

ABC RAMPS TAP

A ULI Minnesota Technical Assistance Panel for Minnesota Department of Transportation

April 15-17, 2019



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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS (TAPS)

Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) are convened by ULI MN at the request of cities, counties or other public agencies. TAPs address specific development challenges such as site redevelopment options, downtown revitalization and environmental considerations.

TAPs convene development experts across disciplines who can offer recommendations based on the sponsor's questions. The goal is to generate ideas for realizing local, regional and statewide aspirations. Panelists evaluate data, site conditions and future redevelopment readiness and provide specific recommendations to guide future land uses for each site, as well as future partnerships in the real estate industry.



Panelists at the initial report-out at the end of the 3-day Technical Assistance Panel.

In this instance, **the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)** invited a ULI MN Technical Assistance Panel to evaluate how to move forward in the management and development of the downtown **Minneapolis ABC Ramps** to create a thriving mobility hub in the heart of the city, improve pedestrian and other commuter connections, revitalize unused and underutilized spaces, and add new uses within the Ramps.

THE PANEL

Panelists are ULI MN members and experts who volunteer their time because of their commitment to the principles of redevelopment, planned growth, economic expansion and local and regional capacity-building.

PANEL

Max Musicant, *The Musicant Group (Chair)*
Doug Arseneault, *Central Ohio Transit Authority*
Bill Dossett, *Nice Ride Minnesota*
Lynette Dumalag, *JLL Minneapolis*
Meena Mangalvedhekar, *Hennepin Theatre Trust*
Chris Palkowitsch, *BKV Group*
Chris Sherman, *Sherman & Associates*
Charlie Zelle, *Jefferson Lines*

ULI MN STAFF

Cathy Bennett
Caren Dewar
Gordon Hughes
Rachel Lieberman

ABOUT THE STUDY SITES: ABC RAMPS

The ABC Ramps (the “Ramps”) were completed in 1992 as part of the I-394 construction using Federal Aid Interstate funds. The purpose of the Ramps is to have programs that support reducing congestion and improving air quality by reducing single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips. MnDOT is the owner of these ramps and bridges and contracts with the City of Minneapolis for operations and maintenance. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) maintains oversight. The ramps are situated in downtown Minneapolis between 10th Street to the south and 4th Street to the north and 2nd Avenue to the east and Twins Way/3rd Avenue to the west.



The Ramps are very large parking garages, with Ramp A having over 3500 stalls, Ramp B over 1600 and Ramp C nearly 1500. Together, they total over 6500 stalls and account for more than 30% of the off-street structured parking managed by the City of Minneapolis parking division. Approximately 48,000 square feet of lobby or warehouse and skyway space sit unused or underutilized in the Ramps. The Ramps are highly visible landmarks in downtown Minneapolis and are surrounded by a high concentration of working, living and social activities. The Ramps not only provide parking spaces for carpoolers, single occupant vehicle commuters, and attendees of events, they also serve as hubs for Metro Transit, bicycle commuters, Nice Ride bike share and Megabus. Additional fixed route transit, Greyhound, Jefferson Lines, Northstar passenger rail and Blue and Green line light rail stations are accessible within a few blocks. These services and modes are spread out between all three ramps as well as the surrounding neighborhood without sufficient signs, maps or wayfinding within the ramp’s skyway or in the surrounding area. This makes it difficult for users to have a seamless transition from one mode to the next and to downtown or the North Loop neighborhood.

Outcomes from a recent University of Minnesota study commissioned by MnDOT recommended the Ramps should be enhanced to become more of a Mobility Hub. Mobility Hubs are an integrated suite of mobility services provided at defined locations around existing and new transit stations, allowing transit riders to seamlessly access other modes of transportation once they arrive at the station. The study strategies ranged from simply enhancing the public realm around the existing or new transit stations to encourage walking (sidewalks, street trees, street

lights, wayfinding), to providing racks for bicycles on buses and trains, to supporting bicycle share programs, rideshare and car share, as well as high-frequency local shuttle services, and other regional and local transit connections. [Additional information and examples can be found here.](#)

In 2017, the Shared Use Mobility Center authored the [Twin Cities Shared Mobility Action Plan](#). This plan identifies integrated mobility hubs as an important strategy to help policy makers and local leaders drive and support change in the Twin Cities.

Lastly, Saint Paul and Minneapolis received awards from the Bloomberg foundation as part of the [American Cities Climate Challenge](#). Minneapolis plans to develop a pilot program (Mobility-as-a-Service) offering subscription service for unlimited transit use and an allotment of use for shared cars, bikes, scooters and ride hailing. Saint Paul plans to build out 35 mobility hubs to offer low carbon options and electric vehicle charging. All above mentioned efforts would support the Ramps in their quest to become an integrated mobility hub in downtown Minneapolis.

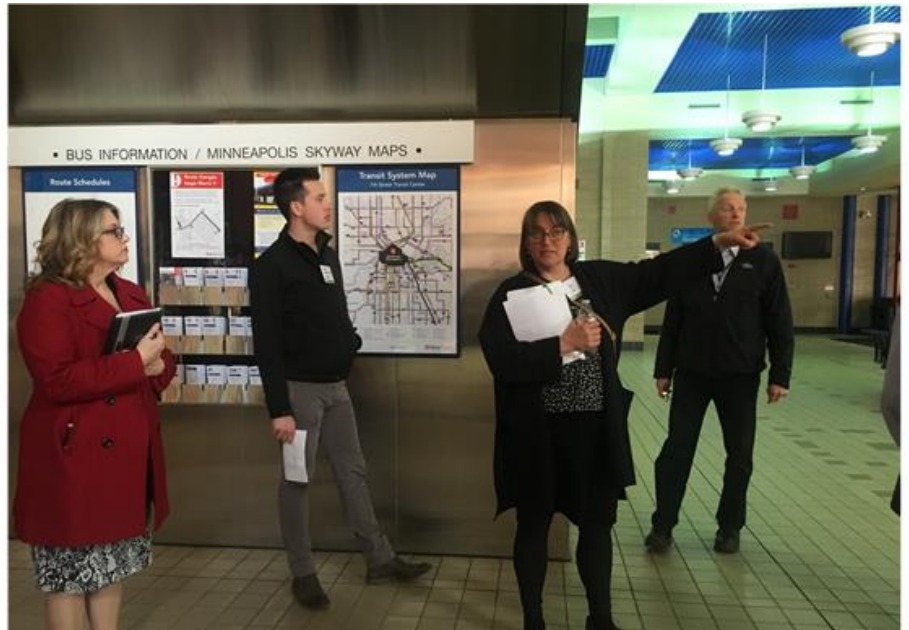


A Ramp, East Side

THE PANEL'S CHARGE

MnDOT asked for the panel's expertise related to **mobility, utilization of spaces, partnerships and placemaking** to improve the user experience.

The Ramps are underutilized and not currently serving as a mobility hub. The purpose of the TAP was to understand the market needs that would contribute to a mobility hub which would function as more than just connections to modes, but as activity centers, services for commuters, public and private services and amenities, and integration with adjacent land use etc. The Ramps were constructed before such modes as bike share, scooter share, Uber and Lyft existed. Currently, transportation network companies have come up with their own spots for user pick up and drop off in and around the Ramps, but these are not consistent for all ride hailing uses. MnDOT would like to identify defined pick up and drop off areas as part of the creation of a multi-mobility hub for the Ramps.



MnDOT Staff lead ULI MN panelists on a guided tour of the ABC Ramps

One of the reasons to conduct the TAP was to gain market insights into the potential activation of nearly 48,000 square feet of underutilized spaces to encourage a safer more welcoming environment that people will want to use while serving as a key transportation asset.

In addition to reactivating spaces, providing safe and secure pedestrian connections to the North Loop area of downtown Minneapolis was a specific implementation need identified by MnDOT for the Ramps. Safety and security issues have been identified and the desire to understand the value of better lighting, wayfinding and importance of installation of emergency call boxes are a few options MnDOT would like to explore to increase safety and security of the current connection.

Specifically, MnDOT asked the panel to address the following questions:

1. What can MnDOT do to support and encourage the activation of vacant, unused or underused floor area in and around the ABC Ramps to create a more attractive, safe and pedestrian supportive mobility hub? What types of uses will the market support in these areas?
2. Are there any perceived barriers/restrictions to reusing MnDOT space within the Ramps? How can MnDOT encourage public, non-profit and private interest and investment in redevelopment/reuse opportunities in and around the Ramps?
3. What types of place making activities and initiatives in and around the Ramps could be undertaken by MnDOT or in partnership with the public, non-profit and private sectors to help make the area a more attractive and vibrant place to be?
4. How does MnDOT improve pedestrian connections, both at street and skyway level, from the Ramps to nearby destinations including the North Loop?

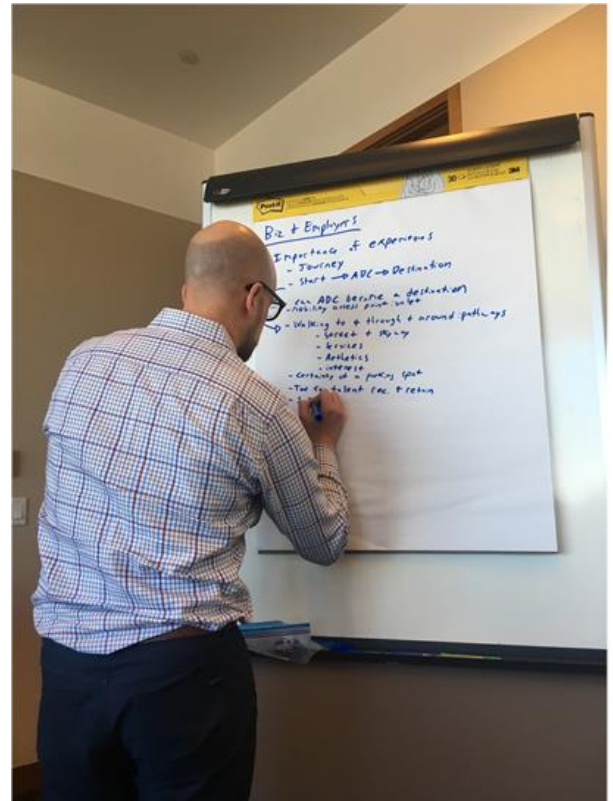
THE TAP PROCESS

Panelists spent three days reviewing the site's issues, meeting with stakeholders and crafting recommendations for MnDOT to consider enhancing the Ramps in an effort to incorporate more mobility to, from and within the structures.

On the first morning of this three-day TAP, panelists participated in a walking tour of the ABC Ramps in downtown Minneapolis. Representatives from MnDOT provided a summary of the Ramps' history, layout, current uses, and potential future uses. After the tour, the panel conducted community stakeholder interviews with business, city, transit/mobility, and safety/security representatives. These interviews allowed the panelists to understand various perspectives of those working in and around the Ramps, and those using the Ramps. At the end of day one, stakeholders, MnDOT representatives, panelists, and ULI Minnesota staff gathered for a kickoff reception where discussions continued regarding possible uses for the Ramps, goals of the process and long term aspirations.

On day two, additional stakeholder interviews with representatives of downtown interest/retail, safety/security, city planning, transportation/mobility, and business interests were held. These conversations and background information helped to inform the panelists' recommendations and gain a better understanding of the varied use and future interests of the Ramps.

Over the course of the remaining day and a half the panelists worked together to distill the background information provided by MnDOT and key stakeholders and utilized their professional expertise to formulate key recommendations about the Ramps. The TAP concluded with a presentation to MnDOT, City of Minneapolis staff and other stakeholders where panelists shared their initial recommendations, followed by questions and discussion.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The panel conducted individual interviews with representatives from Target, the security firm ABM Industries, the City of Minneapolis (including parking staff and the Police Department), Metro Transit, Regional Transportation Management Center, Xcel Energy, St. Stephens, MnDOT, the Downtown Council, Red Archer Retail, Securitas, Inc., Walker Parking Consultants, Move Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, Be the Match, Hines, and the Minnesota Twins. These organizations were selected for interviews by MnDOT to reflect a variety of users, developers, and current and future partners of the Ramps.

Key themes emerged regarding safety and security, wayfinding, public private partnership, and current and future potential uses of underutilized spaces. The input from these interviewees was taken into consideration by the panel when making their recommendations.

Key information from stakeholders included:

- **Safety and Security:**
 - Cleanliness and a feeling of safety in the Ramps have improved over the last few years, but there is still a need to improve the users' experience. As an example, panic buttons are small and hard to find and there are long empty corridors where walking can feel disorienting, unsafe and isolating.
 - The Ramps are an area where those experiencing homelessness congregate when they are displaced in the morning from nearby shelters, which is perceived by the general population as creating unsafe conditions. Interviewees indicated that most of the crime within the Ramps is not related to those experiencing homelessness, but rather drug-related issues and disorderly conduct. There was an indication by some that the addition of more formal security guards is not the only solution but rather activating the spaces with more people could bolster the feeling of security. However, leveraging existing onsite security personnel to serve as greeters, ambassadors, and stewards of the Ramps could generate positive response and activity. Other suggestions included designating spaces for those experiencing homelessness and their belongings during the day, and partnering with agencies to assist with social service needs. Providing these opportunities could decrease the stress and hopelessness felt by those experiencing homelessness and create an increased sense of safety for the general public.
 - Public restrooms in the ramps and surrounding area are sparse to nonexistent, and a big community need. Right now, the only unlocked restroom in the Ramps is the Megabus Porta-Potty. Some stakeholders felt that spaces should be available for groups to use together, whether they are people experiencing homelessness, employees, or event attendees. Others advocated for more limited service between these groups.

- **Wayfinding and Placemaking:**

- There was a general sense that the Ramps were a barrier in their appearance as well as a connection to other amenities within downtown. The structures are not attractive and do not provide an opportunity to engage with the street life and the surrounding uses in downtown. In addition, there are few connections and those that exist are not a quality experience due to long pathways with no active uses along them, no active uses at terminals of pathways, poor sightlines, and often insufficient lighting. This is particularly true for the connection to the North Loop neighborhood.
- Wayfinding in the Ramps is difficult, and suggestions included improved signage and adding 'user experience enhancements' like fun light displays, holograms, kiosks and integrating art into signage and all wayfinding features. Incorporating onsite staffing for guests would also enhance the user experience and safety.
- Activation of the Ramps as a mobility hub, destination and activity center was desired and supportive by the stakeholders. It was noted that there currently is no central gathering area, or heart of the Ramps space.
- There are unclear and infrequent connections between different areas of the Ramps with limited reason to access the I-394 levels where there are no active uses to provide "eyes on the street". There are also unclear connections from the skyways to the street levels.

- **Public/Private Partnerships:**

- The Ramps are heavily utilized for event-related activities in the Target Center and at Target Field. The key users of these venues (Twins and Timberwolves) are interested in enhanced partnerships with the Ramps. Suggestions included allowing valet parking options, better signage and wayfinding and ways to profile the events for users immediately when they enter the ramps and make their way to Target Center and Target Field.
- There are also opportunities to partner with the local businesses in the Warehouse District and North Loop neighborhoods to increase safety and provide service needs for their employees, and visitors.
- Activating partnerships with homeless service agencies was suggested.

- **Multi-Mobility:**

- Metro Transit is looking for ways to collaborate with MNDOT on providing more flexible contracts that would allow users to park some days and take transit other days. A suggestion was made to create a flexible MnPass tag to allow people to park in the garages or use transit and could give credits for people who car or van pool.

- Limited wait time for transit connection is key; 4-7 minutes maximum wait time is ideal. This being said, time is elastic, with time waiting for uncertain feeling longest. Reduce the perception of time waiting by providing real time arrival info and animating the waiting areas with amenities. There was an interest in providing a public or private shuttle service (maybe autonomous, or electric) running from the ramps through the downtown core. Other suggestions included providing spaces for Nice Ride and scooters outside the ramps.
- It was suggested that MnDOT needs to consider a future when cars are less important in society. Considerations for electrification, autonomous vehicles, shuttles, car sharing, scooters, bikes, etc. within future plans for improvements and in creating spaces to enhance multi-mobility.

PANEL'S RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

The findings in this report are based on the panel's independent opinions and analyses as real estate, planning, arts, placemaking, design, finance and development professionals. While the panel considers these ideas and suggestions sound, they are not directives. There is no substitute for developers with motivation and vision and the cities are encouraged to review proposals that meet the project's goals.

MnDOT posed several questions to the panel which revolved around three general areas of interest:

- **Better use of vacant or underused space in and around the ramps**
- **Place making enhancements in and around the ramps**
- **Improvements to pedestrian connections to the North Loop and elsewhere.**

Before responding to the specific questions posed by MnDOT, the panel identified a number of guiding principles that MnDOT should consider when evaluating all other recommendations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Introduce a new narrative

Rebrand and reposition the ramps as a mobility and activity center. The Ramps have served as a key asset for the City and the region since their construction many years ago. They continue to serve as necessary consolidated parking locations for users coming from the western part of the metro area and help to reduce traffic congestion within downtown. They have been successful by many measures and have changed over time but remain large and imposing parking structures.

“It’s a bridge, not a barrier.”

-Charlie Zelle, Panelist

Due to the construction engineering, the Ramps have a much longer useful life than typically constructed parking ramps. They were designed to “bridge engineering standards” since the structures are positioned over Interstate 394. In other words, these assets are here to stay, and as the surrounding areas develop and the transportation options evolve, the Ramps should no longer be viewed as just parking facilities but rather as **mobility hubs with new amenities and activities**. Areas, such as the North Loop neighborhood, have developed over time. The Ramps have now become more of the center of downtown rather than the edge. The City has now grown up around the ramps, and they should be viewed and activated as a bridge to the exciting redevelopment that is occurring in the North Loop providing a gateway to downtown Minneapolis.

It is critically important for MnDOT to shift its policies and plan for a future that accommodates users in a future forward, holistic way. It will take time to rebrand the Ramps as a welcoming

activity center with robust entrances and visual appeal on all sides, increased pedestrian activity, and better connections to existing neighborhoods. Starting with a vision, brand and narrative that can guide future decisions and utilization of the Ramps will be essential. Now is the time for a shift to make the Ramps more accessible, more central to the downtown experience, and more prepared to take on the large changes in transportation anticipated in the next 10-20 years.

Focus on “user experience” in activating public spaces

The Ramps should be aesthetically pleasing, safe and secure, and foster a vibrant public realm. The Ramps should be an **inclusive connector for all people, and a destination meeting the needs of the people in and around them**. It will be important for MnDOT to view the Ramps as an opportunity to deliver hospitality and mobility rather than a standardized parking product. Also, working to incorporate the needs of those experiencing homelessness in Downtown could have broader meaningful impact to the general citizenry and vitality of the area and the lives of those less fortunate. There are many users of the Ramps and they should all be considered when planning and implementing wayfinding and placemaking and utilization of spaces.

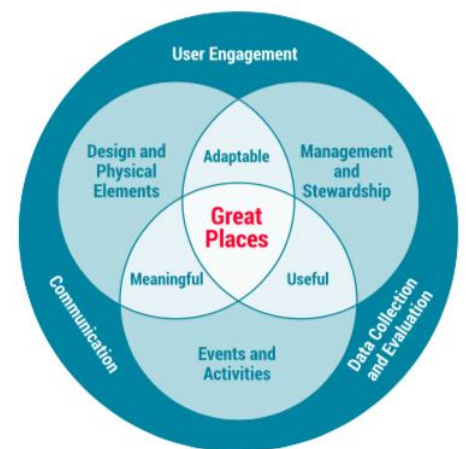
The following ‘user groups’ were identified

1. Commuters
2. People living and working in Downtown, using the Ramps skyways and surrounding sidewalks as pedestrians
3. Transit and multi-mobility users
4. Event attendees
5. People who are experiencing homelessness
6. Aspirational future group: people seeking out the Ramps as a destination

MnDOT should work to develop the Ramps into a **city campus as the center of the North Loop and Downtown neighborhoods**, addressing the need to foster stronger experiential connections between the two districts. As our transportation systems continue to change, the Ramps need to **deliver both hospitality and mobility services**, rather than being perceived as only a standardized parking product. Allowing more mobility functions and information in the Ramps as well as amenities and services that make the mobility services more useful and enjoyable should be the long-term vision for the Ramps.

MnDOT should **combine future physical improvements with enhanced investments in operations, programming, and communications in creating a great place (see ‘Great Place’ diagram)**. The Ramps could become a ‘must-see’ destination experience in the future when all of these components align.

From a user experience standpoint, MnDOT should focus on continuous user engagement throughout the ramps including onsite hospitality ambassadors (people to give directions, lead activities, and/or provide a feeling of safety), and a comprehensive



*‘Great Place’ Diagram by
The Musicant Group.*

communications plan to deliver the new narrative about the ramps as a destination and city center. By focusing on the user experience from multiple levels, the activation of spaces becomes more inclusive and flexible.

Those benefiting from space activation will not only include commuters but also businesses and property owners who surround the Ramp, people experiencing homelessness, those attending sporting and other events and pedestrians using the Ramps as connections between their homes and their jobs and other destinations. All of these users should be considered when making decisions regarding mobility, placemaking, wayfinding and activation of underutilized spaces.

Consider meaningful impact on those experiencing homelessness

The panel considered the impact on those experiencing homelessness when discussing utilization of spaces and adding placemaking amenities. They recognize that more community members are suffering from homelessness and the Ramps are currently serving many as a place of daytime gathering and shelter. Suggestions included working with partners and engaging with nearby shelters and service providers to offer a number of different, intentional gathering spaces and services.

The Ramps could offer some daytime benefits for those using nearby nighttime shelters to help address the huge need for a downtown-wide solution, offering services and a place to congregate for people who are experiencing homelessness during the daytime. This includes, but is not limited to, identification of underutilized spaces in the Ramps to safely store belongings during the daytime, access to bathrooms (restrooms exist currently in Ramps B and C but are closed due to lack of activity in those areas and the need to maintain a safe and secure environment) and showers, and gathering spaces with seating, access to Wi-Fi, job interview preparation and materials, medical and social services, community gardens, skills trainings, games and other meaningful activities. The Ramps could also serve as emergency shelter in inclement weather during the day.

The Ramp A lobby is a good area to serve those experiencing homelessness. It is already naturally functioning on a small scale for this purpose. Ramp B level one could also be considered to serve as a location for daytime storage, and/or a safe gathering space. It is critical that these spaces are activated, programmed and managed so that they are active, safe, and comfortable for those experiencing homelessness and the general public. This ultimately will create the safest environment and produce more value for all people in and around the Ramps and spaces.

Engage professionals to implement and manage the transformation process

MnDOT's [mission](#) is to plan, build, operate and maintain a safe, accessible, efficient and reliable multimodal transportation system that connects people to destinations and markets throughout the state, regionally and around the world. MnDOT is not in the business of leasing retail space, creating wayfinding and placemaking plans and experiences, designing buildings, and advertising or marketing spaces.

The panel strongly suggests that MnDOT engage professionals in these key industries as a resource to ensure that utilization of the spaces can be maximized. This includes designers, process facilitators, and retail brokers so that spaces are activated in a timely fashion. In the long-term, existing MnDOT staff should not be expected to accomplish these key components of transforming the Ramps into a more user friendly, multi-model center.

In addition, MnDOT should work from an adaptive and flexible development model. For example, if retail establishments wanted to lease space within the Ramps, who would they contact, what would be the process, what would marketable rents be, and how would it be implemented? Professionals in the industry can more readily accommodate futuristic concepts into revenue-generating activity than MnDOT or City staff but they will need to understand how to work with MnDOT as a partner before undertaking such activities. New convenience stores doing checkout via a smartphone app instead of a traditional register could be a desirable use in the Ramps, but those users are not likely to reach out to MnDOT to pursue this opportunity as the government is not seen as a private market enterprise. Hiring a reputable leasing agent, working on behalf of MnDOT, would open the doors to new possibilities for MnDOT and the Ramps and make the process of attracting and securing service providers and private market users easier to navigate.

Create a continuous learning culture

MnDOT and partners involved in updating and upgrading the Ramps should learn from others who have created mobility hubs and centers of transportation activity that are able to be more adaptable and flexible to market changes and demographic shifts.

In addition, increasing revenue-generating activity such as retail, advertising, corporate partnerships and new density and development could increase revenue that could be dedicated to improve the public experience within the Ramps. These efforts and forward thinking can pay large dividends to MnDOT and the City.

MnDOT should review successful examples of engaging mobility hubs include the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport, Helsinki Central Station, and Singapore's Mass Rapid Transit system.

UNDERUTILIZED SPACES

Question 1. What can MnDOT do to support and encourage the activation of vacant, unused or underused floor area in and around the ABC ramps to create a more attractive, safe and pedestrian supportive mobility hub? What types of uses will the market support in these areas?

A number of locations within the Ramps could be repurposed for convenience-focused retail and community spaces both geared at those experiencing homelessness, and the general public.

The panel concluded there is limited value for alternative market uses at the street level in the short term. The locations of these spaces and the level of pedestrian and vehicular traffic in these areas do not lend themselves to a readily identifiable reuse that would be supported by the private market. For the Interstate 394 level, the panel suggests the best uses are public and MNDOT-related uses at the present time.



Map from Google Maps

In general, amenities that may be appropriate and feasible within various locations in the Ramps include: dry cleaning services, coffee shops, farmers market or flea market, parking spaces for food trucks on summer nights and event days, a space for shared economy clothing or car swaps, automated convenience stores, regular convenience stores, service kiosks, dining delivery, package pickup lockers, daycare, coworking and maker spaces, theater/arts space, greenspace, and recreational uses such as a sports court. Trying to accommodate any of these

amenity and service-oriented experiential uses that bring more people to the Ramps as a destination would improve utilization of the Ramps. The panel recommends MnDOT look to the MSP airport as an example for how to contract with private retailers within public spaces.

In addition, the panel proposed a larger, more transformative **redevelopment of Ramp B** to create an **“activity center”** and **housing above** that would open up more opportunities for private investment across all of the Ramp areas.

More specific recommendations are outlined by location in the following section. These improvements would require strong partnerships with the private sector and significant public investment by MnDOT to fully achieve a multi-modal hub vision that would generate longer term public benefits and private sector investment opportunities.

Ramp A: Glenwood Avenue Area

The area of Ramp A facing Glenwood Avenue could be repurposed by knocking down non-load bearing walls and creating opportunities for **public gathering, art, multi-modal parking and storage.**

Panelists recommend activating the space with public art and creating more of a gathering space to add vibrancy and increase a sense of place. Adding decorative overhead lighting would be a cost-effective way to attract users to the area. There are large walls where murals, artistic graffiti and other visual art opportunities could be installed in and around the large spiral structures (see photograph). Partnering with the artist community to create artwork addressing issues relevant to the homeless population, or area-specific issues could make this a notable visitor destination. Identifying an area for a small skate park on the ground level of the Ramps, under the highway overpasses, may also be a great community attraction and amenity.

A first step would be to issue a request for proposal that would outline the costs and design concepts for this unique spot and/or partner with a public arts organization. If MnDOT creates the space it is possible that with the right tools, arts organization would be willing to populate it - “build it and they would come”.

Other ideas for this area include:

- temporary pop up retail uses
- HOURCAR parking, motorcycle parking
- wayfinding path to the farmers market which is located on the other side of the Ramps if walking from downtown
- enhanced storage area for bikes
- daytime locker storage for belongings of people experiencing homelessness



Panelists touring one of the underutilized storage areas in Ramp A.



Spiral structure above Ramp A, an opportunity for intentional public art. Photo by Max Musicant



Art installation in a Washington D.C. underpass. Photo by Crystal Garner/The Wash

Ramp A: Lobby

Ramp A is a good location to be designated as a community congregation and amenity area. The panel recommends that the lobby and entryway of Ramp A become a transit lobby where people have a nice place to gather and wait for their connections. MnDOT could seek and allow uses and amenities often found in commercial and residential common areas such as coffee kiosks, convenience retail, table and board games, books, music, etc. And designating this space for scooter pick up and a micro-shuttle pick up location is a suggestion to serve commuters heading to other areas of downtown from this area.

Ramp B: Lobby & Covered Transit Area

Ramp B could become a sports-centric mobility center.

The ground floor lobby of Ramp B could become a more aesthetically pleasing and user-friendly transit station waiting area for those who travel to the area for sporting or concert events. From Ramp B lobby area, MnDOT could create and/or indicate pathways to Target Field light rail stations, the Northstar Train, Target Field and its Plaza, and to the Target Center.

Renovations and Updates to the existing covered transit area at the ground level of Ramp B could transform the safety and perception of the space. Renovating the ceiling, columns, and pedestrian paths with new finishes and lighting would dramatically change the space from a dark and uninviting space into a place that is safer and creates a better image for a major city transit center. The committee visualizes the space as brighter and more visually vibrant. This area is a major face of transit within the city due to its proximity to the major event venues and impacts the overall perception of public transit and downtown and should be prioritized.

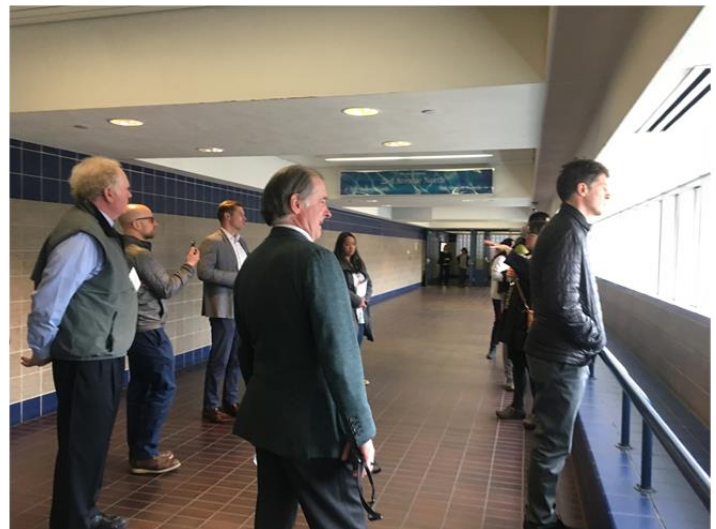


Ramp B Lobby

Ramp B: Skyway Level

The skyway level provides the greatest opportunity for activating underutilized space particularly in the near future. MnDOT is encouraged to complete a pedestrian count study of the skyways to quantify pedestrian traffic in this area particularly and also throughout the skyway system. This can help MnDOT identify the optimal locations in the wide corridors in and around Ramp B, and the long stretch of skyway in Ramp A for retail and convenience uses.

MnDOT should advertise and host **pop-up retail** and activities in different areas of the skyways to test its viability. As an incentive, commuters with travel passes could receive discounts for



Wider areas of the skyways are especially viable for additional uses.

products which would encourage the use of pop up retail. Filling underutilized spaces with retail, and community-centered spaces will go a long way in improving the general feeling and sense of safety in the ramps. The presence more people to keep an eye out for each other may be just as, or more effective than hiring additional security staff. Partnering with the Downtown Improvement District to have volunteer patrollers and/or organizing other ambassadors in the area could also increase the sense of safety in skyways.

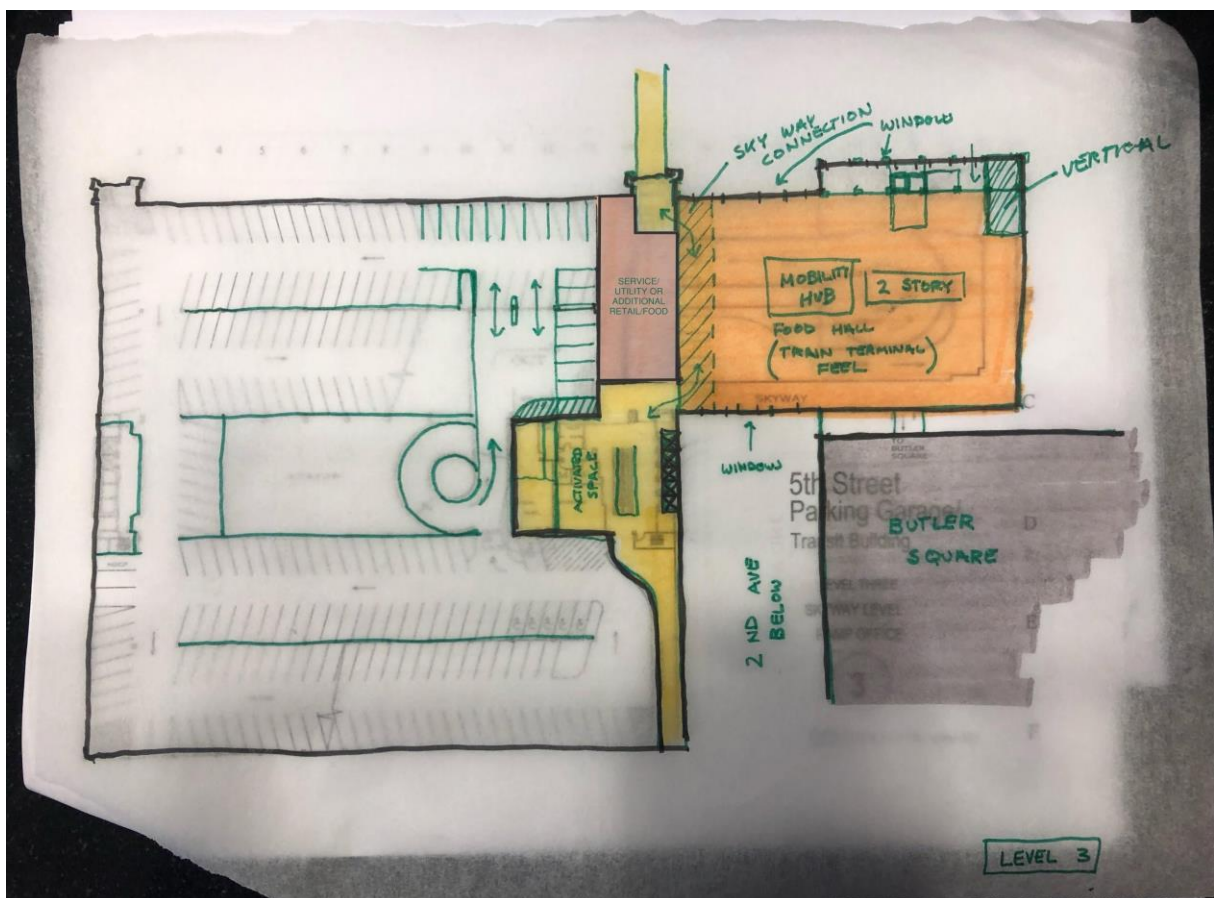
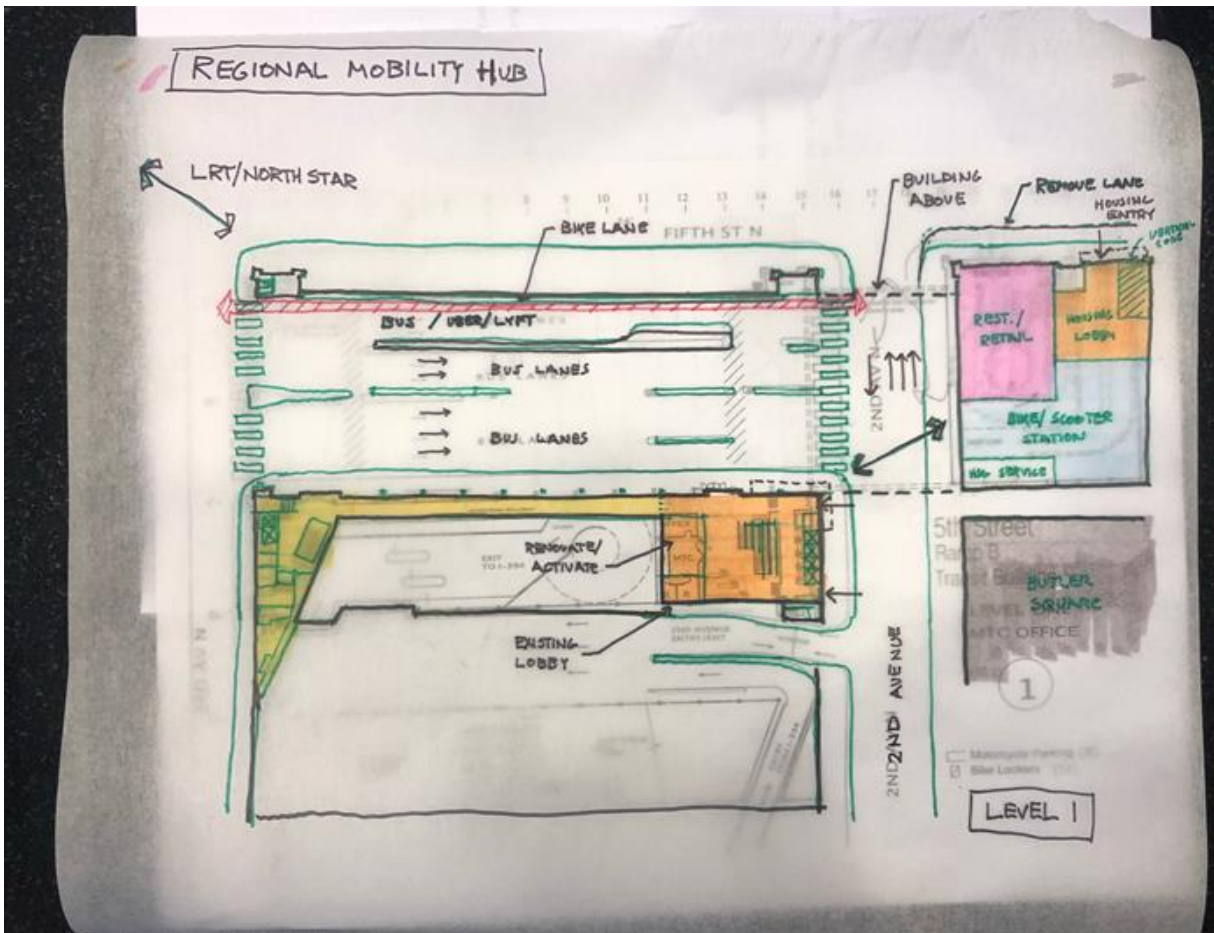
A 'skyway jog', or outlined exercise loop can also be created, with mile markers and visual attractions (i.e., lighting, artwork, signs about artwork and other attractions visible through the skyway windows) for people who already use the Ramp B skyways to exercise in the winters.

Ramp B office space should be explored for retail uses that serve the commuter populations who walk to and from their cars to work and need quick convenience retail. Possible uses could include dry cleaning, coffee carts, automated grab-n-go convenience stores or kiosks, and dining or package delivery lockers.

Ramp B: A Grand Vision - Minneapolis Grand Central Station

As part of a longer-term grand vision, the panel suggests **transforming Ramp B into a regional transit hub and the central focal point of the Ramps**. Modifying the layout, creating a vibrant activity center for mobility and enhanced user experience could transform the area into a "Minneapolis Grand Central Station" type experience. An architect member of the panel created sketches of this more visionary utilization of Ramp B. The panel imagines this skyway level of the Ramps (with Ramp B as the center), to be modified to create a Grand Central Station experience including an information kiosk, and dedicated spots for the new transit flex pass users and carpoolers. This level of the ramps has an opportunity to offer a wow factor, with enhanced design features, retail uses, area for local and historic information and promotional area for area businesses and downtown attractions.

Levels 1-3 of Ramp B: The panel created a broad vision for the "Minneapolis Grand Central Station" and mobility hub with a train station, terminal-esque experience. In this area, people are currently moving through the skyway. A negative aspect of this walking commute is that people have to go all the way around the northeast corner (highlighted orange in the sketch), to get through the skyway going north and south toward and away from the light rail.



Level 1 and Level 3 Ramp B redesign proposals. By panelist Chris Palkowitsch

To improve the walking experience and create a central mobility hub, the panel proposes:

1. Add a **cut-through to connect the skyway in a straight line N-S** (See Level 3 plan, sketched in yellow), removing the extra pathway wrapping around the East corner. This option to change to the skyway path is a possible starting point and could be completed without undertaking the larger redevelopment. (See the green dashed area on Level 3 plan).
2. Creating a new, **two-story grand food hall** constructed into a reconfigured ramp. The food hall would create a destination within the Ramps that would have a broader appeal to the city (See the orange space on Level 3 plan). MnDOT can look to the MSP airport as an example of this concept.
3. Removing the parking decks on levels 3 and 4 to make way for the food hall area to be created where the ramp is currently, over 2nd Avenue.
4. Incorporating **new ground level access** by removing the 5th Street vehicle entrance/exit and transforming it into a new pedestrian entrance, a ground level restaurant, and a bike/scooter station. This new entry would create a convenient access point near Hennepin Avenue and surrounding downtown areas. (See Level 1 plan).
5. As part of the larger Ramp B transformation, the panel suggests exterior modifications to make the space more approachable and visually connected to 2nd Avenue. This would include remodeling the side of Ramp B facing the light rail tracks to include a **restaurant on the corner** (see the turquoise square on exterior image), and **glass walls lining the skyway** (see the yellow square on the exterior image). These improvements would make the whole side of the ramps lighter and less imposing and create a more deliberate and inviting connection to the growing North Loop neighborhood and downtown.



MSP Airport food and retail



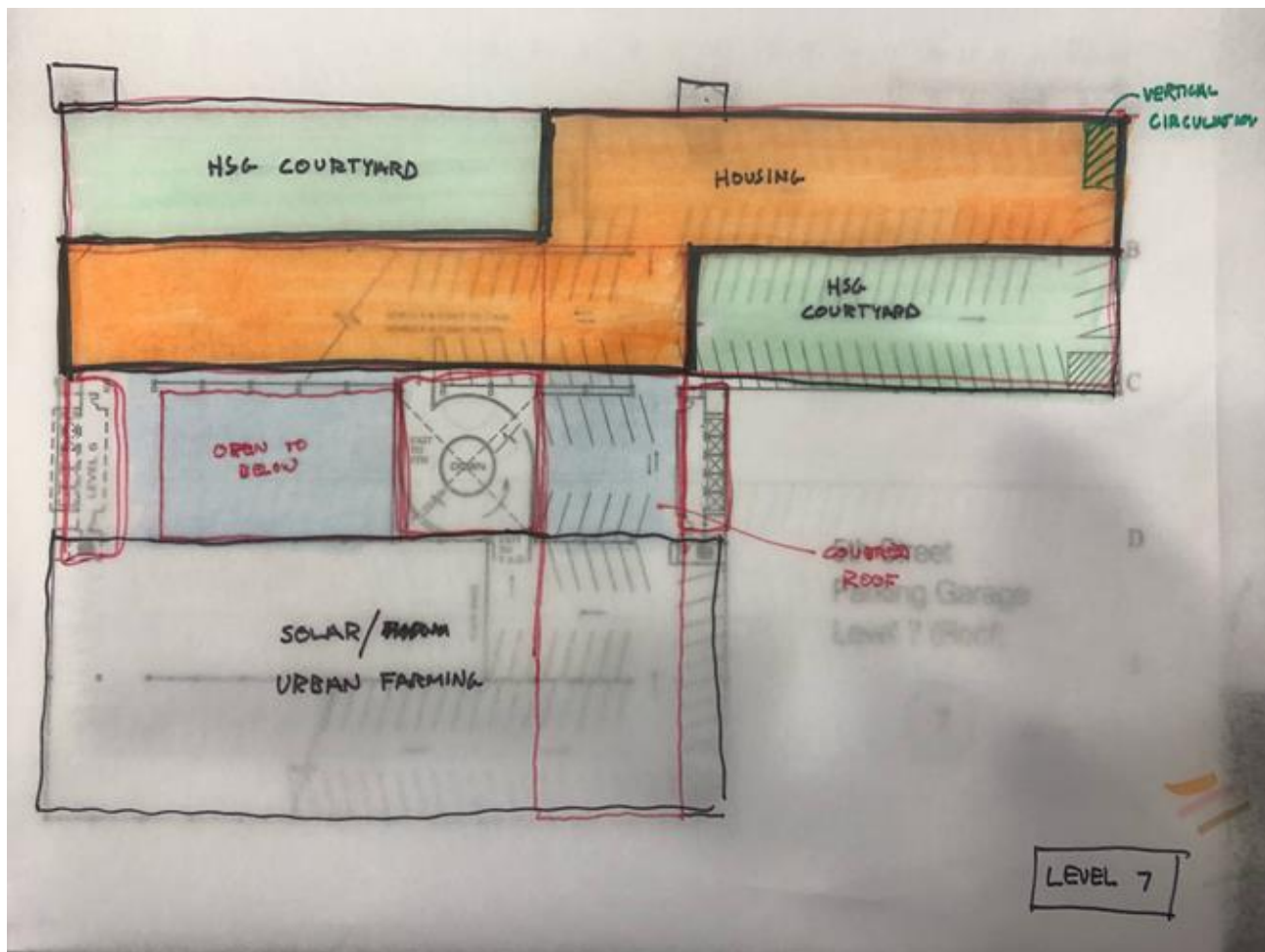
This larger transformation would also include creating an iconic two-story space with glass walls, using the current connection down to the street level to bring people up to eat, visit future retail, or even just experience the Ramp in a different way. This idea is portrayed in more detail in the images within the report. By modifying the ceiling columns and lighting it would drastically change the user experience, pique interest, and draw commuters and passersby into the area rather than turn them away. This is in line with other transportation centers that have added

amenities and visual features to improve user experience within their facilities through retail and high quality congregation areas. Examples include airports, Grand Central Station in New York, and Union Station in Washington D.C.

In addition, the larger renovations could provide an opportunity to create a more delineated connection from the ramps to light rail by way of the skyway from this new central area. This area could also serve as the entrance and lobby areas for added rooftop housing described below.

Ramp B: Rooftop Workforce Housing

Expanding on highest and best use findings recommended in the Air Rights Development Study written in 2014, the panel recommends MnDOT consider seeking a development partner to build **workforce housing on the rooftop of Ramp B**. According to the study, the ramps are built to withstand additional weight, which opens up the opportunity to pursue housing as a viable addition to activate the Ramps. The location, building the housing above Ramp B and working with the rooftop, would also provide greenspace and courtyards areas for the residents.



Ramp B Rooftop redesign sketch. By panelist Chris Palkowitsch

Adding housing to the Ramps is a great transit-oriented development opportunity to serve workforce housing needs and create more affordable options in downtown Minneapolis. Housing would not interfere with commuter parking, as the new residents would have ample transportation options and choose to live in the area, and not necessarily need vehicles.

Amenities within the new housing development would include activation of the skyway level in Ramp B for the resident lobby, restaurant or other retail uses, a rooftop community room, rooftop garden and fitness center and gathering area with unparalleled views.

To portray this idea, a sketch plan with a preliminary **financial model** was developed. The numbers were modeled after a recent housing development proposed in downtown Minneapolis.

Workforce Housing Proposal: 100 apartments above ramp B (concrete or steel construction)

Income Targets: incomes at or below 60% - 80% AMI (\$56,580 - \$75,440, family of 4)
(\$39,660 - \$52,880 individual)

Cost Estimate: \$275,000/unit, \$27.5M Total

Sources		Uses	
\$17M	First Mortgage/Private Financing	\$22.5M	Hard Construction
\$2.5M	Owner Equity	\$2.5M	Financing and Interest Costs
\$8M	TOD Workforce Housing Subordinate Loan(s)	\$2.5M	Developer Fee

This type of development is realistic and could significantly change the character of the Ramps. While it is a ‘big idea” that would require significant public and private investment, the panel believes it should be an aspirational goal for MnDOT to pursue which would help to achieve the vibrant multi-model, mixed use development project proposed as part of Ramp B.

Beginning steps, such as wayfinding and rebranding, and then redevelopment of the skyway and lobby levels of Ramp B will be necessary before a the rooftop workforce housing will be palatable.



Left: The Market Line at Essex Crossing, New York City Right: Le Cordon Bleu rooftop garden in Paris.

For this improvement and others, MnDOT should consider all development incentives that are available to them. This type of project may be able to be achieved without typical low income housing tax credits or other more competitive affordable housing funds if MnDOT would participate in the financing through a subordinate loan. This type of a non-traditionally financed structured deal, with the addition of low to no land costs, could reduce the subsidy per unit from a typical \$150,000-\$200,000 per unit down to \$80,000 per unit. It is a worthy project for further consideration and evaluation.

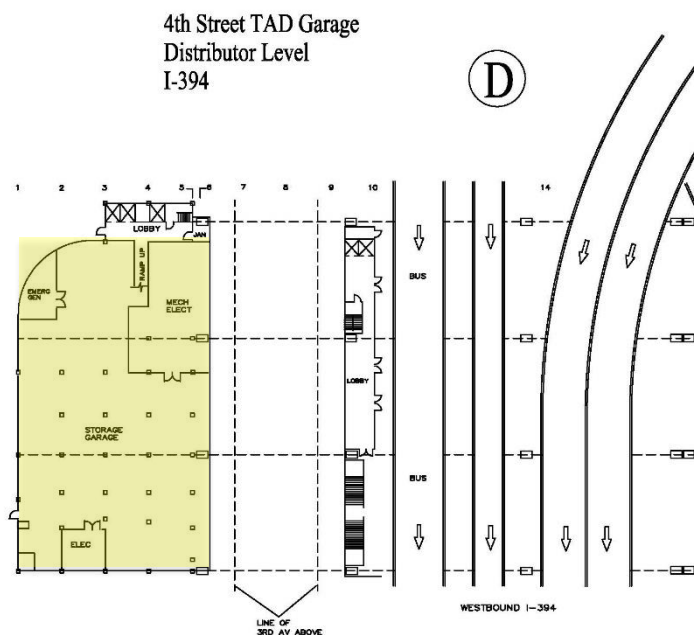
Ramp C: Warehouse/Shop Area

The warehouse area in Ramp C, originally a mechanics shop, is particularly well suited for repurposing. By creating a more delineated and appealing connection to Ramp C from the North Loop MnDOT could capitalize on the increased market demand that is generated in that area. Both the size of the physical space and its proximity to the North Loop make this space particularly attractive for alternative uses.

Areas of downtown have expanded beyond the Ramps and North Loop has evolved into an area for office, entertainment, retail, and housing. As people have moved to the North Loop, amenities to support households, particularly families, are in market demand.

Ramp C currently serves as a connection and entry point between the core of Minneapolis via the skyway and the North Loop. **A daycare in available (and suitable) space in Ramp C could provide an amenity that currently absent in the North Loop area.**

Daycare is a needed use in the area; particularly if it could serve the young families living in the North Loop area and/or retail workers who park in the Ramps to work at the establishments



Ramp C floor plan with storage area highlighted.

downtown and North Loop. Currently, there are limited daycare options in this area and there is market demand for new daycare as indicated in the table below.

North Loop Statistics*

2018 Median household income	\$102,000
2018 Average household income	\$140,000
2018 Average household size	1.4
2018 Average childcare spend, month	\$960
2018 Child Care Index	187

The demographic data indicates that the households who do live in the North Loop area spend more per month on childcare compared to the Metro Area, despite having a higher average household size. The Child Care index is higher in the North Loop compared to the Metro Area; the US average is 100 and anything above denotes higher than average spending.

Metro Area Statistics*

2018 Average household size	2.3
2018 Average childcare spend, month	\$800
2018 Child Care Index	124

*JLL Demographic Summary, prepared by Esri

Ramp C: Vacant area under I-94:

The area beneath the I-94 ramps in the vicinity of Ramp C is not commercially developable but could serve as an urban oasis for the neighborhood and city - those walking or biking on the Cedar Lake Trail, residents or visitors wandering through the North Loop, and game day activities for baseball fans attending Twins games. Greening and activating this area will turn this forgotten space into a unique and special urban place. It could also provide an amenity for potential future uses in the Ramp C warehouse space such as a daycare. Other suggestions for this space include **adding a skatepark and dog park.**



Lynch Family Skatepark in Boston. Photo by Drew Finch, YouTube still.

MnDOT and the City are encouraged to work closely with the redeveloper of the adjoining surface parking lot who may be a willing and motivated partner in creating an exciting new place for residents and visitors.

BECOMING A DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

Question 2. Are there any perceived barriers/restrictions to reusing MnDOT space within the Ramps? How can MnDOT encourage public, non-profit and private interest and investment in redevelopment/reuse opportunities in and around the Ramps?

It will be important for MnDOT to lay the groundwork in attracting private investment by improving the public realm and infrastructure in and around the Ramps. Developers will be more interested in investing in areas where the public sector has taken the leadership to invest in the public spaces including improvements to the street and connections in and around the Ramps, creating a more inviting skyway experience and improving wayfinding throughout the system. To attract private investment, MnDOT will need to have a clear and consistent vision, embrace collaborative approaches to solving problems, develop clear expectations for the private sector and be a development partner by focusing on improving the public spaces. This creates more value for the private sector and reduces their overall risk.

The Barriers

Improving the utilization of the Ramps for increased mobility, connectivity and enhancement of the user experience is a big lift in the smallest of context and this is an even bigger undertaking for the scope and size of the Ramps. Partnerships with surrounding businesses, nonprofits, residents, other governmental agencies and the development community will be critically important for MnDOT to be successful.

Entering into meaningful partnerships for a large governmental agency that is outside their typical scope of services can be a barrier. Strict governmental processes, regulations and legal constraints limit the ability for MnDOT to be nimble and take on risk that may be necessary when partnering with the private sector.

Therefore, it will be critical for MnDOT to outline a clear process to engage in partnerships and enter into agreements to assist in facilitating improvements that are outside the typical scope of MnDOT's expertise.

Partnering surrounding businesses, organizations and key government partners

Private and nonprofit investment in the Ramps will be important to fulfill the vision of increased user experience and enhanced mobility. It is recommended that MnDOT begin relationships with area businesses such as Target, Amazon, Lifetime Fitness; large event owners such as the Twins and Timberwolves; nonprofit sectors such as Hennepin Theatre Trust, Downtown Council, Chamber of Commerce, Warehouse Business District Association, Xcel Energy and St. Stephens. Agreeing on a shared vision early in the process with private mobility providers such as Jefferson Lines, Greyhound, Lyft, Uber, HourCar, and Nice Ride will provide for an easier and more efficient process for entering into shared mobility agreements. Increasing these partnerships for advertising, programming, etc. will not only benefit the user experience but potentially provide added revenue to implement enhance public improvements. With input from these partners, MnDOT should create a simple process and agreement for use of space and communicate that it is available.

The City of Minneapolis is and will continue to be a key partner. They manage the Ramps as a part of their municipal parking system, control the land uses and influence transportation modifications and other infrastructure improvements. Identifying early what the City of Minneapolis would allow regarding integrated land uses and modified mobility connections will be important.

MnDOT should continue to conduct stakeholder roundtables to determine prospective users and partners, and should connect with current partners (Metro Transit, Southwest, private event charter buses, BRT, and/or a smaller shuttles) to create and implement a shared vision, then identify additional partners to fill the gaps.

Finally, outlining a long-term plan for public transportation service with Metro Transit to ensure that there are adequate connections for enhanced bus service, express services, connections to rail and flexibility in user passes will be key.

Reviewing other agency public private partnership agreements as a template could accelerate the process. Smart Columbus is a great model to emulate and MnDOT should continue to remain in contact with Central Ohio Transit Authority who has worked hard to incorporate such agreements within their system.

Develop a “single point of contact” within MnDOT, through a private contract representative or the City of Minneapolis

Developers and retailers look for opportunities where there is both predictability and flexibility. Government entities which embrace collaborative approaches to solving problems, identify and pursue partnerships, manage development risks, improve decision making skills and develop clear expectations are more attractive to development interest than those that are unclear in their contacts, process and vision.

Developers are much more reluctant to invest their limited pursuit capital to projects which have not invested the time and energy needed to achieve a commonly held vision.

A broker or owner’s representative hired by MnDOT, who would serve as a single point of contact and have the authority to work with retail interest and developers, will be more successful than MnDOT or the City in trying to attract those interests on their own.

PLACEMAKING AND MOBILITY

Question 3. What types of place making activities and initiatives in and around the ramps could be undertaken by MnDOT or in partnership with the public, non-profit and private sectors to help make the area a more attractive and vibrant place to be?

Placemaking

At a minimum, MnDOT should **hire a placemaking professional to design a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan for practical and efficient use of the Ramps**, which would include identify the most enjoyable and efficient way to get from point A to point B throughout the Ramps and into downtown and the North Loop. MnDOT can also include wayfinding connecting people to all the transportation options nearby including North Star, LRT, Greyhound, Jefferson Bus Lines, Megabus, Metro Transit buses, SW Transit, ride hailing pickup, bike share, scooters, car share, motorcycle parking, carpool incentives, and more. In addition, the plan should include methods to clearly identify key offsite locations for those with a bit of extra time to explore art, amenities, parks, and attractions in and around the Ramps. As an example, providing wayfinding that points out the nearby Hennepin County Library, the Twins Stadium, the Theater and Entertainment District and other key visitor highlights should be a priority. It is critically important to create experiences for multiple users that physically and socially connects them to the assets in and around the Ramps. Another example would include a designated connection from the Ramps to the Orpheum and the eating establishments on Hennepin Avenue.

MnDOT can also offer **programming and events in the Ramps** that offer surprising, delightful, and safe experiences for all users, and can enhance the experience of those using the ramps for pure mobility purposes by combining retail, programming, fitness, social opportunities, convenience products, services, art, and more. The general recommendation for pedestrian corridors is something interesting every 20-30 feet, to keep people engaged and moving. The ultimate goal of such a plan is to make sure there is something useful and interesting along every major public skyway path to draw people to and through it accomplished by a clearly designed system of signs, lights, pop up activities, games, seating, sights, sounds, retail and service offerings. The panel recommends that MnDOT contract with a designer to develop an integrated theme and overall design plan before embarking on visual improvements to the skyways.

Placemaking Opportunities:

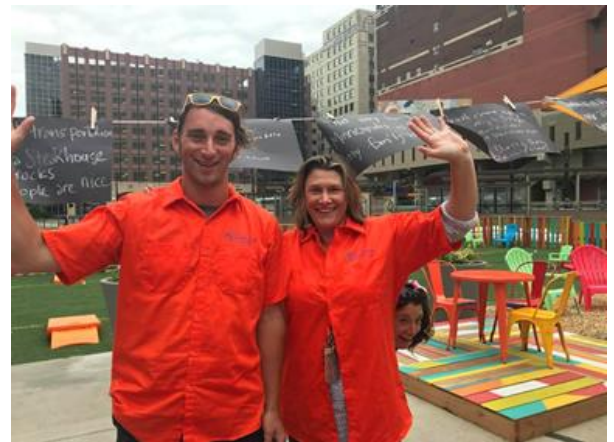
- **Distance maps.** Include distance markers on signage designating how far it is to key places on the skyway. Include areas where people can pick up walking itineraries and/or create a walking tours that utilize the Ramps to get from one area of the city to another.
- **Tables in lobbies.** The various lobbies and transfer locations would be more user-friendly with tables for people to gather and play games, work, and/or eat.
- **Activities.** Provide areas for games and other activities such as foosball, mini golf, corn hole, ping pong, chess, etc. as a way to connect people who are coming and going

through the Ramps and lobby areas. In the skyways and lobbies, nooks with people offering little activities/workshops could also help create a sense of safety, interest, and community.

- **Plantings.** Indoor plantings in and around the skyway systems and lobbies will create more of a sense of peace and tranquility if located in and around key areas of the Ramps.
- **Books/Board Games:** Adding kiosks for sharing books such as the little lending libraries and board games will encourage people to gather while waiting for transit or recreational activities.
- **Lighting.** Warmer lighting and inexpensive strings of lights can easily improve areas with long blank walls.
- **Message boards and kiosks.** Adding historical message boards and kiosks where businesses, entertainment venues or the general community can advertise services, activities, sell food and convenience items, to give people walking something more inviting to activate their brain while educating them on the history and opportunities in the area.
- **Green walls.** On the exteriors of the Ramps, new artwork, or green wall installations may freshen and enhance their appearance.
- **Exercise.** The panel observed many people walking within the skyway system as a method of getting in their exercise steps in between work breaks and going to and from parking to work. Adding designated exercise markers and/or equipment could elevate the experience and encourage others to utilize the Ramps for this purpose.
Delineating a walking track in Ramp A and/or Ramp B skyways with distance markers would be nice for lunchtime/after work walkers and joggers.
- **Digital Screens.** Adding and utilizing existing digital screens identifying parking areas, bus and train schedules and other key wayfinding information will increase the sense that there are things happening in the Ramp while being a good source of directional information.
- **Music.** Playing music throughout the skyway level of the ramps will increase the walking experience. It was also suggested that you could use a speaker system to play music profiling current concerts and game information before and after those events.



Game and seating activation at the St. Paul Central Station skyway. Photo from The Musicant Group



Hospitality team at St. Paul Central Station. Photo by The Musicant Group.



Green wall at MoZaic East

- **Outlets.** Adding outlets to charge phones and computers as well as ensuring that there is strong WiFi is an added benefit for users who may have some extra time in-between activities.
- **Skyway Ambassadors.** Create a skyway ambassador program that provides friendly faces giving directions and suggestions for activities and area events.
- **Art.** Add different colored floor tile and interesting/artistic wall paint (currently the same color and difficult to navigate for some with eye issues), murals, paintings, poems would engage the users and help with navigation.
- **Bathrooms and water fountains.** Determine a plan to utilize the public restroom and ensure that there are various watering fountains in and around the skyway system, as well as an operational capacity to operate and care for the facilities.

Ramp B as the center of a Regional Mobility Hub

The panel sees a great opportunity for Ramp B to become the center of a **regional mobility hub**, defined by the Urban Design Studio's *Mobility Hubs: A Reader's Guide* as "providing a focal point in the transportation network that seamlessly integrates different modes of transportation, multi-modal supportive infrastructure, and place-making strategies to create activity centers that maximize first-mile last mile connectivity."

If executed well, Ramp B could offer a model to fully integrate opportunities for more activity through and within Ramps A and C over time. Long-term, Ramp B could be an anchor for a network of Neighborhood Mobility Hubs in suburbs and Central Mobility Hubs in Downtown Minneapolis.

Transit connection into and out of the Ramps

At street level, the panel recommends making a **better visual connection between the street and I-394 level by creating a clearly defined transit hub area in the underpass and street level underneath the skyway section**. Scooters with designated parking areas, bikeshare docking stations, and a local transit network company or micro transit circulator connecting in this area could leverage last mile connections. Designated bike lanes could be placed between the light rail tracks and the Ramps.

The I-394 level is a location where MNDOT should leverage curb space for long distance transportation options, Uber, Lyft, and other micro transit. Also at this level, the panel recommends MNDOT include and coordinate long-distance transit from the Southwest suburbs.

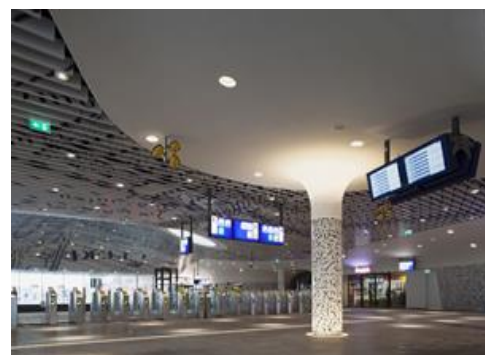
There is a current disconnect between the Ramps and the Blue and Green line light rail. To improve connectivity and mobility MnDOT could create a **visual path to the Target Center light rail station from Ramp B** with lighting, paint, art, and/or signage. The panel also recommends that MnDOT evaluate whether it is time for a high speed high frequency connection from a bus to a light rail to happen. The panel believes it is a possibility.



Image from Urban Design Studio



Lyft driver picks up a passenger.



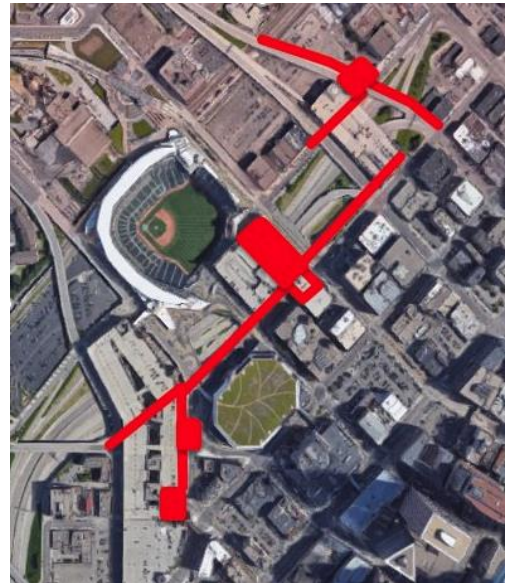
Delft City Hall and Train Station, Mecanoo

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Question 4. How does MnDOT improve pedestrian connections, both street and skyway level, from the ramps to nearby destinations including the North Loop?

The Ramps are no longer a barrier on the edge of downtown, they're a bridge connecting the City to the exciting redevelopment that has occurred over the last several years in the North Loop neighborhood; adding new residents and businesses. It will be very important to foster stronger experiential connection between the two vibrant areas of the City. MnDOT should focus on improved pedestrian connections in the following areas.

- **Entryways and exterior edges.** Elevating the key entryways into the Ramps will help to prioritize the user experience. The branding exercise and coordinated design plan should consider these important first look connections.
- **Pathways in and around.** Visitors to the area should be able to clearly identify how to navigate to and from the Ramps which will require that pathways in and around them are a pleasing and safe experience. A key focus area should be the connection between North Loop from behind the T3 building to the entrance to Ramp C. In addition, improving the street experience along 3rd Avenue will help to draw users to the Ramp. These are areas where partnerships with the City of Minneapolis should be prioritized.
- **Lobby and congregation areas.** Current conditions in the lobby and congregating areas are stark and uninviting. As noted previously, adding comfortable places to sit, tables, plantings, soft lighting, music and games could provide a more inviting experience with minimal investment.



Priority should be made relative to pedestrian connections to the North Loop with access via the pedestrian bridge and entrance to Ramp C. See additional information on each section below.

Pedestrian Bridge

The pedestrian bridge connection is an important link from downtown to the North Loop neighborhood and businesses. MnDOT should work to **enhance the pedestrian bridge experience**. In the short term, adding visual enhancements will be important and long term utilizing the bridge as an iconic artistic feature. These improvements would increase utilization as well as safety along the pathway.



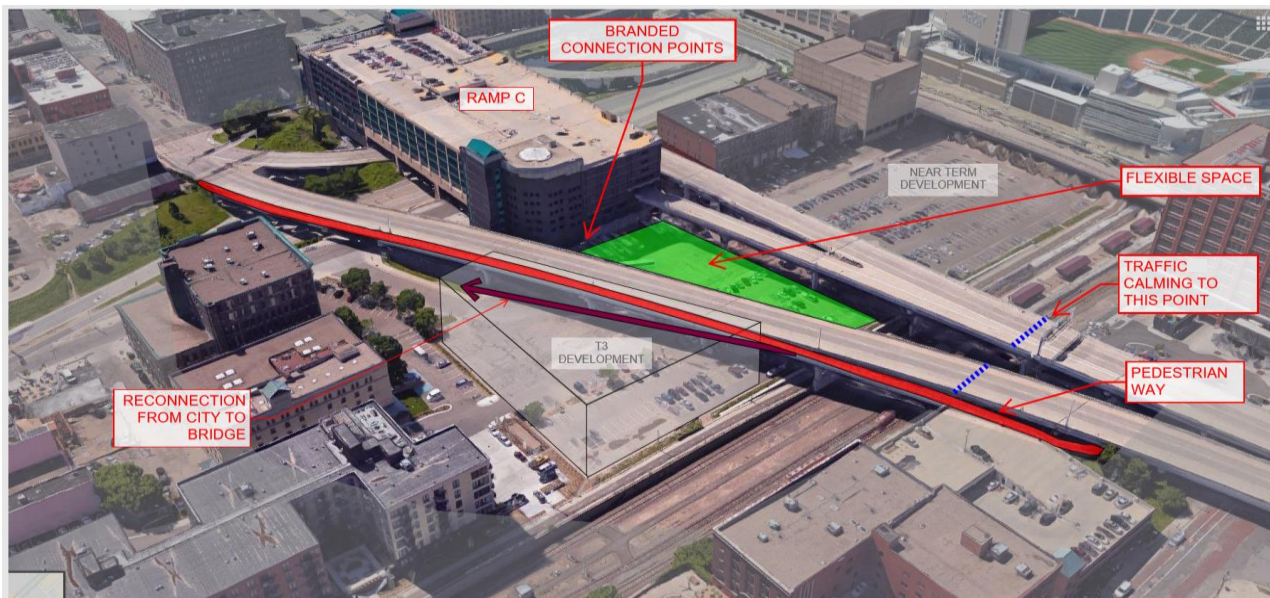
Panelists tour the Pedestrian Bridge near the 1-94 ramp leading to the North Loop



Pedestrian bridge in Long Beach. Photo from the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center.

Short term suggestions include:

- eye-catching and aesthetically pleasing enhancements to break up the distance;
- add paint (on the fence, or on the sidewalk itself);
- put local art along the pathway;
- add decorative lights;
- replace chain link with decorative fencing;
- incorporate historic North Loop storytelling signage;
- better signage about where the bridge leads from both entrances;
- delineating a connection from this area to the Cedar Lake Trail; and
- recreating a vertical connection to the bridge from the street level. (Identify a location, either where a staircase used to be or a new location. As development occurs in the area, now is the time make the connection that meets ADA standards.)



Enhanced Pedestrian Bridge plan. By panelist Chris Palkowitsch

Longer term enhancements are also suggested to mitigate traffic presence and noise and create a wow factor by modeling the design after other area bridge structures (Stone Arch bridge and/or the Walker Irene Hixton Whitney Bridge over 1-94). This includes the following:

- Extend the width of the path by narrowing the highway ramp lanes down to 12 feet, or taking a whole lane out to reduce traffic and noise and prioritize pedestrian traffic.
- Make the pedestrian bridge itself into an artistic feature (refer to example above from Long Beach).

Enhanced connection to Ramp C as a gateway to North Loop

There is a great opportunity to enhance the pedestrian activity and experience with an enhanced access and connection to Ramp C doorway on the northern side of the Ramp, near the T3 building. Daytime workers and residents are already using this entrance as a link to the skyway system and to the amenities downtown. In addition, downtown workers and residents would be frequent users of this link if it was advertised and enhanced.

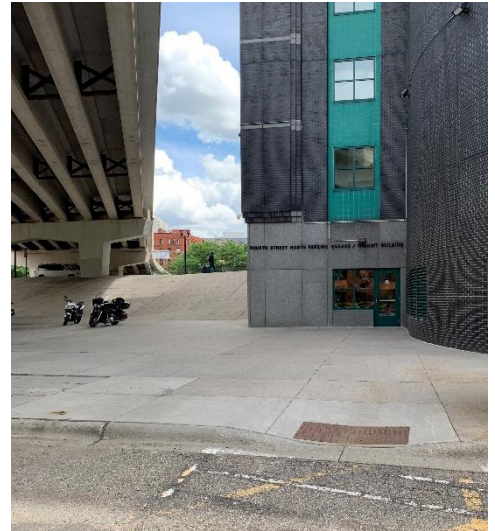
Some simple suggested improvements would include the following:

- Clearly mark the entrance as a gateway to downtown Minneapolis.
- Paint a walkway from the Ramp entrance to North Loop neighborhood; “follow the yellow brick road” affect.
- Program active art displays and activities; aerialists, jugglers, mural painting, musicians etc. that would activate the entrance as a safe place to frequent. This could be a good location for the traveling pianos that are in areas across the City and/or snow sculpture area in the winter.
- Add elements that support more activation of the area such as seating, dog park, skate park, and bike focused features; racks, repair station, map kiosk for regional trails, etc.

These types of minor improvements can be a draw to the more robust plan for redevelopment and utilization of the vacant storage space in Ramp C and open space under the freeways (refer to utilization of storage area in Ramp C section for more detail).

Improvements along Third Street

Along Third Street, the panel recommends adding art to the vacant exterior space to create a more appealing entrance. Suggestions include a memorial statue of a local musician, possibly Prince or Bob Dylan, to act as a visual marker in that. The panel also recommends MnDOT implement clearer wayfinding to Washington Avenue and to the Megabus stop, as current signage is easy to miss.



Door behind Ramp C, connection to North Loop



Current Megabus signage on Third St. could be clearer.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

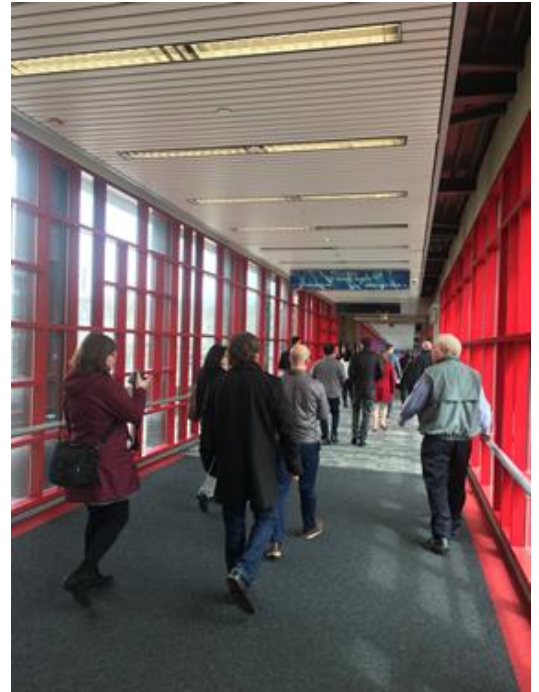
The Ramps were built in 1992 with specific goals in mind - reducing the use of single occupancy vehicles and efficiently moving commuters, primarily from western suburbs, into and out of the edge of downtown. During the past 25 years, significant changes have occurred which have expanded the role that the Ramps play: Target Center and Target Field have been built, ride hailing services are commonplace, the light rail system and NorthStar line are nearby and biking has become a more prevalent way to get around. And, the Ramps no longer define the edge of the City but are now strategically located as a link between downtown and exciting redevelopments to the west and north. The Ramps are no longer a barrier but a bridge that connects neighborhoods and integrates different forms of transportation - a mobility hub.

MnDOT is well on its way to guiding the evolution of the Ramps into a fully functioning mobility hub. This Technical Assistance Panel explored a number of questions that will help guide this process: How can MnDOT make better use of underutilized or vacant spaces in the Ramps? What place making enhancements can be made to improve the experiences of Ramp users? How can better connections be made to and through the Ramps to the North Loop and elsewhere? These questions, and the TAPs specific responses to them, should be considered within the context of the following guiding principles:

- Introduce a new narrative that rebrands and repositions the Ramps as a mobility hub and activity center.
- Focus on user experiences in activating public spaces.
- Consider those experiencing homelessness.
- Engage professionals to implement and manage the transformation.
- Create a continuous learning culture.

A summary of the panel's key next steps for MnDOT to consider include the following.

- **Engage stakeholders**, including ramp users and transit providers, to evaluate and prioritize recommendations from the TAP, create an aspirational vision together and determine what additional research and partnerships are important to implement the plan.
- **Engage with each user group** to discern what experiences and services they would like to have within the campus.
- **Build a brand** and brand promise surrounding the Ramps as a mobility hub. Seek private investment to support the branding initiative.



Panelists tour the ABC Ramp skyways

- **Hire a designer, marketer and/or public artists** to create and build a cohesive brand. Start with a wayfinding plan, design the public spaces with a cohesive brand, develop a public art strategy and add new technology throughout the Ramp spaces. This should be completed by engaging professionals in marketing and public art to coordinate all **marketing opportunities and installation of public art features** in and around the Ramps.
- **Conduct a pedestrian study.** Many retailers are data driven. Updated pedestrian counts, including origins and destinations of people in the skyway system, will provide needed information for retailers considering making an investment in the Ramps.
- **Explore design alternatives and cost estimates for activating underutilized spaces by hiring professionals in interior design, engineering, placemaking, marketing, branding and public art.**
 - **Glenwood Area:** remove storage area walls, add public art, improve lighting, provide wayfinding to other Ramp areas and farmers market, add public storage (particularly for those experiencing homelessness), designate an electric car and car share area.
 - **Ramp A Lobby:** enhance lobby for transit riders, open public restrooms, improve wayfinding and homeless services.
 - **Ramp B Lobby:** improve wayfinding to sporting and event centers and light rail, enhance waiting and activity areas (tables, chairs, games, etc), enhance lighting.
 - **Ramp B:** outline plan to reconfigure for “big idea”: modified skyway, reduced ramp parking area, creation of multi-modal center, and rooftop housing.
 - **Ramp C:** improve wayfinding from North Loop, activate vacant space outside access point, lease warehouse space, and add greenspace.
 - **Ramp C Lobby:** improve lighting and waiting area features and activities, wayfinding along the street, public art and enhanced lighting along 3rd street.
 - **Pedestrian Bridge:** enhance wayfinding (signs, artistic features, lighting), provide vertical access, add iconic/historic physical features and storyboards.
 - **Skyway Areas:** new lighting, flooring, paint, artwork, wayfinding features (digital and cohesive signage), designate areas for pop up retail, add recreational features, greenery, music, markers for walkers, etc.
- **Determine the process and procedures** for leasing underutilized spaces and then hire a broker to fill those spaces on behalf of MnDOT.
- Identify a **single point of contact/ombudsman** to allow easier use of the space, especially for private partners (refer to MSP Airport process and procedures).
- In partnership with Metro Transit, allow businesses and others to **purchase flex passes** and/or HOV (high occupancy vehicle) only spaces.
- **Improve the open space** by Ramp C to the North Loop neighborhood near the T3 building. Connecting these areas will improve the marketability in that area for future uses such as artist lofts, makerspaces, and daycare within a repurposed Ramp C warehouse area.

- Launch a **Ramp ambassador program**; either with DID or independently.
- Open and care for public restroom for visitors of all kinds (see the restrooms in Central Park, NYC, as an example).
- **Test the viability of a housing project on top of ramps**; identifying partners and innovative financing options.

The panel recommends that MnDOT prepare a 5-year plan by engaging a firm to prepare engineering and cost estimates and a prioritization plan that generally follows the recommendations outlined in the TAP report as follows.

- **12 months:**

- Complete the branding of the Ramps as a mobility hub to include name, theme, design; hire a designer to implement the plan including lighting, interior and exterior architectural appeal.
- Work with artists to incorporate public art and other artistic features to enhance and support the new brand.
- Complete a pedestrian study. Survey users to determine utilization of pop up retail.
- Hire company to create a wayfinding and placemaking strategy to include interior and exterior signage, access points into and through the Ramps and informational options using technology and other visually appealing tools.
- Test placemaking, wayfinding and pop up retail uses throughout the skyway system.
- Determine MnDOT's policy for private partnerships in the leasing of public spaces for private uses.
- Invest in improvements to the Glenwood area under Ramp A.
- Remodel skyway pedestrian areas.
- Add areas to accommodate new modes such as scooters and car share.
- Evaluate increasing staff and/or engaging ambassadors to increase safety and creating "eyes in the skyway".
- Designate daytime storage space for people experiencing homelessness.

- **24 months:**

- Seek broker to evaluate options and opportunities to lease underutilized spaces.
- Partner with developers to redevelop warehouse space in Ramp C as a daycare, artist lofts or makerspace.
- Improve connection to North Loop Neighborhood by creating a more appealing entry at Ramp C and improving the pedestrian bridge with visual appeal and wayfinding components.
- Expand overall mobility center upgrades across all ramps.
- Complete engineering and develop preliminary cost estimates for a reconfigured Ramp B to create the mobility hub including the large amenity space in the

skyway level, removing a level of parking and adding areas for leasing of retail spaces.

- **3-5 years:**

- Complete the more transformational modifications to the Ramp B structure including removing 5th street helix and adding vertical access either with an elevator or diverting ADA access across the street through Butler Square.
- Seek private partners to develop the workforce housing project.

PANELIST BIOS

MAX MUSICANT

PRINCIPAL

TAP CHAIR

THE MUSICANT GROUP



Max Musicant is Founder and Principal of The Musicant Group, an award-winning placemaking firm dedicated to transforming underutilized spaces into great places. The firm has pioneered a holistic approach to the creation of place that integrates design, events, and management systems all through the lens of the user experience. Since its inception in 2012, The Musicant Group has transformed places as varied as Class A office buildings to front yards, from urban main streets to suburban strip malls, from block parties to bus stops. Through these and other projects the firm has demonstrated that community and commercial interests all benefit

from more humane, inviting, and lively places for people. Max holds an M.B.A. from the Yale School of Management and a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

DOUG ARSENEAULT

PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATOR

CENTRAL OHIO TRANSIT AUTHORITY



As Public Affairs Administrator, Doug is responsible for community engagement and public involvement in COTA's major projects and initiatives, including the Transit System Redesign in 2017 and CMAX Bus Rapid Transit that launched in 2018. Doug also manages the relationships between COTA and emerging transportation services, including car-, bike-, scooter- and ridesharing, and chairs COTA's Mobility as a Service task force on partnerships with mobility providers. As a public policy analyst, he advises executive leadership on strategies to support COTA's

legislative goals and public policy agenda. Doug was named one of 52 Young Professionals to Know by City Pulse magazine in 2018, and is active with the Create Columbus Commission, New Leaders Council and Next Level Trainings leadership program.

BILL DOSSETT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NICE RIDE MINNESOTA



Bill Dossett is Executive Director of Nice Ride Minnesota, a Minneapolis-based non-profit. A 1989 graduate of Carleton College, Bill received graduate degrees in law and regional planning from the University of North Carolina in 1993. Bill practiced law with the Dorsey firm for fifteen years. Bill has been an active volunteer for the Loppet Foundation, handling operations for North America's largest urban ski race. In 2008, Bill prepared the first non-profit business plan for a modern public bike sharing system and began seeking funding. In 2009, Bill created Nice Ride Minnesota and

worked with its founding board of directors to finalize funding through a public/private partnership. When Nice Ride Minnesota began implementation in January of 2010, Bill took on responsibility for organizing operations and securing funding for three major expansions. Bill helped found the North American Bike Share Association in 2014 and served as its first President. Bill is passionate about biking, cross-country skiing, and paddling and wants to be a catalyst for the growing momentum for active transportation in Minnesota.

LYNETTE DUMALAG

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, TENANT REPRESENTATION

JLL MINNEAPOLIS



Lynette Dumlalag is a Senior Vice President at JLL Minneapolis with a focus on tenant representation and corporate real estate consulting. Lynette is experienced in market research, defining real estate needs and scope, site selection, and lease negotiation. Lynette has over 13 years of experience working in the commercial real estate industry. Prior to joining JLL, she worked as a senior real estate associate for NTH, Inc. where she managed real estate needs for various clients across the Twin Cities. She specializes in Tenant Representation, Corporate Real Estate, Strategic Planning.

MEENA MANGALVEDHEKAR

PUBLIC ART MANAGER

HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST



Meena Mangalvedhekar joined Hennepin Theatre Trust in 2018 and serves as public art manager. She is a practicing visual artist and projectionist in the field of public art and placemaking, and a sought-after advisor in the Twin Cities arts community. She is interested in examining and exploring existing nodes of systems around us. Through public programming and technology driven placemaking experiments, Meena strives to connect community and place. She believes in helping community organizations utilize these instruments to creatively claim and transform public spaces. As a transplant from India, Meena finds it difficult at times to make a new home in Minnesota and often notices similar struggles among different demographics living in the Twin Cities. That has led her to form a contemporary and often metaphorical language in her attempts to approach a wide range of subjects affecting the well-being of her community. She currently serves on the board of Creative Enterprise Zone in St. Paul. Meena has also been actively engaged on the nonprofit boards of Forecast Public Art, Emerge Community Development and the public art collective Minneapolis Arts on Wheels.

CHRIS PALKOWITSCH

PARTNER, ARCHITECT

BKV GROUP



Chris Palkowitsch has significant architectural experience in the areas of senior, affordable, and market-rate housing. Chris is passionate about creating high quality and innovative architecture. He believes in a client-focused approach that emphasizes collaboration to create exceptional and highly functional projects. As a design lead for BKV Group, Chris combines his senior housing project experience with ingenuity and client input to develop designs that enhance the lives of residents.

CHRIS SHERMAN

SENIOR VP, OPERATIONS & CAPITAL MARKETS

SHERMAN & ASSOCIATES



Chris is Senior Vice President of Operations and Capital Markets at Sherman Associates. He oversees Residential Property Management, Marketing, and all existing multi-family assets in the Sherman portfolio. Chris holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the Smeal College of Business at Penn State.

CHARLIE ZELLE

CHAIR

JEFFERSON LINES



Charlie Zelle is Chair of Jefferson Lines, an intercity bus carrier operating in 14 heartland states from Washington to Wisconsin and Minnesota to Louisiana. He is the third generation to lead the Minnesota company (as CEO from 1990 - 2012) that is celebrating its 100-year history in 2019. Previously Mr. Zelle was Commissioner of Transportation for the state of Minnesota (MnDOT) from 2013 - 2019. Charlie Zelle has an extensive civic background in Minnesota including a founding and current Working Team member of the Itasca Project. He has chaired the boards of the following organizations: Guthrie Theater, Meet Minneapolis, Minneapolis Club, Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, St. Paul Academy, Jerome Foundation and the Camargo Foundation. He is married to Julie, a Minister and has two grown children Charlotte and Nick. His interests include skiing, biking, squash, the arts and the vitality of urban spaces.

ULI MINNESOTA

ABOUT US

ULI Minnesota is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members and sponsors. Founded in 1936, ULI now has more than 40,000 members worldwide representing the full spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, including developers, builders, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics and students.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information and experience among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MAYORS

Supported by ULI Minnesota, the nationally recognized Regional Council of Mayors (RCM) was formed in 2004 and represents Minneapolis, Saint Paul and 56 municipalities in the developed and developing suburbs and Greater Minnesota. This collaborative partnership provides a nonpartisan platform that engages mayors in candid dialogue and peer-to-peer support with a commitment towards building awareness and action focused on housing, sustainability, transportation and job growth.

ADVISORY SERVICES

ULI has a long history of providing unbiased, market-based solutions and best-practice advice on land use and building resilient and competitive communities through Advisory Services. At ULI MN, three advisory service options are offered to policy leaders. Each option, including the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP), engages ULI MN real estate professionals who volunteer their time and talent to contribute their wisdom and expertise.

For more information, visit minnesota.uli.org.

“The ABC Ramp TAP represented the best of ULI Minnesota and its mission: talented and creative professionals from across the land-use spectrum, gathering to develop novel ideas and implementation strategies to improve a critical corner of our community. The energy and insight generated by the mixing of transportation, real estate, art, and design, was a testament to what can be accomplished through collaboration toward a common cause.

- Max Musicant, The Musicant Group, TAP Chair



Urban Land Institute

Minnesota

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