

Zeidler Community Conversations Series

May 2015

Topic: The New Arena and Development in Milwaukee

The following report documents participant responses to the public discussion hosted by the Zeidler Center for Public Discussion on the Bucks arena and new development in Milwaukee. Zeidler Center is grateful for the opportunity to serve the public through facilitated dialogue, and would welcome future collaboration and continued dialogues on this and other issues with community partners. Questions about the Zeidler Center's facilitation and writing of this report should be directed to:

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Dialogue questions:

Question 1: What do you value about your community or Milwaukee in general that you think may be positively and/or negatively impacted by the building of the arena and the surrounding development?

Question 2: What kind of development would you most like to see investment focused on surrounding the arena and why?

Facilitation method:

The Zeidler Center facilitates our monthly Community Conversations Series using Reflective Structured Dialogue, a process which utilizes small circles of diverse individuals (5-7 people) discussing personal experiences, values, and uncertainties in structured and facilitated conversations.

Participants experience both structured portions of dialogue using pre-determined questions, and unstructured dialogue. During the dialogue, each participant is given the same amount of time to speak, without interruption. After each speaker, there is a short pause of silence so that all may reflect upon the speaker's response.

The following is a draft list of communication agreements used to facilitate the small group discussion. These may be revised and/or amended per small group:

Proposed Agreements for Communication:

1. We will speak for ourselves, from our personal experiences.
2. We will refrain from criticizing others or attempting to persuade them to adopt our own views.
3. We will share airtime and participate within the suggested timeframes
4. We will not interrupt except to indicate that we cannot or did not hear a speaker
5. We will "pass" or "pass for now" if we're not ready to respond to a question
6. When we discuss our experience in the dialogue with others, we will not attach names or other identifying information to particular comments unless we have permission to do so.

Participant responses:

The following is a summary of participant responses to the dialogue questions, organized according to themes that emerged during the dialogue.

Possible Positive Impact:

Arena may bring identity/community to Milwaukee:

- The arena will be good for name recognition of our city and first time impressions to visitors.
- I value diversity, pride, and character. I have been in Milwaukee for two years. I believe that the Bucks Arena may bring identity to the city.
- Without having all the pieces, I believe the Bucks Arena can be positive.
- The Bucks Arena is practically and symbolically very important for the city. I believe that the Bucks Arena is even more important from a symbolical point of view.
- Value sense of community. Idea that something like this could bond people together. Sports bonds people regardless of the sport. Physical beauty, architecture positive affect.
- Optimism and hope for change in the city. We have always been just a shadow of Chicago. This could be powerful force that could bring people together for competitive spirit. Bring people out and together for more than just game.
- I'm concerned about all the unfinished open space. The empty lots make the city look bad. I'm in favor of the arena for that reason.
- Could help city move forward racially.
- I come from the most integrated city in the United States (in California.) I believe that the mark of a great city is the ability to create spaces where everybody comes together. I would like to see a place where people may mingle, converse, and come together.
- It is a good opportunity for Milwaukee to take steps in their pride, but not sure if it's the right solution.

Arena could be a multi-use/year-round space:

- The new arena could be used by the community in various ways to have indoor life during the whole year.
- In the past, the city of Milwaukee used to host free concerts. I think that the new Bucks Arena might be a great opportunity to revamp the concept.

- Free concerts would be great.
- Need more things around the area to do.
- I want a public space.
- I think it is a great opportunity to bring people together, especially through free concerts and activities.
- I think the public space is a great idea that might not be as well implemented in the lakefront as in the location of the new arena. I think this public space might be more useful and practical in another location away from the lakefront.
- Wisconsin Sports Hall of Fame could be brought in into the new Arena.
- I think it would be a great idea to create an arena whose indoor space conveys an outdoors experience for the community to use all year around.
- In San Antonio, they have a similar concept where people go to talk, and it has a wonderful atmosphere. I see it as an oasis. It is called *Riverwalk*.
- Perhaps our money could be spent better, but anything that makes downtown more vibrant helps bring people there. There is nowhere to just be downtown. More community space for everyone to meet is important. If it brings that then fine.

Arena is important for the economy of Milwaukee:

- In years to come, I believe that the NBA will be playing globally. As of right now, the NBA has a great deal of international players. If Milwaukee loses this opportunity to have international presence, the city will lose economic power.
- I love sports. A city has to have basketball to be an attractive city. Without basketball we would be a nothing city. It brings people into the city.
- Jobs will be affected positively by this if done correctly. More employment for those under employed.
- We have a lack of density downtown in that area. The arena would change and expand that area of the city.
- I think the market demands it. There is parking planned with direct access to freeway.
- Positive contribution to urban development and vitality.
- Important this center is more than just for night of game only.
- Downtown arena could build up downtown area.
- I think the new arena might improve shopping because I believe there is little quality shopping downtown. It seems to be that suburban

shopping is same old, same old. I fear, however, that the planned parking for new Bucks Arena might not be enough.

Arena could be important for youth/education:

- Cost of games is expensive. Maybe release some tickets and distribute to school system for those youth that are doing well. Use as an incentive. Future for kids is important. Social impact not just business.
- One of the most interesting aspects for me is the idea that the Milwaukee Public Museum might move to the current Bucks Arena. The Bradley Center might be a fascinating display for a 21st-century museum.
- I would like to bring Milwaukee together; all ethnicities. I would like to have programs whose purpose were to portray Milwaukee under the right light. I would like the new Bucks Arena to bring harmony to the city.

Possible Negative Impact:

Arena may strip resources/demand high cost:

- It has a narrow focus. Takes eyes off economy as a whole. It's a distraction away from the real issues
- From a negative point of view, I suspect that resources might be taken away from other aspects of the city's life.
- Negative is cost. Where is the money coming from? Vibrancy of city is important. Where else would money go from this? Maybe some of the revenue put back in community?
- I don't give a hoot about sports and don't think it would be a big loss if the Bucks left. The team owners have the money to build the arena themselves and they are the ones who are going to profit. We could be using the money for education or investing in manufacturing for more jobs.
- One disappointment was that the Bradley center was a 90 million dollar gift to the city, but even after completed we couldn't make enough revenue from it to pay for maintenance of the building, which is probably why those who could pay for it don't want to pay for it all themselves.
- I value education and public parks. I don't care about sports. The owners can pay for it themselves.
- Negative is where is the money coming from?
- Tax contributions should come with a return for the citizens of the city of Milwaukee. We should make demands.

- That money should go towards manufacturing and new job creation. It's a privilege to have a new structure like that, that Milwaukee maybe shouldn't have because we are under developed as a city in important areas that will affect the success of the new arena.

Arena may affect employment:

- My concern is how the construction will affect employment and if the hiring process will be fair, putting the appropriate person in the appropriate position.
- The problem is that we don't know if the economic development that would provide more jobs will actually come.

Kinds of Development Desired:

- Farmers market, street theater, public concerts free, sports involvement. A strong mind and strong body. Not just for making money but so the average youth can also benefit. Sports is big business doesn't get people healthy. Not just for profit but to help all people. Forensic contests or visual art.
- I don't like that the parking areas are so far from the sports facility and other downtown attractions.
- True gathering space. Shrubs, trees, benches, places for people to congregate. People feeling free and that it would be a sense of welcoming. No chains or iron on windows of shops like art galleries, or small local businesses. Cultural magnet, music, mural each month for instance by youth to represent how they are feeling. Enterprise center for youth. Show people what can be done. Showcase and take advantage of how great this could be.
- Better public use would be nice. I would like a soccer field. I would like for the funding to be integrated with the trolley.
- Pair commercialization of businesses and parks. Projects like the Starbucks at Red Arrow Park. Where part of the burden of developing and maintaining the communal area is the responsibility of the commercial business it's located with.
- A space that is "bad" might more easily be revitalized or re-energized if a new business takes root there. Doable, but takes long-term commitment.
- I am okay with the arena but would like some activities for myself. I like to skateboard and would like a skateboarding park. I want more family activities downtown. There should be open spaces where people who live downtown spend time.

- Showcase and celebration of our people. Creative energy. Vitality to celebrate diversity. Attract all walks of life and stations of life.
- The arena is not like a mall all confined and controlled and you must shop and leave. Enterprise center for youth. Encourage and showcase. Take pride not just another chain restaurant. How to attract and move things around would be important. Debates great and public speaking is a lost art. Have this be like Hyde park.
- Likes “Built Spaces” especially more historic. If it was an improvement to the Bradley center, that would be nice. Is a full new one really necessary?
- There needs to be development of activities for the city dwellers like various parks which could be along side or within an indoor restaurant or cafe, an indoor soccer field (like Uihlein), indoor roller rink and café, etc. They should be free like Red Arrow Park.
- Get a business to support the cost of the activity while making a profit. Tie the business to the activity.
- The trolley may take care of the parking issue.

Next Steps/Questions

- Continue the conversation. Zeidler Center should do a lot of group discussions on this. Input from community is important. Bring people together and change city. Future Milwaukee and the Milwaukee art museum wanted people's input. Who is listening? How does this matter our ideas about this? Who again is listening?!
- I'd like to find out if there is an organization who is campaigning or lobbying for social impact. Do not want this to just end here.
- When Bradley Center was built what happened? Will this be the same?
- Is this bill getting passed or proposed?
- Confused about financing it is not clear? Needs to be made clearer. Risk is financial?
- Tax effect? How to collect on taxes through maybe a drink tax? Who do we want to help first? Community or Developers?
- How could the Bucks leaving really affect the City? All we would lose is the name recognition. But think of what we could gain if the money was spent on other projects.