Long Lost Allies?

Walking Advocates & Business District Organizations

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Thursday, September 14, 17
About You!
About Us!
Many partners make a street great.

- **Businesses** (destinations and stewards)
- **Local government** (sets guidelines and rules)
- **Residents/Customers** (walkers or potential walkers)
  - Research shows walkers and bikers spend more money at local businesses than drivers
- **Advocates** (vision and pressure)

*Business district organizations can bring all of these partners together*
Businesses are stewards of the street.

- Businesses are the primary destination for many potential walkers

- Businesses shape and maintain key elements of a street
  - Visual intrigue (signs, art, plants, light, etc.)
  - Doors, walkways, and windows
  - Maintenance (cleaning, shoveling)
  - Special uses (patios, sidewalk sales, etc.)
  - Transportation amenities (parking lots, bike racks, benches)

- Business district organizations can bring resources to businesses in order to incentivize walk-friendly decisions in all of these realms
What do business district organizations do?

• Marketing and branding

• Events

• Provide direct technical assistance

• Administration of local government programs

• Advocate for stakeholder interests
  
  From business-friendly policy to housing development that grows customer base

• Influence or directly managing elements of the streetscape
Great Cities Collaborative

Practical and helpful peer network of small organization Executive Directors & program staff from Business Associations & CDCs.

- Information sharing and transitional peer-network support
- Historical representation from Minneapolis to St. Paul
- Worked towards policy change at city and government levels

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Seward Redesign

• Nonprofit CDC, established 1969
• Place-based: Seward and Greater Longfellow neighborhoods (30,000 residents)
• Housing development
• Commercial real estate development, brokerage and management
• Infrastructure advocacy
• Business development and support
• Sustained by philanthropy, government contracts, and earned fees
WBBA exists to engage the business community in the responsible economic development of the West Bank district while preserving the unique character and heritage of the Cedar-Riverside area.

1) District Marketing
2) Small Business Support & Technical Assistance
3) Regional Connections for the West Bank
Unique neighborhood features include:

1) 175+ businesses, 90% still locally owned / operated
2) 3 major academic institutions in addition to major medical
3) Cedar-Riverside neighborhood is home to the largest Somali immigrant population in the United States
4) Most densely populated area in the midwest, also one of the lowest median household incomes
5) Blue & Green Line light rail, multiple bus routes
The West Broadway Business and Area Coalition’s mission is to create an inviting and vital West Broadway Corridor and to encourage the development of the Northside into a thriving economic community.
Pedestrian Friendly Development
AFTER: 2601 East Franklin – Seward Co-op Grocery
BEFORE: 3300 East Lake Street – Vacant - (2012)
AFTER: 3300 East Lake Street – Sonora Grill and Repair Lair (2016)
Seward Commons: 2312 Snelling Ave - The Cooperage: Affordable Senior Housing (60 units)
2312 Snelling Ave – Cedars Rising Supportive Housing (40 units)
Touchstone Mental Health Headquarters (70 jobs)
Hiawatha Avenue & Lake Street intersection
Art, Culture, & Creative Place-making
Placemaking vs Creative Placemaking
Placemaking

• Programming for a place regardless of audience

• Use of events and activities

• Leadership may or may not come direct from the community, may not prioritize diversity / representation

• Audience size among primary goals

• Temporary use of space a focus

Creative Placemaking

• Direct input and impact of audience is considered

• Focused use of art and culture

• Diverse and/or representative partners with direct community representation and leadership (“nothing about us without us”)

• Audience composition among priority goals

• Long-term use and community impact of space a focus
Cedar Avenue
- A Cultural Corridor

- Arts on the Avenue
- Graffiti Prevention through environmental design
FLOW Northside Arts Crawl
West Broadway Open Streets
Lake Street
Museum in the Streets

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Business Improvement & Special Services Districts
Minneapolis Special Service Districts
What is a Business Improvement / Special Service District?

- Public / Private Partnership
- Gives businesses additional resources and control
- Collective contribution to
  - Maintenance
  - Development
  - Promotion
  - Safety (real and perceived)
  - All of these impact walkability!
How Can BIDs Improve the Pedestrian Environment?  
(West Broadway Case Study)
Safety, Livability, & Perceptions of Safety

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Public Safety

• Eyes on the street

• Engaging with community

• Providing jobs for community members and people with challenged pasts

• Crews out 4 days a week

• Weekly reports on issues such as vandalism, dumping, graffiti, and other nuisance items
Safety & Cleaning

- Collaboration among nonprofits
- We Live Here, We Work Here, We Learn Here
- Ongoing clean-ups
Cedar - Riverside / West Bank Safety Center

- Need arose from community for local safety arm
- Neighborhood nonprofits worked with precinct to procure funding, space, implement programming
- Opened in 2012
- Crime prevention, community engagement, resident support
- Neutral, usable space
Environmental Design

- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- CPTED business assessments in partnership with police department
  - Lighting
  - Windows and doors
  - Other safety elements
- Benches and bus shelters
Long Term Planning & Advocacy
Cedar Avenue Improvements

• Lack of freeway connection made this street a high-traffic pass-through

• 4-to-3 lane conversion: Intentional slowing of traffic, added parking, widening sidewalks

• Good for pedestrians, good for businesses
Reconnecting Neighborhoods
Seward & the West Bank, Interstate I-94: Broken Connections

Sources: City of Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Borchert Map Library
Reconnecting Neighborhoods
*Seward & the West Bank, Interstate I-94: Broken Connections*

*Before*

*Sources: City of Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Borchert Map Library*
Reconnecting Neighborhoods
Seward & the West Bank, Interstate I-94: Broken Connections

Before
(Broken connections in yellow)

Sources: City of Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Borchert Map Library
Reconnecting Neighborhoods: Whose streets?
Safe Crossing to Affordable Housing & its Greenspace

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Reconnecting Neighborhoods: I-94 Project

- Create dialogue between stakeholders in the community and government agencies;

- Frame the issues to be addressed with the assistance of traffic engineers;

- Evaluate alternatives and negotiate consensus solutions;

- Set priorities and seek funding together.

Desired outcomes will improve social and physical connections, access to jobs and businesses.
35 W Interchange
Broadway Railroad Bridge
Pedestrian-friendly Facade Improvements
Accessibility

- Utilizing programs like Facade Grant matching, VSA Minnesota
- Help bring buildings up to code & orgs address accessibility
- Buildings as well as neighborhood sidewalks
  *IE: parking, curb-cuts, bump-outs*
Murals & Pedestrian Amenities
Cultural Identity through Facade Improvement
Long-Lost Allies

(A two-way, pedestrian-friendly street!)
What do districts need from walking & cycling advocates?

• Studies show businesses under-estimate how many walk/bike/bus,

• Pedestrian advocates can & should join / participate on boards and committees,

• ... and thank businesses that have bike racks, water, and other amenities,

• Advocate for city programs that support small businesses
  *(bike rack cost-share, facade improvement grants, business association operating support)*,

• And support safety initiatives beyond policing funding!
Questions?

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