

Toledo Museum of Art
Museum Place Community Conversation #6 Notes – Frederick Douglass
Community Center
Meeting Date: 2/8/18
16 people in attendance

Who Attended: Jason Daniels of JAYRAMON LLC introduced himself as facilitator for the evening. There was a total of 16 community stakeholders present for the meeting and 1 representative of Toledo Museum of Art (TMA).

Why We Are Here: In early 2017, TMA became the official property owners of the Museum Place (MP) Residences—five historic buildings along Monroe Street and Collingwood Avenue, in Toledo’s Old West End Historic District. As a trusted institution in the Toledo community, the Museum is hosting a series of public community conversations about the next steps and plans for the MP properties. Current MP residences, community members, neighbors in the surrounding neighborhoods, and other area stakeholders all invited to attend the community meetings and provide feedback. There will be a total of 10 Community Conversations taking place in or near neighborhoods surrounding TMA campus. Each meeting will be led by a facilitator and last up to 90 minutes.

What to Expect: Each meeting will include the same questions. What will be different are the discussions and themes suggested by stakeholders. Notes from each of the 10 meetings will be posted to TMA website. At the conclusion of the meetings, a final report will be created and shared with the community, TMA staff and board of trustees.

Question 1: What kind of art do you like and what do you like about it?

Group 1: Abstract art, performance art, and film. Medieval and renaissance art (service to community). Gardens, botanical gardens, multisensory gardens with flowers. Freelance street art. Community engaged art. Participatory art (the Bean in Chicago and art experienced through various seasons. Iconic in Chicago). Community driven art and sculptures. Photography. Political art. Participatory art.

Group 2: Visual art (Pieces that engage people, families, and is interactive. Sculpture art with emotional appeal). Self-expression art that serve as

conversational pieces. Art that provides a platform for graffiti artists where they can have their work recognized on a wall of building in the community. Art that engaged kids. Art where kids play a part in creating an interactive piece. Need more graffiti art downtown.

Common Themes

- Visual Art.
- Art that Engages (individuals, kids and community).
- Art that attracts people to it.

Question 2: What do you currently like about this neighborhood?

Group 1: Architectural art that has a connectedness to the neighborhood. Diversity and cultural art. Vintage homes as art. Places like Frederick Douglass Community Center is art located in a neighborhood. Diversity of experiences in the smaller communities – lots of different socioeconomic experiences, cultural experiences, in a small area. Historical richness – how can that be highlighted more, so people and visitors to our city know about rich history. Trees. Homes have such history like secret passageways in old homes with a story to tell. Increase in various types of outreach activities (slow roll bike excursions). New businesses. Inclusivity is increasing.

Group 2: Diversity. Multiculturalism. Vintage and historic homes as art. Family-friendly activities in centrally located areas. Preservation of all neighborhoods. Have real estate companies take a lead in inviting residents to the area as marketable, safe community. Homes like Art Tatum should be a tourism mecca and educational for kids from all over. City Park has a rich history. Diversity of experiences throughout various neighborhoods.

Common Themes

- Diversity within different neighborhoods.
- Historical richness in homes and activities throughout various neighborhoods.

Question 3: What do you aspire the neighborhood to look like 10 years from now?

Group 1: Better sidewalks. Less potholes. More engaged public historical narratives – more historic signs and signs letting people know where they are and where the neighborhood attractions are. More festivals. Community bikes (bike sharing). Sustainability integrated across many platforms. Greener communities and neighborhoods. Lots of artists. Better lighting. Restoring the concept of “neighbor” and “neighborhood” – better communication, fabric of communication (what is communication?). More diversity in types of city events (make them all throughout the year). New sources of pride. Do something about bridging the gap between the museum and the university – stretches of Monroe and Bancroft – not walkable, very gray. More walking paths where we feel safer.

Group 2: No vacant or abandoned houses. Stronger city and bank engagement/value recognition. Bike trail to go with those bikes! Historic bike tour – with placards, ex. Art Tatum’s house, YouTube playlist of his music, scavenger hunt, mystery, choose-your-own-adventure. Virtual map of historic district and trolley tours. Vibrant, well lit community. More investments in the neighborhood – both private and public. Envisioning people living better 10 years from now. Interactive and disability friendly play area (great consensus among everyone in the room based on murmurs and multiple comments) like Smith Park. Elected officials will know their neighborhoods, council leaders want to hold meetings in the areas they’re responsible for leading.

Common Themes

- Interactive and disability-friendly play area for kids and families.
- Safe walkable community with walking trails (signage).
- Community bike trails.

Question 4: How could we imagine Museum Place?

Group 1 and 2 in combined dialogue: Condominiums. University art student housing – musicians too. Artist live-work spaces or just workspaces/studios. Out of the 5 buildings: 4 can be devoted to different verticals (performing art, music,

tech, etc.) and the 5th is variable – potentially dedicated to innovating certain industry verticals for investors (horticulture so the grounds can stay beautiful). The State of Ohio is looking to fund tech and coding boot camps, so a house devoted to developing tech and software would be key. Culinary arts. Co-operative living spaces where participants are in a community, chip in, share responsibilities.

Community space within living areas – common areas for shows to be hosted in the buildings, on the grounds, or have auditoriums built into the buildings. Accessible options for visitors, visiting artists, artist residencies to bring people to Toledo for short term stints that are affordable (hospitable spaces for artist locally, regionally, and nationally. Collaborative project involving painting and space for mural spaces. Airbnb or residences dedicated to visiting members, conductors for the symphony. Visual Literacy Preschool – can be provided for residents and neighbors. Senior housing, multigenerational housing, like *Mozart in the Jungle* – dedicated senior housing for artists, senior creators to retire and be creative in this space.)

Re-entry possibilities and programming – in collaboration with organizations working to reduce the incarcerated population, helping individuals find vocations and skills and passions through the arts (like Philadelphia mural arts program. Offer residential program for individuals who are coming out of criminal justice system, looking to make a difference through the arts in their own lives and others' lives. Integrate arts and residential. Finding stable housing after involvement with criminal justice system is difficult. Integrating with community is an indicator for successful re-entry. Would require community buy-in, would be a hard nut to crack).

Café or coffeehouse, internet café, study collectively, retail shops, co-working space for small business, entrepreneurs, affordable short and long term living space for medical residents (UT and ProMedica – like how they do for Case in Cleveland). Housing for mercy college. All the faith leaders, heads of the banks, heads of major corporations, sit down and begin to solve the issues of this core area of the city. Need buy-in from “the big people in city and county”. But will the neighborhood be a neighborhood or a business district? Make sure we don't compromise the history and culture of the neighborhood. Big corporations can impose their will and change the face of the neighborhood. Put the powers that

be onto a bus, drive through all the neighborhoods, have a vision, point this out. Draw the picture for them. This is the opportunity to build the town back up. Like Milwaukee, Indianapolis. Louisville. (Toledo does not have vision in this area. Leaders should take a bus tour). Engagement with Toledo, Spain – opens door for international exchange.

Common Themes

- Live, work art spaces.
- Spaces of innovation that may attract investors (tech, performance, art, music).
- Communal spaces throughout properties for residents and visitors to enjoy/connect.
- Varied residential programs (prisoner reentry, senior housing, artists, etc.).

The Parking Lot: Sometimes ideas that are raised during the course of a discussion are interesting and worthwhile to follow up but are not necessarily of direct use to the goals of the current meeting. The following ideas made it to the parking lot and will not be forgotten, as it is documented for discussion in the future.

- A community organization responsible for helping to better organize and engage the neighborhood, keeping neighborhood looking good, and acquiring vacant properties.
- Philadelphia Mural Arts Program.
- Visual Literacy Preschool.
- Art Tatum House - came up in 2 questions with lots of ideas surrounding its preservation and rebirth.