



Cedar Rapid Downtown SSMID Commission Minutes
March 27th, 2019 | 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance

Present: Casey Drew, Dave Drown, Darryl High, Dawn Jaffray, Chris Lindell, Linda Mattes, Matthew Miller, Randy Rings, David Sorg, Craig Stephan, Joe Terfler

Absent: Emily Ellingson, Andrew Morf, Fred Timko

Guests: Ryan Anderson – Confluence, Jennifer Selby – City of Cedar Rapids, Jennifer Pratt – City of Cedar Rapids

Staff: Ellen Bardsley, Jenn Draper, Dennis Hotka, Jessica Komisar, Jesse Thoeming, Audrey Wheeler

Welcome, Introductions & Call to Order

Mattes welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Consent Agenda

Rings moved approval of the consent agenda with Terfler seconding. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

3rd Ave Presentation

Selby and Anderson presented 3rd Ave construction/updates which consists of protective bike lanes, a parking buffer, benches and raised planters, trees, pavers and more.

3rd Ave Corridor Timeline

- 2017 – 3rd Ave SW from 6th Street to 1st Street
- 2018 – 3rd Ave SW at 1st Street SW
- 2019 – 3rd Ave Bridge, 3rd Ave SE from 1st to 5th Street, 3rd Ave SE from 5th to 19th Street

3rd Ave Bridge Timeline

- Mid-March to Early-July 2019 – Joint replacement, mill and resurface, restripe parking from angled to parallel
- Mid-July to Early-August 2019 – Planters with grasses and flowers, benches and trash receptacles
- Spring 2020 – Plant trees in planters

3rd Ave SE from 1st Street to 5th Street Updates

- Mill and resurface
- Protected bike lanes
- Raised medians
- New streetlights
- ADA improvements at the Paramount
- April 10th – Bid opening, June 2019 – Begin construction, Fall 2019 – Complete construction

Anderson stated the trash receptacles will be black and the benches on the bridge will be silver. Mattes added that the silver brightens up the area and doesn't get as hot as the black and looks fresh. Jaffray stated she would be worried about the black being a safety concern in the summer. Anderson stated there is a Right of Way Specs Manual that is currently being created to enhance the design consistency. This manual will be released later this year but there are decisions that need to be made now for the streetscaping in front of the Paramount on 3rd Ave. Red and gray concrete pavers will be installed outside of the Paramount and dark gray pavers will be used closer to the curb to create a visual

safety line and also organizes the streetscape elements. Bump-outs in the intersection will include red pavers to match the pavers directly in front of the Paramount entry. Selby stated the decision to move from clay to concrete pavers is a trend other communities are seeing as they seem to tolerate harsh conditions better. The new proposed tree grates will be installed in higher traffic areas as the new standard. These grates have a wider opening for the tree, irrigation system access points in the corners and is made of corrugated weathered steel. Anderson presented the proposed benches for Downtown (not including the 3rd Ave Bridge) which is a black powder coated steel. Anderson added black works better than other colors amongst different styles of architecture and it will match the new street lights that Alliant is installing. The arms of the proposed bench are configurable and modular so they can have arms on both sides, one in the middle, etc. The commission provided other recommendations such as silver benches due to the heat or composite decking material.

The price per unit for the proposed black bench is roughly \$2k, however there are price breaks, a loyalty program and a generous warranty. Thoeming stated the Commission had approved the budget at \$800 per bench (120-140 benches total in the district) however it doesn't necessarily have to be a 1:1 replacement either. The Commission will take the proposed bench and the budget into consideration.

Restaurant Week Re-Cap

Draper stated more than 50% of the participating restaurants during Restaurant Week were in core districts including Downtown & Czech Village NewBo. The Fork & Knife Feast event experienced about 250 attendees which is half of what was originally projected. However, with it being a first-time event and some uncertainty from the public, we are hopeful that due to its popularity from those who went, the attendance number will increase next year. The website traffic for Restaurant Week was comparable to Farmers' Market traffic. There was no fee to be a participating restaurant, however they did have to attend and provide food samples at Fork & Knife Feast as well as be a member of the Economic Alliance. Drew asked what the total cost was for Restaurant Week and Fork and Knife Feast. Draper stated those numbers are still being calculated but we are estimating around the \$15-20k range. Restaurants were asked to share sales numbers for this year compared to the same timeframe as 2018 in order for us to get a better feel for if it was successful. The general feeling and feedback from restaurants was that it was successful and that they saw a different crowd/new faces in their establishments.

Farmers' Market Update

Draper provided a draft of the Farmers' Market venue for 2019. This draft is not final as it needs approval from the City but the market will focus on 2nd Ave and 5th Street due to the construction that will be taking place on 3rd Ave. There are 190 spaces, including vendors and sponsors, available which is comparable to previous years. There was a significant increase in applications this year and the current waitlist already consists of 75 vendors which is expected to grow by another 50. Vendors were scored by an external committee and were ranked based on number of years they have participated in the Market, if they had any cancellations or no-shows last year and their product quality. Draper is beginning the process of finding and securing entertainment for the Markets so if there is anybody that Commission members would recommend, please send that info to Draper (jdraper@cedarrapids.org).

Retail/Business Support Program

Thoeming presented the idea of a Business Support program to offset the harsh Winter season and the construction that will be taking place on 3rd Ave that might have some effect on Downtown businesses. This program will be designed to incentivize individuals to shop/spend money in our district between Memorial Day and Labor Day 2019. The initial idea is to receive a passport or coupon book, get it stamped, turn it in to receive a gift bag and be entered into winning a grand prize drawing. The Gazette is interested with the idea and want to partner on it. In order to move the needle, it is proposed that this program is allocated \$10k by shifting funds from other budget line items. These funds would be used for ad buys, social media, prizes, etc. The Commission provided some other examples of how this program could be successful such as having a table at the Farmers' Market to give them out or give the budgeted funds to the selected businesses for gift cards to give a way. Overall, the Commission had a conceptual buy-in for the program and Rings motioned for the \$10k re-allocation with High seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Pedestrian Bridge Discussion

Rings wanted to see if there is energy to move forward as this will be a high dollar project and will take some time to complete. Thoeming stated he received a rough estimate for a very basic bridge at \$2.2M but with initial renderings from the JLG plan, the it would cost more than that. Drew stated if it was submitted to the City for funding assistance, it could be a project they would engage but it would be competing with other projects such as the Flood Control System and Connect CR. The Commission agreed to let the WOW project committee take on the next steps such as costs, design, funding, etc.

Bike Share Program

The Bike Share Program is scheduled to launch the second week of May to kick-off Bike to Work Week. The three SSMIDs and Linn Co. Trails is supporting this program by contributing funds for a \$100k Wellmark Grant match. The Downtown SSMID Executive Committee agreed to a \$5k contribution. These funds will be used for branded bike helmets, the production of a video created by Iowa BIG and instructional signage on the bike racks. There will be 90 stations amongst the core districts spanning from Coe College to Czech Village. VeoRide is the company that is taking care of the initial capital investment of the bikes and running the operations of the program as well as any maintenance and repairs that the bikes or stations will need. Fat tire bikes will eventually be introduced by the Mt. Trashmore Trail and there will be a test pilot for scooters during the Fall.

Re-Branding Update

The RFP for the re-branding is complete and is waiting on final feedback from the sub-committee before it is released. The sub-committee will find time to meet in-person to review.

Other Business

In the Downtown SSMID Guidelines that were discussed and approved during last month's meeting, it states that the Commission will consist of four officers. In order to better define who the officers are, the Guidelines will be amended to state the Commission will consist of the current and incoming chairs and up to two others that they select.

Thoeming received projections and actuals from Brother's Grocery, who is planning to be the Downtown grocer in the new Paramount Lot Tower. In order for the Downtown location to be successful, they must make \$6.5M per year. If their store gets built, their business model will focus on people like us: individuals working Downtown, coming in for staple items and not carts full of groceries. The projections will be e-mailed out along with the minutes and the actuals for the other store locations will be hand delivered due to the sensitivity of the information.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.