

January 26, 2021

To: City of Bloomington Department of Planning & Transportation
CC: City Council Member Sandberg (Liaison to Plan Commission)

Re: Rezoning Map and Text Amendments to the 2019 Bloomington UDO

Dear Planning Department, and City Council Member Sandberg:

Hopewell Group began holding community discussions in 2019, concerning redevelopment of the current IU Health hospital site. We brought many people to the table to amicably discuss concerns, find common goals, and to share input with the City administration. When the public process commenced in Spring of 2020, we were heartened that the City chose to engage master planners for a mostly-transparent public process, for this important project.

We have been increasingly dismayed at the levels of divisiveness and poor communication surrounding the passage of the UDO in 2019, and the current rezoning map and text amendments. Hopewell Group includes people on “all sides,” and it was suggested we hold a facilitated conversation series. After two open discussions, and one working meeting, we have several recommendations:

1. **We recommend that the City slow down and engage a third-party, neutral facilitator** to guide a series of community meetings. This would not be mediation, but facilitation, with the intention of alleviating the divisiveness that has seized our community. We are concerned that a handful of people, committed to no compromise, are currently driving the conversation to the detriment of all.
2. **What can Hopewell say yes to? These are items we found unequivocal agreement on:**
 - R3 Zoning: Reword the Residential Uses zoning amendment to largely retain the “old language” R3 zoning in the historic and established neighborhoods; specifically, duplexes permitted when they meet historic guidelines for building height, footprint, massing, etc.
 - R4 zoning. This zone is clearly meant for density and should be placed wherever large scale new building can take place. Examples include the hospital site and industrial areas, such as the property between the Dillon and Southern Knoll on W. 3rd St; the former auto glass shop at the corner of Patterson and W. 2nd; the IU Health property that is for sale on 2nd across from the Eye Center; the former Hi-Speed Tire at 3rd and Madison.
3. **“Your questions, coming soon.”** In city meetings, we have received assurances from planning staff that there would be a posting of questions, comments, and staff responses on the the UDO draft public outreach website. Not only has this not happened, but the line on the website indicating that that information is “coming soon” has been removed. When assurances are made, and then deliberately deleted, community trust erodes.
4. **A holistic approach from the City.** Zoning should be just one tool to address the much larger issues of affordability, diversity, and inclusion in our city’s housing stock. We ask that the City continue to seek funding sources and development partners for truly affordable housing, while intentionally creating opportunities for affordable home ownership, particularly for those from historically marginalized groups.

Hopewell Group has often looked to the tenet that the most beneficial things happen slowly, in increments. The shift in City code that is the UDO zoning map and text amendments will impact the citizens of Bloomington for decades.

We also believe that the hospital site is Bloomington's greatest opportunity for achieving affordability, diversity, and density; it is the obvious place for the demand for residential density outlined in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

We urge the Planning Department, and the Plan Commission, to give the time this process is due.

Sincerely,

Hopewell Group

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