MAKING THE CONNECTION: MIDTOWN GREENWAY TO LAKE STREET

RECENT GREENWAY DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS THE OPPORTUNITY

MURALS CONNECT TO LOCAL CULTURES AND ATTRACT CUSTOMERS MURAL BY GRETA MCCLAIN

THE MIDTOWN EXCHANGE IS A RECOGNIZABLE LANDMARK

OUTREACH AT COMMUNITY

DESIGN EXPERIMENT: SITE AMENITIES, WAYFINDING, AND ACTIVITIES AT CEPRO, NEAR THE MIDTOWN GLOBAL MARKET

MAY 2016
HOW TO ENSURE SUCCESS ALONG THE GREENWAY/LAKE STREET CORRIDOR

Two decades ago, the Midtown Greenway was a derelict railroad trench. Now, each year people take more than a million trips on this unique, almost car-free trail connecting the Mississippi River and the Chain of Lakes. The success of this “green infrastructure” has encouraged commercial development and thousands of new housing units to sprout along the Greenway — and in the process, helped to enhance the tax base, one of the key goals of Hennepin County’s Community Works initiative. This newer development adds to the host of other destinations near the Greenway’s 5.5-mile route, including Lake Street’s thriving commercial districts. Nevertheless, significant physical and cultural barriers stand in the way of many people who might want to exit the Greenway, or gain access to it.

These missed connections present challenges to the Greenway’s effectiveness as a transportation route and neighborhood asset. Recently they were the focus of extensive research and community outreach by the Midtown Community Works partners: Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, the Midtown Greenway Coalition and the Lake Street Council.

This plan is informed by an in-depth understanding of these challenges and grounded in feedback from Greenway commuters, recreational users, underserved populations in the Midtown corridor, local business owners and a variety of other stakeholders consulted during the summer and fall of 2015. It outlines an array of recommendations and emphasizes new approaches to partnerships, diverse funding sources, and “lighter, quicker, cheaper” design solutions.

The engagement process revealed tremendous opportunities to forge new connections to and from the Midtown Greenway, and strengthen existing ones. If we tap that potential, the success of this premier urban amenity can grow to better serve nearby residents and businesses. Equally important — as the county looks to wrap up the Midtown Community Works program — its success over the next 20 years can be ensured as well.

**CONNECTING TO THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

Greenway entrances are hard to find and gaps in bike- and pedestrian-friendly routes to and from the Greenway make navigation challenging. Additional bike lanes and visual cues will improve connections making the Greenway easier to access. Bike-friendly business initiatives, such as bike parking and discounts, will reinforce that welcome.

**GETTING TO KEY DESTINATIONS**

Greenway users often report being disoriented to their surroundings, especially in the areas below street level. A wayfinding system throughout the Greenway will help people know where they are going, and orient visitors to destinations, bikeways, and community spaces. This system will include signage, map kiosks, and highly visible markers in a consistent color.

**PART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

Residents of adjacent neighborhoods, particularly people of color, are underrepresented in today’s mix of Greenway users. Quality public spaces with attractive amenities at key locations will draw new users, while arts and cultural activities hosted by community partners will contribute to neighborhood identity and make everyone feel welcome.

**BICYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

Survey respondents felt that many connections between Lake Street and the Greenway seem unsafe. This creates barriers for those who wish to access nearby destinations. Solutions proposed include upgraded crosswalks (painting and/or flashing lights), traffic calming and signal adjustments, vegetation management to increase visibility and safety, and new streetscaping with improved lighting.
EXAMPLE DESIGN TREATMENTS

Connecting to the Transportation Network  Getting to Key Destinations  Part of the Neighborhood  Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety

VERTICAL CUE / CONNECTING TO THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK
DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE / GETTING TO KEY DESTINATIONS
CROSSWALK & DESIGNATED BIKE PATH / BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
SEATING & SCULPTURE / PART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD
EXTEND SIDEWALK & BIKE LANE / BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

VERTICAL CUE / CONNECTING TO THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK
DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE / GETTING TO KEY DESTINATIONS
CROSSWALK & DESIGNATED BIKE PATH / BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
SEATING & AMENITY SPACE / PART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

VERTICAL CUE / CONNECTING TO THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK
DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE / GETTING TO KEY DESTINATIONS
CROSSWALK & DESIGNATED BIKE PATH / BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
SEATING & SCULPTURE / PART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD
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RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS
For more detail, visit www.hennepin.us/midtown.

- Placid Lake
- Lake Calhoun Parkway
- Lake of the Isles
- Midtown Greenway
- Lake Street
- 35W

Connection to key commercial / cultural destination  Business district  Access point
LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

2015 OUTREACH EFFORTS

- 21 interviews with local businesses
- 4 focus groups with underrepresented communities, total of 44 people attending
- 6 small groups/workshops with 119 people
- 6 community meetings with 154 people attending
- 5 community events with 282 people
- 610 people surveyed online and at 5 public opportunities along the Greenway

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

 WHICH IMPROVEMENTS WOULD BETTER CONNECT YOU TO DESTINATIONS FROM THE GREENWAY?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Very Helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat Helpful</th>
<th>Not Helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map kiosks at entrances/exits</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphics along pathway to/from destinations</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tall visible elements at exit/entrance points and near destinations</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateways that make entrances more visible</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE OF COLOR

- The Greenway doesn’t seem like it’s for me and my family
- Images and art from my cultural community would make me feel more comfortable
- The Greenway doesn’t feel like a safe place for me to go, I don’t feel welcome or protected there
- Programs/activities to connect diverse communities to the Greenway would encourage more use

 WHAT BUSINESS OWNERS SAID

- Nearly all businesses thought it would help to be better connected to the Greenway.
- 3 out of 4 want to attract more bicyclists to their business and were interested in promotions for those customers
- 73% were willing to participate in the city’s cost-share bike parking program

 INFLUENCE OF DESIGN EXPERIMENTS

- 77% of people surveyed felt the design experiments had a positive impact on their Greenway experience
- Encouraged 1 in 4 people surveyed to change their route or destination

 WHAT PREVENTS YOU FROM GOING TO A LAKE STREET BUSINESS OR NEARBY CULTURAL DESTINATION?

- There isn’t a convenient exit/entrance to where I want to go from the Midtown Greenway. 41%
- I don’t feel comfortable biking or walking because of vehicle traffic around Lake Street. 40%
- There isn’t a convenient place to park/lock my bike. 26%

 HOW OFTEN DO PEOPLE USE THE GREENWAY TO GO TO LAKE STREET?

- A few times a year: 28%
- A few times a month: 37%
- A few times a week: 24%
- Everyday: 6%

 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Native American</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East/West African</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**NEXT STEPS**

**IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN**

Continued participation from all of the Community Works partners—including neighborhood and community organizations along the Greenway—is essential as we seek to implement the improvements outlined in this plan. Together we will follow up on existing opportunities and identify new ones, build new partnerships, and seek funding from organizations that may support many solutions in the plan. Examples of potential funding sources appear in the chart at right.

Visit [www.hennepin.us/midtown](http://www.hennepin.us/midtown) to sign up for project updates, view supporting documents, and learn more about the “Making the Connections” plan.

**WHAT’S IN IT FOR THE COMMUNITY?**

- Lake Street
- Adjacent neighborhoods
- Midtown Greenway

**HOW MUCH IS NEEDED AND WHO COULD HELP SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN FUNDING THESE PROJECTS?**

$225,000

**CONNECTING TO THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**
- State and Federal transportation grants
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Local and national bike advocacy groups

$700,000

**PART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD**
- National and local arts grants
- Neighborhood enhancement grants
- Public and private placemaking grants

$350,000

**GETTING TO KEY DESTINATIONS**
- State of Minnesota legacy grants
- Federal and regional trail grants
- Minnesota DNR Grants

$495,000

**BICYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**
- Federal Highway Safety Grants
- Safe Routes to School
- State Transportation Safety Grants

**MIDTOWN COMMUNITY WORKS PARTNERS**

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Researched and prepared by Damon Farber Landscape Architects