

Applicant: HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST, Minneapolis, MN

Project: Setting the Stage: Planning the Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor on Downtown Minneapolis' Oldest Street

ATTACHMENT 2: DETAILS OF THE PROJECT NARRATIVE

a. Major Project Activities: Hennepin Theatre Trust, with the endorsement and support of the City of Minneapolis, will lead a planning process involving and engaging arts, business, philanthropy, education, religious and public sectors in a re-invention of Hennepin Avenue as a nationally acclaimed, year-round cultural destination. The “Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor” will physically and programmatically connect the Mississippi Riverfront, the new Cesar Pelli-designed library, restored Cowles Center for Performing Arts, historic Pantages, State, and Orpheum Theatres and the Herzog and de Meuron-designed Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. The corridor aims to convert vacant and underdeveloped public and private spaces along the Avenue to uses that connect and inspire an arts-centered community cultural experience and cross-programming among affected entities while fostering economic vitality. This effort is supported by the business community’s *Downtown 2025 Plan* currently in development.

First Quarter: Setting the stage

1. Lead organizations (Walker, Artspace, and Hennepin Theatre Trust) will retain a project director to assist in planning work program, identify a qualified land use legal professional, and engage a web developer.
2. Confirm overall project timeline and major activities and schedule for public meetings.
3. Design communications strategies and infrastructure, including branding, web design and linkages, social media tools, and media/public relations plan and strategies to raise awareness and promote interactive development of the Plan.
4. With the City of Minneapolis, perform an up-to-date inventory of all land uses, ownership and zoning or other city restrictions along the Corridor. Identify physical barriers to access to facilities along the Corridor (e.g. roadways, lack of sidewalks, visual barriers, transit-related issues, etc.).
5. With all arts/culture/open space organizations along the Corridor, assemble and summarize current audience demographics and programming plans as basis for joint/complimentary programming.
6. Review available literature on similar corridor or arts district projects in other cities; establish site visits to ascertain actions deployed and outcomes achieved to facilitate creation of arts-centric destinations,

including zoning, ownership and leasing models and other restrictions and incentives; identify best practices. Focus visits on “northern” cities to gain insights into winter programming of outdoor spaces.

Second Quarter: Gathering Input

1. Launch interactive website and social media tools; share/circulate information from projects/cities visited, best practices, etc.
2. Lead organizations solicit/convene selected arts organizations and businesses as well as artists to draft principles for creation and operation of the Corridor ensuring support for the role of the arts and artists in Corridor creation and operation.
3. Lead organizations convene involved individuals and organizations touching or residing along the proposed Corridor to review project goals, principles and timelines and to share assembled information about current state of Corridor; present successful efforts by other cities; confirm precise geographic boundaries of Corridor; complete a facilitated visioning process for entire Corridor with large group to inform plan and foster engagement in project.
4. Using information gathered, preliminarily identify space opportunities and a range of potential uses/programming for sites (e.g. artist housing, galleries, artist studios); utilize surveys of potential space users (artists / complimentary users) and property owners to compile feedback in order to refine space programming; develop strategies to facilitate complimentary development and revenue creating opportunities throughout the Corridor.
5. Explore integration of the natural environment into the Corridor by embracing the amenities of the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden (south) and the Mississippi River (north) and by creating or improving green spaces throughout the Corridor; explore programming of outdoor/public spaces in conjunction with arts organizations.
6. Focus on both pedestrian and vehicle/public transit movement throughout the Corridor; examine physical and visual barriers to pedestrians and identify specific opportunities for sidewalk-level engagement; explore with Metro Transit the routing of buses to support movement to and through Corridor; explore opportunities for location and financing of light rail on Hennepin Avenue as well as small, green “circulator” transit options.

Third Quarter: Developing the Plan

1. Based on information gathered from the foregoing, create an engaging, multi-seasonal representation of the Corridor along with a map identifying proposed range of uses for each parcel within the Corridor.
2. Complete the overall Cultural Corridor Plan document; load to website and invite feedback through various media; host three or more sessions with affected and interested parties.

Fourth Quarter: Presenting the Plan and Obtaining Support

1. Present plan for formal endorsement by affected neighborhood groups, the business community, by the boards of all involved institutions along the Corridor and endorsement by the City of Minneapolis.

b. Outcomes and Measurements: Despite disappointing past revitalization efforts on Hennepin, several entities have created destinations, but these lack connectedness. This project, led by the Trust in collaboration with other arts and cultural organizations, will set the stage for synergistic future development, connecting these organizations and fostering an environment that supports intensive arts uses. The cohesiveness, appearance and economic function of Hennepin Avenue will thus be improved. The result will be a broadly supported plan for an easily identifiable and attractive destination, shared audiences, and an economic renaissance *grounded in the arts and culture, newly connected to the natural environment*. Upon implementation, there will be over a mile of pedestrian friendly walks, Corridor supported transit options, cultural outlets, restaurants, bookstores, galleries and museums. The effectiveness of the planning process will be measured by feedback from a highly interactive website, social media and a survey instrument that evaluates the quality of the planning process and the resulting plan. These items are included in the proposed project budget. Success requires completion of the following tasks on time and within budget, including securing required institutional/community/municipal support: 1. Completion of an illustrated plan, mapping and related written/electronic presentation materials (by end of third quarter); 2. Adoption of the plan by affected neighborhood organizations (by beginning of fourth quarter), and 3. Endorsement of the plan by all collaborating boards of directors and all major collaborators (by mid-point of fourth quarter); 4. Formal support of the plan by the downtown business community and integration into the Minneapolis Downtown Council 2025 Plan (by mid-fourth quarter); 5. Completed survey of planning process participants and affected organizations and individuals with positive feedback on process and results (by midpoint of fourth quarter); 6. Endorsement of the plan by the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Arts Commission, and other relevant public bodies, as necessary, as the definitive guide to future development in the Cultural Corridor (by end of fourth quarter).

c. Key Individuals, organizations and works of art: Tom Hoch, President /CEO of Hennepin Theatre Trust will serve as the lead on this project. Ann Gadwa of Metris Arts Consulting will serve as the Project Director. Olga Viso, Executive Director of the Walker Art Center and Kelley Lindquist of Artspace will work with Hoch as co-conveners; both are already involved and committed. Viso serves with Hoch on the Downtown business community's planning process, *Downtown 2025*, which includes

Hennepin Avenue as a “Cultural Corridor”. The Walker Art Center and Artspace were identified as key organizations because both are located on and have major real estate holdings on Hennepin Avenue. The Walker is a strong visual, performing and media arts organization with an international aesthetic and capacity for joint programming with the Trust. Artspace is a community developer of live/work space with successful projects around the country and brings a broad range of nonprofit real estate development expertise in the arts to the table. This fall, Artspace will open the new Cowles Center for the Performing Arts on Hennepin Avenue within the Corridor.

d. Target Population. We are seeking to make the Cultural Corridor a national treasure, building on the national reputation of the Walker Art Center, the Twin Cities arts and theatre scene and the prominence of the Mississippi River. For the planning process proposed, we will target all current businesses and property owners along Hennepin Avenue as well as patrons of the collaborating organizations, local artists and arts enterprises and the adjacent neighborhood organizations.

e. Plans for promoting, publicizing, and/or disseminating the project. In addition to developing an overall public relations plan for this project, two primary activities will raise awareness and foster engagement among diverse stakeholders. First, we will host a series of face to face, publicized meetings with people and organizations to disseminate information and gain feedback. Second, our plan calls for development of a highly interactive website and social media campaigns that will push information to the community and pull the community into the process. The budget includes a significant investment in website development and social media operations.

f. Plans for documenting, evaluating, and disseminating the project results. The plan will be posted on the Trust’s and conveners’ websites; a series of meetings will provide feedback to those consulted; and an electronic evaluation survey will gather feedback. As part of our overall communication plan we will undertake public relations efforts to increase awareness, visibility and engagement; we will secure media coverage at project inception and upon completion to inform the public of the plan and invite input and participation.

g. NEPA/NHPA Impact. We do not believe that any portion of the project will involve environmental review. The exact connection between the Mississippi Riverfront and the Cultural Corridor is being addressed by the Mississippi Riverfront Corporation in conjunction with the Minneapolis Parks and

Recreation Board. The proposed Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor is not in a historic district. Therefore, the plan would not involve modifications to any historic structures. It is intended to address the public realm and uses inside primarily non historic properties, rather than modifications to those structures. A list of the historic buildings along the Hennepin Avenue Corridor is included as part of Attachment 10 as a point of information.

h. Plans for making the project accessible. All community meetings will include the use of ASL interpretation and are ADA Compliant. Non-English resources will be provided through the City of Minneapolis, which has a comprehensive list of interpreters and is very familiar with provision of this service. The website component of this project will provide access to non-English resources through coordination with the City. We will establish links to the project website through the City's website and the website of Hennepin Theatre Trust, the Walker Art Center, Artspace, Hennepin County libraries, the Downtown Improvement District and the Minneapolis Downtown Council.

i. Budget. Grants and contributions raised specifically for this purpose will provide the necessary financial resources to cover costs beyond operations. \$60,000.00 has already been pre-pledged, with additional grant support identified. Should the grant awarded by NEA be less than the project cost indicated, we would reduce the proposed budget for travel, and reduce other budgeted items on a percentage basis.