



## EVENT PREVIEW

### Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan

# Tuesday, January 18

## Focus Group: Arts, Culture & Ideas

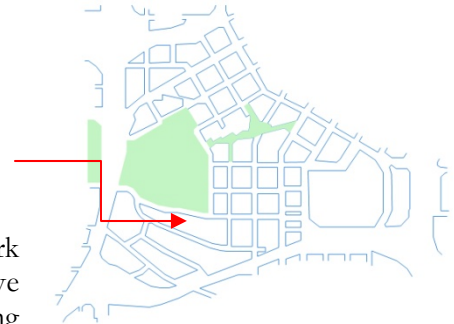
The Woman's Club 410 Oak Grove Street

1:30pm-3:00pm



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)



### Loring's 'Creative Capital'

Our neighborhood is home to a large number of 'creative sector' individuals, businesses & institutions - the concentration of creative sector businesses in Loring (15%) is twice that of Hennepin County. Inventors, entrepreneurs, writers, designers, I.T.'s, journalists, and every kind of artist - live and work in the district. Loring is also home base for a large number of institutions that draw people together for the exploration and celebration of ideas, beliefs, and for interaction on a social and cultural level.

### How can these assets be better supported in Loring? Can we leverage these strengths for the greater good of our City and our Region?

The Master Plan Steering Committee will convene a focus group to discuss:

- The range & types of people attracted to the area
- Assets that Loring has to offer
- What draws people to Loring Park to live, work, play and visit? What keeps folks away?
- Ideas for Loring's future as a gathering place for cultural activities...

- Specific steps that might be taken towards this vision

Potential participants: Minneapolis Community and Technical College, area churches, Walker Art Center, Pride Committee, Red Eye and Music Box Theaters, Woman's Club, Minneapolis Convention Center, and others.

Results of this focus group will inform the cultural and economic vitality and public realm elements of the Master Plan, as well as other areas such as pedestrian circulation, land use, and development priorities.



The 90 minute session will be facilitated by Tom Borrup of Creative Community Builders, member of the 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, and is intended as an opportunity for key stakeholders to have a voice in the master planning process. The public is invited to listen. For further information, contact Jana at CLPC - 612-874-9002. Updated January 7, 2010.*

## Loring Park Master Planning Process

FOCUS GROUP – Arts, Culture & Ideas

Tuesday, Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011; 1:30-3:00 p.m.

*Thanks to Pam Lehan and The Woman's Club of Minneapolis for hosting today!!*

Area Stakeholders present: Pat Parnow/Loring Park Art Festival, Steve Barberio/Loring Theater, Hafed Bouassida/MCTC-Film Dept., Phill Lindsay, Johan van Parys/Basilica of St. Mary, Kathy Dhaemer/Basilica of St. Mary, Greg Hennes/Gallery owner, Diane Moe/Loring Park Director, Pam Lehan/The Woman's Club of Minneapolis, Mary Ann Snedic Wunderlin/Loring Park Art Festival, Roy Williams/Hennepin Ave. United Methodist Church, Inez Bergquist/Cathedral of St. Mark's, and Mary Altman/City of Minneapolis-Arts & Culture.

Staff present: Peter Musty/Master Plan Consultant, Tom Borrup/Master Plan Consultant & facilitator, and Jana Metge/CLPC Coordinator.

Tom welcomed all for coming and a round of introductions were conducted. Jana distributed Sign-In Sheet, name tags, handout on Master Plan Consultant Team, and introduced today's host – Pam Lehan, General Manager of The Woman's Club of Minneapolis.

*Pam welcomed all to The Woman's Club of Minneapolis.*

**Pam did an overview of the Club:** The Woman's Club of Minneapolis was started in 1907 by six (6) women. They knew that they could do more together than individually. They purchased a building on 15<sup>th</sup> & Harmon, but soon outgrew it and built the building at 410 Oak Grove in 1928. Members of The Woman's Club of Minneapolis are responsible for 1) the school meal programs, 2) purification of the city's water, 3) public health program, and a number of other programs which they have initiated. They participate 2x/year in Project Homeless Connect with the City/County effort to eliminate homelessness. They have the oldest sewing guild in the City and provide HCMC's maternity ward with baby clothing and products. They have hosted the neighborhood's National Night Out event – in 2009 we had 400 in attendance and in 2010 we had 600. Saturday they hosted a "Baby Shower" for the Visiting Nurses Program and raised over \$50,000 of items necessary for this program, including some baby cribs.

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. 30<sup>th</sup> 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. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Then on Thursday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> 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. 6<sup>th</sup> a "Visioning" Community Design workshop was hosted by the Wesley Church. This weekend is our third (3<sup>rd</sup>) in a series of Master Plan Gatherings and Events. **Thursday, Jan. 20th** will feature a panel on Multi-Model Transportation hosted by the Basilica of St. Mary from 6:00-9:00 p.m. **Saturday, Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>** will be our third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Community Design Workshop hosted by Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

Today is the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) focus group. Other Focus Groups have been conducted with Rental Property Owners & Managers, Condo Owners (north end and south end), Harmon Avenue, and Nicollet Avenue. 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), Councilmember Lisa Goodman, and Lt. Matt Clark (safety issues). 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. (Note - the Request for Proposal overviewing the purpose of the Master Plan is on the CLPC website – [www.loringpark.org](http://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](mailto:clpc@visi.com).*

Tom overviewed the purpose and process for today's Focus Group – “Loring Park – Arts, Culture, and Ideas”. Tom has completed research which shows the neighborhood to be home to a large number of “creative sector” individuals, businesses, & institutions. Loring Park data reflects that we have 2x the concentration of creative sector businesses than that of Hennepin County. Today, the question of how can these assets be better supported in Loring and how can we leverage these strengths for the greater good of our neighborhood, City, and our Region are the discussion topics.

**Discussion Questions:** (Note – input from comments written on index cards & discussion).

1. *What are the assets which Loring Park neighborhood offers people who live, work, or study here?*

- Places of worship
- Cafes & Restaurants
- Parks & Green spaces
- Arts – Theatre – Movies – Performances
- Beautiful architecture
- Cultural & Creative density & characteristics
- Various modes of transportation
- Diverse Community
- Historic significance – lots of history
- Festivals
- Artsy & Urban
- Arts/Access to visual arts i.e. Walker & Sculpture Garden
- Downtown & Neighborhood nexus
- Educational institutions and living spaces
- Everything in a small, contained environment! Recreation, art, shopping, theaters (movie and live performances), restaurants
- Basilica Art Programs – Gallery/8-10 exhibits per year & 25 Concerts per year
- Cultural Activity – Arts – Programs at Hennepin Ave. United Methodist
- Cultural Activity – Arts – Programs at MCTC
- Great Events as Loring Art Festival & PRIDE
- New ownership & program at the Loring Theater on Nicollet Ave–200 events @ 200 per
- Houses of worship are beautiful and welcoming
- Neighborhood is Central to City of Minneapolis – centrality
- Neighborhood has a creative cultural identity
- Neighborhood is community to Arts & Education

2. *What are the assets which Loring Park offers people who visit?*

- Convention Center
- Walker Art Center and the unique Sculpture Garden
- Need to get numbers from organizations as to # of folks coming to each per year
- There is pride in the neighborhood of those who live and work here
- Institutions and organizations give back to the neighborhood – St. Mark's paid for the playground in Loring Park during NRP Phase I and The Woman's Club of Minneapolis paid for the fishing pier per our NRP Phase I implementation.

- Many hotels are adjacent to the neighborhood
  - Loring Park is intimate and small with beautiful fauna and floral, yet in an intimate setting – feels more inviting than the larger parks
  - There is a Legacy to Loring Park – i.e. release of the white swans in the pond – ballparks open to both men and women – it is sacred ground – open & inviting to all
  - Lots of gathering places in the neighborhood
  - Public Spaces/green spaces/park
  - Lots of places for weddings and events (Park-Woman’s Club-Churches)
3. *What are the characteristics of people attracted to Loring Park?*
- Folks in search of all stated above
  - Concerts
  - Political Actions
  - The Community is open, accepting, and warm
  - Food – Art – Weddings – Park
  - Great place to live – all above would attract you here
  - To visit – Events will attract you here, may not be a destination location for suburban visitors and folks may come to i.e. a Basilica event and not be aware that they are in the Loring Park neighborhood
  - Building units are for small families, so great location for retired folks to move to – close to downtown, to cultural activities, beautiful park, green space, dog park/place for dogs
  - High rental is an asset, especially because it is affordable
  - Churches draw from a regional base/freeway divided up neighborhoods
  - Loring Park Art Festival markets to a regional base and suburban base to get a good showing.
  - “I think visitors are surprised by the beauty of the Park & surrounding buildings
  - People who visit are not afraid to go out of their “comfort zone”
  - Light Rail brings folks to downtown and then to Loring Park enroute to the Walker & Sculpture Garden, a lot of international and national visitors.
  - Need to ask Convention Center how many folks per year.
4. *Vision for Loring Park Neighborhood and its assets:*
- “FLOW” – great neighborhood where it is – some walking routes and access do not flow well. Neighborhood is land-locked and bounded by freeways; edges of grid connect in several spots and not in others. Need connectivity. Some areas of places to walk in and out and around – need to improve.
  - Welcoming – Safe – Active - Vibrant
  - Connections and better walkways.
  - Public transportation / ease to get to downtown – many folks do not feel that taking a bus is comfortable – idea of a streetcar is exciting and will get folks to come through the neighborhood. Hard to get to Loring Park if from a suburb.
  - Better neighborhood – Continue to build on aesthetics
  - “Alive & Enlightened” – area should be experienced as a “live” area – may be a bit sleepy vs. active like NYC.
  - Visual & Artistic
  - Diverse
  - Inclusive of the Edges – i.e. Nicollet Ave. feels a bit outside of the neighborhood and not a part of the flow.
  - Green – Arts – Education – connect them
  - People – Involvement & Energy that will continue
  - Budget Cuts – worry that amenities will not be funded to keep operational and maintained – i.e. Berger Fountain
  - Safe – Safe in actuality and in perception
  - Market – collective marketing for the neighborhood image and of collective events

- Safe access and crossing to Loring Park, especially across 15<sup>th</sup> Street
  - That it is a walking neighborhood
  - Access to parking that is identified, available, easy to get to and safe
  - More shops and cafes
  - More involvement by and with MCTC and students
5. *Reasons folks do not come to Loring Park Neighborhood:*
- Past reputation of the 70's and 80's
  - Perception / reality of safety
  - Parking – Access to, directions to, security that there would be adequate parking, and safety of parking
  - Traffic routed around Loring Park; hard to get to it if you are not familiar
  - Feeling that neighborhood is not safe so close to downtown
6. *Specific steps that could be taken toward the Vision:*
- The Woman's Club of Minneapolis could build an underground parking ramp on their sight to market for neighborhood events and activities
  - The Woman's Club of Minneapolis could build a stairway from "the hill" to 15<sup>th</sup> Street and then create a safe passage across 15<sup>th</sup> Street. A stairwell from the parking lot to 15<sup>th</sup>, a green walkway through and down would activate the edge of the Park.
  - Enhance Public Transportation – Streetcars!
  - Make Greenway more visible on both ends so that people know it goes somewhere from each end.
  - Communicate Assets to others – develop a plan
  - Develop better and safer walking/connectors
  - Develop identity as the Creative Center of Minneapolis
  - Example was given per Chicago Arts Business District – gives the Avenue more access to funding, CPED, city staff support, and communications.
  - Improve ways to cross 15<sup>th</sup> Street – it is suicide to get across and onto the main entrance of the park and dangerous for the children at the church daycares. It needs to have safe crossing for all, somehow.
  - Program Loring Park in the winter – ice skating, Food vendors, ice bowling, carnival in the Park; plan events by organizations/institutions being on a planning team and taking part in the planning of the event. This may get their constituencies at the event.
  - Access to the Park – crossing on 15<sup>th</sup> is dangerous and unsafe, a liability to the City
  - Create a DVD and market the neighborhood to suburban Rotary Clubs
- Develop and implement "Familiarization Tours" with suburban governments to promote the neighborhood
  - Edge of Downtown to Franklin Ave. – Develop and implement critical steps to ensure 1) Safety/Policing, 2) Market Theater opportunities, 3) Economic and Real Estate Development, 4) improved transit; stretch up to the level of quality in that other areas in the neighborhood enjoy.
  - Loring Park Ambassadors to greet visitors, give directions, welcome folks
  - Eliminate areas of "ugliness" – i.e. parking lot by Joe's Garage
  - Create more beauty and interesting features in the neighborhood
  - Create a 2-3 year series of PSA to be played on TV promote Loring Park neighborhood and its events
  - Find things that will attract students to get involved in the neighborhood, park, events and activities – maybe even live here
  - Collaborate more amongst arts organization – cross promotion
  - Develop and implement "Open Houses & Events" in conjunction with the Loring Park Arts Festival – August 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011
  - Predictability for available parking if visitors are coming in to events and we want the competitive edge.

- Market the neighborhood – develop a PR campaign
- Need a balance between activity of the Park/neighborhood and the quietness which the greenspace/nature/flowers provide

*Other Issues/Ideas:*

- Create a sculpture garden into the City – sculptures could rotate – institutions & organizations could build platforms for the art and encourage Walk-a-bout tours
- Continue to work with Heading Home Hennepin and the City/County plan to reduce homelessness
- Connect Art organizations and businesses – market our assets!
- MCTC students/parents do not feel safe and feel that the neighborhood is not safe for their children. Develop ways to help parents feel comfortable (and students) – open houses, speaking at college orientations, walking tours during orientation
- Think about re-kindling the “Walk on the Avenue” – hasn’t occurred for 3 years – open houses followed by a concert – created a sense of community and organizations collaborating.
- Develop way to promote amenities – for example, The Woman’s Club of Minneapolis has a Theatre which seats 632 folks.
- The loss of the Lowry triangle when the tunnel was built and freeways put through was discussed. MNDOT, in the future, needs to do remediation here, make this area more walkable, fix that space, connect green space – i.e. Seattle
- Determine ways to market Minneapolis over St. Paul – distance from suburbs is the same
- Density can be a plus or a negative for visitors – can be exciting or overwhelming

Tom closed the discussion with the comment that “folks come to Loring Park for rejuvenation – it is the cultural hub of the Midwest/Region!”

Jana encouraged all to spread the word about Thursday’s Gathering and panel presentation Multi-model Transportation – Pete put up the Preview on the screen.

Tom thanked everyone for coming and participating!

*Respectfully submitted, JLM*