

Notes from Community Conversation-May 10, 2011
Edina Library

Meeting leaders: Kim Montgomery, Laura Nisi

In attendance: Sue Arneson, Melody Chestler, Dick Crockett, Bright Dorublaser, Sally Euson, Charlie Flinn, Sandy Fox, Cheryl Gunness, Ellen Jones, Tom LaForce, Cathy Liebman, Michelle Lohrding, Janet Marple, Jan Michaletz, Amy Minge, Hilary Santoni, Kevin Staunton, Linda Urban, Leslie Vaillancourt, Mary Werbalowsky,

On May 10, 22 civic leaders met to meet the goal of defining what residents would like to see in the Grand View Square area. This information was gathered with the intention of passing it along to both the Steering and Executive Committees to be included in the Grand View District Small Area Planning process.

Kim Montgomery provided an introduction of the history of the area, the process and timeline for the Community Advisory Team, the 7 Guiding Principles developed by the C.A.T and a description of the Small Area Plan process going forward.

The members broke into 5 working groups to answer the following two questions:

1. What amenities should a 21st century city have that we do not have at all in Edina in general or in this area in particular? .
2. Which of those amenities would be a good fit for this geographic area? What do we, as residents not want in this area?

A spokesperson from each group elaborated on the ideas put forward by their group. A copy of all of the responses is attached with the group leaders listed (attachment A.)

There were areas of commonality among the groups. Many of the groups talked about the need for connectors, both social and physical. Several of the suggestions dealt with bringing back a sense of community both among and across generations. With respect to social connectors, the items that kept recurring were community-gathering places such as restaurants, an intergenerational community/civic/cultural center, a town square and meeting rooms. With respect to physical connectors the amenities most mentioned were bike and walking paths both to and around the study area, parking fixes and better west/east Edina connections. There was a recurrent theme of beautifying the area and encouraging/providing for small businesses and services.

Many agreed that with changes in school district funding that there will be a need to fill the gap in the form of providing for arts/cultural experiences as well as providing additional classroom and meeting spaces.

There were also a couple of areas of commonality among the group regarding what they did not want to see. In general, the group did not want to see chain or big box stores in

Page 2.

the area or tall buildings. They wanted the buildings to fit in with the current height of buildings in the area. There was some agreement that using the topography of the area to camouflage the height of buildings would be acceptable.

There were splits on the issue of the use of the area as a transit stop. Some people were concerned about the subsequent congestion in the area while others felt that having a mass transit stop would be critical to the future of the city and the area.

In addition to the responses listed above, 8 other community members responded to the questions posed either by email or by phone. Their responses are attached as Attachment B.

As a wrap-up to the meeting we talked about how people can stay both informed and connected to the planning process. Ideas mentioned were: providing emails for members of the group to forward, providing better information and access to the information on the City's website, creating a social networking site about the process on Facebook or a blog, having people sign up for City Extra and providing more detailed information about the process there and having people attend the monthly meetings of the Steering Committee for the Small Area Plan process.

Attachment A

Community Conversation

RESPONSES

Hilary Santoni

YES TO:

Intergenerational/Multigenerational - Exemplary Green Community Center - Town Square - Connectors to the Neighborhoods (safe) - Bike Trail to and around - More intimate space - Pool - Restaurants together - mixed specialty retail - small specialty food shops - Cafe - Gym, Designated fitness space - Arts small performance space - green (funding) - better connector East and West

NO TO: big box - transit center - mixed use - pool - hotel - 494 corridor - nothing excess height

Sandy Fox

YES TO:

Gateway - Connector - Central Gathering Spot - Modern Multigenerational community center - accessible available community non-profit incubator - available meeting gathering rooms - multi use cultural center - shuttle - biking - improve what we have - keep small businesses

NO: chain stores - more roads, more congestion - Walgreen's - more residential - high rises

Charlie Flinn

YES TO:

Restaurant - Sense of west side - intergenerational - community center, teen center - Depot - bike walking access

DICK Crockett

YES TO:

Restaurant - Chautauqua like learning center - Conference Center - City Center -
Better integrations of amenities - more use of underground parking - improve
stores

NO

Chain stores

Linda Urban

YES to:

Center for all of Edina - Civic Center with auditorium - cultural center - open
space with small scale garden amenities - family friendly multigenerational -
pedestrian and bike accessibility - especially crossing streets (Vernon, 100, etc.)
- small varied service-based business - needs makeover - attractiveness - mixed
use ok - more restaurants

NO

big box - chain - professional services/medical - smaller office space for
businesses connected to daily living - fast food chains –

Attachment B

Email/Phone responses to Community Conversation questions by community members not able to attend May 10 meeting

Mary Burnton

Edina should consider a performing arts space, like that of Hopkins.

Would like to see a facility like that of Minnetonka with a large indoor running track and a pool.

Would like to see a community gathering space modeled after student unions. There is a critical mass with City Hall and the library, which would make this area a good place for a community gathering space.

Would like a central space to be used for a Farmer's market and music performances including outdoor concerts.

Could open up the design process to young people like that of the MN Real Estate Competition where real estate majors at the U of M compete for the best design.

Sue Dinapoli

I would like to see a true community center on that site.

Should be in the heart of Edina, not on the periphery, close to highway access.

Should incorporate outdoor spaces.

Should include bike trails connecting and running throughout the area. This is huge.

Should be a full service center for kids including kids who do not have easy access to facilities.

Should have meeting rooms that could be used for many purposes including business meetings, tutoring, and group functions.

Should have gym space/sport courts with easy accessibility; not dedicated to teams because we have plenty of spaces for team sports and practice.

Should have a non-video game room.

Should be multi-age.

Should incorporate tons of books; also have computers.

Should be run by trained educators with a community background.

Should be welcoming and have spaces for art, films and music.

Should have a place to eat.

Should be a central gathering space, a place to congregate allowing us to better connect with kids.

Janet Ha

1. A transportation hub, similar to Eden Prairie's but different. Mostly someplace where people can park, then wait in a warm, sheltered area for a bus. Many more people take the bus from the Vernon/100 area than you can imagine, and they now park everywhere (although Jerry's back ramp is usually pretty empty) and wait outside, on the street. In Minnesota that is just ridiculous. We can do better. With shuttle vans to the train station in St Louis Park when that comes through.

2. I do not really see the need for another community facility, with the possible exception of a teen-centered space. But I think DECA does a pretty good job with the space at the high school, and the Depot in Hopkins fills in some blanks. It's hard to imagine a space like the Depot in Edina; the adults would not allow it. This space's proximity to the police station would make it more like a non-denominational church space. Sanitary but not so fun.

3. I honestly have no objections to a somewhat taller building here, if that's what someone wants. An eight-story hotel? I don't have a problem with that. I can't imagine a developer thinking that would work. More housing? Fine. Another senior care space? Fine, as long as it has facilities for both old, and old-old people (A hospice like space, similar to what 7500 York just put in, not another Edinborough) we still need many more places like that. This space, with proximity to the Jerry's mall would be great. I might even move there.

Janet Ha (Cont.)

4. What do I not want? A casino, movie theater or any other purely entertainment focused space. Go to Southdale, please. As long as a transportation hub is included, I do not much care what else is there. And I live really close by.

Jennifer Hovelsrud

Paul and I talked about this for a long time. The one thing we keep coming back to is community-gathering space. It'd be nice if this were indoor and outdoor. We don't really have a community center and "hub" of the community. Could this be workout space too? Basketball for all ages? I don't know what the financial realities of this are, but it would sure be nice. It would also be great if this could be made bike accessible somehow.

We see it as space for all ages. But as a first priority, our young people need a space. I know they would use it if we did it right. Could the cost be offset by retail space inside or out? Restaurant? Coffee shop? Workout gear?

Sigrid Redpath

I myself would welcome some space to give small recitals, with a good acoustic and piano. That way community could gather to support local young musicians - local teachers could sign up to have piano, voice or instrumental concerts, and if the space were big enough, some artists could come perform for the community there. It need not be a huge concert hall, but be constructed with the acoustic in mind from the beginning.

Last year, to have Liv's senior recital, we were looking for a space, and to rent Antonello Hall at McPhail would have cost \$2000. And the music recital room in the basement of Schmitt Music is a very unpleasant place to be - no windows, tight space, horrible buzzing fluorescent lights - and it is booked solid all of the time. We have to go up to Brooklyn Center for our piano recitals because the Edina Schmitt's is so booked. The stages at the High School and Middle school are too large for these salon type music functions. In the old days, salon recitals were often given in large homes, for entertainment. I think they are a great tradition, and they allow our young people the opportunity to perform for a smaller group of friends/ neighbors. And we have a lot of musicians in the Edina community. These type of recitals are often given at mansions, like the Swedish Institute or the MPLS Women's Club, but they are far away and frankly are often booked.

The local community could benefit from this space often, I believe. Here would be a space people could walk to and hear many possible recitals. Thursday Musical hosts a series of home recitals, and some in assisted living spaces. What a great venue this could be for that - they have very talented singers, and instrumentalists perform several times a year. Sometimes musicians perform at the library, but it isn't really set up for them, and seating is not good. High school carolers, jazz ensembles and chamber groups could have a space to perform, to an audience that could walk there for entertainment.

What would be ideal would be to have an acoustically correct small recital hall and 2 practice rooms with pianos also in the complex, which could be used by nearby residents on a sign up basis.

Sarah Zarrin

This common area is going to be in the location that is close to the old community center, close to the Edina library, close to lots of small and large businesses, close to a couple of Edina schools. Therefore, it is a prim location to build a 21-century common area, which has a green footprint. If any city is able to build an exemplary green building is Edina. We need to bring youth, elderly, educators, leaders in the business, and community leaders to put aside differences and think about the future on this bldg.

It should have area for relaxation and reflecting, area for getting books from library and reading them there. Perhaps it should have an indoor park in this part of Edina.

it can be a single story or multiple stories, but it has to have green foot print with all kind of gadgets to save energy and utilizing same as those other 5 examples on the attached file.

Edina is one of the five cities as a green city pilot. This can be the beginning of building green in Edina.

Meriwether Felt

I do know the community put a lot of effort into coming up with the initial proposals to the city. But I also remember being disheartened at the lack of involvement by urban planners during the initial design charrette and also felt a lack of multi-disciplinary idea pollination in the initial design proposals. Maybe all of that has changed since then.

I do remember the proposal was granted further study, but I can't remember if there was an independent professional urban or regional planner brought in to lead it. I sure hope someone that specializes in urban design, community development, redevelopment and land-use are participating along with the architects involved, They could also tap into studies of projects around the world that are a successful mix of retail/pedestrian/transportation and projects that have successfully integrated multi level pedestrian/parking/transportation/service systems.

On to your questions

1. Amenities

A public amenity; The project should include a publicly accessible amenity that is unique and a *draw* to this site, such as a view, a plaza (St. Marks, Washington Square...), a park, a facility, a giant interactive cyber message board

2. Vertical connections; through visible and energetic paths

3. Boutique hotel

I think a nationally recognized urban planner would be good at helping to identify these needs, the economic projections and potential transportation issues would merit it.

4. This project should not be a suburban copy of "mixed use"

A larger grocery store (although important and one that I enjoy using) should not drive this project

Centralized vehicular transportation

Rachael Pream Grenier

Here are some ideas of what can be housed in the old public works site:

- A bike shop that is similar to Express Bike Shop in St. Paul <http://www.exbike.com/backdoor/> where youth are involved in bike repair.
- A small theater/performance space. I could see this being very useful for groups who wish to host events but Fick and EPAC are too large.
- Youth run coffee shop like The Depot

<http://www.thedepotcoffeehouse.com/about/index.html>

- A cultural center with changing exhibitions, music, film, etc.
Virginia Kearney

Community Conversation with Virginia Kearney

Community needs/wants for the Grand View District:

A youth center like the Union of Youth in Northfield-A place for all Edina kids but especially those who don't have easy access to facilities. We are dropping the ball as an affluent first tier suburb. We need to do a better job for all of our youth.

A space for a farmer's market. This is a better location due to its centrality.

A space for rental for event rental. Right now there is very little high quality rental space for events and meetings. Meeting and event dollars leave Edina as a result.

A gathering spot for young families in all weather, a central gathering space that is light and bright.

A green roof on top of a community center (native plant material in a ecologically sound design) with adjacent outdoor café.

Meeting and/or performing spaces

Open gym and workout spaces that are easily accessible

A transit stop-- Looking to the future of how we travel, transit is key in this area.

Important to be architecturally forward so that a community like ours can provide a model for others. Repurpose and reclaim the current public works site and make it a fabulous and forward gathering space.

Add small, locally owned bistros/restaurants/cafes that can serve as central gathering spots.

This area is critical as it is a gateway to the city, the first thing you see when you exit Highway 100 at 50th. Wouldn't it be great if future generations thought how this generation looked ahead and planned something on the forefront?

