

Newsletter

Seward Redesign / Seward Neighborhood Group / SCCA
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TASKFORCE MEETING TIMES AND DATES

Visual Identity – Landscaping

Mondays at 6:30 PM

Movement

Tuesdays at noon

Community Involvement Crime and Safety

Topics moved to other Task Forces (see article on page 3 for details)

Local Business Vitality/Gateways

Fridays at 8:30 AM

Seward Redesign
<http://www.sewardredesign.org>

Seward Civic & Commerce Association (SCCA)
<http://www.sewardredesign.org/SCCA-about.html>

Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG)
<http://www.sng.org/>

Brainstorming Strategies

By Emily Wergin

We spent Week 3 brainstorming ideas for how to help nurture a Franklin Avenue that better aligns with our core values.

A huge range of ideas have been emerging; they range from easy and practical ones (like adding more garbage bins) to long-term dreams, (like building a land-bridge over Highway 94 to Augsberg.) We tried to organize the ideas based on type (physical, policy or event) and how long they would take to implement.

We've collected the ideas that came out of all 4 task forces, (as well as the walks and community workshop,) and have been looking across them to find common themes. This week, we'll present emerging potential projects back to the task forces for discussion.

In order to see how an idea can actually be implemented by the community, I went to a workshop about the "Paint the Pavement" program in St Paul. The city has set up an easy-to-navigate program for residents who want to create a street-mural on their block. A non-profit organization provides advice and assistance to help neighbors out. The visual variety these murals provide help slow traffic AND the process of creating them helps build community.

One resident explained how her block created a mural in an intersection. They



Paint the Pavement Project in St. Paul.

began by getting to know one another by hosting potlucks where they discussed ideas for improving their street. One issue people noticed was that it was hard to read everyone's house numbers. A few people got together to organize an event where each household would paint a bird-shaped address marker. This event gave the group of neighbors an opportunity to work together to create something real on their block. Hence, when someone suggested painting a large mural, everyone was confident that they could do it.

Paint the Pavement is a wonderful example of how a small physical project can be combined with an event to build community while improving the physical infrastructure. Perhaps we can use this model to inspire similar projects on Franklin Avenue?

For more information about Paint the Pavement, see www.paintthepavement.org.

TASKFORCE AGENDAS

- Meeting #1: Review input to date and set the stage for vision and values
- Meeting #2: Set Vision and Values
- Meeting #3: Define Strategies
- Meeting #4: Detail out test projects**
- Meeting #5: Finalize and refine, and Celebrate!



What The Experts Are Saying ...

Here we bring in information from outside our neighborhood on topics relevant to our discussion. As you read what the experts have to say, think about how it relates to your own experience. Embrace it. Question it. Reject it. Talk about it... you decide.

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS!

Research for this "What the Experts Are Saying" section is made possible through funding from the **McKnight Foundation** and the **Phillip's Family Foundation**.

This weeks' expert section is based on "The Affordability Index: A New Tool for Measuring the True Affordability of a Housing Choice," an article published by the Center for Transit Oriented Development and the Center for Neighborhood Technology in January of 2006. To read the full report on housing and transportation affordability, go to:

www.reconnectingamerica.org/public/reports

Read the Franklin Avenue Blog!

www.FranklinAvenue.us

Transportation and Affordability

By Emily Wergin

With gas prices skyrocketing, reducing transportation costs is a hot topic. While getting a more fuel-efficient vehicle can help, many people are trying to walk, bike and take public transportation more often.

Do you know that Seward/Longfellow already has some of the highest concentrations of commuting by foot, bike or public transit in the Twin Cities? The 2000 census found that 26% of Seward/Longfellow residents commute by these modes. This is compared to 8% in the 7-county metro region.¹

This data was included in a 2006 article that used the Twin Cities Region to study the impact of transportation costs on housing affordability. Seward / Longfellow is one of the case studies in the article. As a result of below-average car use for commuting, overall transportation costs are also lower. The average household in Minneapolis spends less than \$7000 annually on transportation while the metro-area average is nearly \$11,000. (These numbers are all from before the price of gas started climbing.) Even though the median income in Seward/Longfellow is

39% less than the metro average (\$33 as opposed to \$54,000), the percent of that income spent on transportation is only 1 percent higher.²

The proximity of our neighborhood to employment centers and colleges as well as access to public transit and bikeable routes helps make Seward an affordable place to live.

¹ Affordability Index p 9
² Affordability Index p 11

Questions to Consider ...

- To what extent do the transportation choices that people in Seward make reflect our identity?
- What percent of people who live and/or work on Franklin Avenue commute by foot? Bus/LRT? Bike? Car?
- What percent of customers to Franklin Avenue businesses get there by foot? Bus/LRT? Bike? Car?

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Newsletter

Task Force Participation

As of Week 3, the following people have participated in our task forces:

Visual Identity / Landscaping

Jean Johnstad, resident
Kathryn Rosebear, resident
Nancy Sampson, resident
Marne Zafar, SNG board and resident
Cindy Burns, resident
Greg Tromiczak, resident
Roxanne Bergeron, resident
Brian Hughes, SNG board and resident
Lylee Rauch-Kacenski, resident
*Sheldon Mains, SNG board and resident
*Katya Pilling, Seward Redesign staff
*Emily Wergin, Seward Redesign staff and resident
*Gayla Lindt, CityDesk Studio

Movement

Elina Kolstad, resident
Sue Zuriff, resident
Clem Engen, resident
Mary Gaytan, Seward Redesign staff and resident
Nina Chenault, Movement Arts Center and resident
Brian Miller, Seward Redesign Staff
*Robin Garwood, Councilmember Gordon's Aide
*Bernie Waibel, SNG staff and resident
*Emily Wergin, Seward Redesign staff and resident
*Christian Dean, CityDesk Studio

Community Involvement / Crime and Safety

Sandy Isham, resident
Marilyn Jones, resident
Annalee Brown, resident
*Ross Gabrick, SNG Board and resident
*Katya Pilling, Seward Redesign Staff
*Christian Dean, CityDesk Studio

Local Business Vitality

Tracy Singleton, Birchwood Café and resident
Charlie Hoffman, Hoffman Guitars and resident
Chris Johansen, Crown Video & Tanning
Leah Robshaw, resident
Suzanne Weinstein, Coastal Seafoods
Bruce Johansen, resident
*Hans Steege, Dero Bike Rack and resident
*Jim Welna, Welna Hardware
*Bernie Waibel, SNG staff and resident
*Katya Pilling, Seward Redesign staff
*Christian Dean, CityDesk Studio
*Galya Lindt, CityDesk Studio

End of meeting evaluations have identified three main shortcomings in our task force participation.

1. The cultural diversity of our neighborhood is not represented in the task forces.
2. There are not as many Franklin Avenue businesses participating as would be ideal.
3. The Community Involvement / Crime & Safety Task Force has only had 1-3 participants per meeting.

Help With Outreach! If you have suggestions for how to reach out to parts of our community that are under-represented in this process, please let us know.

Task Force Adjustment: Community Involvement and Crime and Safety are important topics and we need more people to provide input on these areas. As a result, we are adjusting our task forces.

- The Monday Group (Visual Identity) will now make sure to include Community Involvement in their discussions. This should be a good fit for the large, talkative group that often brings up community involvement ideas anyway.
- The Friday Group (Local Business Vitality) will make sure to include crime and safety in their discussions. This group has already been thinking a lot about this topic because it is so important to the success of our businesses.

We will no longer have a Task Force on Wednesday evenings; we hope that those who have previously participated in this group will be able to join one of the other groups for the final two meetings.

**Indicates that the participant is part of the Franklin Avenue Steering Committee*

To **join a task force**
or ask a question,
please contact emily@sewardredesign.org



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Opinion Page - This is your space!

There is never time in our meetings for everyone to say everything that they're thinking about. If you have a really cool idea, share it here! If you want to rant, this is the place to do it! If you aren't able to participate in a task force but want to contribute to the process, here's your space.

Whatever you have to say, send it to emily@sewardredesign.org for inclusion in the next weeks' newsletter.

Strategy Ideas Keep Flowing After Meeting

After the [Visual Identity] meeting I took the 2 down Franklin, and then back in to Seward, and paid close attention to some things we had talked about. A few thoughts:

- 1) Outside of the Desiring God storefront there is an electrical/ fuse box. In a St. Louis neighborhood, they had artists cover them in beautiful Mosaic tile works. pretty cool
- 2) To the east of that storefront the little planting of trees and grass in front of the parking lot is quite sad - needs to be spruced up, benches too, perhaps?
- 3) Maybe banners on the light poles that have Seward's logo, are colorful, and say things about Seward? (<http://www.artsintransit.org/1997-images.html> - an example of a "main street" in a part of St. Louis city)
- 4) Also- I'm sure you have been looking in to the way that other cities approach art and visual identity into their neighborhoods. Not to focus on St. Louis so much (but it is what I know) - the metro transit authority has an arts in transit branch, and they have done some really cool work. (<http://www.artsintransit.org/> - be sure to check out the projects tab- then past projects)
- 5) If we did have a "Seward night out" celebration on Franklin, it could be cool to work with Metro Transit and have an art-bus-project. I'm not sure if they have done it here- but I know in other cities they paint buses, usually as part of a big art celebration- a local artist will plan out the design, then kids and general public will paint on the bus. (<http://www.artsintransit.org/bus-2004.html>)

Lylee Rauch-Kacenski
Seward resident

Suggested Amendment to Green Core Value Statement

Carol Greenwood, SNG Environment Committee Chair, wrote in requesting that the italicized portion below be added to the vision statement for the "Seward is Green" core value:

"We envision Franklin Avenue as a place that

[1] is a model of environmental health and sustainability, demonstrating the best in resource conservation, energy efficiency, and waste reduction for the neighborhood and the state, and 2) a place where small businesses can meet the economic needs of their neighbors while supporting owners and employees in an economically sustainable way.]

contributes to the environmental health of both our neighborhood and the world."

Newsletter Trivia!

According to the 2000 census, what percent of Seward/Longfellow residents commute by foot, bike or public transit?

The answer can be found somewhere in this newsletter.