

Minnesota Promenade Concept

DBBA Presentation to City Council

June 16th, 2021

Handout of Presentation

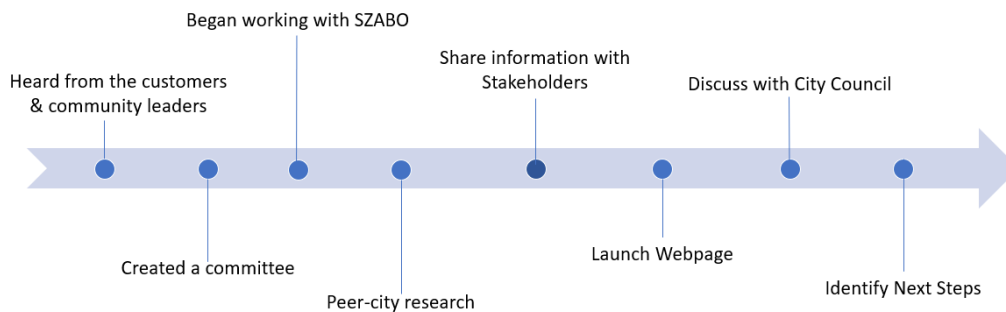


Thank you, Councilors, for being here today, and for prioritizing the future of Downtown Bend.

I am here today on behalf of the DBBA Board of Directors. The DBBA is a small nonprofit dedicated to increasing the vitality of Downtown Bend by enhancing the experience, image, and lifestyle of the Downtown Bend Economic Improvement District. Our scope of work includes everything from daily sidewalk sweeping, to branding and marking, to advocacy and planning &

development. The DBBA Board of Directors are a group of individuals who are voted for by business and building owners in the EID. The individuals are elected to represent the voice of the EID stakeholders.

First, a quick recap on what brings us here today:



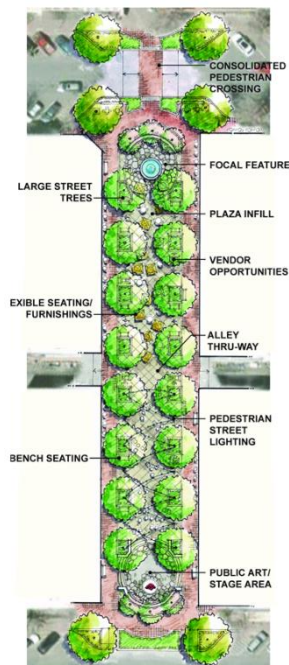
- The DBBA has heard from downtown customers & community leaders a desire for more walkable spaces, and areas for community gathering in downtown Bend
- In response to these requests, the DBBA BOD created a committee to investigate these ideas further
- We began working with SZABO to secure renderings of what the space could look like
- We dug into research on promenades, and we started one-on-one conversations with other peer cities that have successfully created promenades
- Then we shared all this information with stakeholders (Business and Building owners along Minnesota) to educate them on the opportunity and hear their insight and feedback
- Today, we launch our webpage explaining this concept and inviting the community to weigh in
- And now we are here discussing this with you to identify next steps

These concept rendering, created by [SZABO Landscape Architecture](#), models the concept of a pedestrian promenade on Minnesota Ave between Wall and Bond Streets. This model is a first draft to help the Bend community get an idea of the 'look and feel' that this space could have. These are in no way final drawings, and any forward progress on this idea would include further stakeholder and community input.





These overview renderings, created by [SZABO Landscape Architecture](#), models the concept of a traffic flow from the downtown parking garage, through the proposed Minnesota promenade, through the Commons Plaza, and to the [Drake Park Boardwalk](#) (construction beginning in 2022). The DBBA believes that building restrooms in downtown Bend is a necessary part of any further development of downtown Bend. We are proposing a combined restroom/covered bike parking facility in the North Mirror Pond parking lot.



We have identified restrooms as the most crucial need for downtown Bend. Restrooms in downtown are long overdue, they are needed now, and they will be needed even more in the future if we are inviting more people to use our downtown as a gathering space. Building restrooms are also a near zero risk, and they will be publicly supported. This is an easy 'win' and could serve to build trust with the community and downtown stakeholders. I would propose that the DBBA writes a TRT grant to cover the building costs and then ongoing restroom maintenance comes out of the downtown parking fund. We are also recommending that the building of a restroom facility is paired with a covered bike parking facility. We believe this is another significantly needed asset in the downtown core, and one that will encourage the multi-modal transportation we would like to see more of.



We really like the history mural on the restroom pictured in this slide, and we love the additional greenery and benches on this cover bike area pictured.

Here are some of the things we have learned:

- The creations of promenades take time.
 - For example, Pearl Street Mall in Boulder, Co began as a concept in 1966, and Pearl Street was eventually closed ten years later in 1976, and the promenade was completed in Aug 1977.
 - Just a few days ago I was talking with the Executive Director of the San Diego Downtown Partnership, where they are currently installing a promenade. He said that he spent years talking with stakeholders and community members, running townhalls, and hosting meetings on this topic, then the city invested in a feasibility study. At the completion of that feasibility study, the city invested in a pilot program, and now they are moving forward with a permanent installation of the promenade. Its been over 5 years since their process began.
- Public Promenades take financial investment – not just to create, but to sustain.
 - For example, Pearl Street is 4 blocks, and their annual budget to care for this space is 3 million
 - In San Diego, they spent \$300,000 for a year pilot program that closed the street from Wed-Sun from noon to 2am. Their entire price tag for their promenade creation is \$40 million
 - In Lancaster, they have two staff people from 8 to 3 every day just to keep the promenade clean. They report that service costs about \$40,000 a year, and they have 2-man ambassador teams every day in the promenade (until 11pm) to keep things safe – this program costs \$250,000 year.
 - Church Street, Vermont spent \$80,000 with a consulting company called PUMA to help them build a plan for growing their downtown
 - In San Diego, the downtown association gets 45% of the parking revenue from the district
- All successful promenades have near consistent programming to activate the space. Most of them have daily programming such as buskers and food vendors, and then they have an “event” and average of once per week throughout the year.

Here is what we learned

Must haves	Opportunities	Heightened awareness needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R&D investment Ongoing funding sources identified Consistent Programming Beautification Consistent Cleaning & Stewardship Accessibility (including parking) Community buy-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Environmental Impacts Increased property value Expression of community values Slows down movement in the core Fuel Private Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89% of promenades fail * Livability concerns can increase Construction impact on businesses Types of events/vendors Gentrification

- All successful promenades are easy to access. They are easy to access by public transportation, and they have nearby parking garages. For perspective, downtown Boulder/ Pearl Street Mall is surrounded by 5 parking garages.

Here are some of the positive impacts that we have heard about:

- Promenades help add more green spaces and reduce pollution
- Promenades can increase business sales and downtown property values
- Promenades can become the center economic driver of the city
- Promenades create a culture that is slower & more engaged

Here are some of the areas of concern, or things we need to be aware of as we move forward:

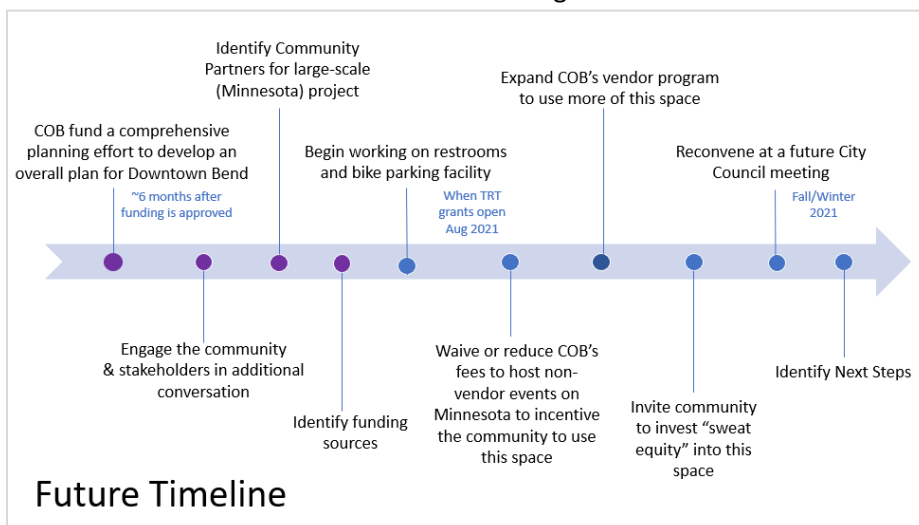
A study done by Fresno State University, that studied the trends of pedestrian promenades over the last 50 years, reported that 89% of promenades fail, and have been removed or repurposed. If you read the study, you could question the relevance of this data to our situation given that the cities studied were all larger cities already in an economic decline during the 50's and 60's. However, I believe that we can still learn from these failures. These failures were attributed to some of the things we just discussed, poor planning, lack of ongoing sustainable funding, increased livability issues, lack of maintenance, and lack of accessibility. This data can help us make sure that we don't fall into the same pitfalls as other downtown's have in this endeavor.

Our stakeholders are concerned about these items that caused failure in other areas – and they are also concerned about

- The impact of construction on their business. Many of our small businesses could not afford to have months of construction on their street – at least not right now (post-COVID).
- Stakeholders are also concerned about the types of events that this space would draw. Given that the majority of businesses experience a decrease in sales on days where there are vendor booths in front of their businesses, they want to make sure there is a great deal of intention when creating the programming for this space.
- They are also concerned about delivery – both into their businesses, and out of their business (customer pick-up)
- Noise. Businesses report that any amplified sound on this narrow street with brick buildings on either side, makes the sound reverberate to the point the customer service and basic conversations are near impossible.

All this information, both the exciting possibilities and the concerns – is going to help us move forward to create the best possible chance of success.

Here is the timeline we recommend for moving forward:



First, we would like to recommend not just a feasibility study for the Minnesota promenade project, but a comprehensive planning effort to develop an overall plan for Downtown Bend. For example, here are upcoming projects that are going to impact the entire development of Downtown Bend.

- Expansion to Revere/Hawthorne
- Movement of City Hall
- Removal of the Hawthorne and Lafayette access to 97

We need a comprehensive plan to understand how all of these pieces fit together – both with timeline and funding.

Then, we suggest that we more deeply engage our stakeholders and community about this project, and the future of downtown Bend.

- Our new website
- Community Conversations

Then, recognizing that any development we do downtown will draw more people, we ask that the city working with the DBBA now to create public restrooms in the downtown core. This is already needed in downtown Bend and will be a key component to any future development of the downtown district.

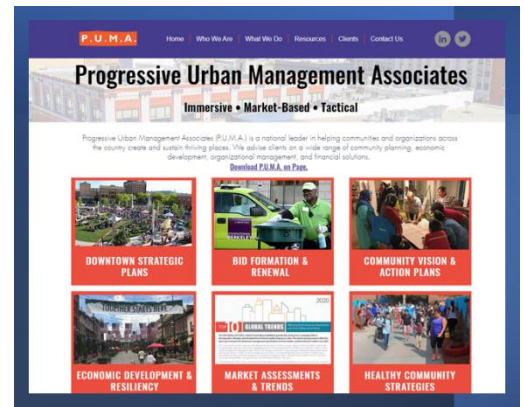
In our research it became clear that these sorts of projects are successful when they are multiple community partners, and so we would like to work to identify and enroll these partners

Then, we would like to recommend some ways in which we could work to activate this space while we are working on gathering more data.

- COB Waive Event Fees
- COB increased their sidewalk vendor program
- COB/DBBA invite the community to invest 'sweat equity' into the space

Then, after these action steps are taken, we would like to reconvene with you to review what we have learned and outline how to best move forward. Based on my conversations with other downtowns – I imagine this would include some kinds of pilot program or partial redevelopment.

Both Boulder, Co and Church Street, Vermont have used Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA), and both have raving reviews of working with these experts on developing a plan to grow their downtowns.



I have submitted an inquiry to PUMA, and I will let you know as soon as I have more information.

Thank you. Questions?

