Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #2
Cedar-Riverside Recreation Centers Predesign

09/17/19 5:30 – 8:00pm
Brian Coyle Community Center
[Oromo and Somali interpretation provided via headset]

CAC members present: Abdirizak Bihi (Chair), Aburazak (Sisco) Omar, Amber Wiebe, Jamie Schumacher, Abdi Gurhan, Adam Ugas, Ali Saleh, Bosteya Jama, Furtune Del, Patrick Slaven, Yusra Arab, Teri Kwant

CAC members absent: Abdul Sero, Amina Hanafi, Fardowsa Osman Egal, Khadra Fiqi, Kwangja Kwon

CAC Alternate members present: Ahmed Mussa, Pete Munene

Members of the Public: Approximately 15 members of the general public were present

Staff, consultants, and speakers present: Susan Olmsted and John Slack (Perkins+Will); Gemechu Getachew (Oromo interpreter); Salah Warsame (Somali interpreter); Keith Allen and Nawal Hirsi (Fairview); Amanda Novak and Brian Kirk (YMCA); Steve Peacock and Karen Durant (Augsburg College); Amano Dube (Brian Coyle Center); Daniel Elias, Siciid Ali, Paul Jaegar, Jamie Neldner and Abdirahman Mukhtar (MPRB)

1. Welcome
   The second Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was called to order by Abdirizak Bihi, the CAC Chair, who welcomed everyone present. He thanked the CAC members for the wonderful job they were doing, and commented on the field trip to Northeast Minneapolis. Daniel Elias (MPRB) invited everyone to sign in and help themselves to refreshments. The focus of this meeting will be on the project partners (Fairview Health Services, Augsburg University, YMCA and Pillsbury United Communities), service providers and users, and demographics of the Cedar-Riverside community. He reminded everyone that interpretation headphones are available at this and every future CAC meeting, then reviewed the agenda. Objectives include learning more about neighborhood places and programs, gaining a better understanding of who participates, introducing project partners, and sharing concerns and questions about all of these.

2. Introductions
   CAC members and the general public in attendance were asked to introduce themselves, share some information about their role in the community, and answer the question “What do you love about Cedar-Riverside?”:
   - Abdirizak Bihi: Has lived here for twenty-something years and raised his two daughters here. Youth grow up with the community so might know some young people as children and now they’re grown up and going to college, serving their community. It’s nice to know everybody.
   - Teri Kwant: Has lived in this neighborhood for 30 years. Love that this neighborhood is always full of people who live in or visit the neighborhood. It is a gateway to Minneapolis.
• Yusra Arab: Policy aide at the City of Minneapolis. This community is part of our identity, a place where you’re known, you’re not a sore thumb sticking out but part of the City, so that’s a great feeling to have.
• Aburazak (Sisco) Omar: Resident and community organizer. Grew up in this building and now is the coordinator for the 2-year-old theater space. This neighborhood pretty much raised me and I will be raising my kids here.
• Furtune Del: Business owner and resident of the neighborhood. What I like is that I feel at home.
• Amber Wiebe: Augsburg student. Loves the built environment (residences and businesses mixed together), and the warm and welcoming feeling of being in the neighborhood.
• Jamie Schumacher: West Bank Business Association Director. Loves the business community which has 200 businesses, 90 percent of which are small, locally-owned and operated.
• Ali Saleh: Lives in the neighborhood and works at Augsburg College. Loves the youth and how they interact with the elderly, grow up and become part of the community.
• Bosteya Jama: Site director of Cedar-Riverside NRP. This is a colorful place to be and it attracts new people.
• Adam Ugas: Like that I can get everything from sambusa to gobi.
• Abdi Gurhan: Love that this is the first place where the community feels like home, where I can find anything diverse, including different kinds of food. It is a welcoming and warm place to be. You can walk around and you will meet all kinds of people.

Members of the general public in attendance introduced themselves and answered the question “What do you love about Cedar-Riverside?”

3. Project Overview & Updates
Daniel (MPRB) provided an overview on how the CAC was selected [PPT 8]; reviewed the CAC charge [PPT 9], Group Agreement [PPT 10], CAC resource binder [PPT 11] and photography policy [PPT 12]. He described what was available on the project page on MPRB’s website [PPT 13] and explained how to access more information on MPRB’s Capital Improvement Program [PPT 14-22], which covers the status of park projects through 2024.

Daniel reviewed the CAC meeting schedule [PPT 24-25], and reminded CAC members that we are at the design phase, the beginning of a very long process that will eventually get to the vision, design, bid process and ultimate construction. On the alternate months when CAC meetings are not held, staff from MPRB and Pillsbury United Community will be available in the Community Room beginning at 5:00pm giving CAC members an opportunity to ask questions about the project or to offer feedback in a small group setting.

Daniel quickly reviewed the scope of the project. The location of the C-R West recreation center has not been determined. It could involve removing and building a new facility in its current location or building a new recreation center in the West Cedar-Riverside/Riverside Plaza area. C-R East would be a recreation center integrated into a larger building on the surface parking lot on the east side of the Augsburg University (Augsburg) campus. At this point MPRB has funding only for the predesign phase. He presented slides showing what this project is and isn’t [PPT 27], what we know and don’t know [PPT 28], and where we’ve been and where we’re going [PPT 29].
The topics presented at CAC #1 were introduction to project and predesign, Equity 101, MPRB 101, and CAC responsibilities. The hopes and concerns/fears exercise [PPT 32-33] showed that there was a lot of overlap. Some key messages were heard at CAC #1:

- Strong and enduring commitment to community
- True access and welcome for everyone
- Recreation Center(s) to support living, working and playing at Cedar-Riverside
- Turn data into outcomes – MAKE IT HAPPEN
- Why are we saying “if”?
- How can we sustain it?
- What’s going on with Lot A?
- Why will this take so long?

A project tour took place on August 17, and included visits to the Northeast Recreation Center, Augsburg College site and Coyle Center.

4. **Small Group Exercise**
CAC members, staff and attendees gathered around six tables, each containing a site map, to discuss and identify their favorite neighborhood places, existing amenities/services and participants, and what is missing. At the end of the small group exercise a representative from each table reported back to the group on some of the highlights of their discussions.

5. **Engagement Tool Overview**
Daniel introduced and described Meeting-in-a-Box [PPT 43-44], a tool that has been developed to enhance community engagement by providing a quick and easy method for gathering feedback at meetings or events attended by CAC members. It takes about ten minutes to run through a brief exercise that will provide more data that can be used to inform the project on what people want in a new recreation center. Daniel emphasized that this tool will not be a final deciding factor in the project program, i.e. programming will not be based on popular voting, and it is also not intended to limit the potential program opportunities.

6. **Partner Panel**

*Keith Allen, Community Advancement Team, Fairview:* One of our goals in community advancement is understanding the health [inaudible] in the community. We know that we will not be a strong anchor institution if we’re not working within the community, and one of our [inaudible] process designed for and with community in mind. We have a strong commitment to the Cedar-Riverside community as our building is right down the street, from permanent employment to also address health and wellness. One of the projects we have in this community along with our partners and other organizations like Augsburg is what is called the Commons.

*Nawal Hirsi, Engagement Manager, Fairview:* Part of my role at Fairview is to manage the health and wellness through the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood called the Commons. This is an initiative that was created in response to the needs of the community, in particular women and girls, to have a space for health and wellness programming, and physical activity without worrying about stigma or the clothing that they wear. We have various programs from educational classes that focus on health and wellbeing, women’s circle to have a safe space to address their mental health needs and learn more about mental health to reduce the stigma, and specific programming for girls with activities like swimming and basketball. Like Keith said a
lot of health happens outside of clinics and hospitals and that’s why we are embedded in areas across the state and our hospitals are based in [inaudible] to make sure that we reduce some of those barriers and social determinants in health that ultimately affect people’s lifestyle and chronic conditions and overall health. We are part of this project to ensure that what we have learned from the community reflects in this process and to give our experience working in the community. It has been a great process so far.

Amanda Novak, Senior Director of New Development, YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities: Many of you know the YMCA from our various branches across the metro area and greater Minnesota. Our closest branches here are the Midway and the Blaisdell branches, and we also have a branch on the University of Minnesota campus. Many people do not know that YMCA is not just a swimming gym. We are a nonprofit that’s focused on outreach, programs and services that serve the many diverse populations of Minnesota. It is our vision to create a place that is welcoming and accessible to all participants and our staff, working with all genders, ages, cultures, abilities and backgrounds. It is our goal to be as inclusive and diverse as possible because we feel that that will truly allow us to be the most impactful in needs development and [inaudible] and social responsibility work that we do across the state. We are excited to be a part of this effort not only because we are learning so much about how we can best serve the various communities, not only in this neighborhood but in the broader reach of our portfolio, but being at the table with such great organizations like PUC, Fairview and Augsburg we’re learning a lot about how big organizations can come together and address community issues. We are excited to understand how we can enhance and elevate and ideally complement the programming that is going to occur in this neighborhood. We would look at being an operational partner of some sort. This will not be a stand-alone YMCA branch. We are here to complete, so however we can present ourselves and our skills and expertise to elevate what is already occurring and what we can do to further enhance, that’s where we would like to be at the table.

Steve Peacock, Director of Community Relations, Augsburg College: Here with Karen Durant who is on the Board of Regents and also the Chair of our East End Task Force. I think most of you know that Augsburg University is a small, four-year, private liberal arts college right across Riverside. We are very proud to have been part of this community for 150 years. We see our location in the City, in this neighborhood, as a real asset. It provides amazing opportunities for our faculty and our students to learn and teach, and that plays itself out in many different ways. Many of you are familiar with [inaudible; coughing] of faculty engaged in community-based learning, and we have lots of students that are engaged as interns and doing core space experience or learning projects. We have volunteers, and that’s really the way we engage in places like Brian Coyle Center.

Let me give you a little background on how this opportunity on the East End of the neighborhood came about. Our Campus Master Plan calls for that large parking lot on the very east end of campus, right off of 25th Avenue South, to be redeveloped. We have a small task force that Karen and I are part of that is beginning to explore what might happen there. We are using three guiding principles for that process. The first is we really want to activate that corner, both as a gateway into the campus as well as a gateway into the broader neighborhood, so make it welcoming, inviting and vibrant. Right now it’s a surface parking lot with a vacant building on the corner and that’s not what we want to see long term. The second guiding principle is incorporating into that site uses that Augsburg needs, so likely that will be parking, probably some student housing and probably some academic space. So we have to figure out as
we plan what might happen at East End that serves Augsburg’s direct needs. The third thing, our president has really emphasized this, is connection to community. How can we incorporate spaces or uses in that location that begins to address community needs? That’s really where this opportunity came about. President Priibbenow approached the MPRB as we began this process and said we would be very willing to have at least consideration of a shared recreation, health and wellness facility incorporated as part of this larger development. That is the opportunity in front of us. Is there a use, a set of activities, that can serve neighborhood interests and needs that can also overlap with Augsburg’s interests as well? We are excited to be part of this process, to partner with these organizations and also be part of this process with you.

Amano Dube, Director, Brian Coyle Center/Pillsbury United Communities: We are located throughout north and south Minneapolis, and this is one of the three locations in South Minneapolis. We have two more community centers on the north side plus a grocery. I think many of you know the history of Pillsbury United Communities. Dating back to the settlement house movement dating back to the 1880s that has also come to the United States and one of the locations was Minneapolis. It came at the settlement house movements that started in this neighborhood. So the history of Pillsbury United Communities down in Seven Corners where the first Pillsbury House was built in 1906. Ever since Pillsbury has been connected to this group and as the social movement that is deeply involved in addressing the changing needs of communities. It was a great opportunity for us especially looking to this 5-way partnership. We joined immediately because we have, since 2008, attempted doubling tripling the size of this facility, the Coyle Center. There was a community engagement process, I think Bihi remembers and Abdirahman, Bosteya, in 2008 and the whole design was done, the predesign phase was done, we designed what we need, what we needed was to expand, but because of the recession everything sat and never come back until most recently. So, we were extremely excited to join this partnership because as one of the anchor institutions in this neighborhood, with many years of history and one that has continued to evolve to meet the changing needs of the diversity and demographic change, we feel like we have a responsibility to advocate for this community to get better programming space, amenities and what they need, what they deserve as one of the most densely populated communities. Secondly, we are also determined to build a community where any person has personal, social and economic power and that communities are the owners of their own solution. This is the kind of engagement we are doing now, what does the community need, and we are part of the community to co-create solutions. So that’s what we would like to see in this process. We also believe we want to see every person have their personal wellbeing enhanced and especially the new facility, that is going to be [inaudible] but also address the needs and wants of the community. That’s why we really jumped on despite many years of community questions, you will not [inaudible]. I am glad to see the partners now for the first time all of them determined to work with to what is a community, listen to the community and determine what’s right for the community.

Question and Answer Period for CAC Members:
- Aburazak (Sisco) Omar – My question is for Amanda and possibly Steve. YMCA programs made me who I am today, the Beacons program, that’s why I became a youth worker. Just to understand why the YMCA for people who participate and use their amenities, do we have to pay to get the service? How will that be different for a community-based YMCA? You did mention that this would not be a standard YMCA.
Amanda – The YMCA is really intrigued to being a part of this process because it’s not going to be our typical approach to membership where you have to pay a specific amount. But to be honest we don’t know what that is going to look like. Much of that is going to be driven by the programs that are identified to best serve the community and we are here to supplement everything that’s already being done and to help identify what else needs to be created. We are just one of many that will be serving the community so that will be reflected in a model that will not tie directly to how you currently see a typical YMCA. We are truly just an operational partner at the table and there’s a lot to be discovered that will further define that [inaudible]. We need to learn more.

Steve – I would just say that we as partners, all of us, have really embraced the core value of this process, the need for affordable access to whatever programming facilities happen at either site. We don’t know exactly how it’s going to happen, but it is very much a shared value of this process.

- Patrick Slaven – While I appreciate definitely the Augsburg willingness to engage and start this process of communication and conversation, it sounds like your participation in this process is really focused on the lot and I wonder beyond just engaging in that physical space in the development that’s going to go on there if it turns out that there isn’t a productive and meaningful use for this project to work with that physical space that you’re developing, would you still be engaged in something else that is built elsewhere?

Steve – Very much so. I was probably too narrow in how I phrased my comments but we’re very engaged right now with the Brian Coyle Center so we would continue. It doesn’t really matter if it’s on our property or if it’s in a different location. We would continue to engage in a very meaningful way in figuring out how to support institutionally and through engagement of students and faculty and other ways in any facility or center that was developed. Thanks for raising the question.

- CAC Chair Abdirizak Bihi – I appreciate the work of Augsburg College for working with Brian Coyle Center youth, for all of the food, for the volunteers and all of the work your University does with this neighborhood for a long time. I also appreciate [inaudible] come to the neighborhood and hire from the community, and I wish that goes now also another sector of our community that’s growing, unemployment. It’s university graduates or college graduates, and we are learning now, they’re also suffering the most severe unemployment that is all of the people would fight for every day. So we would appreciate your wealthy institutions [inaudible] also think about college graduates now that need help to find a job. YMCA, I don’t know much, I know you do a lot of great things, my mind is very small, I am usually around here spending most of my time and I don’t see a YMCA but I really appreciate you be a part of this great future for this community, in the near future. What we worry about is the [inaudible] are good [inaudible] especially with that [inaudible], but sometimes some good things we fight for also we don’t think about the other side of it. I remember when we started to organize for the LRT here when some of our residents as [inaudible] because a [inaudible] a long time ago. We had to really fight to get that voting back. On the vote for the LRT, and we got it, but we didn’t know what they were coming with in terms of having parking spots for all those people coming to our neighborhood. They weren’t even thinking about LRT without having parking spaces along with that. But now we are wondering, because you already answered about that, but will it be accessible for youth? For example, I know first-hand no matter how Brian Coyle tries to have the gym
open there are challenges for young people to sometimes find clothes and young people outside, standing outside, because there is not budget, that also come along with it that say we need to have the staff available. Of course you can’t just come in and play do everything. There must be staff and other small issues that we don’t usually think of. So we’re concerned about having big dreaming, big amenities, but what about the budget that would make it accessible, affordable?

Amanda – That’s a great question. I want to reiterate the point that we are not building a YMCA as everyone probably has a very specific idea in mind. If anything it would be the YMCA coming into the Brian Coyle Center and enhancing the sports programming that’s currently occurring with some of our programmatic components. It would be the YMCA working with a women’s group on how can we do meditation and different approaches that way. We are not looking at building a branch. I want to be really clear about that. Whatever hopefully ideally when something is built it will be a Park and Rec Board building that they will operate and we will come in and enhance with the services that will best meet the community. That can range from youth in government programming that we do currently through the University YMCA bringing that here, I know we’ve had that here in the past. It could be wellness focus for seniors, youth, women, how can we set up support groups. So it’s really being responsive to the community needs and being a partner that would utilize the facilities that are built by the Park Board. We are not building a YMCA.

Steve – I would just say that as part of this process Perkins+Will is working with all of us on operating models, so we get very clear once there’s clarity around what programs and facilities and space that are needed, we will drill down to, what’s it take to get it built, what’s it take to get it staffed and sustained so that it can be effective, available and accessible long-term. That’s part of this process. We don’t have those answers yet but it’s very much a part of this predesign process.

• Abdi Gurhan – How would you engage an approach if your interests conflict with the interests of the community?

Keith – For us the great part about our interests with Community Advancement is making sure the community is heard. As a commitment to making sure we’re in this co-creation process we want the community’s health and wellbeing to be a priority and what does that look like and what are the voices being heard. It’s easy for us to say that because that’s what our job has been designed to be in community advancement as far as our organizational win in this, and a win is a win in the community for us. [inaudible] If a community is healthier there are less folks coming through our ER and ER folks are not getting patients. That is a great example of what I would prefer happen in this case.

Amano – I know that there are [inaudible] in the community engagement process and there is research and surveys and so many things that happened especially in this community that is [inaudible]. There are great institutions around us that have a research mindset, they come out and engage the community, get ideas from the community, and they never come back. Our communities are really frustrated about this. What the community wants to see is they want to see something that they want to happen. This is what we want, this is the amenities we want, the facilities we want, and I think that is what we need to go by because if we don’t want something there’s [inaudible] If you don’t need a program that is going on in this building there’s no way for us to run the program because the life of this organization depends on the participants who need that service. So that’s why we continue to evolve, with changing needs. In this case, you are the representative voice of the community, the
stakeholders who represent your community, to give voice to those who are not here, “this is exactly what the community wants”. Of course there are negotiation as we go because of the budget, operations, sustainability, where does the money come from. There are so many unanswered questions, we will sit down and come out with a consensus on what we want in one facility, or for the new Brian Coyle and the facility on the Augsburg campus [inaudible] is going to come up you are going to think about it and [inaudible]. [inaudible] where the money comes and how is it sustained. Again, this is dependent on you. These organizations are not going to say if you don’t take, this leave. That’s not how we’re going to work. You guys are going to understand how this is going to be built, how it is going to be sustainable. It’s not like this is what we want, make it happen. Wherever the money comes from. I don’t think this is going to be that easy, you guys are going to understand, also, if you want something, you will have to understand how we will build, and sustain it. Is that realistic? [inaudible] If you can’t afford there’s nothing the organizations can do. As Dan said from the beginning, again and again, this is a process. [inaudible] We are going to find out what kind of facility we are going to build together.

• Adam Ugas – Thank you for coming and I’m please, can you give them all a hand. I’ve been in this neighborhood for 19 years, it’s the first time seeing someone from the YMCA, Amanda, so thanks for coming. One thing that everybody right now says is that each organization, each one has something going on and helping directly in the community, as Nawal is doing with the health and women, Steve is doing something, Pillsbury. And Amanda, what can YMCA, that they can implement, when you go back and say I want to implement something to help in the community, whatever it is with the youth, elders, or anything on that. If there’s anything you can do so we can know that the Y cares, other than a future thing?
Amanda – Well I would say from the get-go the Y cares about all of the communities that we serve and many of the ways that we serve them and how we can make our services as accessible as possible. We as we said throughout this process are learning more about what the community’s needs are and how we can be responsive to them, so I don’t think we’re at a point in this process for the YMCA to be able to say this is what we can provide the community. I think that we have a breadth of services that can be impactful from youth engagement to family engagement, all the way up to helping our seniors age gracefully and independently. It is our hope that we will learn how we can best serve the partners here in this community and how we can take these learnings to our other branches and our camps, overnight and day camps, and our daycare facilities so that we can be responsive in general as community needs are evolving. We have a lot to learn. We’re very early in the process. When Dan pulled the map up of the schedule and time of the CAC process, we are not even a quarter through, so I think we all need to remind ourselves that this is a journey that we’re all going to participate in together. We don’t have the answers up here. If anything we can be responsive to what your needs are.

Daniel thanked everyone for participating, then welcomed Emily Stern from the City of Minneapolis who is working on the Lot A RFP.

Emily Stern, Project Manager, Minneapolis CPED: I work on redevelopment projects on City-owned land that we typically sell to private developers. The site that we’re talking about here is Lot A, the surface parking lot behind the Red Sea. It has 93 stalls and has been operated as a
parking lot for many decades. The City has decided this site is ripe for redevelopment. There are two LRT stations in the neighborhood, and this site sits squarely in between them. The overarching development vision for this site is an African Village Public Market, filled with retail shops and small businesses that would be open, accessible and inviting to both African and non-African populations. It would serve the neighborhood and the business community of Cedar-Riverside, and existing businesses would be invited to be part of the market. They would also invite businesses from the broader region to set up kiosks and operate out of the market. It would be a resource and economic driver for the local community as well as a regional destination to bring people from all over the state to this neighborhood.

The City planners and the planning guidance for the site calls for a large-scale and dense development. Beyond the mall other complementary uses being considered, either on top of the mall or adjacent to it, include housing (both ownership and rental, affordable and market rate) and creating some sort of recreation center with youth and other programming. The advantage of pursuing that kind of project or development on this site is that it would free up more park space on Currie Park, and this new facility could be used during the 18-24 months it would take to rebuild the Brian Coyle Center. Currently the City is working with the community to flesh out development objectives that would go into requests for proposals that the City would issue for private developers to submit applications and proposals. After receiving proposals from developers they would go back to the community many times with the recommended developer to work with groups like CAC, MPRB, the business association, neighborhood groups, Cedar-Riverside NRP and other organizations and institutions in the community. Similar to this CAC it is very early in the process. Everything is fluid and flexible at this point and the City is trying to shape the process and development objectives for this site with the community and MPRB.

**Question and Answer Period for CAC Members:**

- **Bosteya Jama – How far along is the process so far?**
  Emily – The City is working with a group of representatives from various organizations and institutions in the Cedar-Riverside community (i.e. West Bank Business Association, Augsburg College, Cedar-Riverside NRP) to flesh out the development objectives and vision of the site. They are considering what the City and community want to see on this site. That would be the frame or criteria for how development proposals would be evaluated. The plan is to go out with the RFP later this fall. Once proposals are received there would be another community-led process where the City and/or developers would go out to the community and make presentations and get community feedback on the merits of those proposals or things that could be improved. The City is at the very beginning stages of what will be a lengthy process that will involve the community at many steps along the way.

- **Furtune Del – What was the process for selecting the advisory group? Is someone from the Somali community there? Why are they not at the table? If they are not at the table, who is the group engaging?**
  Emily – The City did not select the membership of that group. It deferred to Louis Smith, who chairs the Cedar-Riverside Partnership. There is a staff level work group that is reviewing and editing the development directives for the RFP. Louis selected a staff-level
representative from each of the major partners or institutions that are part of the Partnership. [Emily offered to initiate follow-up, pulling Louis into the conversation.]

- Sisco Omar – What happened to the initial plan of the mall being on Minnehaha?
  Emily – The site located at 2600 Minnehaha was ruled out for technical reasons. It is a small site and the vision for this mall would be somewhere in the vicinity of a 100,000 square foot building. At least two other sites were considered as well.

- Sisco Omar – Did this task force come up after the last so-called community engagement that was done here?
  Amano – That came out of the last Cedar-Riverside Partnership meeting on June 27, this was the first time the Lot A Development was presented. Participants had great questions, it was extremely controversial At the end of the meeting it was suggested that the Cedar-Riverside Partnership put together one group of representatives from this neighborhood. That is how Louis was in charge rather than somebody [inaudible]. Questions about this should be directed to the Cedar-Riverside Partnership to ensure that the work group will reflect the community. [Emily agreed.]

- Abdirizak Bihi – When is the RFP coming out? It would be nice at some stage to include people who live here, not just community activists. That could come through election, because democracy shouldn’t only work when politicians want your vote, starts at the local level. Our voices should be heard on important projects, and we should have the right to vote. If the majority of the community wants those resources that would help with health, fitness, housing or library, or whatever it turns out to be. We are a very civil society. Whatever it turns out to be, then the majority of the voices should be respected. If people like it or don’t like it, people should have an opportunity to vote.

Daniel invited CAC members with additional questions or comments to complete comment cards and give them to staff. They will be addressed at the next CAC meeting.

7. Public Comments

Members of the General Public were invited to provide questions and comments.

- Question: Regarding the issue of the timelines for the Park Board’s conversations and dovetailing that with the Lot A development, it still seems that there is a tighter timeline on the Lot A situation. If there is an RFP coming out I know decisions won’t be final but things start to get set with the issue of the RFP itself. When an idea is floated that is controversial in a community, as the Lot A proposal has been, there are a lot of different opinions on that. Some of those opinions tie in with Brian Coyle Center expansion and having more green space in a part of town that is already extremely densely developed. The concern that we hear about at Cedar-Riverside NRP from people in the community is why do we have to move to the RFP process just a couple of months after there was a formal public announcement on June 27 that the City’s current vision for this is a mall idea with housing high rise on top of that. If the Park Board gets involved, the process would take longer, at least a couple of funding cycles at the state level. With that in mind, with the idea that things are moving more slowly on the CAC front, why is the RFP being issued so soon? Also,
we did lobby to have more community members on the Cedar-Riverside Partnership task force but so far that request has not been allowed.

Emily: That’s a great question about the timelines interface. The City has had very early conversations with staff at MPRB about the possibility of doing the development in a phased approach, with the African Market coming online sooner. Particularly if the City can acquire an adjacent Hennepin County-owned site, which would essentially double the size of the site, there would be a possibility of doing a second phase that would include affordable housing. Affordable housing would take several years to get through the development process and assemble the public subsidy. That would mesh well with MPRB’s capital fundraising and bonding timeline so the park facility would be incorporated into the second phase, either integrated with housing or side-by-side with housing. It would also allow more time for public input and being intentional about how these things come together.

- Question: I have lived in this community for more than 25 years, and a lot of gentrification has been going on in the City, including on the North Side. A lot of people are scared about all of the development that is going on, and they are not used to it. We come from a country that is torn up. What is the long-term plan? Are people going to be asked to leave their homes like the people living on Olson?

Emily: Council Member Warsame’s office in particular has put forth a vision not just for the African Village but that this would be part of a larger cultural district. The City is setting up a number of cultural districts throughout the city and Cedar-Riverside is one of those. The idea is to essentially elevate what is great about your community, not to gentrify or displace, and to provide economic opportunity in places like this mall that would have incubator space for small businesses, similar to the Midtown Global Market. The city is looking to build on what is already good about Cedar-Riverside, preserving affordable space for existing businesses in the neighborhood and creating a cultural district that will draw customers from all over the area.

8. Wrap-up & Next Steps
   Daniel reminded CAC members to take Community Engagement in a Box handouts and to complete comment cards if they have additional questions. The next CAC meeting is November 19.

9. Adjourn
   The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

*Handouts: Agenda, CAC project binders, Meeting evaluations, Community Engagement Meeting-in-a-Box*