

Toledo Museum of Art
Museum Place Community Conversation #3 Notes – Mott Branch Library
Meeting Date: 12/5/17
12 people in attendance

Who Attended: Jason Daniels of JAYRAMON LLC introduced himself as facilitator for the evening. There was a total of 12 community stakeholders present for the meeting and two representatives 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: Art that starts a conversation, eclectic/diverse. Antique art. Young people are looking for authenticity and integrity in art. 21st century art. Older buildings are art in themselves. Sculptures, such as the one’s outside the TMA. Architecture in and of itself. Art that has a role in improving the lives of people. Art that has a social justice purpose.

Group 2: Theater is art, along with architecture, performance art, and the many TMA exhibitions. Art that exposes people to something new or historical. Art that immerses you in an experience. Murals, new sculptures at the TMA.

Common Themes:

- Art that serves a purpose and can help improve lives—art as immersive experiences
- Buildings and their architecture
- Sculptures

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

Group 1: Homes that are unique/diversity of home architecture. Community oriented. Neighborhoods that are well maintained—(History of Dorr Street is proof). Beauty of neighborhoods. Pride of community – the ability for residents and neighbors to work together/collaborate to preserve and enrich their community/neighborhood. A neighborhood excitement about the transformation and challenges (history and legacy), a neighborhood that has a strength to preserve – authentic evolution.

Group 2: Acknowledgement that the TMA “neighborhood” (3/4 mile in each direction) has excitement of transformation but also shared challenges. Regardless, there are many amazing memories, history and legacy the neighborhood possesses - authentic evolution of the area that has potential. A neighborhood that has rediscovered opportunity, and an awareness that is vital to the entire community. Pride of neighborhood (maintenance, architecture). Empty spaces/abandoned and deteriorating homes are a signal of opportunity – relics of change. Wish the neighborhood could sync up and work better together. It’s important to do everything we can to preserve and enrich our community. All the neighborhoods are “all in” it together. Old West End, Dorr Street, Monroe Street Corridor all making progress on their own but need to come together, through the Museum, as a commonality. City is really realizing that this is vital to the whole city. The Museum is only a part of that. The beauty of the diversity of the area—architecture and citizens and the pride of all the surrounding neighborhoods. Beautiful natural environment that needs to be protected. How do we leverage this opportunity?

Common Themes:

- Neighborhood pride
- Leverage opportunity for neighborhood preservation and revitalization
- All neighborhoods have a distinct beauty and culture to be celebrated

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

Group 1: Start with a pedestrian community. A healthy, effective transportation system, sidewalks, miniparks for meeting spaces, programming in parks to bring people together. Slow traffic in and around the TMA, pedestrian and vehicle. More accommodations for technology in our lives but not be consumed by it. A neighborhood that helps us find balance in our lives. Safely enjoy the area. Aspirations of being recognized creating and evolving neighborhoods that received national accolades, other communities will want to model after us. Become a national model for other arts communities. The TMA makes decisions that are sustainable—thinking long term for the neighborhood and its well-being.

Group 2: Vacant spaces more purposeful and viable. Protect existing housing fabric. African American culture is celebrated. A walkable community. A neighborhood that is not a food desert. Gentrification without relocation. Strong neighborhood associations that are truly engaged. Safety is a priority and low crime. The neighborhood where the TMA has really made a difference. Thriving schools. Neighborhoods where it's residents are ambassadors. The TMA must drive ambassadors and own it and be highly engaged in the process. We have a community of people who have lost hope- the TMA can make a remarkable difference in this revitalization if they to go to them.

Common Themes:

- A walkable community
- A safe destination neighborhood that encourages spaces and opportunities for people to enjoy
- A neighborhood where the TMA is engaged in its neighborhood and makes decisions that are sustainable and positively impact the surrounding community

Question 4: How could we reimagine Museum Place?

Groups 1 and 2 (joint feedback): Thinking it would be great if they could take one of the Museum Place buildings and use as a Bed and Breakfast, rather than a hotel, for those who travel from out of town. Keep rent affordable because the cost of downtown living is too high. How do we make Museum Place inclusive and affordable? Mixed use is important. Housing teen moms as a consideration or a property for youth. Space for visiting artists or artists-in-residence to interact with those that live there. Museum Place should not be a gated community but integrated. Remove the gates – they are a barrier. University of Toledo student housing for their artists – get a commitment from the University to be invested in the arts and continue their programs with the TMA (including Bowling Green State University and other institutions of higher education where there is a need or synergy). Dorms for art students. Keep all historic tax credits. Some could be studio space. Museum Place could become a stellar attraction like the Gehry building. A national/regional reach. Caliber that raises the bar and makes people want to come to art school here. Draw for higher education. Moving forward, respecting the history of the buildings. DelMar is a disaster. Restore Barley. Site could be restudied in terms of parking. Looks like there is more parking than needed. Rethink the site plan. Accessibility for people with disabilities. Maintain the historic façade but consider modern needs in terms of accessibility and needs of the diverse residents and business owners. Model of diversity and tells a story to others. Get WGTE to relocate to Museum Place. A zone of intellectual affinity.

Common Themes:

- Residential with housing for artists and people with disabilities
- Restore the buildings and improve the site plans
- Use the buildings as dorms for university students studying art in the area to be close to TMA
- Sustainable living model for other artistic communities

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.

- Hotels (21C Museum Hotels) in Cincinnati and Louisville drawing inspiration and customers
- How can the 3 corridors come together (Old West End, Dorr Street, Monroe Street)
- Review Ode to the Zip Code – Fair Housing
- Arts Commission Side Walk Poetry
- History that has got us to blight has lead to predatory lenders. Compilation of oppression over the years by banks, insurance companies, etc. How can the TMA play a role here?
- The TMA should be connected at the neighborhood level. Not get involved and then disappear