

Let's Make Coltsville More Pedestrian Friendly!

Transcribed Workshop Notes

Church of the Good Shepherd - Parish Hall

Saturday, January 23, 9:30am to Noon

Co-sponsored by Knox, Inc. & the National Park Service

John Monroe transcribed these notes directly from half-sheets of text generated by workshop participants at Topic Tables, most of whom are residents of Coltsville neighborhood. Apart from spelling corrections and slight revisions for clarity, this is the raw data; the ideas have not been ranked, prioritized or vetted. I have left in the two questions that did not attract comments because they may evoke responses later on.

To get a full understanding of the ideas generated in this workshop, you must also look over the trace-paper sketches and annotations made on maps of the neighborhood. The participants demonstrated extraordinary abilities to identify issues and solutions spatially. It will require additional studio time and community engagement to distill this mountain of good ideas into a manageable set of proposals and implementation strategies.

You will find the workshop agenda and original set of Key Questions on pages 7 and 8.

Gateways + Walking Routes

- **Where are the gateways to the neighborhood for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists?**
 - Colt Park is a gateway to the city. There are beautiful vistas of skyline.
 - *Chase Lot* is ugly.
 - Suggestion: go to Dillon Stadium meetings
- **What are the key destinations for visitors?**
 - Potsdam housing is fascinating. Can it be brought back to its original German design?
 - Armsmear:
 - tour when decorated for Christmas
 - walking tour of gardens on Sundays in June
 - Shuttle bus tour of national park area and cemetery, dropping people off at Wadsworth to view Colt Collection
 - Bicycle rental for in-park tour (especially for *historical* visitors)
 - Specific **women's** history display: Elizabeth Colt as businesswoman
 - Hepburns ----- Colt ----- Hartford ----- CT
 - Loop in the Lady Catherine Riverboat
- **What routes would best serve visitor needs?**
 - Improve CT Transit bus service to Colt Gateway from downtown transit hubs

- **What are the key destinations for residents?**
 - Colt Park as an improved recreational destination, i.e. *How do you enter the swimming area?*
 - Regional Market
 - Observation: already draws a suburban crowd
 - How about farm stand opportunities at vacant lots?
 -
- **Which sidewalks are the most heavily used by residents?**
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- **Where can inexperienced cyclists ride comfortably?**
 -
- **What sidewalk improvements are needed?**
 - Currently no benches or resting points
 - Lack of sidewalk continuity
 - Crumbling sidewalks and inconsistent lighting
- **Where are crosswalk improvements needed?**
 - Charter Oak + Huyshope
 - Huyshope + Wawarme, towards the boat launch and market
- **Which areas need better street lighting?**
 - Between Dillon, Colt Park and Van Block
- **Where are there safety concerns?**
 - In general, neighborhood streets are too wide which leads to high-speed traffic.
 - More calming and narrowing measures needed
 - Path from neighborhood towards boat launch, river and regional market
 - Dangerous intersection at Charter Oak + Wyllys/Columbus
 - High-speed cars on blind corner, inadequate pedestrian facilities and signal improvements needed
 - Night-time flashing signal should be four-way red
 - Dangerous intersection @ Huyshope + Charter Oak
 - Unclear pedestrian crossing at Charter Oak
 - Dangerous intersection at Charter Oak/Nepquash/Sheldon
 - Blind corner, hill, cars don't stop, cars park to edge restricting visibility
 - Winter safety: Need to make sure sidewalks, crosswalks are well (and promptly) shoveled
 - Have crosswalk buttons on **both** sides of street at **all** intersections in park neighborhood
 - Area is unsafe after dark for pedestrians (especially the elderly and disabled)
 - Need police on foot patrols after dark
- **Where are there bicycle concerns?**
 - Ask Joe McGail

Wayfinding Tools + Techniques (Topic Table merged with Colt Park Improvements)

- **How would you use signs (including confidence markers) to guide visitors along routes and to destinations?**
 - Use the dome icon as part of sidewalk lines for wayfinding: use the point of the dome as an arrow
- **Where would you place maps?**
 - Use art embedded in sidewalks to create walking tour
 - Make it practical but innovative, not just the same old, same old
- **What should be included in a graphic icon to brand the Colt neighborhood and pedestrian routes?**
 - Blue onion dome: use as the icon, put as the background for all signs, literature, etc.
 - Use the dome, but differentiate it from existing uses: include innovation somehow
- **How could an app enhance the experience of visitors and residents?**
 - Video on inside of Armsmear on phone app

Colt Park Improvements (Topic Table merged with Wayfinding Tools + Techniques)

- **How would you improve the existing entrances to Colt Park?**
 - Create an entrance from Potsdam worker housing.
 - Direct exit/entrance off/on I-91 and I-84 [Note: I'm not sure whether this refers to an exit/entrance to Colt Park itself, or the neighborhood.]
- **What features would make the park more inviting?**
 - Move dumpsters at Good Shepherd parking lot to area behind church, between CREC and Koppelmans
 - Remove the fence around Good Shepherd parking lot

Story-telling + Park Interpretation

- **How can NPS work with partners to tell the stories?**
 - Cooperate with Wadsworth (curator of Colt collection) on videos, podcasts, brochures of Armsmear
- **Where would you place NPS interpretive wayside signs?**
 - Charter Oak + Van Dyke (pedestrian way to Riverfront Park): when sliding door is built
 - Wawarme + Van Dyke (Riverfront Park)
 - Huyshope + Nepaquash (Church of the Good Shepherd and Parish House)
 - Wawarme + Wethersfield CNHP (Colt Park Recreation Area)
- **What stories would you include on signs?**
 - Potsdam Kiosk Ideas – some interesting possibilities
 - Context of idea of technology existing on a spectrum, from old human technologies (such as baskets) to newer/high-tech practices (industrial technologies and now digital tech).

- For example, weaving led to computers, as the Jacquard loom was the beginning of binary code.
 - This is a relevant idea in the time of energy descent/post-peak-oil
 - I'm not knowledgeable about workers history/labor issues, but if there is a story to tell regarding worker's considerations/labor...
 - Question: How did Potsdam Village contribute to industry/worker's housing/labor rights?
 - Question: How did the influx of Germans impact Hartford?
 - Focus on one family history. Use the sign to collect family stories. So many interesting stories to share! Use social media to collect and share stories.
 - Use LASR to create overlay of historic photos with scene (LASR connects with social media)
 - Have a shop with wicker/willow items to buy, and have a job program to make items, sell and profit from the store
 - Sam never put insurance on the armory. After Sam died, in 1862, Elizabeth insured the armory. Two years later the armory burned to the ground. Elizabeth rebuilt the buildings with the insurance and made them fireproof.
 - The impact of women in business in Hartford and Connecticut
- **What roles might school partners and neighbors play in National Park Service programming?**
 - Observation: There are no Latinos at this meeting in a neighborhood that is majority Latino.
 - To engage the full spectrum of neighbors, hold bilingual meetings like this at the Center for Latino Progress
 - Or, meet at Bulkeley High School with student engagement
 - Interactive programming
 - History of labor and labor organizing
 - Immigration and labor
 - Create murals and art on highway wall
 - Get Hartford Art School, CREC's GHAA and Kinsella involved
 - *Love this!*
 - Link history of innovation/invention to current issues.
 - Sponsor *Invention Convention* for schools
 - Sponsor Coltsville essay contest for schools: elementary, middle, high school and college
 - Use multiple learning modes, especially active learning:
 - Make stuff
 - Tie in with craft and tech community
 - Link Colt's interchangeable parts to other Hartford industries:
 - Typewriters
 - Bicycles
 - Sewing machines
 - Provide Innovation Grants to Hartford youth and entrepreneurs

- Include entrepreneurial education
 - Highlight business innovations of Colt
 - Feature neighborhood business center
- Use art to bring this place to life
- Hold `meetings` in the park with community members currently using the park
 - Popsickle truck model: *Ice cream for a dream!*
- AmeriCorps residents as beautifiers and park rangers
- Elizabeth Colt: botanical garden tied into Armsmear resident gardens
- Include local artists and community issues
- **How can social media enhance the neighborhood experience for residents and visitors?**
 - Include signs that:
 - Connect to iQuilt
 - Eccentric attractions like Barnard [spelling?] (witch hangings) and sightings of Mother Mary
 - Avoid only paper maps, avoid `boring`
 - Create well-designed **Interactive Map** that features
 - Oral history
 - Dense, lush visuals
 - Beautiful use of archival materials
 - Beacon Technology (ie *Hello, Parkville*) to add info to alerts phone when in proximity
 - Use of LASR app to provide immediate, interactive, historic images layered onto view through phone camera
 - Utilize networks
 - Friends of Colt Park
 - South Green NRZ
 - South Downtown NRZ
 - Dwelling Downtown
- **What roles could neighbors play as ambassadors/interpreters?**
 - Recruit volunteer guides from neighborhood groups like Armsmear, Hartford Hospital, etc.
- **How can we engage visitors actively in this neighborhood?**
 - Implement a Makers Space
 - Support CT Makers movement
 - Tie in with innovation history of Colt
 - Connect with Kinsella School, CREC and HAS University
 - Bike Patrol
 - Answer questions
 - Youth Employment
 - Benefit from Bicidio (spelling?) and local bike culture
 - Encourages cycling in park
 - Willow Works Business
 - Recreated by local teens/young adults

- Near Potsdam Village
 - Job training
 - Historical re interpretation
 - \$\$ for community
- Spanish language signs from Wethersfield Avenue to the Visitors Center
- Create statues of key players to inform each site
 - Photo opps
 - Have audio bios
 - Challenge visitors to find certain characters
- Give visitors a “Past Port” that they can stamp at each site
- At visitors center, have LEGO statues of Sam and Elizabeth like the statue of Mark Twain at the Mark Twain House Museum (great attraction for kids!)
- Tie in with Stowe Center Salons to bring to life the progressive, intellectual Hartford women’s contributions

School Bus Traffic Management

Note: Due to time constraints, no participants engaged in this station. This hot-button topic will attract more attention in future forums.

- **What are the current problems with school buses?**
 -
- **How could the traffic be managed differently in terms of timing and routes?**
 -

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By Noon, Let's Leave With:

- Answers to Key Questions (see page 2)
- Maps annotated with specific designs and big concepts
- Next steps to improve walking for **everyone** in Coltsville

8:45 Light Refreshments Available

9:00 Welcome

Ryan O'Halloran - Knox Inc

James Woolsey - National Park Service

9:10 How We'll Work Together

John Monroe – National Park Service

Sidewalk Detective Work

Key Questions

Topic Tables

Maps + Magic Walls + Crayons

9:30 Topic Tables for Small Groups

Gateways + Walking Routes

Wayfinding Tools + Techniques

Story-telling + Park Interpretation

Colt Park Improvements

School Bus Traffic Management

10:45 Gallery Walk to Consider Our Recommendations

11:30 What are Our Next Steps?

11:55 Plus/Delta Review

- Plus: What worked well about today's workshop?
- Delta: Next time John runs a workshop like this, it will be better if *what....?*

12:00 Adjourn

Coltsville Neighborhood Workshop
Key Questions for Topic Tables

January 23, 2016

Gateways + Walking Routes

James Woolsey (NPS)

Ryan O'Halloran (Knox Inc.)

- Where are the **gateways** to the neighborhood for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists?
- What are the key destinations for **visitors**?
- What routes would best serve **visitor** needs?
- What are the key destinations for **residents**?
- Which sidewalks are the most heavily used by **residents**?
- Where can inexperienced cyclists ride comfortably?
- Where are **sidewalk** improvements needed?
- Where are **crosswalk** improvements needed?
- Which areas need better street lighting?
- Where are there safety concerns?

Wayfinding Tools + Techniques

Ernie Graziano (NPS)

- How would you use signs (including confidence markers) to guide visitors along routes and to destinations?
- Where would you place maps?
- How could an app enhance the experience of visitors and residents?
- What roles could neighbors play as ambassadors?

Colt Park Improvements

Ernie Graziano (NPS)

- How would you improve the existing entrances to Colt Park?
- What features would make the park more inviting?

Story-telling + Park Interpretation

Joanne Gangi-Williams (NPS)

- Where would you place NPS interpretive wayside signs?
- Where would you place kiosk signs?
- What roles might school partners and neighbors play in National Park Service programming?
- How can social media enhance the neighborhood experience for residents and visitors?
- How can we engage visitors actively in this neighborhood?

School Bus Traffic Management

John Monroe (NPS)

- What are the current problems with school buses?
- How could the traffic be managed differently in terms of timing and routes?