



The comments and questions below were collected from 6-12 breakout rooms, moderated by members of the planning team, during the August 6th Town Hall Public Forum.

BHRU Public Forum II
Breakout Session Summaries

8/19/20

The Public Forum II included a breakout session to give citizens and attendees an opportunity to participate feedback in small groups based on 5 consistent questions posed among the breakout groups.

1. *Based on the presentation you saw this evening, what do you want the planners to know?*
2. *Do you agree with the principles for this framework? (Y or N) If not, what would you change?*
3. *Since reconnecting the grid is one of the strongest principles that came forward what are your impressions of the block scale proposed.*
4. *Do you have a preferred concept and why? (Connected Gardens, the Mews, and the Greenway.)*
5. *Other questions and suggestions?*

Taking this approach provided a more intimate level of contribution by all and each room was moderated and “Captained” by a development planning consultant and/or supported by a City representative.

Room	Captain
Breakout Room A	Deb Kunce
Breakout Room B	Josh Scism
Breakout Room C	Ranadip Bose
Breakout Room D	Rachel Momenee
Breakout Room E	Mary Krupinski
Breakout Room F	Lance Dorn
Breakout Room G	Mary Catherine Carmichael
Breakout Room H	Chris Merritt/Karen Valiquett
Breakout Room I	Doug Voigt

Theses breakout rooms of roughly 8 – 12 individuals (incl. “Room Captains, a City staff member, and attendees) resulted in valuable feedback that often was similar in nature and occasionally a stand-alone validation of design (“framework”) approach or an expressed concern. We have compiled that information below for the public to view.

Moving forward, we anticipate using a similar approach if unable to meet in person, and have found that leveraging technology to provide the more intimate dialogue with citizens and Stakeholders has proven to be as an effective means as possible to meet the objectives of participation and transparency for the development of this project.

Now, for key takeaways, compiled responses and final detailed appendix by room:

Key Takeaways

The responses from the Breakout Room Sessions can be organized into a series of categories. Below are the repeated themes and key takeaways from the 9 breakout room discussions.

Principles

- General agreement on the principles
- Some struggled with planning jargon

Public Forum/Engagement

- Request to send materials ahead of time - it was a lot to digest.
- Outreach is important
- Need to hear from people that wouldn't normally come to the traditional public forum.

Connectivity

- Liked focus on connectivity, the smaller scale blocks and complete streets
- Bike lanes, protecting cyclists, maybe making the area less car-friendly.
- Concern for traffic calming on the new N/S streets
- Overcome 2nd Street as a barrier, connect to Building Trades Park
- Loved leveraging B-Line for activation.

Scale and Density

- Everyone open to density on a portion of the site, but emphasis to get step down at edges
- Supportive of transition in scale from site to neighborhoods

Affordability, Diversity and Inclusion

- Focus on diversity and inclusive housing, open to variety of income levels, abilities, age, ethnicity, etc.
 - Desire for housing that is truly mixed use and interspersed throughout the whole site
 - When we say "this is for all" what does that mean? They really drilled into that" accessibility, economics advantages, etc
 - This is an opportunity to hold the city accountable to its promises, but also balance the needs of the City

Retail and Amenities



The comments and questions below were collected from 6-12 breakout rooms, moderated by members of the planning team, during the August 6th Town Hall Public Forum.

- Many would like to see the space as supportive of other Bloomington amenities (10-15 min walk of downtown), and desire to make sure this doesn't necessarily take away from that now that it's active
- More than just retail: what are other community uses that can anchor these places
- Concern about developing retail spaces in the current market
- Ground floor retail probably couldn't be supported, suggestion that they be accessible living spaces to help activate the greenway

Kohr Building

- Mixed feelings, some felt that the Kohr building is an important piece of historic architecture to be kept, others felt it wasn't a priority
 - Perhaps as arts & culture space anchoring the site (synergy with Lotus Foundation) "a ramble of arts uses"
 - Idea about preserving historic elements from the hospital and utilizing them throughout the public realm

Public Realm

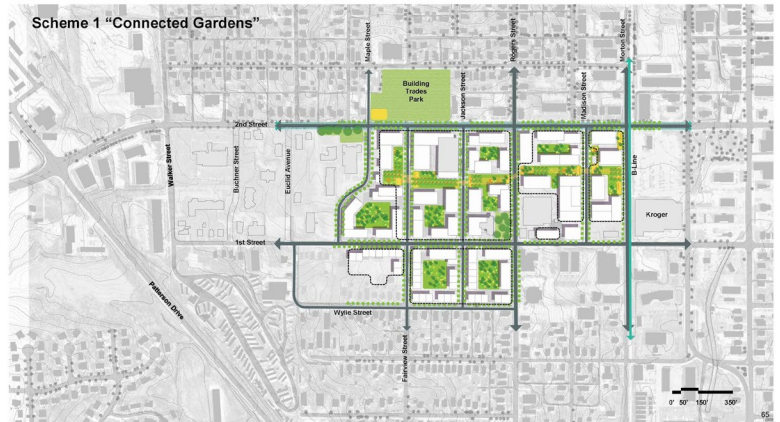
- Ratio of public space to development needs to be considered
- Liked the green investment but also concerned about maintenance; mention of native species that might require less hands-on maintenance
 - Concern for how they will be paid for and maintained
 - Public v. Private: how do we make sure that it feels public
 - Needs to be multi-functional, aesthetically pleasing
 - Liked featuring sustainability up front, stormwater management as visible part of the design; liked the use of limestone
 - Importance of renewable energy on site

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Framework Concepts

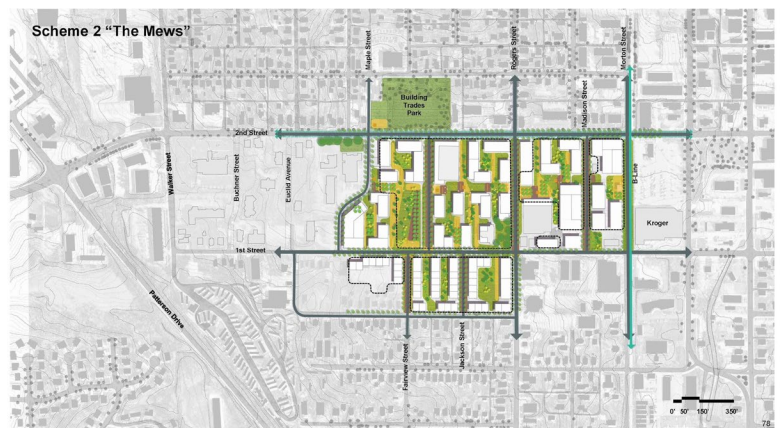
Scheme 1 “Connected Gardens”

- Like how Fairview goes all the way to 2nd St. The neighborhood needs to weigh in. The other options do not show it going through.
- Some felt the “Connected Gardens” were maybe too focused on the residents who live there



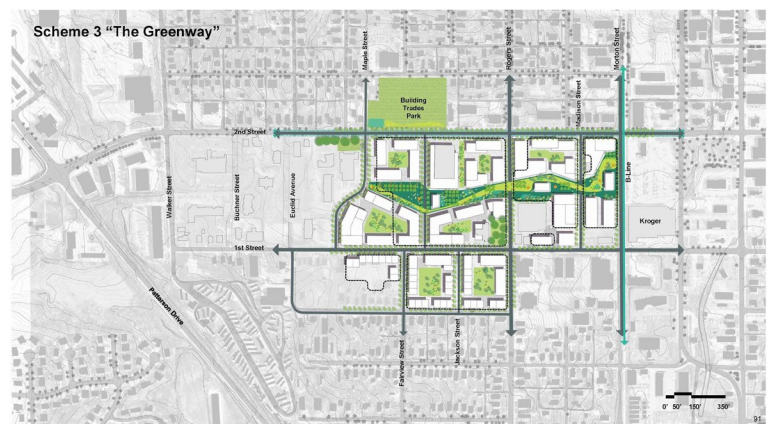
Scheme 2 “The Mews”

- Advantage: would create a neighborhood not divided by public spaces, does not divide south and north
- The Mews fit in with the neighborhood, more reminiscent to the alleys, linkages back to the neighborhood.
- The Mews don't divide into E-W or N-S it integrates the area well.



Scheme 3 “The Greenway”

- Greenway – like meandering greenspace and connectivity and stormwater management
- #3 looks like more commercial activity than could possibly be supported
- Greenway has potential and meandering/storm aspects
- Some felt that the larger, more flexible communal space better connected people





Breakout Question 1 – All Groups Compiled – Repeated themes in **BOLD**

1. Based on the presentation you saw this evening, what do you want the planners to know?
 - a. **Connectivity/Walkability** : lot and block planning; re-stitch the streets
 - b. **Keeping the Kohr Building** : could be transformed into arts and culture hub or residential apartments
 - c. **Keeping the Garage** : preserving the garage and improving the façade with vertical gardens
 - d. **B-Line as an asset**
 - e. **Mixed Housing Types** : support of mixed housing types and a variety of income levels.
 - i. Enjoyed the various options but would like to see some massing models of different housing types to better understand how they flesh out differently.
 - f. Would like the new building to feel like a part of Bloomington and not that it landed in Bloomington. Holding onto the old building keeps our history in the forefront. It's a deeply historic site.
 - g. Renwick was mentioned as a model. It has not lived up to the expectations.
 - i. Would like convenience store, coffee shop, etc (and it didn't happen in Renwick) – we want more commercial
 - h. Discussion of green uses, community gardens on rooftops, locally grown food.
 - i. Let's not forget about the criticality of public transportation enhancement to serve those w/o autos.
 - j. **Question 1 Expressed Concerns**
 - i. Concerns about examples are from large cities around the world. These may not apply in Bloomington.
 - ii. Connectivity is essential in this City and area.
 - iii. Mitigate the water in the site (impervious for so long).
 - iv. Concern about too much retail even before Covid – lost time and effort where housing is most essential. Will IU decline have an impact on market? Consistency of 3 ideas is green space, is this correct?
 - v. Concern – focus on retail – too much un-leased in market, focus on needed housing
 - vi. Too urban
 - vii. What Covid means in terms of pop density?
 - viii. What does “for everyone” or “for all” really mean? – invisible or marginalized community members (disabilities, experiencing homelessness, people of color, young or old)
 - ix. More about the history of health and human service providers and remaining needs in the area
 - x. All the buildings – where will the items within the building be shifted/moved and where will they go. I support keeping the Kohr Building.

Breakout Question 2 – All Groups Compiled – Repeated themes in **BOLD**

2. Do you agree with the principles for this framework? (Y or N) If not, what would you change?
 - a. **Overall Agreement with Principles** : principles reflect creative and thoughtful potential
 - b. Support housing price gaps
 - c. Support infrastructure
 - d. Housing types and appropriately scaled edges
 - e. Question 2 Expressed Concerns
 - i. **Hard to Understand Planning Language**: translate into lay-persons terms; work with community organizations to help translate to the community (Shalom Center, Black Lives Matter)



- ii. Economics are very complicated to get it to work
- iii. Need continued awareness building of public meetings and broader outreach for input

Breakout Question 3 – All Groups Compiled – Repeated themes in **BOLD**

3. Since reconnecting the grid is one of the strongest principles that came forward what are your impressions of the block scale proposed.
- a. **Connection to the street and alley grid were important.**
 - b. **The feeling was uniformly favorable about the blocking sizes and some discussion about which roads would be vehicular and which pedestrian. Which would have bike lanes, and generally defining those better.**
 - c. Pedestrian first was well-received. Important to not be auto-centric.
 - d. Need to be responsive to future trends in transportation, including autonomous vehicles and public transportation.
 - e. Questions on micro grid if this applies to energy (electric), but like transportation grid at neighborhood scale
 - f. Same scale of what you see Prospect Hill and McDoel Gardens
 - g. Question 3 Expressed Concerns
 - i. Ensuring the balance between vehicular lanes and pedestrian only are clearly designated in design
 - ii. Being attentive to making the pedestrian walkways not too broad – unnecessary and at the expense of housing footprint
 - iii. How will heavy parking be handled for residents and visitors interested in the developing area? If the parking garage is used for dense residential support, where will overflow go?

Breakout Question 4 – All Groups Compiled – Repeated themes in **BOLD**

4. Do you have a preferred concept and why? (Connected Gardens, the Mews, and the Greenway.)
- a. All 3 Concepts
 - i. **General agreement that no plans were superior over others due to more information needed to assess (again, per above).**
 - ii. No specific preference – like concept in general
 - iii. Can live with all 3
 - iv. **All concepts are aesthetically interesting.**
 - b. Connected Gardens
 - i. Like how Fairview goes all the way to 2nd St. The neighborhood needs to weigh in. The other options do not show it going through.
 - c. The Mews
 - i. Mews: attraction – would create a neighborhood not divided by public spaces, does not divide south and north
 - ii. The Mews fit in with the neighborhood, more reminiscent to the alleys, linkages back to the neighborhood.
 - iii. The Mews don't divide into E-W or N-S it integrates the area well.
 - iv. Not #2 – o.k. with 1 or 3
 - v. Like the second concept (Patrick)



- vi. If medium density, then concept 2
- d. The Greenway
 - i. Greenway – like meandering greenspace and connectivity and stormwater management
 - ii. #3 looks like more commercial activity than could possibly be supported
 - iii. Greenway has potential and meandering/storm aspects (and greening the garage with plantings).
 - iv. Like all 3 – stormwater management on Greenway
 - v. Each of the concepts were well received.
- e. Other Comments regarding 3 offered plan configurations
 - i. Important for greenspace to be accessible to all.
 - ii. Ratio of public space to development needs to be carefully considered in zoning – feasibility of cost
 - iii. Safe, well connected, aesthetically interesting, take advantage of BLine
 - iv. Small, comfortable, family friendly spaces
 - v. Greenspace is really important to me. Mature trees are a great asset. But concepts would have to pencil out financially.
 - vi. Want openness, no blind spots, well lit, well connected, and aesthetically interesting.
 - vii. In Terre Haute, shared playground was great.
 - viii. Are there a density scale to the concepts? No not yet. Density of buildings and people may lead to a mix of the concepts. Like consistency of all three and each has their pros (Greenway and Mews)
 - ix. If high density, pocket parks work, otherwise they consume too much potential housing
 - x. Greenway and Mews were talked about the most – all have consistent aspects (pros) to build upon.

Breakout Question 5 – All Groups Compiled – Repeated themes in **BOLD**

5. Other questions and suggestions?
 - a. **Outreach is important.**
 - b. Need to hear from people that wouldn't normally come to the traditional public forum.
 - c. Think through ways to lower housing costs, infrastructure costs to lower housing prices. New construction is expensive, out of reach for workforce.
 - d. Noted that parking structure should be greened, otherwise ran out of time – thanked for opportunity.

APPENDIX – ROOM BY ROOM RESULTS

Breakout Room A (Deb Kunce)

- Small but mighty group that focused on the history of the site.
- Appreciated the walkable pedestrian design from the turn of the century.

- Liked connectivity & re-stitching the streets together.
- Like the green space, but concerns about who will maintain.
- Couple proponents for townhomes.
- Loved leveraging B-Line for activation.
- Fairview & 2nd: important to talk with connecting neighbors.
- Preferred options: well, votes for ALL actually, no real consensus around a particular option. May be dependent on the density of housing.

Breakout Room B (Josh Scism)

- Expressed desire to see density modelling in conjunction with the greenspace
- Felt there would be a point to focus on greenways connecting to existing amenities, less focus on it as an amenity itself
- Some talked about a desire for a street-level activation like in Europe (sidewalk cafes etc)
- Someone noted that people will be investigating this *as it's built*. Where will they park? Need visitor parking in addition to residential at the beginning.
- 2nd street: need to attend to how that impacts public transportation
- No prevailing scheme was a winner, but overwhelming support for the direction so far

Breakout Room C (Ranadip Bose)

- Recurring themes: connectivity, water mitigation and stormwater use
- This group had a concern about developing retail spaces in the current market
- Density question brought up again, in light of a post-Covid world
- General agreement on the principles
- Question about the microgrid: is it electric or transportation *to be clarified in the future*
- Scale discussion: scale of street is important, examples brought up include Prospect Hill
- No preferred concept “we could live with any of them”, though there was some small preference for N/S connectivity vs. the greenway which kind of divides the north and south portions of the site.

Breakout Room D (Rachel Momenee)

- Very interested in stormwater management and sustainability, indeed to the point of it being a visible component.
- They felt it was a larger, more flexible communal space that connected people better, therefore had a preference for the Greenway scheme, or Mews scheme.
- Some felt the connected gardens were maybe too focused on the residents who live there.
- Housing: want to make sure it's truly mixed use and interspersed throughout the whole site. No one level of housing should be relegated to one area versus another.
- Transition to neighborhood was important (in terms of scale)
- Ground floor retail probably couldn't be supported, suggestion that they be accessible living spaces to help activate the greenway
- Kohr building: group felt it was historic architecture and important to keep. Perhaps as arts & culture space anchoring the site. (synergy with Lotus Foundation) “a ramble of arts uses”

Breakout Room E (Mary Krupinski)



- A group mostly of folks from adjacent neighborhoods
- Liked connectivity, complete streets, liked the smaller scale blocks
- Surprised at how much green there was, and some concern that there should be more housing instead of quite so much green
- Also saw the space as supportive of other Bloomington amenities (10-15 min walk of downtown), and desire to make sure this doesn't necessarily take away from that now that it's active
- Supportive of scale transition
- Desire for a variety of housing and maintenance of medical amenities; but wondered where the density would happen?
- Wanting to support Bloomington on a larger scale
- Also concern about how the green spaces will be paid for and maintained
- What happens in the interim? People were curious about the transition period.
- Overall pleased and supportive.

Breakout Room F (Lance Dorn)

- Everyone open to density on a portion of the site, but emphasis to get away from that deeper into the site
- Open to variety of income levels, and mix of renters/owners
- No one in this group thought preservation of Kohr building was a priority
- Desire for limited surface parking, and to preserve garage (though could be improved in appearance. Vertical gardens)
- Thought about a re-use of the garage as well, 25 yrs down the road or so
- Green uses, community gardens, locally grown food all mentioned throughout
- Pedestrian focus was well received
- All concepts well received, but felt that the Mews concept fit best b/c it's reminiscent of the alley structure of the neighborhoods.

Breakout Room G (MC Carmichael)

- CONNECTIVITY! Word came up the most.
- Bike lanes, protecting cyclists, maybe making the area less car-friendly.
- Overall, the group liked the mood and ideas and felt they reflected what's been heard in other meetings.
- Liked the green investment but also concerned about maintenance; mention of native species that might require less hands-on maintenance
- Concern that private courtyards wouldn't get utilized as much as public greenspace
- Group didn't think it was a great space for urban farming
- Preferences seemed to coalesce around schemes 2 and 3
- Felt it might be too easy to go fast through N/S streets, and would need some interruption to calm traffic pace
- Liked featuring stormwater management as part of the design; liked the use of limestone

Breakout Room H (Chris Merritt/Karen Valiquett)

- Participants in this group ranged from someone whose family spent time in this hospital to someone who specializes in economic development
- Comment that employers have openings, but it's hard for people to live in Bloomington.

- They really wanted to focus on diversity and inclusive housing.
- When we say “this is for all” what does that mean? They really drilled into that” accessibility, economics advantages, etc
- Suggesting to work with local community organizations to translate the jargon better
- Desire for more awareness of these community meetings
- What kind of city subsidies might be needed to make the site truly accessible and inclusive?
- Ratio of public space to development needs to be considered
- “Sometimes small, comfortable, family-friendly spaces are best”

Breakout Room I (Doug Voigt)

- Spent a lot of time talking about larger community priorities:
 - Housing on the site AND adjacent to the site: density, affordability
 - Development here may take pressure of [McGill Gardens and Prospect Hill]
 - This is an opportunity to hold the city accountable to its promises, but also balance the needs of the city
- Discussed the Hopewell Group, and expanding the mix of housing choices.
- Greenspace:
 - Public v. Private: how do we make sure that it *feels* public
 - Needs to be multi-functional
- Retail: what have we learned about retail in Bloomington? Can we bring those lessons into this design?
 - More than just retail: what are other community uses that can anchor these places
- Social Justice:
 - How can this project start to take on some of these issues and further advance the City’s goals?
- Request to send materials ahead of time - it was a lot to digest.
 - Thought to replicate breakout rooms structure before Public Forum III