Meeting Notes

Participants:

Date: 7/19/2014
Project: U of C Arts Block
Project Number: 2014304
Copy to:

From: SCB
Purpose: Public Workshop #2
Location: Arts Incubator

Discussion Notes:

Transportation

How can transportation issues in the neighborhood be improved?

• Block already has good transit options
• Encourage walking, and using transit
• What would make it better?
  o Bike Lanes
  o Fix potholes
  o Pedestrian Safety
  o Slowed Traffic
• Use Boulevard as a route to transit
• Getting to airport from here is difficult
• Potholes make lanes seem smaller
• Walking here isn’t scary but looks scary to outsiders
• Spaces/buildings in the area need to feel more inviting
  o Things should be built on empty lots
  o Needs “order” to help spaces feel safe
• Spaces for gathering and shopping are needed
• This is a historic area and has a “lot of unique character”
• Advocate to keep street parking free
• There is plenty of parking in the neighborhood currently

Architecture + Block Identity

What should the future corridor look like?

What heights of buildings would be appropriate?

• Need better signage
• Need to see activity inside of buildings from the street
• Locked doors on current facilities is a deterrent for visitors
• Lighting interiors of buildings at night, help it feel more active
• Buildings should make a bold statement
• Intercom entry in unwelcoming
• Don’t like muffler building, doesn’t blend into block
• Need modern buildings
• Windows replacements, opening up of buildings, will help it look more modern
• Attractive = urban = "want to go there"
  o “Funky different” – urban – edgy

The above constitutes the writer’s understanding of the items discussed and decisions reached. Should any of the participants disagree with this meeting record, contact the writer in writing within five days of the date of this document. Otherwise, the meeting minutes shall stand as the official record of the meeting described above.
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- Need landscaping, seating and outdoor cafes
  - Need more sophisticated looking streetscape
  - Need spaces to connect people
- Making improvements will encourage pedestrians
- Maintain empty lots – cut grass – fix broken pavement
- Create good public space for people to hangout
- Connect to Greenline, encourage CTA use
- Overly grand, or super modern buildings might clash with the historic buildings
- Respect the traditional architecture, pickup architectural elements, Schultz building is fabulous
- Create Washington Park banners for light poles
- Need an identity for the area
- Re-purpose the muffler shop – outdoor exposition
- Make a different façade on muffler shop
- Include a bank, grocery store, library or theater
- Keep buildings instead of tearing more buildings down
- Theater – small neighborhood stage + cinema + multi-purpose
- Create places for Youth
  - People music school
  - Marvin program
  - Face of the city
- Sustainable elements should be included
- Family friendly activities / spaces
- Place to learn music / volunteer
- Create little retail shops – jewelry, ceramics
- Synergy with retail that relates to the arts programs
- Do not like mobile food trucks unless they represent local business
- Culinary + business incubator
- Provide retail with short term rents, for business start-ups
- Technology Centers, Computer labs – create an office away from home
- Welcome signage to neighborhood from 94 (green line)
- Draw people into neighborhood
- See diversity and play it up!
- Washington Park Historical Society would work in Rail Station historic building
- “No more demolition”
- Provide places for local Christmas shopping!
- Keep integrity of the community!
- Do not like CTA station-parking lots

Building Heights and Scale?
- 3 is ok, 4 max + residential
- 2 levels for small retail shops would be ideal
- 6 levels would be good to overlook park, especially for a restaurant
- Greater height at King Drive makes sense

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- University of Chicago Hospital not the right scale for west of the park
- Carefully consider the scale of the block for pedestrians
- Buildings should be height of trees
- Neighborhood scale
- 6 + at King drive would be nice

Youth/Family + Academic Programs

*How can we engage families, children and partner with academic programs?*

- Create tutoring labs for math, reading, and writing
- Survey community families to help identify educational needs
- Workshops for adult education to support children in basic skills
- Must be a perception of safety on the block for families to use it
- Balance arts and academics, or use arts to teach academics
- Relate to what children like to do: culinary classes, robotics, gaming, drawing, dancing
- Partner with elementary administrations
- Provide free transportation for children
- Good programs for children include
  - Ceramics
  - Leather making
  - Film making/video – documentaries – new technology – viral (Youtube)
  - Music – digital beat making – produce, edit
  - Creative Writing
- Create children’s theater
- Computers to attract youth
- Make media editing programs / software accessible
- Life skill courses
- Leverage churches – places where youth congregate
- Culinary education in exchange café

Retail + Food

*How should food and retail be a part of the future of the corridor?*

- Create a local marketplace atmosphere
- Identify retail attraction strategies
- Let artists provide input into retail planning – ‘create places’
- Create a directory of local community artists
- Identify the neighborhood as an Artist community
- Food priority: farmers market (61st closest)
- Provide places to buy healthy food – coop
- Pop-up retail would be good, provide places for street vendors
- Food truck space
- Encourage foot traffic
- Culinary classes
- Food distribution system, places to grow food
- Invest in youth education about gardening, classes and cooking

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- Community kitchen – seniors and kids
- Provide a kitchen / facility for creating care packages for homeless
- Create spaces for both outdoor/summer and indoor/winter markets
- Markets can be a temporary use for empty spaces
- Create a marketing plan
- Be inviting!
- Partner with Washburn C.C., the Chopping block and local Chefs
- Seniors – record recipes, cultural dishes (history)
- Training centers – KLEO
- Identify the target audience
- Bring noise attention to area
- Lighting on street and in businesses outside stores
- Tourism – make area welcoming
- Outdoor seating – open doors to café / sliding doors
- Work with existing buildings / businesses

Performing Arts + Visual and Fine Arts

How do you engage in arts?
- Currently mostly only online
- Would like to have more in person connections
- Would like to be more involved with some of the activities at the Logan Center
- People in the neighborhood don’t know what arts activities are going on locally

How can we make it easier for people to participate?
- Engage existing community organizations and social groups (ex. Church, block org.)
- Go grassroots. Knock on doors – start person to person conversations
- Understand the make-up of the neighborhood. Create activities that people need / that support their life needs
- Connect to alderman’s office
- Need be consistent about outreach message for the Arts Incubator – follow-through with outreach vision
- Need to have clear communication – not just talk no action
- Need to involve business owners – or the chamber of commerce
- Need to create easily / approachable activities that everyone can participate in
- Need to announce things in the neighborhood, create a dependable system of announcements

Do you think kids would be interested in certain activities?
- Yes – into music / movement – activities that engage children at the appropriate level.
- Create a gateway to learning arts

What types of cultural activities are needed?
- Marven – music / arts center needed locally
- Currently have to go out of the neighborhood to find quality arts activities
- In other communities arts centers are more apparent. There is a huge need for arts activities locally
- Currently difficult for outsiders to get engaged with activities in the Arts Incubator

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- Need to get the word out
- Need someone who can reach out to people walking by who are curious
- Parks district activities have been reduced, need to get them back
- Communications about meetings/activities should be improved
- Using styles of music and art that relate to youth's life experiences
- Make your own instruments
- Music programs, make your own tracks/music
- Arts and workforce development
- Start with a fountain – create beauty and positive places
- Film festivals that celebrate the local culture
- Dance – world styles
- Acting classes
- Events, talent shows – provide the opportunity for kids to show off their learned skills with the community

How do our families engage with visual and performing arts?
- Children – music, "pop," hip-hop – core of youth culture
- Work with hip-hop artists – professional
- Jazz, jazz fusion, salsa dancing
- Museums, sculpture, public art
- Gallery
- Affordability is an issue – sing, dance, music