Heart of the City:
How a Great Place
Is Created

Presenters

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Agenda

1. What is Heart of the City?
2. What makes Heart of the City a Great Place?
3. What was it before?
4. How did it come to be?
5. Lessons for planners
6. Q/A, Discussion

1. What is Heart of the City?
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2 What makes Heart of the City a Great Place?

2013 Award Winner
Sensible Land Use Coalition
Great Places Initiative

Physical, social, inspirational elements

What makes Heart of the City a Great Place?

Great Places jury:
“A true community gathering space transformed from a suburban strip center.”
32 submissions
6 winners
Heart of the City was the only suburban place among the Great Places

What makes Heart of the City a Great Place?

“The suburbs are not rife with places to get together that aren’t also commercial. Nicollet Commons Park is one.”

“Now in its third summer [2006] the square-block park has come into its own.”

“Scores of suburbs are seeking downtowns. Burnsville is building one.”
- Linda Mack, Star Tribune

What makes Heart of the City a Great Place?

“LCDA funding for street and park infrastructure and a parking ramp catalyzed the creation of Heart of the City, Burnsville’s vibrant downtown.”

“. . . one of the metro area’s first ‘town square’ style parks, Burnsville’s center of gravity.”
- Metropolitan Council LCDA Profile
2 What makes Heart of the City a Great Place?

- Nicollet Commons Park – central square, gathering place
- Grande Market Place – 23,000 sq ft retail, 16,000 sq ft office, 113 apartments (50 affordable)
- Affordable Housing - Dakota County CDA, 34 rowhouses, 50 in Grande Market Place
- Housing - 200+ other units in vicinity
- Restaurants
- Parking - on-street, shared, parking ramps
- Performing Arts Center
- Streetscape

3 What was it before?

- Burnsville incorporated as a village in 1964
- Burnsville Center regional shopping center developed in 1970s – center of commercial activity
- Heart of the City area was suburban strip commercial, office, light industrial

3 And now

- Heart of the City area developed in the 60s-70s
- Strip commercial, office
- Diamondhead Mall
- K-Mart
3 What was it before?

And now

1974

1974

1964

1991

1997

3 And now

4 How did it come to be?

• 1995: Mayor Kautz and others form “Partnerships for Tomorrow” campaign to revitalize the City
• Burnsville wanted a central gathering place for community events

4 How did it come to be?

• 1999: Identified area
• Numerous meetings, charrettes
• Created Framework, Zoning Code
• Met Council LCDA grants
• 2004 – Nicollet Commons Park dedicated
4 How did it come to be?

Design Framework:
- Roads
- Bike/Ped Circulation

Design Framework Principles:
- Create a Compact Critical Mass of Activity
- Make HOC Identifiable Symbol, Civic/Cultural

4 How did it come to be?

Design Framework:
- Development Patterns Analysis
- Visual Preference Survey

Design Framework Principles:
- Framework of Open Spaces and Linkages
- Balance Vehicles and Pedestrians

4 How did it come to be?

Design Framework:
- Street Types
- Parking and Paving

Design Framework:
- Signage
- Streetscape Examples
Design Framework:
• Design Objectives
• Building Components

How did it come to be?

Design Framework – Recommendations

D. TOWN CENTER FRAMEWORK PLAN

Nicollet Commons
At their highest density from the geographically center of the HOC District, Nicollet Commons is bordered on three sides by a concentration of three-story residential and institutional buildings and one block houses on the western edge. This central gathering space will become the focus of civic and cultural activities, providing an area for programmed events such as fireworks, markets, outdoor festivals, and concerts, as well as passive recreation space (Figure 2-3 and 8-4).

Parking
Parking will consist of a combination of on- and off-street parking, surface and internal parking, and off-street parking. The central Nicollet Commons will require approximately 500 spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial space and an additional 1,000 square feet per square foot of commercial space.

Figure 2-3: Nicollet Commons

Zoning Code – 2 Districts

Zoning Code – Street Types
How did it come to be?
Zoning Code – Street & Building Types

Nicollet Avenue Streetscape

Staff, consultants, committees empowered by Mayor and City Council to lead

“Make it happen, get it done.”
- Mayor Kautz
4 How did it come to be?

- Grande Market Place opened 2004
- Slow leasing 2006-on
- City staff went out selling!

4 How did it come to be?

- Partnerships!
- Dakota County CDA
- Sherman
- Opus
- Klingelhut
- John Torgerson
- Stonebridge
- Others

4 How did it come to be?

- Arts were an important component from the beginning
- How to fund it?
- Host community for garbage (landfill)
- TIF pooling - bonds

4 How did it come to be?

- Winter Lighting Ceremony
- Volunteers, committees
- Fundraising for lighting snowflakes

How did it come to be? 4

2003
4 How did it come to be?

2004

4 How did it come to be?

- Red Lion Liquors

5 Lessons learned

- Vision
- Public-private partnership

5 Lessons learned

- Tools in place first – for grants and developers
- Opportunity – site, timing

5 Lessons learned

- Perseverance
- Selling, outreach
- “Zone it and they will come.” (Not!)

5 Lessons learned

- Have a Plan
- Be flexible (used PUDs)
5 Lessons learned

- Leadership
- Courage