



omaha by design

Mini Place Game Exercise
Heyday on May Day Event
(TMP Open House organized by Mode Shift Omaha)
@ 25th and Harney
May 1, 2012

Omaha by Design was among the participants in Mode Shift Omaha's HeyDay on May Day event, which also served as the final open house for the City of Omaha's Transportation Master Plan.

ObD asked those in attendance to evaluate Harney Street from 24th to 26th and suggest potential improvements that could be made in both the short- and long-term. Seventy-one attendees completed the exercise.

Evaluation Tool

Participants were asked to evaluate Harney Street between 24th and 26th according to the four criteria outlined below, which rank responses on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree").

Comfort and image

- Attractive
- Feels safe
- Clean/well maintained
- Comfortable places to sit

Access and linkage

- Identifiable from a distance
- Walkable
- Bikeable
- Accessible by transit
- Clean information/signage

Uses and activities

- Good mix of activities
- Frequent community events
- Area is busy
- Encourages physical activity
- Area is vital economically

Sociability

- People in groups
- Evidence of volunteerism
- Sense of pride and ownership
- Children and seniors present

Overall Rankings

The participants ranked the area's access/linkage as its highest asset with an average score of 2.9. Comfort/image and sociability tied for second with average scores of 2.2, and uses/activities came in last place with an average score of 2.1.

Analysis

What do you like best about this place?

- Close to midtown
- Good location to revitalize
- Access to downtown
- It gets me from my house to work downtown
- The old buildings
- Open
- Inviting with lots of potential
- Location
- That it connects areas within Omaha (midtown, downtown, Field Club Trail)
- Small town feel
- The brick buildings
- Fairly low traffic
- Urban environment
- The apartments
- Close to my office
- Easy area to have a business
- Has trees along the street (need more)
- Mix of old and new
- Proximity to dining and entertainment areas
- Transit/pedestrian access
- Views to downtown
- Low rent

What is the biggest problem with this place?

- Dirty
- Needs renovation
- Parking
- Low enforcement of maintenance
- Garbage/ cluttered with debris
- It's not walker or biker friendly – long stretches of ugly
- Vacancies/a lot of the old buildings are falling apart
- Run down
- Feels “dangerous”
- Needs more attractions, landscaping and recycle bins
- Safety and awareness of bicyclists
- Nothing here permanently
- Empty
- Congestion
- Aesthetically unpleasing
- No economic vibrance
- Needs more green open spaces for free community events
- Perception of lack of safety
- Cars blowing by on the street
- Would be a nice place for a park
- Traffic volume
- Lack of attractive business facades, streetscape, green spaces
- No occupancy
- Boring, nothing to do
- Not a destination

- Meter parking on Farnam
- Seems blighted
- Not enough people
- Underdeveloped
- Appearance
- Nothing to keep people here – no reason for being
- No sense of place
- Underused
- No identity
- It's ugly
- Maintenance
- Hard to see as traffic speeds by (visibility)
- It's built for cars, not people
- It needs a makeover, but the bones are great
- Lack of infill development
- Crime
- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Terrain and ease of use

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.

- Paint
- New garage
- New windows
- Clean up
- Change buildings
- Plants (more flora)
- Trees
- Gardens
- Bike path
- Rental bikes (such as Omaha B-cycle)
- Murals
- Finish the bike lanes
- Lighting
- Landscaping
- Recycle and trash bins
- Restaurant
- Events like this
- Walking path
- Renovate the beautiful old architecture in the area to attract people to live here
- Make it more pedestrian and bike friendly
- Installing perimeter benches and tables
- Show movies on the white brick wall in the summer
- Water fountains
- Turn empty lots into small green spaces
- Shops
- Make it more accessible
- Park with activities (hoops, skate park)
- Use storefronts
- Local art
- Beautification on the north side
- Bike lane

- Places to sit
- Less pavement
- Nice grassy areas
- Slower speed limit
- More trash pick up
- More bike lanes in the area
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Police presence
- Solar lighting
- Involve neighbors and businesses
- Go from one-way to two-way on Harney
- "Broken window" philosophy
- Bike shops
- Create a pocket park
- Banners
- Colored bike lane
- Business incubator

What three changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

- Plant and keep the area maintained
- Concerts
- Water feature
- Better street maintenance
- Update older buildings
- Update sidewalks
- Encourage businesses to the area
- General cleaning
- Good surfaces to walk and ride
- Bike lanes
- Add retail businesses/employment companies
- People living in the area
- More eating places
- Bike/pedestrian route
- Low maintenance landscaping
- Hold community events/block parties here
- Recruit businesses for economic development
- Public garden space
- Public transportation
- Food forest (draw in community, habitat for animals, insects)
- More accessible roads for bikers, pedestrians, public transit
- Turn unused lots into greenscapes
- More trees
- Affordable housing
- Art co-ops
- Put in a community shopping area
- A church
- Community center or bike shop
- Streetscape
- Open markets of different kinds
- Retail – more interaction

- Attract families
- Convenient restaurants
- Farmers market
- Gallery
- Benches/greenery
- Bike way
- Viable business mix
- Blend of retail/food/residential
- Small businesses
- Community garden space (maybe include demos/teaching space for urban chickens and beekeeping)
- Park
- Walk-through from Farnam to Harney
- Incentivize business development
- Vacancies
- More social events
- Interactive entertainment
- Shade
- Plant trees
- Needs commerce at the street level
- Need 24/7 rail to replace bus between Old Market and 72nd Street, then Westroads
- Harney Street Bike Trail
- Iconic shelter
- Creative, colorful lighting
- Development of Hupmobile building

Comments from users of the place. (Exercise participants were told to ask someone who is in the place what they like about it and what they would do to improve it.)

- Hold more events like this
- Like the location, just need to update it
- Build
- Need more people living in the area
- Update older buildings
- Murals
- Like the location, needs more shops
- Make strong link to the Old Market and Midtown Crossing
- Food carts
- Less crime
- Easy business area for industrial use
- Fresh paint
- More green space
- Improved options for mobility
- Make it safer
- Create weekly "owners" of the space

What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed activities? Please be as specific as possible.

- Mulhall's
- John Hoich
- New BLK
- Midtown Crossing

- Kent Bellows Studio and Center for Visual Arts
- Progressive landscape architects
- Alley Poyner Macchietto
- J Development
- NuStyle Development Corp.
- Building owners and city developers to partner their resources to improve what we have rather than tearing it all down and starting over
- Omaha permaculturalists
- Greenstreet Cycles
- Local musicians and artists
- Rows at SOMA developer
- Use the cycling community to support efforts
- Papio Missouri River NRD
- Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- Use engageomaha.com to tap into more folks
- Courtyard Ink
- Hot Shops
- Emerging Terrain
- Artists
- Businesses
- Metropolitan Community College
- Low income housing
- Master gardeners from Extension Office
- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Jun Kaneko
- Lauritzen Gardens
- Bemis Center for the Contemporary Arts
- Youth Emergency Services
- Community service by young people
- Lasting Hope Recovery Center
- Tap the underemployed
- Public administration students at UNO
- Activate Omaha
- City Sprouts
- Mode Shift Omaha
- Private contractors
- Sierra Club
- National Audubon Society
- Green Omaha Coalition
- Colleges

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