

# News

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## Planners formally present 'minimum grid' to crowd of more than 100

Read more here: <http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/news/article35389710.html#storylink=cpy>

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Two urban planners from Gehl Studio formally unveiled their draft proposal for a project known as “Minimum Grid,” which involves a series of projects in Midtown and downtown, designed to enhance the connection between the two, especially by bicycle, on foot and by public transit.

The plan also identifies five locales as “civic assets,” that could be enhanced further by improving connectivity, they said. The planners, Julia Day and Andreas Rohl, made their presentation Tuesday evening in Columbus Council chambers at the City Services Center, before an audience of more than 100 people.

Their services were paid for by the Knight Foundation, which sponsored a competition looking for innovative ideas to improve communities. The Minimum Grid idea, submitted by Midtown, Inc., and its executive director, Anne King, was awarded a \$200,000 grant, which paid for Gehl’s expertise and is to pay for a pilot program or two in hope of kick-starting the rest of the project.

The five “civic assets” that the planners hope to involve in the grid are the 13th Street corridor from Lakebottom Park into downtown, the “civic commons” (the government complex on Macon Road), Broadway/Riverwalk/Uptown, the Columbus Museum and Buena Vista Road (from Wynnton Road to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard).

The 13th Street corridor is central to the idea of improving the connection between Midtown and downtown, which make up what the planners call the “core community,” Day said.

“I think it’s a great idea,” Day said. “Thirteenth Street is a natural desire line. There is a hill over the bridge, but it’s the most direct way to get between Midtown and Uptown. There’s potential opportunity where we can use some traffic calming, making the intersections safer to navigate on foot.”

Rohl said connecting the different “assets” in different parts of Midtown/Uptown will eventually create grid that will make the whole area more navigable on foot, on bicycles or on public transportation, but it can’t be done half-way.

“It’s about creating a network that’s good for walking and cycling and also good for public transit,” Rohl said. “If you want to go on a bicycle, for example, it has to be good quality all the way. If it’s good quality 90 percent of the way, and then there’s 500 meters where it’s very dangerous or there’s a crossing you can’t get through, then you just won’t take your bicycle.”

In introducing Day and Rohl before their presentation, Mayor Teresa Tomlinson said for Columbus to remain vital and vibrant, projects like the Minimum Grid will have to be part of the plan.

“This is the future,” Tomlinson said. “The days of looking at cycling and pedestrian access as some sort of oddity, or just for recreation, are long gone. The city’s that thrive and are competitive will be those that have what we used to call an alternative transportation grid, but we are now calling a complete transportation grid.”

Following the presentation, the crowd moved downstairs to the City Services Center community room, where they broke into small groups to discuss each of the five civic assets and to make suggestions about improving on Gehl’s ideas. Day and Rohl will take those suggestions back to Gehl and use them to fine-tune their plan into a final version that they will bring back to Columbus in October, they said.