



**November 28, 2017**

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**Toledo Museum of Art  
Museum Place Community Conversation Notes**

**Meeting Date: 11/14/17**

**10 people in attendance**

**Who Attended:** Jason Daniels of JAYRAMON LLC introduced himself as facilitator for the evening. There was a total of 10 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 are 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.

**Reimagine Exercise Question: What would the TMA campus look like and what would our community look like if we did not have public art? Imagine a world where there was no public art in our community.**

Table 1: TMA campus would be bland and gray. Went to school in communist Poland and it was blah and gray, not very interesting. Community would have no visual interest.

Table 2: The world without public art would be only half of what it is now. What’s great about this community is that it’s inspirational and represents so many different eras of our existence. TMA buildings are art in themselves and should be presented as such. With TMA as a steward of the properties, the history of these buildings should be part of the public art. Also, more parking.

Table 3: The absence of art would be a detriment to our environment. Been to places where there wasn't art but there was a lot of graffiti. The Toledo fiberglass frog project brought national attention to Toledo. We are interested in doing something that again. Important to maintain the integrity of the buildings. Historic housing is unique to our area.

Table 4: Community would be oppressive without public art. Provides a tourist destination. Collective memory and history. Serves a super important purpose. Shows what we are all supposed to be and demonstrates our collective identity.

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

Table 1: Like Impressionism art. Learned to appreciate it at the Museum from age 9-15 at Saturday morning classes at TMA. Loved the Kehinde Wiley exhibit within the ancient Greek sculpture.

Table 2: Architectural art in relation to our neighborhood. Each building has its own persona. Art that is mysterious and makes you think. The craftsmanship has since dried up. Different materials and forms used in housing.

Table 3: Appreciates architecture and design. Conversation of Old West End neighborhood as works of art. How every home is its own masterpiece. Drawn to Medieval and Renaissance art. Created in a communal context. Not to be in TMA but to be consumed by the neighborhood and church communities, not just by those interested in art but by everyone. Liked the Art Deco period because it's a combination of skill of building things.

Common themes:

- Impressionism art seems to resonate.
- Architecture and neighborhood (Old West End) should be viewed as pieces of art.
- Building craftsmanship is art in itself.

### **Question 2: What do you currently like about this neighborhood (campus that includes TMA)?**

Table 1: Individuality of the buildings. We like the trees, very sad when they were cut down. Love the churches and cathedral. Love the Glass Pavilion and that it's made of glass. Used to be a parking lot. There was a street that ran right through that area.

Table 2: We like the fact that it's not congested and more open than other parts of the city. Character of the housing/structures. Not like cookie cutter condos. Easy to get around, can get downtown in a couple of minutes. Sense of community, diversity and good neighbors. Integration.

Table 3: Historic churches including the cathedral. Trees and greenness of the neighborhood including old oak trees. Love how easy it is to get to TMA. As an outsider, fascinated by up and down history of the neighborhood.

Common themes:

- Trees are important to the campus.
- Ease of travel – neighborhood not congested with travel.
- History of the neighborhood.

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

Table 1: Monroe street is gone. Walking paths there. MP restored. What did MP look like previously and how do we get it back to its original state. More art pieces coming from downtown toward TMA. An Art Boulevard. Art around the property of TMA. See a piece of art right as you're coming off the highway. That ramp has a lot of potential.

Table 2: Not so sure about Monroe Street going away. Speed is a problem right now. Traffic isn't heavy enough that people can treat it like a freeway. Monroe Street is one of the longest arteries in the city. Preserving houses not currently being taken care of. Closer relationship between TMA and the artists of Toledo. Artists communities becoming catalysts for revitalization. Vitality that could come to both the neighborhood and TMA. Artists having the ability to rent space in MP. Artists ability to create within MP especially with TMA being so close in proximity.

Table 3: How do we get TMA to fit in better with the Old West End neighborhood and its festival? What can TMA do to be more inclusive with the neighborhood? (lots of discussion). Vision of TMA as a more inclusive and welcoming anchor. Get the rest of the city engaged in TMA. People from the suburbs are afraid to come downtown.

Common themes:

- How TMA can be more inclusive of the community.
- Vision of TMA as a more inclusive and welcoming anchor.
- Get the rest of the city engaged in TMA.
- Notion of people being knowledgeable of TMA and owning a sense of community around TMA.

### **Question 4: How could we reimagine MP?**

Table 1: Restore the buildings, take off exterior ramps and things that were added. Develop spaces for artists to create. Put a dome over the courtyard for year-round participation. Landscaping and lighting in exterior.

Table 2: Build an aesthetic relationship to the street. Residents do not seem connected to the surrounding environment. Everyone parks in the back, not the front. How do you reimagine car access to create a “front entry?” Great design challenge for the site. How do you make that area walking-friendly? Set aside a number of units for artists as live/work space. Preserve the buildings.

Table 3: Restore buildings and maintain integrity. We currently do not have a have a hostel in Toledo. Setting a part of the buildings as a hostel would be a draw to visitors. Provide shuttle service to other community partners. Create opportunities for community to showcase the city and all it has to offer, including TMA campus. Could be incorporated into cost of staying there. Look for communities that do this already: Chicago, DC., etc.)

Common themes:

- Preserve the buildings back to their former glory.
- Use space as combination of residents, artists and visitors.

**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.

- Historic markers should be added throughout Old West End neighborhood.
- Wayfinding
- Speed is an issue on Monroe Street.
- TMA competing with neighborhood-inclusiveness.
- Community not recognizing TMA as an asset.