

Community Asset Mapping Report

First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, IL & Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area



AT THE INTERSECTION
OF HERITAGE, FAITH,
& COMMUNITY

Partners for Sacred Places

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area (NHA) Partnership was awarded a grant from the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, with support from the National Park Service, to support its efforts to preserve, restore, and reuse the historic First Presbyterian Church as a community asset. The grant provided for services from Partners for Sacred Places (Partners) to plan and facilitate a community-based asset mapping. Partners is the only national, non-sectarian nonprofit organization focused on helping communities preserve their historic religious properties and maximize their use and potential as vital community assets.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

Partners worked with Abraham Lincoln NHA Partnership to organize a Community Asset Mapping Workshop. Asset mapping is a critical engagement tool - the objective of this workshop was to use the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model to bring together a wide group of stakeholders and leaders from throughout Springfield and greater Sangamon County to generate ideas and guidance on ways that First Presbyterian Church can use its space and building for new uses, partnerships, and collaboration. These new uses and shared initiatives, in addition to enriching the life of the community, might also help generate revenue to support the preservation of this unique historic property. Overall, the goal was to bring together a wide circle of community leaders, connectors, and stakeholders to help identify opportunities to leverage First Presbyterian's important physical and institutional assets by connecting them with the strengths and needs of the city of Springfield.



Photo taken from First Presbyterian's Facebook page

The Community Asset Mapping Workshop was held on Saturday, January 19, 2019. Approximately 40 stakeholders and leaders attended. All of the attendees were identified and invited beforehand by Abraham Lincoln NHA Partnership with guidance from Partners. A larger group discussion with an introduction to



Community asset mapping participants gather to share ideas generated during the morning's session

Partners for Sacred Places and the ABCD model was followed by two smaller group breakout sessions facilitated by Partners' staff. Using the ABCD model and asset mapping tools, each small group identified strengths - "assets" - of First Presbyterian Church. These assets were drawn from the building's design, location, and human capital invested in its preservation. Next, the groups identified the assets of Springfield and greater Sangamon County, including its associations, institutions, economy, stories, and physical and individual strengths. The groups then brainstormed new ideas for collaboration,

programming and events, community uses and activities, and potential revenue generation. At the close of the workshop, the groups reassembled to review what each had accomplished and share feedback and questions.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

The project's outcomes suggest that First Presbyterian Church will best continue to serve the community as a flexible community center able to accommodate a range of activities as noted above, including

1) Education & Youth Development

- a. Using classroom space to facilitate a number of community and youth education objectives, including those related to music education and literacy instruction

2) Fine & Performing Arts and Culture

- a. Highlighting Springfield's existing arts and culture resources, both institutional and individual, by providing rehearsal space and venues for a variety of groups from the Symphony to local artists

3) Heritage tourism

- a. Partnership with the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau to participate in tours and interpretation centered on Springfield and Lincoln history and historic sites
- b. Partnership with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum and other Lincoln sites to offer interpretation of Mary Todd Lincoln's life

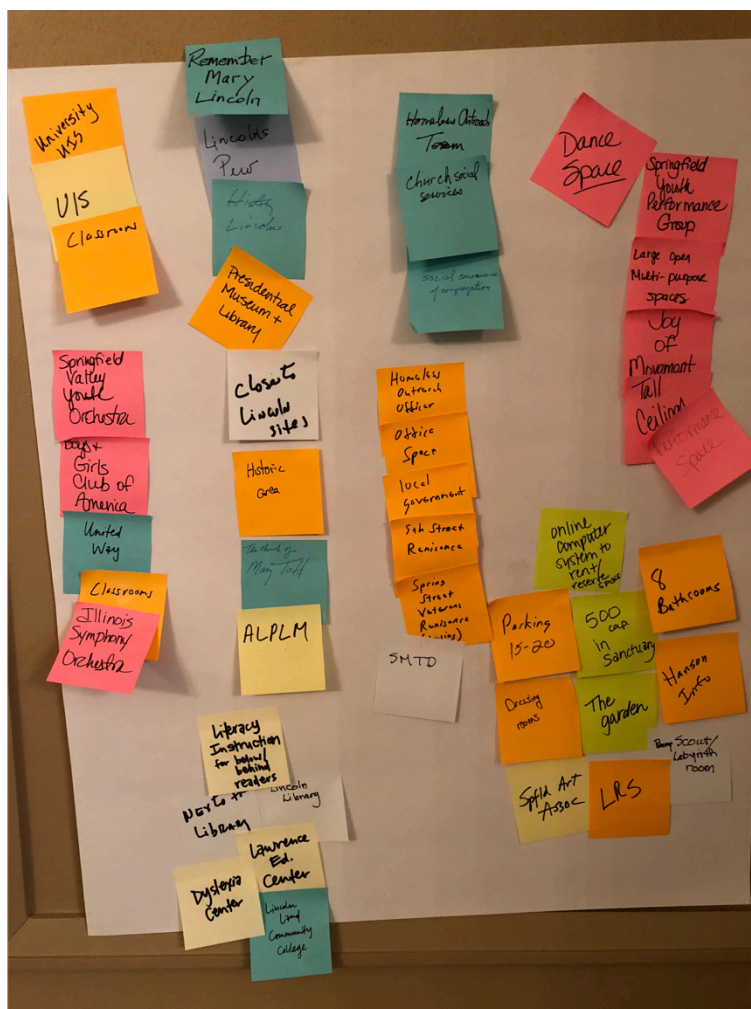
4) Conference & Potential Revenue-Generating Space Use/Rental

- a. Serving as space for conferences in the Springfield area, and serving as a gathering space for local and state government meetings and conferences
- b. Leveraging the building's location and unique architecture for commercial rental uses, such as weddings, that generate revenue

5) Human & Social Services

- a. Many of the potential asset connections identified in this category dovetail with current initiatives and momentum at First Presbyterian, including efforts toward addressing homelessness and affordable housing, food justice and sustainability, as well as prison reentry

The connected assets that informed the above categories can be found in the appendix.



An example of some of the asset connections made during the asset mapping event

RECOMMENDATIONS

Next Steps

In order to most efficiently address some of the connections and ideas proposed at the asset mapping, First Presbyterian should take the following organizational steps.

1. Begin with some of the “low-hanging fruit” offered in the asset mapping and connections that correspond with ideas and initiatives already underway at the church. Some ideas like those around affordable housing initiatives will take more work around building design to figure out, while others - such as “Remember Mary Lincoln” (under “Heritage Tourism”) - can happen much sooner. A few ideas are new programs (“Connecting youth with instruments and musical education opportunities”), which will take a dedicated team to initiate and bring to fruition.
2. Identify the ideas with the strongest interest and partners and pursue them. Sharing the outcomes with the Advisory Team and congregation through an outline of the major ideas would be one way to easily see the ideas generated during the session. People may respond with energy and enthusiasm to certain ideas and be surprised by others and find them interesting. The leadership should make sure to ask for feedback and solicit the input of those who might have their own skills and talents to offer and implement these ideas.
3. Identify and empower a team that is interested in steering the implementation of some of the ideas generated during the asset mapping session. This team could include some of the leaders on the Advisory Team or those who attended the asset mapping, and the invitation to participate could be based on their interest or offer (indicated via index cards) at the conclusion of the asset mapping. The team does not have to be responsible for all the tasks related to implementation; instead they should identify which ideas to implement first and work to a) solicit the talents and skills of members and friends of the church who can help implement the ideas, and b) coordinate the implementation.
4. Create a timeline for the leadership team to follow as they implement the ideas and connections proposed at the asset mapping.

Existing Space

With few exceptions, the programming suggested by participants did not require a permanent space with restricted access. The asset mapping outcomes illustrated the range of interests and possibilities for programming and use that could likely fill First Presbyterian’s facility to capacity and support the vitality of youth, families, and many others through Springfield via opportunities for education, culture, and gathering. For attendees, First Presbyterian’s space was ample and attractive. Its design and layout provide considerable variety in the kinds of

use possible – while ceiling heights, interior dimensions, and other qualities, such as fenestration and natural light – make for a welcoming environment.

While the most recent addition to the congregation’s facilities is already listed among First Presbyterian’s assets, there is room to recognize the value of the early 20th Century connecting wing. In addition to the space and connection between the church and the larger, later addition, it likewise has a range of historic features – such as windows, Sullivanesque-Prairie style exterior ornamentation, etc. – that add to its charm and value. While the current layout and circulation patterns can be confusing or difficult to use efficiently, Partners believes that this warren-like situation can be approached with focused thinking of architectural professionals who might use the input of the asset mapping to help define the key issues to improving circulation, access, and use of the existing space in both of the 20th Century additions.

APPENDIX: ASSET MAPPING OUTCOMES

The following are transcribed notes documenting the output from the Community Asset Mapping Workshop. Asset Connections (groups of clustered or connected assets) have been sorted into five broad categories, though in many cases these clusters or connections might span more than one such category.

Asset Connections

Education & Youth Development

Pokémon/VR gaming

Outdoor outlet for power

Wifi

Pokémon Go

Public programs / collaborate with Public

Library

Public library

Evening vesper program

Incubator

Meeting rooms/classrooms

Give the green seats to Dumb Records

Will O'Hearn (city library)

Youth STEM Engagement

Kidzeum

Science Center

IL Times

BOS Center

SJ-R

College Search and Application Support

College search and application

Good schools

Bus stop

Internet for whole building

12 Classrooms

The Outlet

Temple Israel

SIY S.O.M.

Salvation Army

Collaborate with local museums

State Museum

African History Museum

Military Museum

University space-sharing

UIS

Classrooms

Youth Music Education

Springfield Valley Youth Orchestra

Boys and Girls Club of America

United Way

Classrooms

Illinois Symphony Orchestra

Literacy Instruction for Below/Behind

Readers

Next to the library

Lincoln library

Lawrence Ed. Center

Dyslexia Center

Lincoln Land Community College

Fine & Performing Arts and Culture

Mid-day concerts for downtown employees

Brown bag concerts

State workers

Performing arts community center

Quality acoustic spaces

Music rooms

Sangamon Valley Youth Symphony

Hoogland (theater center, ballet company)

Organ

Rehearsal space

Black box theater

Dance floor

IL Symphony partnership

Ballet company

Host music and arts spaces

Stained glass windows

Flexible altar space

Connecting youth with instruments and music education opportunities

Unused musical instruments in basements and attics

Boy Scouts

Girl Scouts

Springfield School District 186

Boys & Girls Club

4-H

Urban League

Big Brothers Big Sisters

YMCA

U of I Extension

Artist Residency Program

SAA/Enos Park Artist Residency Program

Utilize church classrooms as studios (temp 1-12 mos.)

Plus local artists that need more space (low cost)

Dance space

Dance space

Springfield Youth Performance Group

Large open multi-purpose spaces

Joy of Movement

Tall ceilings

Performance spaces

Nonprofit space rental

Online computer system to rent/reserve spaces

Parking 15-20

Dressing rooms

Springfield Art Association

500 capacity in sanctuary

The garden

LRS

8 bathrooms

Hanson info

Scout/Labyrinth room

Maker and Entrepreneur Space

Maker Space

Classrooms

Heritage Tourism

Visiting Tourists

Hotels
Tourists
Evening tours
Proximity to Lincoln homes
Airport
Train station

Tourism Attraction

Festivals downtown
Dana-Thomas House
Lincoln Tourist Tour
Route 66
Great streetscape
Museums
Garden in season
Looking for Lincoln
Ghost tour stop
History H4H
Major Lincoln artifact
Iconic red doors
Location sister city visitors should tour

Historic interpretation and tours

Using SCVB to assist and promote
Lincoln pew
1908 Race Riot
Location to Lincoln Home
Bicentennial Plaza
Governor's Mansion
State Capitol

Remember Mary Lincoln

Lincoln pew
History Lincoln
Presidential Museum and Library
Close to Lincoln sites
Historic area
The Church of Mary Todd
ALPLM

Conference & Potential Revenue- Generating Space Use/Rental

Conference location

3600 sq ft
Safe and secure
Multiple simultaneous use
Welcoming landlord
Informal space
Public transit
Formal space
Kitchen
Dedicated parking
Accessible first floor
Variety of sizes of spaces

Government related meeting and conference space

Government meeting space
Inclusivity
Near City Hall
Event venue
Small meeting rooms
Large meeting rooms (community)
Large spaces
Central location
Restaurants
Multi-level, bipartisan representation
Proximity to federal building

Nonprofit Rental Spaces

Hoogland Approach “rent out rooms”
Springfield Area Arts Council
Jewish Federation
HOPE School
Springfield Ballet Company
Salvation Army
UIS Student Union
Helping Hands

Weddings & Events

Peace garden
Wedding venue
Large event hall
Kitchen

Human & Social Services

Interfaith Justice Organizing

Ministerial Alliance
Interfaith community (mosque, synagogue, Bahai)
Food pantry
Anti-racism training

Connection to race riot history
Faith Coalition for the Common Good
LGBT+ affirming
Social justice history
Flexible altar space
Interfaith inaugural prayer service
Fellowship hall
Samaritan ministries
GSIA
Interfaith worship
Interfaith group
186 school district
Child friendly
Family/intergenerational programs

Homeless Outreach Team

Church social services
Social conscience of the congregation
Homeless Outreach Officer
Office Space
Local government
9th Street Renaissance
Spring Street Veterans Renaissance
SMTD

Permanent Supportive Housing

Health care
SIU
Contact ministries
Winter Warming Center
Lincoln Public Library
Springfield Housing
Coordinated Homelessness Services
Public library
Coordinated Entry Services

Downtown Community Center

Community center
Location to public safety services
Location to other social services
Hospitals (St. John's Memorial)
Helping Hands
Sangamon County Department of Public Health
United Way
District 186
CLHC SIU
St. Andrews Funds
Empty downtown spaces
Free childcare
Great churches
Equality mindset
Art community
Enos Park
Classrooms

Additional Assets Not Grouped in Clusters

Physical - First Presbyterian

Easy access to city library
Affordable price
Age appropriate rooms
Abundant windows (fenestration)
Tiffany windows
Multiple bathrooms
Organizational meeting space (recognized as go-to for all)
Location
Wheelchair accessible commons
Classrooms with light and sinks with water
Organ
Capacity for music/acoustics in sanctuary
Moveable stage (hydraulic lift)

Food Justice & Sustainability

Indoor year-round farmers market
Downtown location
Existing food pantry
Breadline/food pantry
Teachers (food classes)
Large kitchen
Horseshoes
IL Stewardship Alliance
Slow Foods Springfield
Central IL Food bank
Local food movement
Two large hospitals (MCC & St. John's)

Reentry Program Support

S.I.N.G. Shifting into New Gear
Classrooms (12)

Nicely furnished Cook Room
Tiled floors
Theater seats
Lack of cluttered rooms
3 baby grand pianos
Nursery (for families)

Physical - Wider Community

15 year lease on federal building
Mortgage free federal building
State Capitol
Public transportation
Seat of all State Agencies
Downtown restaurants
Dana Thomas House

1908 Riot Site
Old State Capitol
1908 Monument at L-Square Park
Union Square Park
Vachel Lindsay Home
New Salem State Park
Lincoln's Tomb
Carillon
Airport
Lincoln Memorial Garden
Bank of Springfield Center
Illinois State Fairgrounds
UIS Planetarium
Botanical Society (Atrium)
Governor's Mansion
Downtown community (businesses and associates)
Sojourn Shelter
Parks and their programs

Associations

Cuba partnership
Action IL
Parkinson's Dance Party
Islamic Society of Greater Springfield
Compass for kids
Public radio
Head Start
Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault
Y Block
Medical community
Sangamon Community Restores
Music Fests downtown (L.O.G. Fest, etc.)
Jewish Community (Temple B'rith Shalom, Temple Israel, Chebad House, Jewish Federation)
Sangamon Success Plan
Springfield Walking Tours

SJ-R
NAACP
Frontiers
Capitol Area Career Center
Springfield Road Runners Club
Black Sheep/ Dumb All Ages Show Community
Springfield Bicycle Club
Illinois Times
Academy of Lifelong Learning
LLCC
Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist congregation
Genh Kids
Planned Parenthood
Nurse Family Partnership
ICASA
Economic Development Corporation
M.E.R.C.Y. Communities
Historic preservation advocates
Downtown Springfield, Inc. (Main Street)
Junior League of Springfield
NPR Illinois
SIAN
Community agencies promoting integration (UCP, SPARC)
Innovate Springfield
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Greater Springfield Interfaith Association
Wooden It Be Lovely
Matthew Project
Girls on the Run
CFL
Phoenix Center

Institutions

SIU Medical School and students
National Park Service
State government
LNHS
Hoogland Center and its tenants
Legacy Theater
LLLC
Comm Federation
Central Baptist Church
County Market
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Hy-Vee
UIS
Springfield Park District
HSHS St. John's Hospital
Cathedral Church
Amtrak
Two federally qualified health centers
Douglas Ave UMC
First Church of the Brethren
Third Presbyterian Church
South Side Christian
Local coffee shops (WM Vans, Custom Cup, Free Press, etc.)
More Light Church

Individual

Radical pastor
Woman at the head of church leadership
Patient leadership
Abe!
Intersections among groups and leaders
Welcoming congregation (inclusivity)

Economic

Market need for downtown housing
Tourism