

Proposed Site Usage for 4th and Wisconsin Executive Summary

After 10 months of research and the input of hundreds of stakeholders, citizens, residents, area businesses, civic leaders and government and economic development representatives, it is the professional recommendation of the Creative Alliance Milwaukee (CAM) creative problem-solving team assigned to this project that the 4th and Wisconsin site be approached as an evolving space for the next 2-5 years rather than committing to a capital-intensive solution at this time. While WAMDC LLC requested at the beginning of the contract that a permanent solution be developed, it is the professional conclusion of the CAM team, for reasons outlined below that were uncovered during the course of the 10 months of research and input, that it is premature to be investing in a permanent solution at this time.

“As an alternative to capital-intensive construction, adaptive reuse and temporary structures enable significant transformation with relatively minimal cost. LQC Light Development can transform underutilized spaces and a district’s identity, as well as attract more partners for long-term transformation.”—Project for Public Spaces

It is recommended that, beginning in summer 2015, 4th and Wisconsin would be optimally utilized as a platform to demonstrate a revolving, ongoing, year-round smorgasbord of the vast array of creative, cultural and artistic talent that is abundant in this city, as well as utilized as a micro-entrepreneurship incubator.

Currently, this proposed project has been identified in many different ways, including:

- 4MKE
- MKE Public Square
- MKE Creative Epicenter
- Milwaukee’s Creative Sandbox
- Milwaukee’s Creative Lab
- The Milwaukee Creative Incubator

The recommended interwhile use of the site is a combination of all that those names imply.

Such a concept could include elements such as:

- A stage (temporary or semi-permanent, pending cost and permitting)
- Sound equipment
- Moveable furniture (tables, umbrellas, chairs)
- Temporary structures for pop up storefronts featuring local retail and services, such as local clothiers or gourmet foods
- Kiosks (temporary or semi-permanent, pending cost and permitting) for visitor information and potentially for ticket sales to performances of cultural and artistic organizations featured on the stage
- Food and drink (a variety of options will be tested, including food trucks, coffee carts, biergarten, collaboration with area businesses such as the Hilton Hotel, etc.)
- Fire pits in winter
- Christmas market in winter

This “interwhile” site recommendation keeps the site activated year-round, trials and uncovers new ideas that may become the, or components of the, final permanent solution and make the site more appealing to potential investors and developers.

Photos of how this interwhile recommendation looks in other cities (below) give an idea of how this could work in Milwaukee. It is acknowledged that the condition of the pavement will need to be addressed in some fashion to achieve some of the desired results.













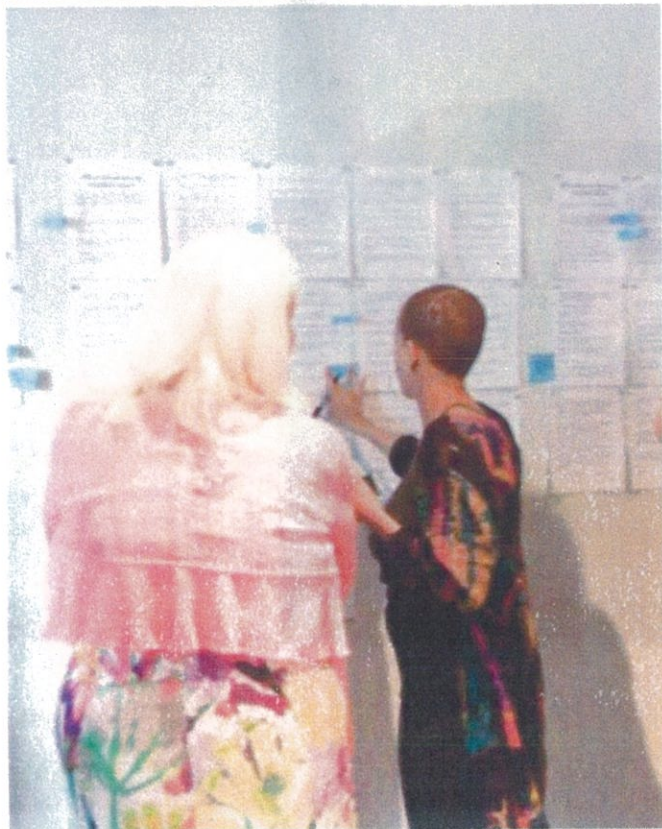
The exact mix of elements will change and evolve and is dependent on budget, permitting and appropriate City approvals. A more detailed and defined plan is recommended to be created in the “programming and execution” phase, subsequent to this recommendation being accepted by WAM DC and commitment to assist with fundraising (if not the actual funds themselves) secured.

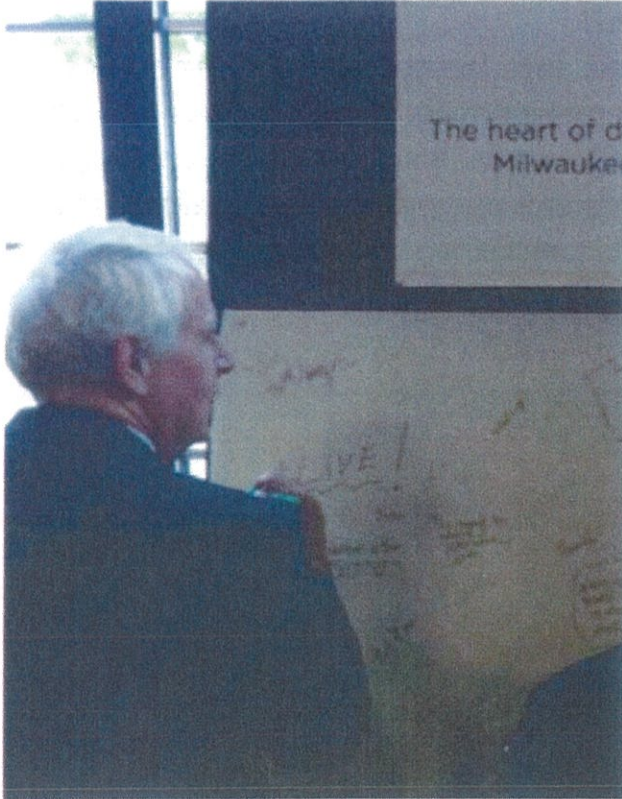
This recommended site approach allows the 4th and Wisconsin site to become a creative lab, where programming for a diverse array of art and creativity can be put on display and small, local businesses can be piloted in order to test out new and various ideas for future, more permanent development opportunities.

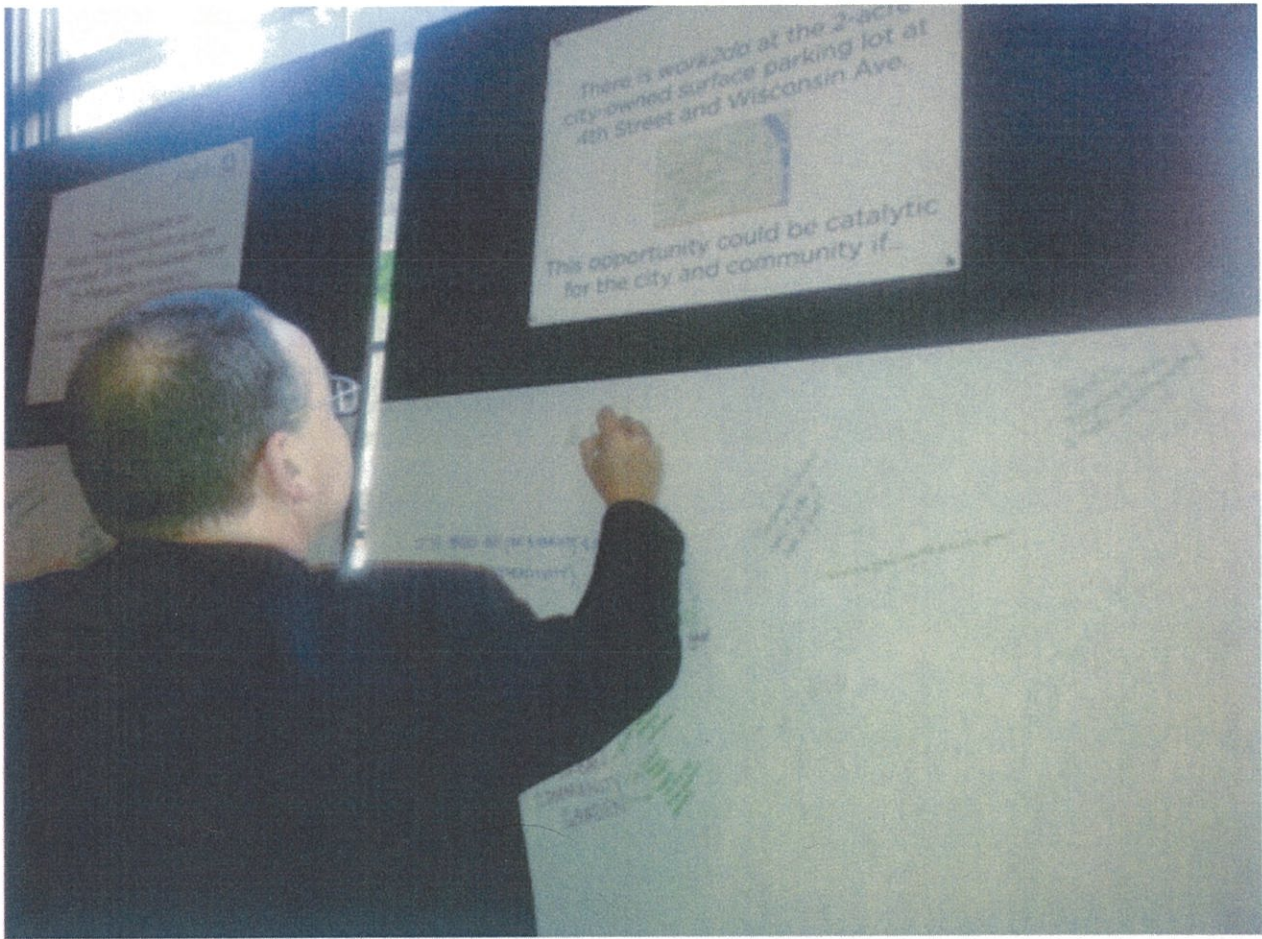
The proposed site usage has the opportunity to provide not only short-term economic development for the immediate 4th and Wisconsin area, but also has the potential to develop and connect an entire downtown ecosystem using Milwaukee's cultural and artistic assets as catalysts.

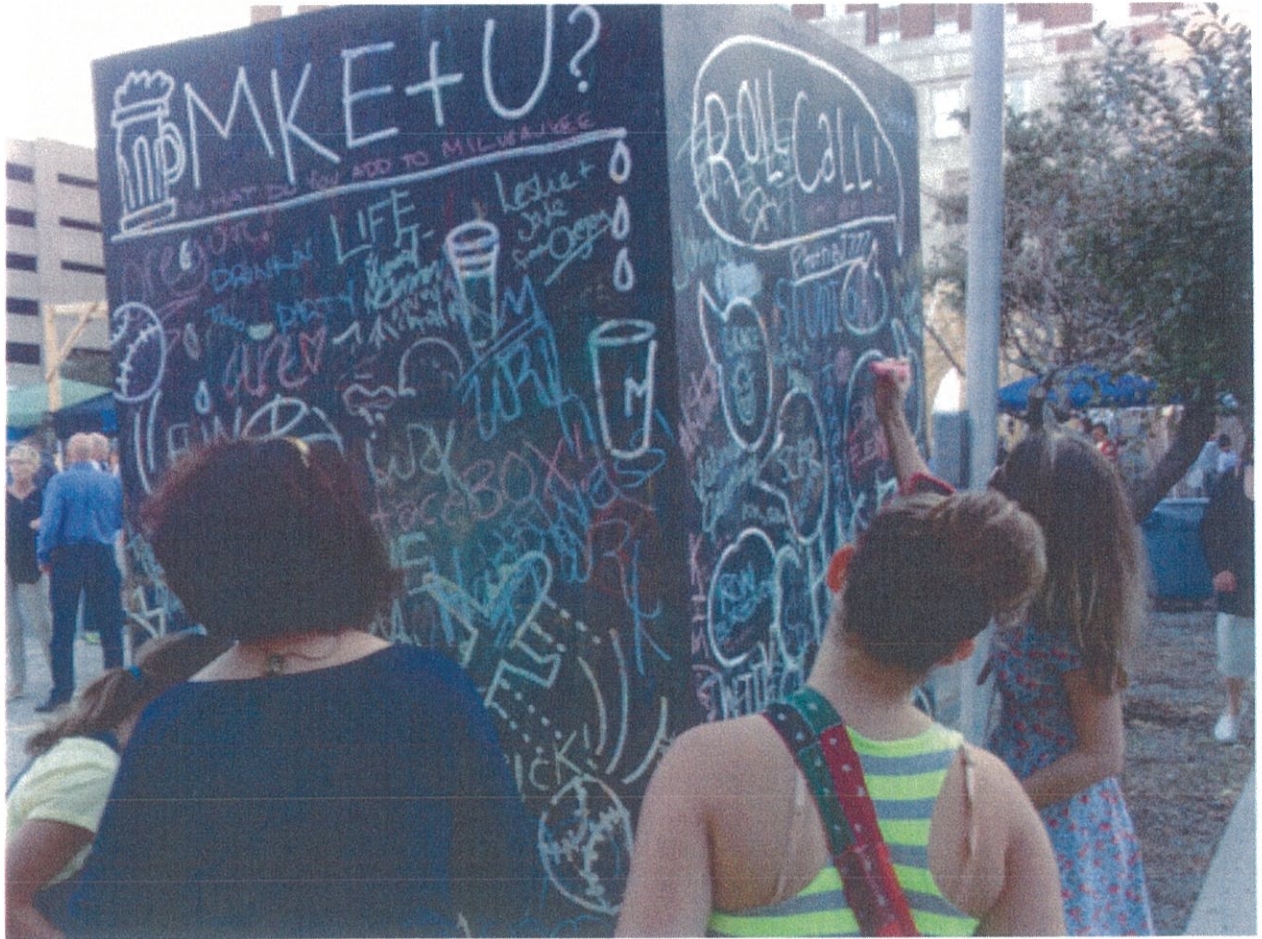
How Was The Site Usage Conclusion Drawn?

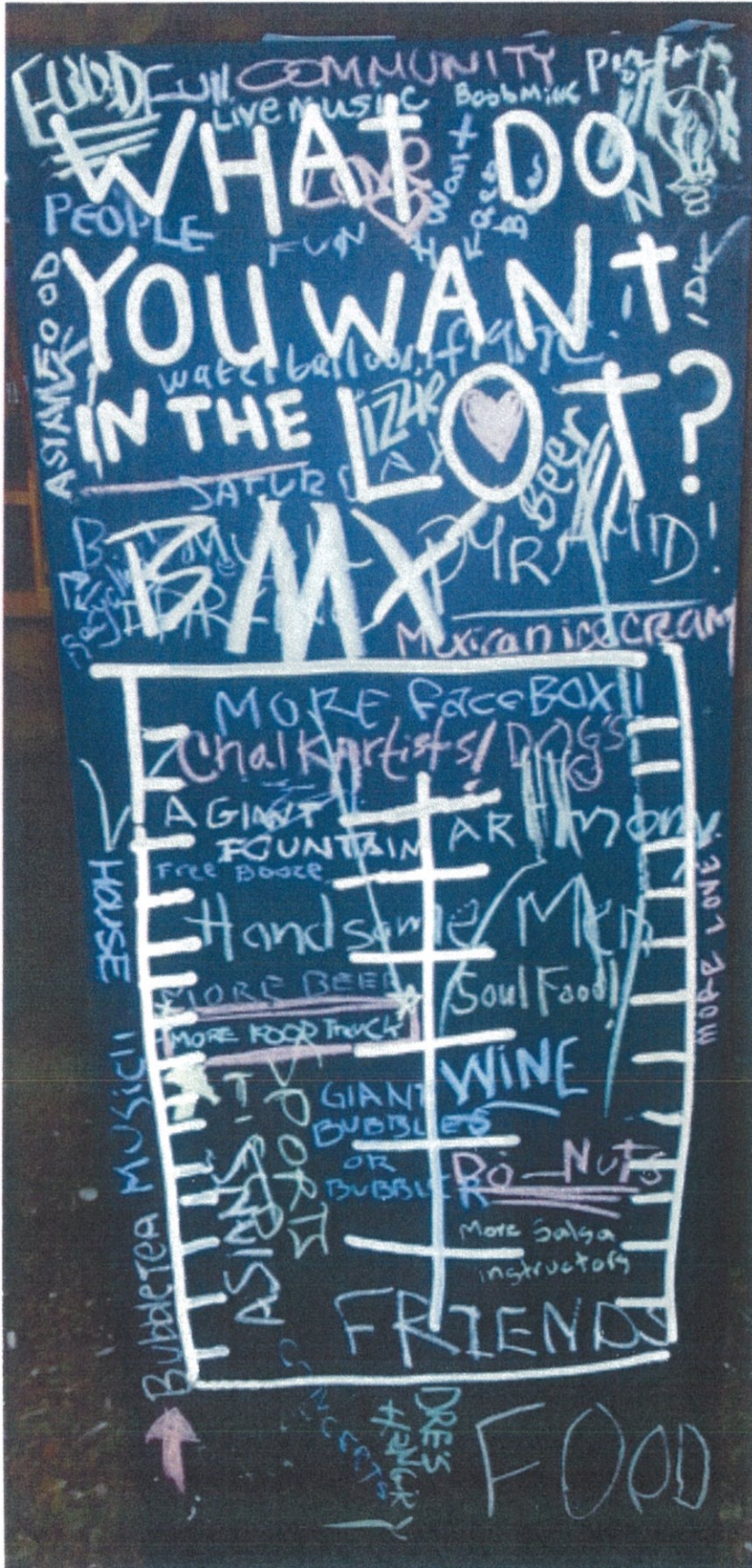
Nearly 2,000 stakeholders, citizens, residents, area businesses, civic leaders and government and economic development representatives provided input through a number of mechanisms over a period of 10 months, including online surveys, in-person surveys, community dialogues, workshops and public input sessions. The sum total of this input contributed to CAM's conclusions and recommended site usage outlined in this summary.

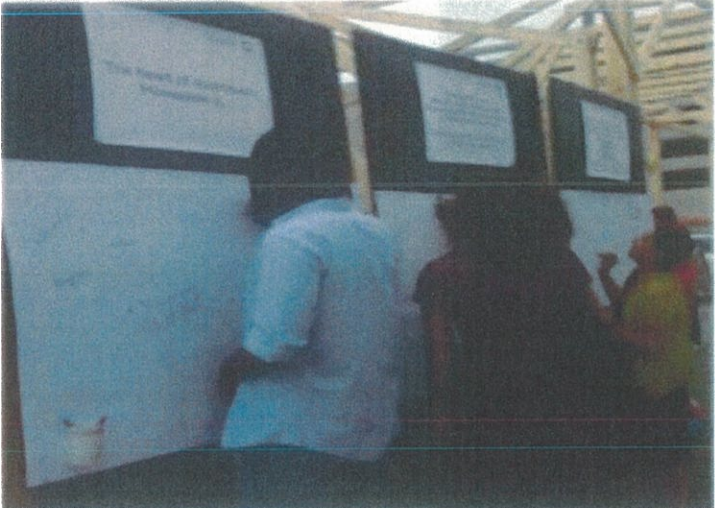
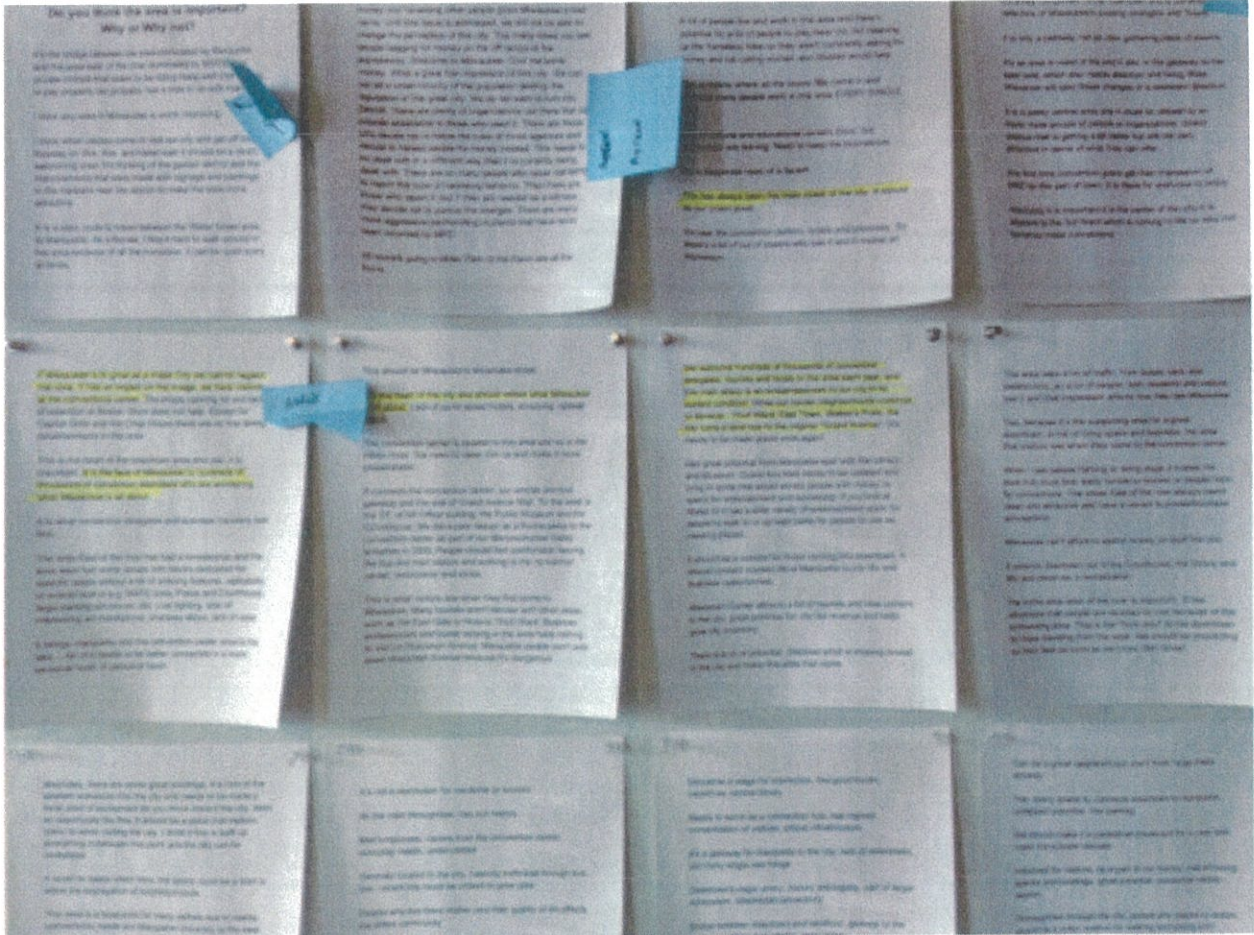












As part of the CAM creative problem-solving process team, The Kubala Washatko Architects dedicated 10 months and the volunteer time of more than a dozen architects to conduct discovery on the built environment surrounding the lot. Utilizing a process called pattern language to synthesize their discovery TKWA wrote six patterns (detailed in the appendix) and led a workshop of more than 100 civic leaders and professionals across disciplines at the 2014 creativeMilwaukee@work Summit.

Following is a written compilation of the top group ideas and input as well as several of the hand-drawn sketches the work groups produced. These ideas informed the solution that is recommended and will be further developed in the next steps phase, should this recommendation be accepted.







Four Season City

Areas of downtown Milwaukee can be very vibrant during summer, but this drops off dramatically because of an assumption that no one wants to be outside in winter. Other cities with cold climates have managed to create a vibrant streetscape and many conference attendees believed that it could be possible here. Temporary pop-up structures are used in public squares in cities like New York and Minneapolis in the winter months. Fire pits are another popular outdoor winter feature in such squares. A vibrant, annual Christmas Market was suggested by a number of participants.

Milwaukeeans struggle with envisioning how we can enjoy a site such as 4th and Wisconsin during the winter. Photos from similar spaces in other cities demonstrate how 4th and Wisconsin can be a four-season site:

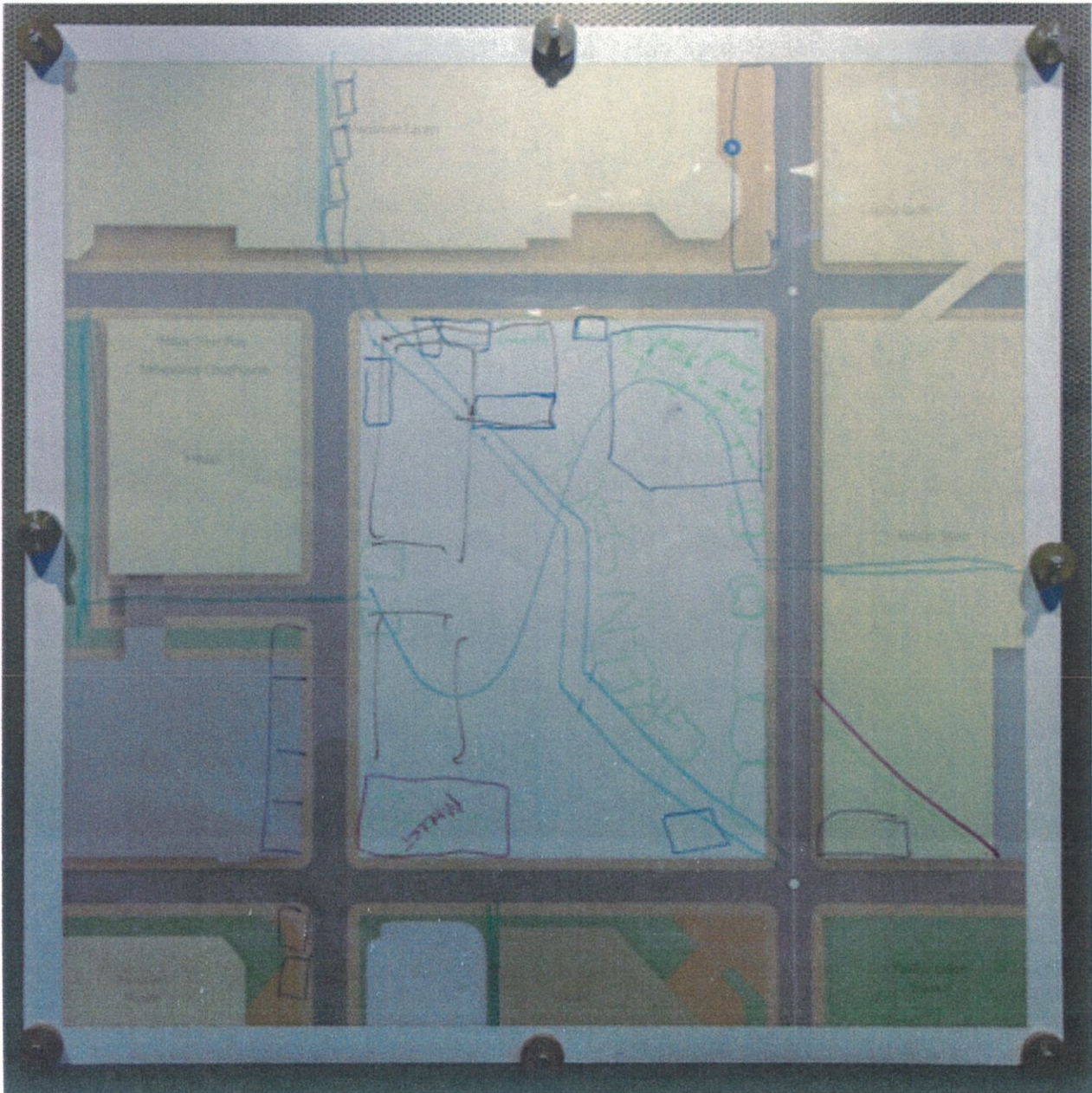




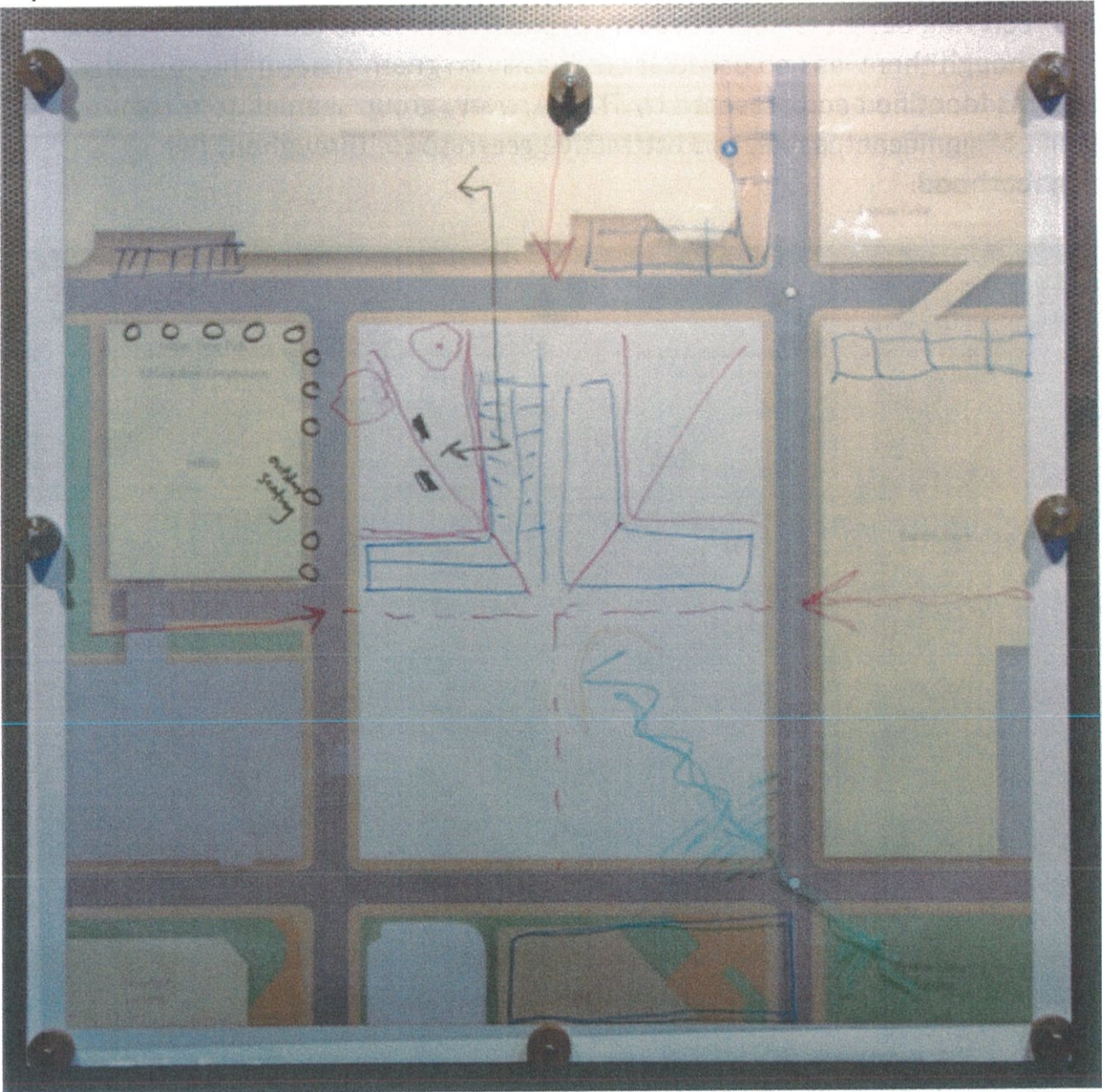


Greening Downtown

One recurring design element in every proposal was some form of green space. Even though there was no particular emphasis on green space in the six initial patterns identified and presented by TKWA, every group seemed to recognize the deficit of significant, usable, and attractive green space throughout the neighborhood.



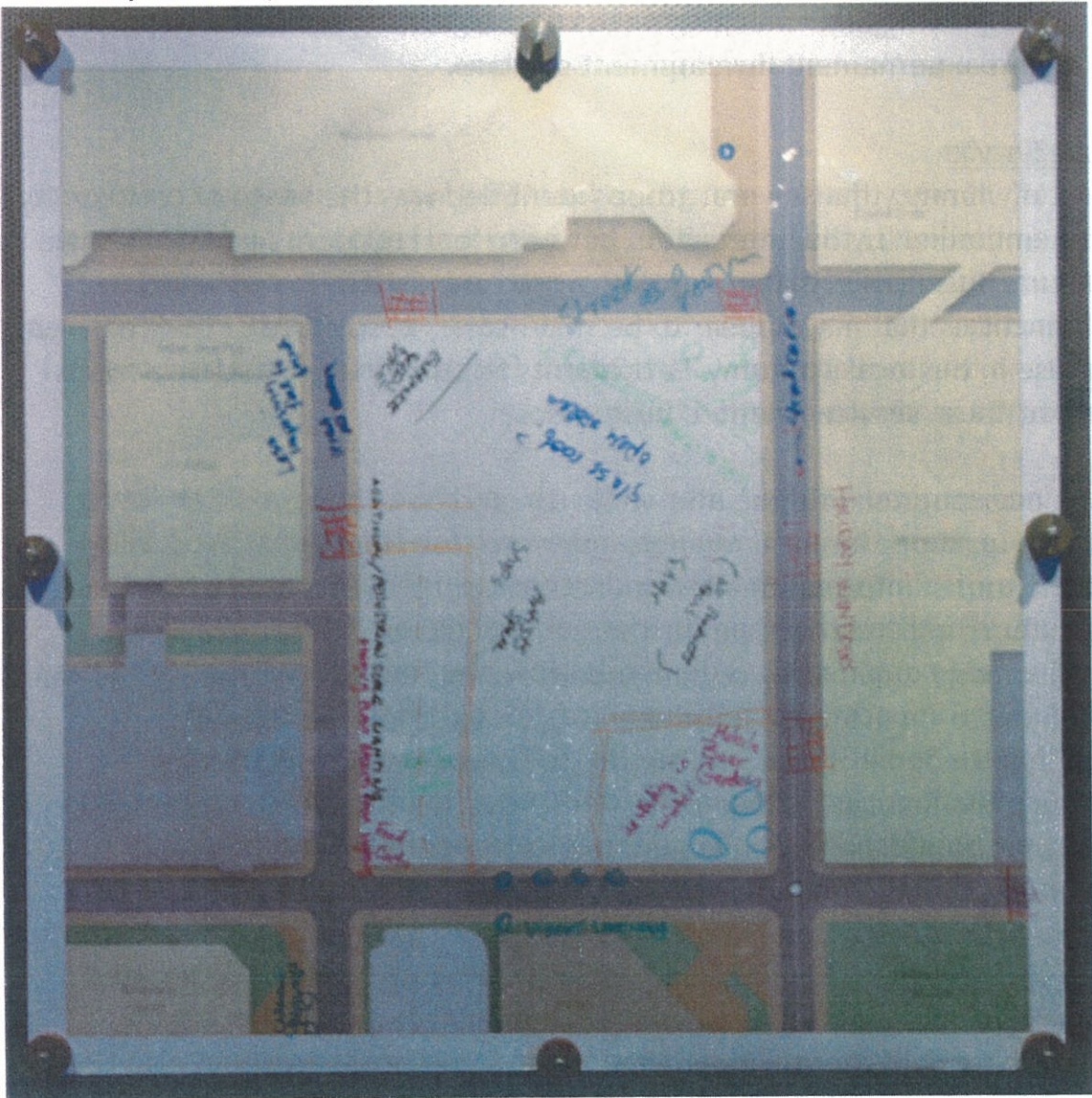
Particularly given the anticipated rise in residents moving to the area in the next 12 months-3 years, the need for some non-developed space will become more important.



Food Focus

Food appeared as a major issue in the discussion at each table. It became clear that the area lacks variety in food options. There is unmet demand for even a basic grocery store, however the need is more nuanced; a single solution won't suffice.

The concept of food trucks, mobile coffee carts and pop up shops like local bakeries and artisanal foods such as chocolate are the ideal solution for addressing this situation. The lot exactly as it is, is in fact the ideal location for a food truck destination, given its location in the heart of downtown and across from the convention center. Even permanent "trucks" as Portland has done to line many surface parking lots is a potential turn-key solution for the lot as is.



Intertwined Residences

In addition to the food issue, Westown lacks a variety of residential options. Existing housing in the area is limited and feels disconnected with other activity. Many groups were seeking ways to intertwine residential elements with other types of uses.

This issue can be best addressed with the LQC style of creative placemaking being suggested as the interwhile solution. More than 800 new housing units are coming online in the area over the next 12-18 months, which will significantly change the landscape of the area. Over the next few years, the site can nimbly respond to the growing and changing needs of the growing residential population, evolving toward a permanent development solution.

Small-Scale Service

One aspect of vibrancy that several groups identified was the sense of community connection embodied by the interaction between local residents and small-scale entrepreneurs. Businesses that are locally owned and staffed (as opposed to national franchises that may appear to be small-scale) keep more of their earnings and expertise in the local economy. Participants felt that there could be a model of success for these service-oriented businesses.

This can be incorporated into the interwhile use and development of the lot by including pop up shops for local retailers and even fresh food sales. A mobile coffee cart, a tourist information kiosk and a semi-permanent stage to feature local arts, culture and creatives can further enliven the lot. Other small-scale services will emerge organically as demands grow and the site evolves. CAM has approached micro-financing organization Kiva Zip to develop a “Ziva Zip Milwaukee Pop Up Retail Space” on the site to showcase the local micro-entrepreneurs the financier is helping to fund. Kiva Zip officials are enthusiastic about the opportunity and have pledged their considerable social media marketing megaphone to help the concept succeed.

Each of the above pattern solutions and general elements can be incorporated into further developing the solution, which will provide not only short-term economic development for the immediate 4th and Wisconsin area, but also the

potential to develop and connect an entire downtown ecosystem using Milwaukee's cultural and artistic assets as catalysts and as well as provide the critical opportunity to test out new and various ideas for future, more permanent development opportunities prior to extensive capital investment.

This recommendation for the site incorporates uses for the lot that utilize best practices of creative placemaking that allows iterative installations and infrastructure to develop over time in response to user experience, rather than capital-intensive permanent construction that is, by its nature, then fixed and inflexible. This “interwhile” solution is especially appealing given the extensive amount of transition taking place in the area over the next 2-3 years, including more than 800 new housing units coming online in the immediate vicinity; a location for the arena determined and the facility built; and new ownership of The Grand Avenue.

It is the professional opinion of the CAM creative problem-solving team that, until the impact of these major projects is measured and the user behavior of attendees understood, it is premature to make a capital-intensive investment in the lot. For the next 2-3 years, the lot is best kept activated, but nimble in use, design, infrastructure and investment. This is in keeping with creative placemaking best practices as well as other leading schools of thought such as experience design and even lean start-up. Creating minimal viable product (MVP) or, in placemaking parlance, lighter, quicker cheaper (LQC) designs, and allowing the development to be both iterative and responsive to the people, place, investment and moving pieces, is both the most prudent and the most forward-thinking approach to developing the lot. This approach increases the value of the lot over the next few years as well.

This solution meets the design parameters as detailed in the original scope of work, with two exceptions, as noted:

- Fully develop the site to its highest and best public use (as stated, “the best and highest public use” at this time is to *not* fully develop the site)
- Provide a place, experiences and opportunities for the general public—people from all walks of life and backgrounds to come together.
- Promote racial and ethnic harmony, as well as civic pride.
- Generate revenue to reinvest in the site and facilities.

- Provide greater public use of the site, although private and public/private partnership developments will be considered.
- Consider creative uses for/incorporation of the Robert Indiana MECC floor in conjunction with input from floor owner Ben Koller (While creative uses for the floor were considered, the owner intends to sell the floor, making execution of any of the ideas impossible at this time.)
- Serve as a civic unifier that consistently delivers and is equipped to thrive and shape Milwaukee's urban brand.
- Enhance public access to the site and further develop/support free and low-cost community events.
- Enhance and promote the surrounding neighborhood.
- Be authentic and demonstrate that which is the best of Milwaukee—its culture, heritage, history and people.
- Give people a reason to want to live, work, play and learn west of the river
- Be a development that encourages visitors who walk out of the convention center, the Grand Avenue, the Milwaukee Hilton, etc. to look around and say: "This is a really cool and exciting place to be!"
- Allow for the property to be activated during all seasons.
- Provide for a bikeshare station and streetcar stop along 4th Street.
- Provide flexible space that can be used for multiple purposes that may change over time.
- Be economically viable, actionable, fundable, sustainable and doable.

Next Steps:

Programming and Execution

During CAM's creative problem-solving process, dozens of interested organizations/creatives/artists were identified who have indicated a desire to help specifically program the site in the manner described above, as well as help with the actual execution of site activities and events in 2015 and beyond.

CAM also recommends reaching out to the surrounding property owners to understand their annual programming efforts and events, so that whatever happens on the site can be coordinated and leveraged with what's happening in the surrounding neighborhood.

CAM recommends convening the parties that expressed interest as well as the partners outlined below as a next step to further developing the concept, programming and steps to execution.

Proposed Programming Partners:

4MKE committee members and curators • 88.9 Radio Milwaukee • African American Chamber of Commerce • ArtSpin • Boston Store • City of Milwaukee • Community Journal • Community Newspapers • Creative Alliance Milwaukee • Department of City Development • FLYE Entertainment • Grand Avenue Mall • Hilton Hotel City Center • Hispanic Chamber of Commerce • Grand Avenue Mall/facility • Journal Communications • Marcus Corporation • Marquette University • Metro-Milwaukee Association of Commerce--FUEL • Milwaukee Artist Resource Network • Milwaukee Arts Board • Milwaukee-based creative agencies • Milwaukee Downtown/BID 21 • Milwaukee Public Library • Milwaukee Redevelopment Authority • NEWaukee • Plankinton building tenants • Running Rebels • Social X/Urban professionals organization • TRUE Skool • United Performing Arts Fund • Urban Underground • V100 radio station • VISIT Milwaukee • Westown Association • WisPark • Wisconsin Avenue Milwaukee Development Corporation (WAMDC)

Site Plan

Based on the outcome of the programming meeting, a site plan by architects will be created.

Site Maintenance

BID 21 has committed to partner with CAM to maintain the site utilizing their Downtown Ambassadors, Clean Sweep Program and other existing Milwaukee Downtown programs that will be the “eyes on the site.”

Communications and Promotion:

When funding is secured, CAM recommends securing the services of a local marketing/branding firm to work with the team to name and brand this effort and the site. This effort is critical, not only as a further demonstration of Milwaukee’s creative talent, but by publicly displaying and promoting our creative assets and offerings on an on-going, year-round basis, we are demonstrating to the world who we are—a vibrant and creative city—in an authentic way.

Funding:

CAM has leveraged their vast fundraising experience and the efforts of the creative problem-solving process to put WAM DC in a position to potentially have the 2015 community programming/planning efforts and execution underwritten by two major funders (Bloomberg Foundation and Southwest Airlines). Along with the City of Milwaukee, CAM has written and submitted proposals for each grant. Execution of Phase II can begin immediately upon securing funding.

The Bloomberg letter of intent proposal has funds identified for an on-site stage, kiosks, covered seating, potential resurfacing of a portion the lot and fees for performers, sound and lighting technicians. The design and location will be developed as an early task after the grant is awarded.

If either the Bloomberg or Southwest Airlines Grant funding is secured, a Programming and Planning Council made up of the entities described above, can begin to immediately develop an events schedule and execution plan for the coming 18 months.

If neither the Bloomberg or Southwest Airlines grants is secured, then other sources of funding would need to be identified.

Appendix

Following is a narrative of the year-long, community-wide creative problem-solving process narrative as well as the research findings and learnings. In addition, the 2013 Strategic Actioning Session results are also attached for reference.