removing the gas tanks?
- The current site as mutual aid hub-food, veggies, clothes
- Preserve the community gathering space

Group 2

- Go forward with improving public safety- plan seems vague
- Hopes that they will not permanently close the site

Group 3

- Build consensus; a revenue stream needs to exist there.
- Build the space up and allow the gas station to be the space that supports, youth music programming, relevant job training
- Very expensive to tear it down, repurpose the dollars and build up for the betterment of the community City owning it without a firm standing and without knowing who the beneficiaries for that, is a concern. Clearly articulate that to the community on the front end.
- Accessory dwelling units. Create a space with 4 stories, the site can be zoned up to 8 stories
- Very important, there are people who live in the community that are currently not involved, are in agreement with it- be more intentional about who is in the room

Group 4

- What if the community was able to own it, residential addition on the top and development going upward.
- Black owned entities back in the space, build a condo or something on top. Community space for the arts and youth.
- Do not let the City control it, they did not ask us if the City should buy it. What if there was a negotiation for the community to buy it and grants used for programming. Example: East Phillips

Group 5

- Event space for racial healing. Lots of people have experienced trauma in the area
- There are other people who would like to give input Art center, music studio, black museum , ongoing convos on police reform in the space
- Community gatherings, more black businesses in the area

Group 6

- Environmental and financial impact study done before it start
- Public space looks messy and dystopian

Group 7

- Additional goal- transparent throughout the process
- The City should recognize its multiple failures, the Mayor and the police need to apologize. We are coming from a place of mistrust, the mutual aid has been filling the hole, the city has left a vacuum there. We plowed our own snow, the first year.
- Apology from the Mayor

Group 8

- Community should own the speedway, like the Wisconsin Packs

Group 9

- The memorial space; not just for George Floyd, but other community members too. The families, supporting families, is integral

Group 10

- No consensus; that location is a memorial. In terms of racial healing, should remain a place for people to come, have a sense of community. Let's do it, make it more aesthetic, brighten it up, all inclusive memorial, making money. Have services for the people; honoring the movement that is ongoing.

Group 11

- Desire reparations done by the City Learning how the changes have broken down trust before, how has the City done this before.

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Key themes and community concerns

- Community ownership of the old Speedway – stakeholders do not want the city to own the site permanently, if they buy it. What does community ownership or community control look like?
- The old Speedway site as a part of a larger racial healing and justice community gathering space for the area.
- Community benefits – what are the possible benefits to the community, given the reconstruction that will occur at 38th and Chicago and speedway acquisition.
- Public transportation and how people move in, around, and through the space safely.
- Trust, transparency, and accountability

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CPED Next Steps

City staff will be bringing a proposal forward to the City Council in the last cycle of the year (November 29 Business, Inspections, Housing and Zoning Committee; and City Council on December 8) to authorize the acceptance of the partial donation of the People's Way from the seller. The timeline for this action is to meet the seller's request to close on the sale of the property to the City by the end of the year. Links to both of these meetings can be accessed here (<https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/Calendar/all/monthly>)

The City's goals for this acquisition:

- Creating space for racial healing and justice in the short term and preserving this site opportunity for a national racial justice healing center and potential other community-focused uses in the long term
- Supporting efforts led by the Floyd family to create a permanent memorial for George Floyd and other victims
- Making new investments to support area residents and businesses
- Improving public safety
- Preserving community gathering space
- Preserving the legacy of a deeply rooted African American community, in accordance with the 38th Street THRIVE Strategic Development Plan

The City's intention is to be an "interim" owner of the site. The long term goal for the site will be community-based ownership.

Next steps: The City is establishing a community engagement framework and timeline to engage with the community on topics heard at the Learning Table on 10/24/22 and other engagement, including the following:

- Preservation of art and offerings
- Interim activation of site and use for gatherings
- Long term community ownership of the site
- Transportation infrastructure
- Racial healing and justice

The expected timeline for completion of this engagement framework is anticipated for the first half of 2023.

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