

Portsmouth Listens



McIntyre Discussion Guide

A Study Circle Dialogue to Explore:

What values and visions will guide the design of the McIntyre public spaces to make downtown Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?



Virtual Kickoff

7:00PM Wednesday December 16, 2020

Online Zoom

Study Circles - January 2021

WELCOME



“Values to Visions to Sketches”

Thank you for taking the time to participate in and contribute to a decision that will impact our downtown community for generations to come. Returning the McIntyre property to the Portsmouth community has literally taken decades. The end of the transfer is in sight and a new journey is set to begin. The City and its development partner, Redgate/Kane, are trying to understand the community’s wants and needs for the public space on the McIntyre Property so that their deal may be finalized.

Over the past twenty years, Portsmouth has used the Portsmouth Listens study circle process on many important public issues from Master Plans to determining the location of the Portsmouth Middle School. For the McIntyre property, Portsmouth Listens will host a two deliberative session dialogue in January which will explore:

What visions and values will guide the design of the McIntyre public space to make downtown Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?

The study circles will incorporate “placemaking” principles. The community knows best what it needs and as an aggregate will provide the talent, wisdom and perspectives that are essential to creating a successful public space. The goal is to create a “place” that people will use and enjoy.

Each study circle group will begin by establishing community values to be incorporated in the final design of the McIntyre public space which will inform the group’s “visions” based on those priority values. Each group will prepare a written report of their “values and visions” that will be published and orally presented to the City and Redgate/Kane. Each group’s “values and vision” will be shared with our urban design partner, the Principle Group, to create “sketches” of what the “visions and values” might look like. Each group’s values and visions, along with the Principle Group’s sketches, will be taken into consideration by the City and Redgate/Kane in the final McIntyre public space design process.

Our timeframe is very restricted. After the Kickoff on December 16, 2020, study circles will be convened the week of January 4 and January 11, 2020 to begin the **“values to visions to sketches”** process.

As a result of the Covid-19 virus and for the first time ever, this PL dialogue will be held virtually on the Zoom video conferencing platform. Each group will include a facilitator and up to ten participants. We are also exploring additional ways to participate and provide feedback outside of the Zoom meetings.

Sincerely,
Portsmouth Listens McIntyre Steering Committee

The McIntyre Property

The McIntyre Property History

In 1960's, the Federal Government exercised its eminent domain power to acquire a parcel of land in the middle of Portsmouth for the purposes of constructing a federal building. The parcel included all of the land between Daniels, Penhallow and Bow Streets as bordered on the east by the rear boundaries of Chapel Street properties. After extensive excavation, the McIntyre Federal Building was opened in 1967 and housed federal agencies and the U.S. Post Office.

Since 2004, the General Services Administration (GSA) has been planning to relocate the functions from this property to another location in Portsmouth. In fall of 2016, the GSA officially began its disposal process, declaring the building to be surplus to its needs. The City is pursuing acquisition of the site through the [Historic Surplus Property Program](#). The City can acquire the property for \$1 subject to restrictions imposed by the General Services Administration (GSA) and National Parks Service (NPS). The restrictions include preservation of the "monument" (the four story building and one story building formerly occupied by the Post Office) in their current condition (exterior). Permission has been given to demolish a small portion of the rear corner of the former post office building to allow for passage along the easterly side of that building.

The McIntyre Property Status

In 2019, the City Council voted to move forward with the acquisition and development of the property under the NPS Monuments Preservation Program. The City Council selected Redgate/Kane as its development partner and entered into a Development Agreement. The Developer presented a plan for the McIntyre property that was controversial. When the City and Developer could not agree on the terms of a ground lease in early 2020, the Developer filed suit against the City for breach of contract.

The litigation resulted in negotiations between the parties that lead to an "Interim Agreement to Stay Pending Litigation" that in part provides:

"2. The Portsmouth City Council subcommittee and SoBow Square, LLC (without lawyers...) will promptly reengage in earnest good faith negotiations to try to achieve resolution on revisions acceptable to both sides. An element of the negotiations must be who bears the costs of architectural and other work necessary to get from revised concept to concrete design/plan."

(April 16, 2020 Agreement at:

<http://files.cityofportsmouth.com/files/mcintyreproject/2020%20Materials/Interim%20Settlement%20Agreement%20fully%20executed.pdf>).

By early November, 2020, the "parties' deal" was described by the Developer as follows:

“We have a deal. The City wants to materially change the development plan on which we have agreed. We are willing to do so as long as the City protects our return on investment...

The path forward is what we have already laid out. The Subcommittee must advise Redgate/Kane how it wants the McIntyre project redesigned. The City must commit to protecting Redgate/Kane’s return on investment and must bear the expense necessary for us to produce a detailed redesign proposal. Redgate Kane will then develop a detailed budget for the project for vetting and approval by the City, whereupon we will proceed with the redesigned project.”

(Redgate/Kane Letter dated November 10, 2020 at:

<http://files.cityofportsmouth.com/files/mcintyreproject/2020%20Materials/Kane%20ltr%2011-10-020%20to%20Whelan%20re%20response%20to%20ltr%20dated%2011-6-2020.pdf>)

Ultimately, cost will be an issue. However, the cost cannot be addressed until the parties determine what will be built. The City initiated a Community-wide survey and received 3,495 responses. Results indicated a strong community desire for more meaningful and larger public space. The City and the Developer are seeking more public input through the Portsmouth Listens Dialogue Process. Their Joint Endorsement of the dialogue reads:

“Both the City and Redgate/Kane support the Portsmouth Listens public space dialogue as a step forward in considering an approach to thoughtfully adding more public space. We both want to achieve this as cost efficiently as possible. We look forward to everyone’s input.”

The McIntyre Dialogue

Although Portsmouth Listens’ initial invitations to the dialogue spoke of specific parts of the property, the McIntyre Subcommittee subsequently voted to "affirm that the feedback we are looking to elicit from the public pertains to the entire McIntyre site and how it is to be redeveloped."

The Portsmouth Listens McIntyre dialogue **will not** include or resolve all issues about the McIntyre Property. At this time, the McIntyre Subcommittee needs to know what the community wants at the McIntyre Property. Public space is the focus as it is the most consequential step in redesigning the McIntyre property. Community input on meaningful public space will significantly guide the final design and density of the project.

The McIntyre dialogue will seek public input on the community’s values and visions and how those values can be incorporated into the McIntyre Project. The values and visions identified will be used by our urban design partner, the Principle Group, to create sketches of the visions for the McIntyre Project. The City and Redgate/Kane will use the sketches to negotiate a final redesign of the McIntyre property.

The McIntyre Public Space

For the purposes of this dialogue, the McIntyre public space includes any part of the McIntyre property and surrounding rights of way. It can include indoor or outdoor public space. The dialogue is not intended to “design” the public space. Before designing, there needs to be “vision” of what the public space might be. Think about how you want the space used!

For descriptions and photos of the McIntyre property and past proposals, please see the City of Portsmouth McIntyre Project website at:

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/mcintyre-project>

And, take a walk around the McIntyre Property.



Portsmouth Values

The Portsmouth 2025 Master Plan was the result of an extensive process that explored existing conditions and developed a vision for the future based on stakeholders' priorities and the expected challenges of the next decade. Portsmouth's official plan to guide land use decisions was based on a two-year planning effort with extensive public input including a forum organized by Portsmouth Listens. <https://view.publitas.com/city-of-portsmouth/portsmouth-master-plan-adopted-2-16-2017/page/1>

The Plan is organized in the following five conceptual **Themes** supported by several **Goals** that describe how Portsmouth can fulfill each Theme.

1. Vibrant

- Support the continued vitality of the urban core through public investment and land use regulations.
- Encourage walkable mixed-use development along existing commercial corridors.
- Support the arts as a vital part of the community and local economy.
- Improve access to indoor and outdoor recreation throughout the city.

2. Authentic

- Ensure that new development complements and enhances its surroundings.
- Protect and enhance the integrity of historic landmarks, cherished views and open spaces.
- Maintain and establish usable public access to and along the waterfront.

3. Diverse

- Adapt housing stock to accommodate changing demographics.
- Accommodate the housing needs of low and moderate income residents.
- Ensure that the supply and character of commercial space can adapt to a changing economy.

4. Connected

- Ensure that transportation improvements are designed to create convenient, safe, and accessible streets for all users.
- Ensure that biking and walking are safe, convenient and comfortable throughout the city.
- Manage public and private parking supply to serve development needs without compromising community character.
- Support a strong local and regional transit system.

5. Resilient

- Implement best management practices and site design standards to ensure sustainability and resilience of public and private infrastructure.
- Manage public open spaces for passive recreation and environmental preservation.
- Promote effective stewardship to enhance the City's natural resources.
- Promote efficient use and management of resources.

Placemaking

This is not a design charrette. This is a visioning process that is best described as “placemaking.” Here are some basic principles of “placemaking”:

Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places

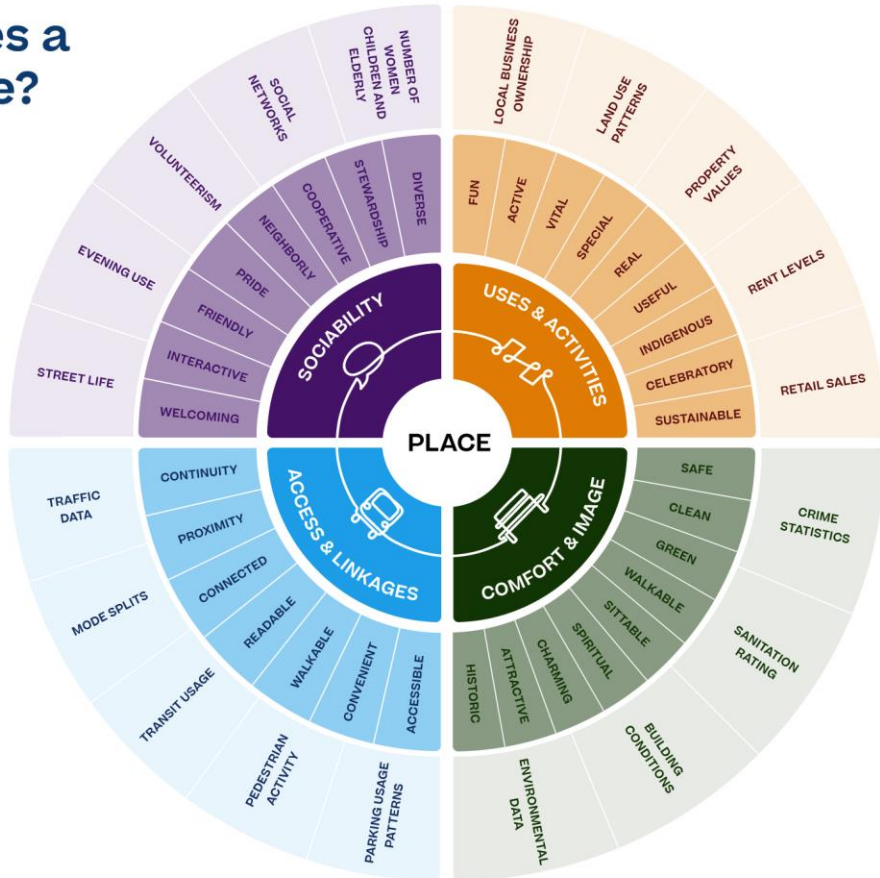
1. The community is the expert. Tap into their talents, wisdom, perspectives from the beginning. A sense of community ownership means a greater chance of success.
2. Create a place, not a design. Design may be nice to look at, but does the space incorporate the characteristics on the “wheel”? Does it have a strong sense of who the community is, is it comfortable to be in, does it have different kinds of activity? Is the whole greater than the sum of the parts?
3. Look for partners – for brainstorming, for funding, for implementing. Schools, museum, organizations, thought leaders.
4. Observe how people in your community (and others) use spaces to see what works, what’s missing, and do the same when your own new one is created.
5. Have a VISION – how might the space be used, what could make it comfortable and appealing, how can you make it a place where people want to be?
6. LIGHTER, QUICKER, CHEAPER: start with easy improvements that make a difference: seating, plantings, lighting, art – all can be improved on and changed over time.
7. TRIANGULATION: “triangulation is the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to other strangers as if they knew each other.” (Holly Whyte). For example, a food truck would have picnic tables and/or benches close by, as well as trash cans. Or a playground and seating area and ice cream stand. Each alone may bring people, but together, they bring even more.
8. You will have naysayers and others who are used to working in their own silos. For example, an architect might be able to design a building, and an engineer a sidewalk, but they may not know how to create a “place.” Starting with small projects and including folks like these is a great way to ease into this kind of planning and development. Bringing naysayers in, too, from the get-go (“why do we need this?” “it costs too much!” “it won’t bring in any taxes”) just might, when it is completed, give them a sense of pride and ownership.
9. Let form support function. As mentioned above, think about how you want the space used, and then create a form for the space to support that. (e.g., Don’t forget the restrooms!)
10. Money is not the issue. This is about a public benefit, an asset to be invested in. It does not have to be expensive (e.g., seating, lighting, etc) and in some cases, funds might be raised privately. When the space is ready for use, the benefits should be top of mind, not how much it cost.
11. You are never finished. Ongoing repairs, changes of elements – this should always be a work in progress, responding to what users want and need.

Adapted by Robin LeBlanc, Plan NH, from Project for Public Spaces' *Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Spaces*.

For more information, see the *Project for Public Spaces* website at: [PPS website](#)

What Makes a Great Place?

What Makes a Great Place?



Project
for Public
Spaces

Opportunities and Obstacles

To best understand the opportunities and obstacles of the McIntyre property, there are at least two things to do.

First, please take the time to walk around the property. Unfortunately, we cannot give you access onto the property or into the buildings. However, there is a lot to observe by walking around the property that may be different from your perception of the property.

For example, there is a significant change in elevation from Daniels Street to Bow Street. What are the views, from all angles? How does the McIntyre connect with surrounding streets and properties? How “big” is it? Take a look at the outdoor area between the building and Daniels Street?

Second, for more specific details on opportunities and obstacles, take another look at the Kickoff presentation by our urban design partner, Russell Preston of the Principle Group. His description and slides are an excellent prompt for this dialogue!

Presentation slides at:

https://issuu.com/principleplaces/docs/20201216_mcintyre_101_presentation_web

If does not download, go to City of Portsmouth McIntyre Project page and click on :
“McIntyre 101 Presentation 12 16 2020”

Video at:

https://youtu.be/VDIjyaC61_s

Site analysis begins at: Minute 36:24

Opportunities and Obstacles begins at: Minute 43:21

Pre-Dialogue Survey

The Principle Group has also launched a pre-dialogue survey that all participants are being asked to take. The survey will definitely help “pre-heat” the dialogue. It will take about 15 minutes but will help you prep for participating in this dialogue and focus on “values and visions.” We will share survey results as part of the overall process.

<https://principlegroup.typeform.com/to/M3g1gkIG>

What is a “Value to Vision to Sketch”?

A community value is a principle or quality that is considered highly desirable in one’s community. A vision is an image of how values might look like when built. In this process, we will start with community values and then envision what that the values might look like as the McIntyre public space. The Principle Group will prepare a series of “sketches” that will illustrate how to incorporate our values and visions into the McIntyre property.

There are two excellent examples of Values to Visions to Sketches right here in Portsmouth, the African Burial Ground and Market Square:

The African Burying Ground

In 2003, during routine infrastructure upgrades, contractors on a Portsmouth City improvement project revealed thirteen deteriorating wooden coffins. Work stopped immediately and the area of Chestnut Street was shut down. The City was faced with a daunting decision about what to do?

The community rallied around the problem driven by its key **values** such as history, culture, diversity and respect for our ancestors. How could those values be incorporated into creating a meaningful sanctuary?

The community **values** generated **visions** of creating a place that would bring together the history and culture of these ancestors in a meaningful and respectful way, “In Honor of those Forgotten”. **Sketches** were generated around the **values** that led to detailed planning/fundraising. The result: one of the most respected and revered African Burying Grounds in America.

Market Square

The transformation of Market Square from the 1970’s through the present is an extremely relevant example of “visions to values to sketches.” In the 1970’s the community needed a revival. The transformation of the City’s main square to improve the overall quality of life and business environment was remarkable.

Values of community, economic prosperity, history and culture turned into **visions** of a more pedestrian friendly downtown with narrower streets and wider sidewalks. Evolving **visions** of community lead to Market Square Day and historic preservation. Market Square is a most unique example of place making as it started in the 1970’s and continues today, most recently with the advent of outdoor dining in the downtown area.

Market Square in 1970’s



Market Square Today



McIntyre Example of “Values to Visions to Sketches”

Here’s an example of what “*Values to Visions to Sketches*” might look like for the McIntyre Property:

Values: “Walkability” has made Downtown Portsmouth one of the best places to live, work and play. Preserving our “history” has also been a very significant factor in Downtown. How can these “values” be incorporated into the McIntyre public space?

Vision: What is your “vision” for applying the values of “walkability” and “history” to the McIntyre public space?

We are not looking for a specific design of where the walkways should be located; how wide they should be; or the materials they should be made of. But the vision could include:

- How should the McIntyre be connected to adjacent walkways (such as Commercial Alley)?
- Where should the walkways lead to or from?
- What should they be able to accommodate?

Is there any “history” to incorporate in the walkways? Before the McIntyre property was built, there was a street through the middle of the property. Should the primary walkway through the McIntyre property be named after the old street: Linden Street?

NOTE: The dialogue is not looking to “design” the walkways to and through the McIntyre property. Rather, what is your vision for the walkways to and through the McIntyre property? What is the purpose of the walkways?

McIntyre Discussion Guide

Session #1:

1. **Introduction:** Introduce facilitator and dialogue process
 - I am _____, a trained PL facilitator. I will be leading the discussion we are having around what is possible for the open space at the McIntyre site. I am neutral, I have no agenda. I am here to guide you in your deliberations. Thank you for joining us today.
2. **Participants:** (briefly)
 - Name
 - What brought you here?
3. **Ground Rules:** The integrity of a safe and respectful dialogue space is based on some common ground rules. So that everyone gets a chance to participate in our discussion, can we agree to some basic rules?
 - ✓ Listen respectfully;
 - ✓ **Mutual respect** – all participants have an opportunity to share;
 - ✓ Only one person speaks at a time;
 - ✓ Everyone will get a chance to speak and offer their views;
 - ✓ **Confidentiality** within the group – one can share what is said in the group but not who said it;
 - ✓ The dialogue is about ideas, not individuals;
 - ✓ Challenge the ideas, not the person;
 - ✓ Please mute your audio when you are not speaking, but keep your camera on;
 - ✓ Use “Raise Hand” function to speak;
 - ✓ Please refrain from using your phone, tweeting or posting on social media;
 - ✓ **Sessions cannot be recorded;**
 - ✓ Work together to find common solutions to difficult problems;

4. **Overall Purpose and Framing Question:**

One of the major purposes of a dialogue is to bring “personal experience” into the discussion of the issue; to go beyond the stats and expert studies; and to identify how the problem impacts real people. The purpose of this dialogue is to bring “community expertise” to the issue of McIntyre public space.

Our framing question is:

**What values and visions will guide
the design of the McIntyre public spaces to make downtown
Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?**

5. **The Process:**

- There will be two deliberative sessions;
- You will identify values and visions to guide the design of public spaces at the McIntyre property;
- Given time constraints you will be asked to report out findings right after each session;
- You will also need to complete a final written report that will be published and you will have an opportunity to present our findings to the City Council and Developer;
- Our urban design partner, the Principle Group will turn your values and visions into sketches of possible public space for the McIntyre Property;
- PL is working with the Principle Group to create opportunities for direct public feedback to the sketches;
- Review examples of “value to vision to sketches”. (See infra at Pages 9-10).Appendix A).

6. **Values: What values can be incorporated in the McIntyre public spaces will make to make downtown Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?**

- See “What makes a great place?” infra at page 8.

7. **Small Groups: Let’s break out into **small groups** for about ten minutes to discuss:**

- What values define the City of Portsmouth for you? (For samples of Portsmouth Values see infra at Page 6).
- Which of these values you identified could be incorporated into the McIntyre public space? Identify 3 to 5 such values and write down so you can share on white board with full group.
You’ll receive a one minute warning before break out rooms end.

8. **Full Group:** Brain storm values with someone from each small group briefly describing values and putting their values on white board.
- Review and discuss values on white board;
 - List priority values to be incorporated into the McIntyre property – each participant votes for their top five values (dot vote, check option or other means);

9. **Session #1 Report:** We need to collect your “values” after Session #1. Please put the following information on the white board or other document and save. (See sample template at Appendix A).

- Title the document “Session #1 Report – (Facilitator’s Name);
- List participants (not mandatory as report will be made public - ask participants if want their name included in report);
- List priority values to be incorporated into the McIntyre property;
- List other values considered to be incorporated into the McIntyre property;
- Please add any other information the group considers important to the issue of values to be incorporated into the McIntyre Property; and
- Please forward your document to the following:

Jim Noucas at: jnoucas@noucaslaw.com

Russell Preston at: russell@principle.us

Mandy Reynolds at: mandy@principle.us

10. **Wrap-up:** What struck you about tonight’s session?

11. **Homework:** Next week we will develop “visions” for the McIntyre property public spaces based on the values we identified in today’s session. Because our time is very limited, please give some thought to your “visions” for the McIntyre public spaces. Reviewing “obstacles and opportunities” (Infra at Page 8) might assist you in this exercise. Visit the property!

Session #2:

1. **Welcome Back:** Any thoughts about last week?
2. **Values:** Share on white board and briefly review list of values from last week.
3. **Obstacles and Opportunities:** Briefly discuss possible obstacles and opportunities exist for the McIntyre property. (Such as Indoor or outdoor space; Elevation; Rights of way; Connections)
4. **What could make the McIntyre public space appealing to me?**
 - See “What makes a great space?” infra at page 8.
5. **Small Groups:** Let’s break out into small groups for about ten minutes to discuss our “visions” for the McIntyre property:
 - What could make the McIntyre property appealing?
 - What are your visions for the McIntyre property?
 - Write down your visions so can share with the full group and write down visions to add to white board in larger group white board.

You’ll receive a one minute warning before break out rooms end.
6. **Full Group:** Brain storm visions with someone from each small group briefly describing visions values and sharing their visions on white board (30 minutes).
 - Review and discuss visions on white board;
 - List priority visions to be incorporated into the McIntyre property – each participant votes for their top five values (dot vote or other means);
7. **Session #2 Report:** We need to collect your “visions” after Session #2. Please put the following information on the white board or other document and save. (See sample template at Appendix B).
 - Title the document “Session #2 Report – (Facilitator’s Name);
 - List participants (not mandatory as report will be made public – ask participants if want their name included in report);
 - List priority visions for the McIntyre property;
 - List other visions considered for the McIntyre property;
 - Please add any other information the group considers important to the issues of visions and values for the McIntyre Property;

- Please identify one person from your group to give a five minute oral summary of your findings and recommendations;
- Please forward your document to the following:

Jim Noucas at: jnoucas@noucaslaw.com

Russell Preston at: russell@principle.us

Mandy Reynolds at: mandy@principle.us

8. Report Out and Next Steps:

All written reports will be provided in their entirety to the City Council, Developer and all participants; and be published on the City's website and in the Portsmouth Herald. Our urban design partner, the Principle Group, will use the reports to create sketches for the City and Developer to consider in negotiating a final plan for the McIntyre property.

We are also creating two other activities. One will be an opportunity to present each group's findings and recommendations to the City Council and Developer. Please identify one person from your group to do a 5 minute presentation of your group's report. We expect that to be a Zoom conference similar to the Kickoff.

The second activity will be the opportunity to review and provide input to the Principle Group sketches. It may be in the form of a survey and/or an interactive Zoom.

Appendix A: Report Template Session #1:

Note: It is not essential to use this form. The intent is create a common format to convey each group's findings and recommendations. The common format makes it easier to compare findings across the groups. The information will be shared with the City, Developer and Principle Group; and will be published. We also want to emphasize that each group can add whatever additional information it considers significant and wants known to the parties and the public.

Group #

Facilitator:

Participants: (participant names are voluntary as this will be a public document)

(Participant identity is not mandatory. Please only include names of those attending and who are willing to have their names released publicly in association with the report)

A. What values did you identify that defined Portsmouth?

B. List your top 5 priority values to be incorporated into the McIntyre public space. Please provide some context for each value identified.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

C. Please list all other values considered.

D. Other: (Please add anything you consider important concerning values).

Appendix B: Report Template Session #2:

Note: As with the Session #1 template, it is not essential to use this form. It will be distributed as the Session #1 report. However, the difference is that this will be the Group's "Final Report". As a result, it may take a little longer to produce. Perhaps task someone to draft and the share with the entire group for endorsement. Each group should also designate a member of the group to publicly present the group's report to the City, Developer and Principle Group.

Group #

Facilitator:

Participants: (participant names are voluntary as this will be a public document)

(Participant identity is not mandatory. Please only include names of those attending and who are willing to have their names released publicly in association with the report)

A. List your top 5 priority visions and related values to be incorporated into the McIntyre public space. Please provide some context for each value identified.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

B. Please list all other visions and related values considered.

C. Other: (Please add anything you consider important concerning values).