DOWNTOWN SAFETY AND LIGHTING AUDIT

Stakeholder Engagement Summary

December 2018

Background

On July 19, 2018, Council directed the Public Service to identify the highest risk downtown spaces where safety can be enhanced by public lighting, and dedicate $250,000 from the Destination Marketing Reserve to enhance public lighting in those spaces.

The City of Winnipeg (City) asked community stakeholders to help identify high-risk spaces in the downtown area that could benefit from enhanced public lighting as part of the City's Multi-Year Downtown Public Safety Strategy.

Engagement

The City partnered with BIZ organizations to host a series of safety audit walks, held on October 15, 16 and 17. Community stakeholders met with representatives from City and BIZ organizations at three different locations to explore areas that could benefit from enhanced public lighting. BIZ patrol employees identified key areas to visit ahead of time. The Downtown BIZ and Exchange District BIZ provided the meeting space on the first two nights and The Forks was the meeting place on the third night.

Participants identified areas they felt required additional lighting, and their suggested location and feedback was recorded using a mapping tool on a tablet. Stakeholders also provided other information on factors that influence safety.

In total, there were 34 individuals participated in the safety audit walks, including:

- Sixteen (16) on October 15, 15 on October 16, and 12 on October 17 (nine individuals participated on more than one walk)
- Twelve (12) from the City of Winnipeg, 13 from BIZ organizations, and 9 from downtown businesses and residents
- Fourteen (14) women and 20 men
- Eleven (11) visible minorities

Limitations

Participants in the safety audit walks were invited by the City of BIZ organizations networks – the walks were not promoted to the general public. The data collected was limited to those who were invited and the areas covered, which does not necessarily capture all of the perspectives of those with safety concerns in Winnipeg's downtown or all of the areas that may require improved safety measures downtown.

What We Heard

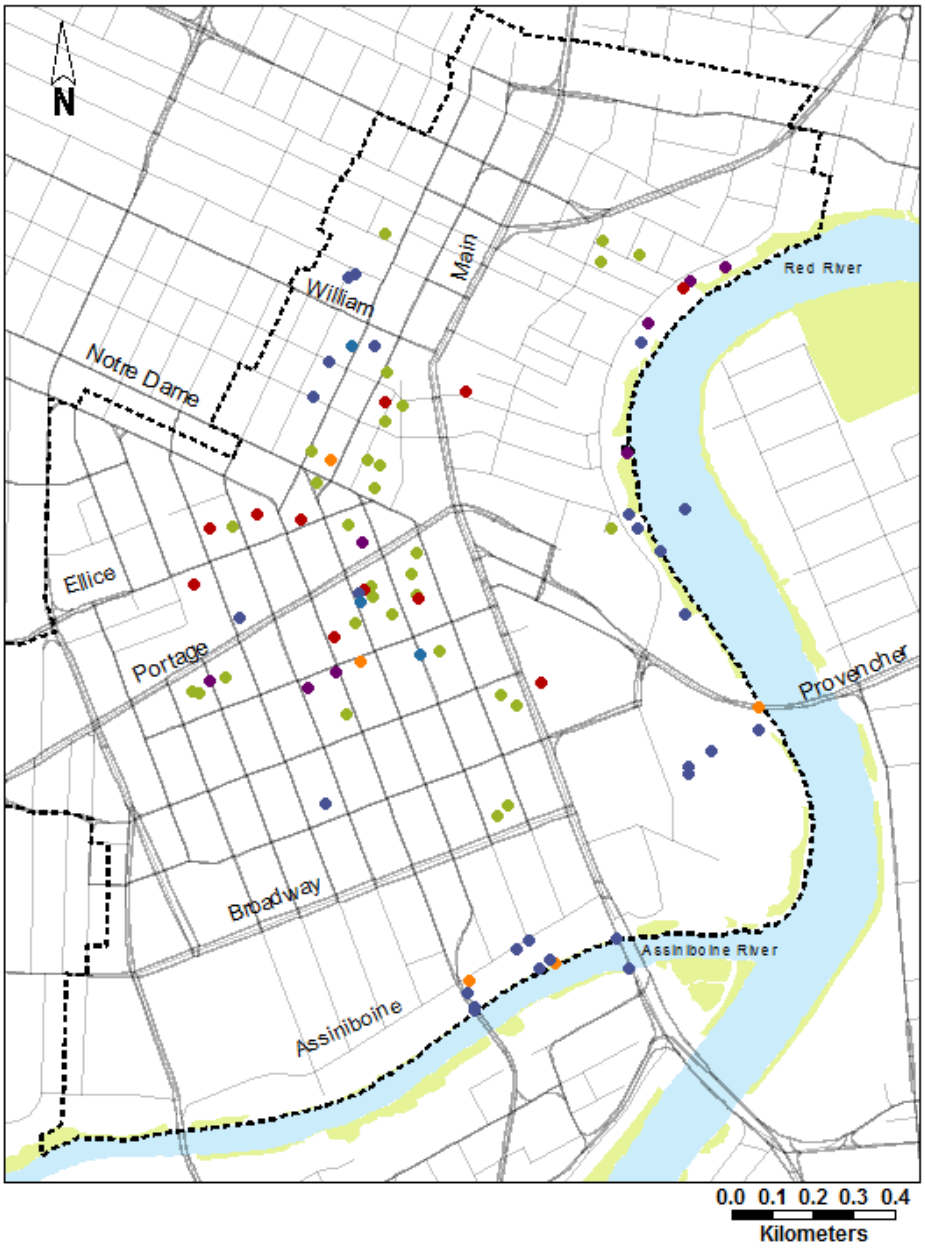
- Improving safety requires collaboration and all stakeholders should be involved.
- Lighting is one factor in improving the perception of safety, but there are other factors including the ability to see what is coming, the ability to leave an area if needed, etc.
- There are private buildings that have lighting installed but it is not functioning.
- There are public lights that are installed but are not functioning.
- Parking lots represent a portion of high risk downtown areas that require replacement or additional lighting.
- Additional lighting in back lanes could reduce the likelihood of illegal activity in those areas.
- Additional lighting where back lanes meet sidewalks would improve the perceived safety of those crossing the back lane.
- Lighting areas that connect new parking to destinations is important to improving downtown safety.
- Lighting should not be installed without consideration for context; the lighting style should suit the neighbourhood.

The map of pins dropped on the audit walks around the downtown demonstrates the need for improved lighting in public spaces, especially in areas near the river and in parks.

Improved lighting in private spaces is most notable in the downtown in areas with a high density of back lanes. Back lanes and parking lots were the most common areas noted for improved private lighting. Parking lots were marked 22 times and buildings were marked seven (7) times.

Back lanes were marked 20 times, and may require improved private or public lighting.

Downtown Lighting Community Safety Audit Map



- Public space that requires new lighting
- Private space that requires new lighting
- Private or Public space that requires new lighting
- Burnt out public light
- Burnt out private light
- Other safety information

Point marked	Number of points
Public area that requires new lighting	31
Private area that requires new lighting	32
Private or public space that requires new lighting	2
Burnt out public light	3
Burnt out private light	10
Other safety information	5

Next Steps

The data collected in the downtown safety and lighting audit will be analyzed in consideration with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and lighting expertise to determine where the $250,000 for enhanced lighting would best serve the community. The outcomes of the audit will also inform the implementation of the Building Exterior Lighting Grant Program.

The downtown safety and lighting audit was successful in gathering information to use in future lighting decisions and in connecting City officials with BIZ organizations and community members. This approach could be useful as a technique for gathering further community input on safety and other design-related issues in the downtown area and other neighbourhoods.

Winnipeg