



Hopewell Group <hopewellbloomington@gmail.com>

Delay Requested for Hospital Site Master Planning Process

City of Bloomington Office of the Mayor <mayor@bloomington.in.gov>

Fri, Jul 31, 2020 at 9:04 AM

Dear Hopewell Group, McDoel Gardens Neighborhood Association, and Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association,

Thank you for articulating your concerns about the timing of the master planning process for the Bloomington Hospital Site Redevelopment project. You are engaged and thoughtful community partners and I appreciate your dedication to our neighborhoods. I'll be frank that, with respect, I do not support delaying the planning process.

We -- City staff, community partners and stakeholders, and the master planning consultant team -- have discussed at length the timing of this project and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on how we converse, engage with and plan the project. Through these discussions we found alignment and confidence in our collective ability to accomplish a robust and open master planning process. We experienced more participation (over 200 attendees) at the first virtual public forum than would have been predicted or even possible at a traditional in-person forum. Perhaps with fewer distractions during this unique time people are able to give greater focus to participating in the process, and with the virtual format they have greater access to participate. Whether via small group conversations with CORE Planning Strategies or via the survey available on bloomingtonhospitalsite.com, hundreds of Bloomington residents have already shared their feedback in these early steps of the process and have brought forth ideas that are under consideration by our consultant, Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM).

On the issue of changes in the market, indeed many sectors of business, including retail, housing and office sectors, are all learning to adapt and change to prepare for a post-COVID world. Our project is no different. While we may not be able to be certain about the prevalence or market appeal, for example, of each specific housing model (i.e. front door or rear door entries, as you suggest), we are confident that SOM, our other partners, and community wisdom, together will help us predict and plan for some of these future changes. It is important for us to prepare plans now so that we are ready as the market returns and as our community develops. Adaptable, of course, but ready. A project such as this, indeed, itself can be part of the economic revitalization our community needs in light of the economic casualties of the pandemic.

Additionally, please note that the purpose of the master planning process currently underway is not to

lay out a detailed plan, but instead to identify zoning changes that are supported by a flexible, framework plan developed intentionally with a 'long life and loose fit.' The master plan will provide a framework for future development that is aligned with an overall vision for the site, and consistent with shared community values. This framework plan will be adaptable and able to accommodate changing market conditions.

This once-in-a-generation opportunity for our community is large-scale, long-term and transformative. We are taking our time, doing our research, working with outstanding partners, and engaging many, many stakeholders throughout the process. We are expanding the structure of our virtual town hall meetings to include break-out rooms where smaller, livelier conversations can occur and drill down to more specific wants and needs for the site. As we move forward we will continue to seek additional ways to engage the community in the process, while keeping their safety top of mind. It is our hope that during a future public forum we may be able to incorporate an "in-person" element to the planning process. In the interim, we welcome all ideas, whether through town hall meetings, surveys, one-on-one conversations or letters.

Thank you for your thoughtful letter. I look forward to your ongoing participation in the master planning process, which will welcome your views, values, ideas and reactions.

Sincerely,
John Hamilton

	<p>John Hamilton he/him/his pronouns Mayor, City of Bloomington, IN mayor@bloomington.in.gov 812.349.3406 bloomington.in.gov</p>
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