



Event Record: Focus Group - Harmon District Visioning Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan

Focus Group Harmon District Visioning

7:00-8:30pm

December 7, 2010

Hennes Art Company

1607 Hennepin Avenue

The following is a summary of a focus group discussion conducted by Peter Musty, CLPC Master Plan Consultant, and Jana Metge, CLPC Coordinator. Several stakeholders of Harmon area were present. The Focus Group was held November 30, 2010 in The Greg Hennes Gallery (www.hennesart.com). Our host was Greg Hennes.



There were fourteen (14) present: Doug Hennes/Business, Reede Webster/MCTC, Scott Erickson/MCTC, Abby Rouster/MCTC Student Legislative Affairs Director, Brad Conley/MCTC Student Council President, Terri Ashmore/Basilica of St. Mary, Richard Sandberg/adjacent resident, James Andrew, resident, John Van Heel/Steering Committee Chair, Beth Elliott/City of Minneapolis-Loring Park neighborhood City Planner, Jana Metge/CLPC, Tom Borrup/Consultant Team, John Lauber/Consultant Team, Peter Musty/Consultant Team Lead. This record includes four items:

- **Event Preview**
- **Agenda**
- **Notes** by Jana Metge.
- **Letter from Participant:** James Andrew



(Pictured from left to right: Greg Hennes, Tom Borrup, James Andrew, Reede Webster, John Lauber, Abby Rouster, Brad Conley, Terri Ashmore (seated), Dick Sandberg, John Van Heel.)



EVENT PREVIEW

Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan

Tuesday, December 7

Focus Group: Harmon District Visioning

Greg Hennes Gallery 1607 Hennepin Ave. So.

7:00pm-8:30pm



Citizens for a Loring Park Community (CLPC) have set up a public planning process in support of the Neighborhood Master Plan effort. Each phase of the planning process will engage the public in a series of group and individual interviews, informal gatherings, and four community workshops.

- Phase I **Discovery** (Fall 2010)
- Phase II **Visioning** (Fall 2010 through Winter 2011)
- Phase III **Urban Design** (Winter 2011)
- Phase IV **Implementation** (Spring 2011)



Developing a Shared Vision!

The CLPC Board approved the selection of Harmon district as a Focus Area within the Master Plan, identified as a district within the neighborhood that would benefit from a long term vision and set of basic development guidelines. It is anticipated that there will be illustrations, including plans, diagrams and 3D computer modeling developed reflecting the long term impacts of the community based master plan policy.

In order to develop a long term public realm vision and land use policy for the district, the CLPC Master Plan Steering Committee is inviting stakeholders of the Harmon Avenue district to weigh in on the important issues affecting Harmon district today and to share ideas for the future. The Discovery Workshop in October revealed what many of the issues may be:

- Historic Preservation | Building Reuse*
- Parking | Streetscape Design*
- Carbon Reduction Goals*
- Campus Master Plan | Student Housing*

- Sustainability | Access to Transit | Bike Parking*
- Local Services | Design of Buildings*
- Long-Range Land Use Plan Changes*
- Redevelopment Opportunities | Placemaking*
- Viewsheds | Economic Development*

Invited stakeholders will include several local businesses, property owners, students, neighborhood residents, public agency staff, Minneapolis Community & Technical College (MCTC) student body, faculty & administration representatives, University of St Thomas representatives, among others. The session, organized by CLPC Master Plan Steering Committee, will be 90 minutes long and will be facilitated by Master Plan consultant team coordinated by PETER MUSTY LLC.

Note to Participants:

Come as you are. The meeting will be conducted with a wide ranging group invited from throughout the district – but is open to the public.

Updated November 2, 2010.



EVENT PREVIEW

Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan

HARMON FOCUS GROUP

AGENDA

December 7, 2010

7pm-8:30pm, Greg Hennes Gallery

7:00 pm

- Greeting by Greg Hennes, Welcome & Orientation by Jana Metge
- Participant Introductions
- Overview of master plan activities by master plan consultant Pete Musty, consultant team members John Lauber and Tom Borrup introduced.

7:10 pm

- Note card exercise: ask participants to answer two questions and discuss or pass in by end of session:
 - **Notecard #1: Identify two issues you think should be addressed in the master plan.**
 - **Notecard #2: Imagine Harmon District in 2030: What do you see?**

...by 7:30 pm

- Discussion

8:30 pm

- Adjourn

What are the the key issues (today) that your individual business or property is facing today?

What are the key strengths/assets/characteristics of the District? What gives this District a competitive advantage?

What are the roles/ of Harmon in relationship to Hennepin, to Loring Park, to MCTC & ST Thomas. What should it be?

What public realm projects make sense to consider? What re-development & reuse opportunities do you see emerging?

Urban design issues in the master plan: height of buildings, land uses, streetscape etc. – any opinions?

Sustainability ideas...?

What other ideas do you have for the district? For Loring Neighborhood?

How can the City and the Neighborhood organizations serve district (or the businesses/properties) better?

Loring Park Master Planning Process

Harmon Area – FOCUS GROUP

Tuesday, Dec. 7th, 2010; 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Thanks to Greg Hennes/Greg Hennes Art Gallery for hosting!!

Harmon Area Stakeholders present: Doug Hennes/Business, Reede Webster/MCTC, Scott Erickson/MCTC, Abby Rouster/MCTC Student Legislative Affairs Director, Brad Conley/MCTC Student Council President, Terri Ashmore/Basilica of St. Mary, Richard Sandberg/adjacent resident, John Van Heel/Steering Committee Chair, Beth Elliott/City of Minneapolis-Loring Park neighborhood City Planner, Jana Metge/CLPC, Tom Borrup/Consultant Team, John Lauber/Consultant Team, Peter Musty/Consultant Team Lead.

Pete welcomed all and thanked everyone for coming. Greg welcomed all to his Gallery and talked about what they do. He stated that he was looking at Uptown and Lynlake to be relocated from 394, but he was on the block, saw a for-rent sign and found 2x the amount of space for 2x less the cost of other sites he had looked at. He is happy to be here, loves the space, and happy to be involved. He has attended the Loring Business Association meetings where he met several of the participants in the room.

Jana distributed a sign in sheet, handouts on the Consultant Team and Jan. 20th/22nd Community Design events hosted by the Basilica and HN Methodist Church. She also distributed cards on a CLPC wine-tasting fundraiser hosted by Loring Kitchen & Bar.

Pete overviewed the Master Plan process to date, as well as having a slide show with photos to illustrate the activities, events, and workshops. Pete overviewed the process to date – Sept. 30th was our Kick Off event at the Park featuring a panel on the history of Loring Park followed by a “Discovery Workshop” on Sat., Oct. 2nd. Then on Thursday, Nov. 4th a gathering was held at the Music Box Theatre featuring food from Nicollet Businesses, live music, and a panel on “Creative Neighborhoods in the Creative City”. Saturday, Nov. 6th a “Visioning” Community Design workshop was hosted by the Wesley Church.

This is the sixth (5th) focus group. Additionally, Key Stakeholder interviews have been conducted with Diane Woelm (Nicollet Ave.), Sen. Scott Dibble, HN Co. Commissioner Gail Dorfman, Bob Copeland (resident and former Heritage Preservation Chair for the City of Minneapolis), Kim Havey (resident and former Empowerment Zone coordinator for the City of Minneapolis), Ray Harris (resident and long-time developer), and Lt. Matt Clark. There will be ten (10) Key Stakeholder interviews.

Pete reviewed that the four (4) focus areas of the Master Plan have been identified as 1) Nicollet Ave., 2) Harmon Ave., 3) Perimeter of Neighborhood/freeway edges, and 4) Perimeter of Loring Park/safe passage to the Park. He illustrated with a large map of the neighborhood. (Note - the Request for Proposal overviewing the purpose of the Master Plan is on the CLPC website – www.loringpark.org click on Citizens for a Loring Park Community). All information and documentation of this Master Plan process is also available on the web. *Comments can also be called in or emailed into the CLPC office at 612-874-9002 / clpc@visi.com.*

The process began with the below exercise. All participants introduced themselves as they read their answers to the below questions, written on cards and on file at CLPC.

Identify two issues you think should be addressed in the master plan.

- Expansion of MCTC buildings and/or re-building current buildings to be able to hold the increasing number of students.
- Blocking off or adding crosswalks in between MCTC Technical building to the Science and Management building.

- An expanded Pedestrian-Focused MCTC Campus to the north.
- Poor performance of retail and restaurant businesses on Harmon and Nicollet; how can we make them succeed?
- We should encourage more development to give this neighborhood the critical mass of residents to support essential services and other businesses.
- Parking & Traffic flow
- Safety & Security
- Utilize underused parcels in the area
- Anticipate developer's issues and be ready with the neighbor's position
- Address the transportation needs of the community
- Protection / Commitment towards Green Space
- Multiple centers, multiple personalities existing as one neighborhood
- Grants for small businesses to start up new stores, restaurants in Neighborhood – encourage development

Imagine Harmon District in 2030: What do you see?

- No visible parking lots or structures
- Enhanced landscaping – flowers, greening, median plantings between the Fawkes block and the Basilica – green up the Freeway wall.
- No vacant buildings
- People day and night enjoying the neighborhood – shops/art/history & more restaurants
- A vibrant, walkable neighborhood reminiscent of Greenwich Village
- More ground level retail, restaurants, coffee shops, galleries
- No vacant buildings
- More local shops
- Affordable housing for MCTC students
- A thriving, pedestrian – heavy avenue linking downtown to the Park/Lyn-Hennepin
- More consumer friendly
- Business storefronts on Harmon between 12th/13th
- A lively urban neighborhood at the foot of downtown Minneapolis with a mix of residents, workers and visitors of shops, cafes, and restaurants that the area is known for.
- A distinct urban village on the edge of downtown with restaurants, music, winebars, students, cafes, street dining and outdoor art – a node-like version of Madison's State Street – with student housing.

Discussion: A series of questions were displayed on individual agendas –

- What are the key issues (today) that your individual business or property is facing?
- What are the key strengths/assets/characteristics of the District? What give the District a competitive advantage?
- What are the roles of Harmon in relationship to Hennepin, to Loring Park, to MCTC & St. Thomas? What should it be?
- What public realm projects make sense to consider? What re-development & reuse opportunities do you see emerging?
- Urban design issues in the Master Plan: height of buildings, land uses, streetscape, etc. - any opinions?
- Sustainability ideas....?
- What other ideas do you have for the district? For Loring neighborhood?
- How can the City and the Neighborhood organizations serve this district (or the businessness/properties) better?

Discussion Responses:

- Not enough walk-in traffic for businesses
- No place to park for customers
- Level of fear – Safety – transient traffic

- Need more small shops / galleries / gift shops
- Visibility is great in the area – proximity to downtown and to students – how to draw them in to visit, use, buy, frequent the businesses.
- Traffic moves too fast in the area – not pedestrian friendly
- MCTC has grown in the past 5-6 years. They have transportation issues – they encourage students to bus/use transit. They provide subsidies. Student numbers have grown from 400-4,000 with the MCTC promotion of transit
- The area needs better bus shelters like those downtown, to encourage students to use transit – heated and well-lit.
- Turn Spruce from Hennepin to Harmon into green, pedestrian mall – close it to automobile traffic
- Basilica is a regional draw – they have concerns regarding traffic flow – safety & security and parking
- Concern about the inability for small scale businesses to thrive in the area. We need solutions and support for small business.
- Harmon is like a ghost area – too many vacant buildings – not pleasant to walk
- Harmon is desolate – but interesting buildings.
- St. Thomas law school seems to have turned its back on the neighborhood – visually
- The neighborhood closer to MCTC has more energy than on the 10th-12th Street side
- Harmon & HN cut off from downtown – HN – more possibilities to change connection to downtown than Harmon. Harmon Place vs. Ave. – cut into 2 chunks – can't drive down it unless you are going to a specific place, you just don't happen to drive by it
- Need signage – way-finding – leave as a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Harmon Ave. is 4 lane vs. 2 – too wide – potential for angled parking – don't need this wide a street. Lessen the vehicle traffic and solution for parking – angle parking. There is a potential here in design to lessen the negative impact. Angled parking would also put more folks on the street.
- Restaurants use valet parking – they park at MCTC and Loring Ramp
- Thousands of students come in and out of area from MCTC, Metro State, and St. Thomas – how can we use that asset to revitalize Harmon Ave. Students suggested affordable places to eat – delis – more coffeeshops. Students go to the Espresso Royale Coffee House a lot.
- CVS Pharmacy is not welcoming
- Lots of turnover in the City Apts. retail location; grocery store seems to be doing well
- Idea to create a bike shop/Bike Coop – this may also draw students out and residents. There is a HUGE bicycle community on campus. There is not a shop from Uptown to Downtown. A lot of bicycle traffic on Harmon per City counts.
- Create a housing partnership – 9.2% of MCTC students experience homelessness and 17% are hungry. 50% of students are on a scholarship to attend. Students experiencing homelessness are single moms, veterans, and youth. If affordable housing was available, and promoted to students, it would cut down on auto use and need for parking in the future.
- Metro State Plan is to develop off-site in the 394 corridor. They use MCTC classrooms in the evening. Their downtown office space is 49,000 square feet.

Questions asked by Consultant, Peter Musty & then mapped out:

How do you walk to the Farmers Market?

How do you access the Skyway?

Respectfully submitted, JLM/CLPC Coordinator



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Letter from Participant: James Andrew

(Approved for inclusion in this record by James Andrew on January 28th, 2011.)

“Peter,

I attended your workshop at the Hennes Gallery and I just wanted to follow up with some thoughts about Harmon Place. I think some great ideas were brought up at the focus group including the bike shop idea, reducing the lanes on Harmon, changing the parking etc.. I would like to add that I think the street could really be a connector between the different campuses and the downtown. If the MCTC plaza opened up to the street in a way and made the whole walk an interesting one between 10th Street and the Loring Park section of Harmon Place. Adding some greenspace, pocket parks, or other landscaping ideas (i'm not a landscape architect so I'd leave it up to the experts) that would not only make the street more pedestrian friendly but better connect it aesthetically with the plaza and park side of Harmon would make it feel less isolated.

I think I mentioned these statistics at the meeting but I wanted to add them here. Harmon Place had an estimated 2500 vehicles per day on average in 2007 (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/traffic/data/maps/indexmaps/2007/mplsin.pdf>)

The City of Minneapolis did bicycle and pedestrian counts on Harmon at 12th Street in 2009 and estimated about 800 bicycles per day use Harmon and about 800 pedestrians per day are using Harmon. This was before the City changed Hennepin and 1st to 2-way traffic so the bicycle traffic may be different today.

The upshot of these statistics are that there is not much traffic on Harmon Place currently and cars make up only about 60% of all traffic on the street. I think that for Harmon to succeed, we need to bring more foot and bicycle traffic to it and make it a more pleasant place to linger and hang out, walk etc.

2500 AADT would be adequately served by a two-lane configuration. Instead, we have four full travel lanes. This is a complete waste of space. I don't want to dictate exactly what the street should look like but it definitely should not be four lanes. Possible configurations could be to reduce the travel lanes and add bike lanes. We could also explore diagonal parking as well as expanding the pedestrian realm and put in pocket parks, planting trees, providing more space for outdoor cafe seating. The possibilities are many. We may want to have an ultimate goal of reconstructing the street but all we may be able to get out of the city in the near-term is a seal coat which would allow us to do things with the lanes but not the curbs.



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One other thing that I don't think we got to discuss were other resources in the area. I think we need to inventory all of the public space resources. The alley that runs parallel to Harmon Place between Nash Gallery and the streets to the north should be preserved and potentially made into a public road. I think that the new use of the alley next to Nick and Eddie is amazing and should be a model for how to use some of this public space in the future. Obviously the alley by Harmon Place and 12th Street is a bit different but as we consider development guidelines for future construction in that area, we should make sure we preserve and recognize the value of the brick paved roads that add to the historic texture of the neighborhood.

I don't think we should expect Lunds to open a grocery store in that location unless we have some new information that leads us to believe that they definitely will. We desperately need to get that space into some use, preserving the alley way in the process, and if a grocery store is not going to be feasible, we should open the discussion about what kinds of use could instead be in that block. I would be supportive of high density (tall buildings) land use along Hennepin Avenue in the area but not on Harmon Place or 13th Street. Any development on those two streets should not overwhelm the character of the streets and should roughly match the massing of the historic buildings. I don't have a real problem with allowing MCTC to use more building space on Hennepin but I would like there to be more storefront space on the first floors if possible.

I hope that isn't too much to digest and you find it helpful. Let me know if you have any questions for me.

Thanks!

James Andrew, 1204 Harmon Place #26"