

The Charrette Overview



Introduction

Between September 10th and 15th, 2012, the City conducted an intensive charrette to develop the Transportation and Land Use Plan for the Strip District. The charrette format was chosen as a means accelerating the plan-making process and effectively incorporating public involvement. To foster accessibility - and to keep the planning District-focused – the charrette was held at the Society for Contemporary Craft at 21st and Smallman Streets.

The week-long process was organized to meet a variety of demands for the week. The detailed schedule is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Charrette Schedule

Time	Monday September 10	Tuesday September 11	Wednesday September 12	Thursday September 13	Friday September 14	Saturday September 15	
8:00 AM		Team Meeting	Team Meeting	Team Meeting	Team Meeting	Team Meeting	
9:00 AM	Team Arrives in Pittsburgh	Concurrent Technical Sessions City Planning/Public Works/Public Safety/URA/PennDOT/ARGB	Team Work Sessions Develop Land Use & Mobility Alternatives	Team Work Sessions Refine Land Use & Mobility Alternatives	Team Work Sessions Design & Production Plans	Set-Up for Closing Session	
10:00 AM	Studio Set-Up/Opening Session Set-Up						
11:00 AM						Public Closing Session	
12:00 PM	Public Opening Session	Lunch In	Lunch In	Lunch In	Lunch In		
1:00 PM		Concurrent Technical Sessions Community Leaders/Stakeholders/Business Owners/Residents	Team Work Sessions Develop Land Use & Mobility Alternatives Streetcar Pedestrian Bike Incline	Client/Team Pin-Up Session	Team Work Sessions Design & Production Plans Finance Plan	Break-Down Studio	
2:00 PM	Lunch In			Set-Up for Midweek Session			
3:00 PM	Client/Team Overview & Site Tour			Public Midweek Session			
4:00 PM	Client Session	Team Work Sessions Development Program/Land Use Strategy	Team Work Sessions Refine Land Use & Mobility Alternatives Streetcar Pedestrian Bike Incline	Team Work Sessions Refine Land Use & Mobility Alternatives Streetcar Pedestrian Bike Incline		Team Departs Pittsburgh	
5:00 PM	Dinner Out						
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM				Dinner In			
8:00 PM		Dinner Out	Dinner Out		Dinner In/Out		



The Charrette Overview



To develop the plan, the Design Team asked a series of questions during the week. The answers to the questions became the components of the plan.

What are the Project Goals?

The Strip District Transportation and Land Use Plan is not a “stand-alone” exercise. Rather it is intended to move the *Allegheny Riverfront Vision Plan* from concept to implementation. Specifically the Plan’s goals are to:

- Collaboratively plan the Strip District’s future,
- Implement transportation improvements within public rights-of-way,
- Identify selective land use opportunities that impact transportation investments,
- Develop a complete system of streets, including enhanced street connectivity, streetcars, cycle tracks, and a possible future incline, and
- Prepare a program of projects for implementation.

How Do We Plan for Tomorrow?

In advance of the charrette, a series of 15 Best Practices (BPs), identified by the City, were developed. The BPs represent that state-of-the-art for applications across a range of technical issues:

Urban Transit Applications

- Transit Stop Consolidation
- Universal Design for Transit
- Small shuttle/Community Circulator
- Streetcar Alignment Planning
- Operating and Maintenance Costs
- Streetcar Capital Cost Estimation
- Funiculars and Inclines

Value capture, Finance and Special District Applications

- Public and Private Value Capture Options

Bicycle and Pedestrian Applications

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation
- Cycle Tracks
- Community and Individual Health Benefits

Roadway and Parking Applications

- Universal Design at Intersections
- Complete Streets
- Parking Strategies
- Technology Innovations and ITS
- Enforcement Programs
- Network Connectivity
- Sustainability and Urban Design Standards

How Did We Proceed?

The charrette was not a “stand-alone” event. In fact, preceding the charrette there was a period of information gathering, analyses and two public forums. This background allowed the City and Design Team to advance the plan concepts quickly and on a sound basis. During the charrette the City staff and Steering Committee met frequently and gave advice and direction. The City/Steering Committee Pin-Up Session on Wednesday was instrumental in shaping the recommendations. Against that backdrop, the Design Team:

- **Developed ideas for improvement alternatives** – in response to the City’s desire to have complete system of streets, a typology was prepared in response to that request. The



The Charrette Overview



typology featured a series of “Ways” - Through Way, Pedestrian Way, Transit Way, Cycle Way and Green Way. Alternatives were prepared for City/Committee review.

- **Presented alternatives to affected stakeholders** – One of the themes of the charrette was to present ideas and get immediate feedback. While the City, Steering Committee and public stakeholders were invited to “drop-in” any time, the scheduled mid-week review session was the time for response and debate over the alternatives.
- **Talked with, and listened to, the stakeholders** – As might be expected, several recommendations, especially regarding the application of BPs on Penn Avenue drew positive and negative responses. From the sessions came other ideas and alternatives.
- **Field-checked, tried and tested alternatives** – Any new ideas were subject to field checking and testing prior to making any specific recommendations. In some cases, changes were made; in some cases, modifications or enhancements were applied; and in some cases the recommended alternative was retained.
- **Prepared a set of revised recommendations** – Based on the preceding steps, the Design Team prepared a set of land use and transportation planning recommendations.

What Did We Recommend?

Consistent with the project goals and direction, the Design Team prepared a Framework Plan that establishes the Strip District’s development trajectory, along with supporting a Complete System of Streets. The Framework Plan mapped the proposed opportunity sites against the transportation improvements to illustrate their integration. The Framework Plan and Complete System of Streets are detailed in the following chapters.

- **The Framework Plan** – The Framework Plan centers around the multi-modal transportation improvements and the resulting supportive land use developments. The Framework illustrates the major corridors where improvements will occur. It also highlights the opportunity sites and how they relate to the transportation improvements. The Framework Plan describes:
 - The Strip District’s three sub-districts
 - The importance of the District’s fundamental block structure
 - Proposed Character Areas
 - Transit-supportive Opportunity Sites
 - Transit-supportive Development Types
 - Future Development Program Potential
 - Smallman Street Transformation
 - Railroad Street Transformation
- **The Complete Systems of Streets** – To help wean the Strip District on the strict reliance of the automobile, businesses, employees, residents and visitors are offered multi-modal options. For the users of the automobile, the daily uses may vary from commuter – “through trips” – to residents and businesses – “to trips”. The system is designed to balance the two conditions – “through traffic and to traffic”. The system, shown in Figure 2, is characterized as an interrelated set of “Ways”
 - Through Way – Liberty Avenue is designed to be the principal commuter route to and from Downtown, as well as Strip District businesses and employees.
 - Pedestrian Way – Penn Avenue is the principal pedestrian street due to its current daily and weekend foot traffic. Enhancements are recommended for convenience and safety.



The Charrette Overview

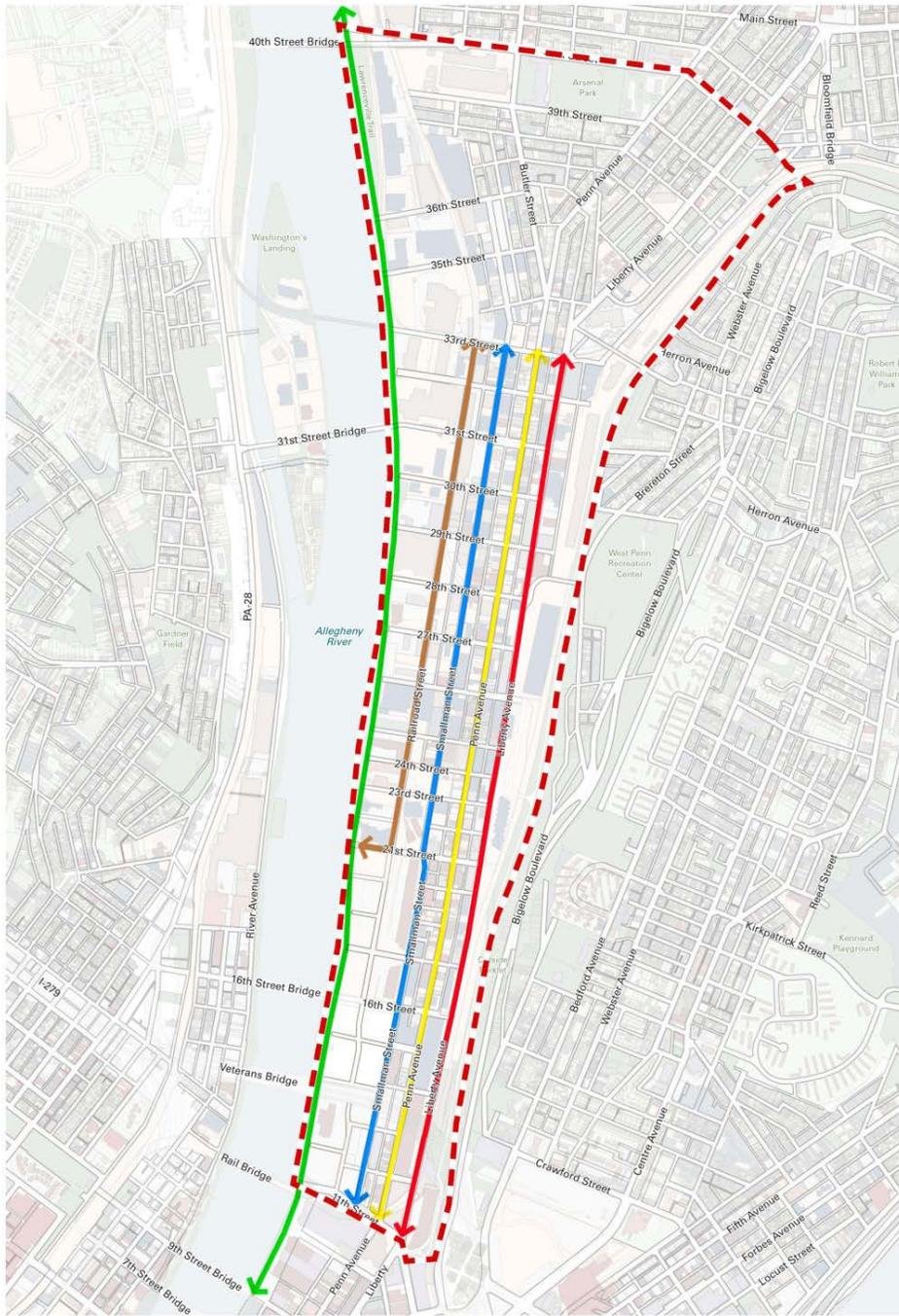


- Transit Way – Smallman Street hosts the recommended streetcar as the centerpiece of the Transit Way. It is centrally located in the Strip District and can serve all existing and future development opportunity areas. An important role is to serve future satellite parking facilities to meet rising demand for parking.
- Cycle Way – Railroad Street is the recommended location for the cycle track that is intended to provide a dedicated facility for commuter bikers. Given the narrow width of the Strip District, the facility is only about 600 ft. west of Penn Avenue, which is the current morning and afternoon choice for cyclists.
- Green Way – The Riverfront Trail constitutes the Green Way and supports the recommendations of the *Allegheny Riverfront Vision Plan* and the *Allegheny Riverfront Green Boulevard Plan* concept.

The Charrette Overview



Figure 2: The Complete System of Streets



THE STRIP DISTRICT CROSS SECTION



The Five Ways: A Complete System of Streets

- ↔ THROUGH WAY
- ↔ PEDESTRIAN WAY
- ↔ TRANSIT WAY
- ↔ BICYCLE WAY
- ↔ GREEN WAY
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



400 0 400 800 1,600'

FEBRUARY 2013



A PROJECT FUNDED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE

HDR
URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES
RCLCO
SPRINKLE CONSULTING ENGINEERS
SCI-TEK CONSULTANTS
MEZRAHI, INC.
OLSHAK MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS