

**BOSTON
SQUARE
TOGETHER**

**OPEN HOUSE 2
FULL REPORT**

Thursday, September 5, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	1
Project Principles	2
Jobs & Entrepreneurship	3
Neighborhood Building Blocks	4
Design	5-7
• Concept A	
• Concept B	
• Concept C	

OVERVIEW

The second Boston Square Together open house took place on Thursday, September 5, 2019. More than 150 people came out to provide feedback and input on a 9-acre site in the heart of the Boston Square Business District. At registration, guests were asked to report if they currently lived in the Boston Square area (defined as Hall, Giddings, Burton and Eastern), worked in the area, or lived or worked elsewhere. Over 66 percent of those who registered currently live in the defined area. Participants visited booths centered on Jobs & Entrepreneurship, Neighborhood Building Blocks, Oakdale Neighbors, Boston Square Neighborhood Association, and Design. The following pages in this document include feedback from attendees at each of the three stations.

A few quick highlights:

- During the first open house, nine contractors signed up for Dimensions, a program offered by Rockford Construction to support minority contractors.
- EPIC, a newly formed non-profit, hosted a meeting with 20+ minority contractors. Amplify GR and Dimensions were invited to share information regarding Boston Square Together.
- Some participants wanted to learn more about Oakdale Neighbors and Boston Square Neighborhood Association. These organizations received contact information for those participants.
- Participants interested in a forming homeownership planning group received an email from Amplify GR.

The final open house is scheduled for Thursday, October 3. At this event, attendees will see the shared-vision for the 9-acre site along Boston Square's business district. Amenities available in the plan include: Flexible, shared spaces like community hubs and small business incubators, housing options and green space.

We appreciate so many of our neighbors spending time with us to share their thoughts and help create a community-centered, shared vision for the site.

Key:

Remarks in **blue** indicate feedback from a person that lives in the BSQ area.

Remarks in **red** indicate feedback from a person that works or owns a business in the BSQ area.

Remarks in **yellow** indicate feedback from a person that has other interests in the BSQ area.

PROJECT PRINCIPLES

»»» By working with a group of committed neighbors and local community organizations, we are dedicated to achieving the following objectives on the 9-acre site:

An equity focused design in the H.E.A.R.T. (Health, Education, Arts & Culture, Recreation and Technology) of the Boston Square business district

Affordable housing options for a wide range of income levels

Homeownership opportunities on both the site and in surrounding neighborhoods

High-quality and sustainable design

Dedicated community spaces

Emphasis on construction contracts for minority and women-owned companies in the 49507 area

Neighborhood-based construction employment opportunities

Dedicated spaces for local business ownership, with an emphasis on reflecting the diversity of 49507

High-quality Early Learning Center

JOBS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Economic opportunities without displacement

Thoughts on small business incubators?

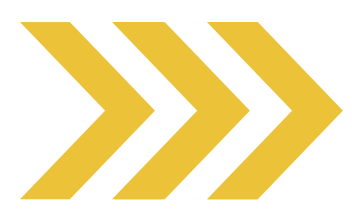
- Keep hardware store
- Like shared-outdoor tables with vendors
- Like affordable farmers market
- Please include an education component to support new businesses
- Outside dining
- Minority business focus
- Green space
- Small business incubators
- Black owned businesses
- What is the reality of this happening
- Outdoor dining is lovely and a great idea for shared spaces for small businesses to have meetings
- Book and reserve space for advance so there is no conflict
- Shipping container retail is awesome for multiple small food businesses to get a start
- Continue postcards. Invite more community networking. Encourage networking
- Entrepreneurship classes and additional support for biz owners
- Food trucks/pop-up shops. Short-term and long-term spaces. No penalty for longer stays
- Pop-up opportunities, grocery, multi-cultural
- Keep hardware store and church
- Economic investment in resident businesses
- What is the affordability cost per sq ft
- What are the pathways from incubator to ownership
- I like the community space, but I would be concerned all open air because of winter. I would want functional all year around
- Will need an educational component. Funding?
- Outdoor market-type would be great
- Will some of the business people who graduate from the incubator be able to expand right here in BSQ
- Life-blood of change. Opportunity has to be able to knock
- Excited for everything coming
- Cultural café owned by locals
- Ethnic food business. Start up foods and retail. Good opportunities
- Incubator space for small start ups with rent by hour office space, computers, meeting rooms
- Outdoor dining
- Pop-up shops
- Home business opportunities
- Economic opportunities for all
- I really like the idea of the weekly pop-up shops that transfers between others. Gives under-represented people a chance to get exposure
- No ownership. Want ownership!
- Bank very important
- Open concept restaurants of all kinds
- I think the idea is nice...more opportunities to start the business world
- Ethnic food options
- Business incubator excellent idea
- No black box building (shipping container)
- Great way to get your foot in the door

- Please provide avenues for fans and supporters to contribute to new efforts financially by investing and volunteering

- I love the open concept idea
- More minority business
- Excited about the incubator
- Incubator should be multifaceted with different seating spaces, internet access and coaches as facilitators for learning
- A place for entrepreneurs to have the business for low rent
- Excellent ideas as long as its developed for results
- Would love to see a local grocer and green space for food
- Increase sustainable business options
- Mentorship and training for youth. Employ the young
- Small business incubators are an excellent idea
- Early childhood education and fresh, affordable food
- Learn from one at market downtown. Share space so we don't spend money we don't need to

NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING BLOCKS

A community that caters to the needs of neighbors today and tomorrow



Thoughts on an Early Childhood & Family Development Center or a Community Hub?

- Early Childhood Center would be great addition to the neighborhood
- I think something for our children would be great
- I think it may be good for the community but also feel indifferent to it
- Great incentive for our young people
- Community Hub sounds great! Need to hear more on who is in the building and how does this work
- Love that you are thinking about all the age groups- not only childcare needs. The need for emphasis on the arts/ education is not just for the young
- Both of these would be hugely beneficial to our community. It would support families and strengthen community networks
- They are both equally important! Do both, do both, do both
- Introduce subsidies to promote local business ownership. Allowing money to stay in the community
- The ideas are great on Early Learning Program but needs to also have something to support and educate parents
- I believe it will be beneficial because the community needs more packages to make life easier
- The ELC is great and the fact that they offer it to people and also a program for parents to further their education is even better
- Make sure there is still some green space
- How do you combine high quality with affordability?
- I enjoy the idea of space you can rent to hold events
- Add performing arts event space
- Parent support- groups and educational training
- Working parents - how will this affect them? Times parents can pick up their children? Can transportation be provided?
- The Community Hub seems a little too big picture. Would love to know what the comparisons? Also, would be great to see the sample of programming in the space
- I love both ideas
- I like ELC and a Family Education Center

- ELC- Like that currently working with ELNC- continue to partner and doing work in this area
- Good Idea- kids need places to learn and study
- Community Hub- this is needed more than anything because we have lost our sense of community! Need to have leaders from the community involved
- Helpful to working parents. Community Hub- great! Good gathering place for seniors
- Where will this be?
- Community Hub- needs to be able to be a youth club on weekends
- Community Hub- sounds interesting. I would like to know more about the specific programming ideas
- Education is the most important! Start the project along with the bank
- I really like the ELC/Family Center concept
- Who will be managing the ELC and the Community Hub?
- Both ideas are great. Let's find a way to also strengthen the Mulich Elementary
- Good idea if under excellent management
- Early Childhood Center- requires close supervision and certified teachers and administrators
- ELC needs to provide safety for children
- Community Hub- an outdoor community hub or concert venue would be great
- Will people who live in the neighborhood be able to get their children into the ELC?
- ELC is needed in this neighborhood
- Community Hub- equal time for all neighbors and groups. Theater and recreation for children
- Community Hub- is a good idea. Could be used many ways
- I like to confirm the idea of having a Community Hub to welcome and be aware of what is going on and in the neighborhood- make sure to appreciate diversity and celebrate community
- All the ideas are really coming along. Good job on all your hard work

- How can the Community Hub truly feel it belongs to the neighborhood? How about free membership for all residents?
- Good Idea- keep it up and make it happen
- In favor of more education and wellness opportunities
- Love the ELC and Community Hub. - Will there be an oversight Board and/or funding mechanisms?

- Holistic services- child care and mental health services
- I love program opportunities as long as they serve the needs to uplift the community
- Like ELC and Family Center- provide information for parents and help with their education
- Safe, affordable, trained staff- similar to Baxter Community Center
- Community space will provide learning opportunities (i.e. how to ride the RAPID and get Wave cards, etc.)
- Early childhood literacy- goal to improve 3rd Grade reading proficiency
- I love both! This is good for the community
- Everyone is nice- great people
- On the Learning Center- who will the partner(s) be? GRPS, Charter School, etc? Community Hub- who will manage and will church be related?
- Connect to church program
- Supports education and health initiatives
- The Community Hub should include Latino celebrations like Quinceaneras

OPEN HOUSE 2 COMMUNITY INPUT



CONCEPT A INSPIRATION: GREENSCAPES

- TOWNHOMES
- APARTMENTS
- MIXED-USE
RETAIL/COMMERCIAL
- ADDITIONAL PEOPLE
THAT HAD THE SAME
COMMENT

Concept A creates a green space environment that activates and engages the community with spaces ranging from passive/pensive to active/hands-on spaces.

GENERAL

- I like this concept best
- Likes that there will be development – nothing to see now (dog walker)

CONFIGURATION OF GREEN SPACES

- ♥♥♥♥♥ Likes open space
- Loves parks
- Likes play spaces
- I want a plaza with seating
- ♥♥♥♥♥ Likes green spaces
- Likes the green space that is more open to the community

LOCATIONS OF AMENITIES

- Likes food market location
- ♥♥♥♥♥ Likes location of Early Learning Center
- ♥♥♥♥♥ Likes Community Hub
- Likes the shapes, a little bit of everything

STREET LOCATIONS & CONNECTIVITY

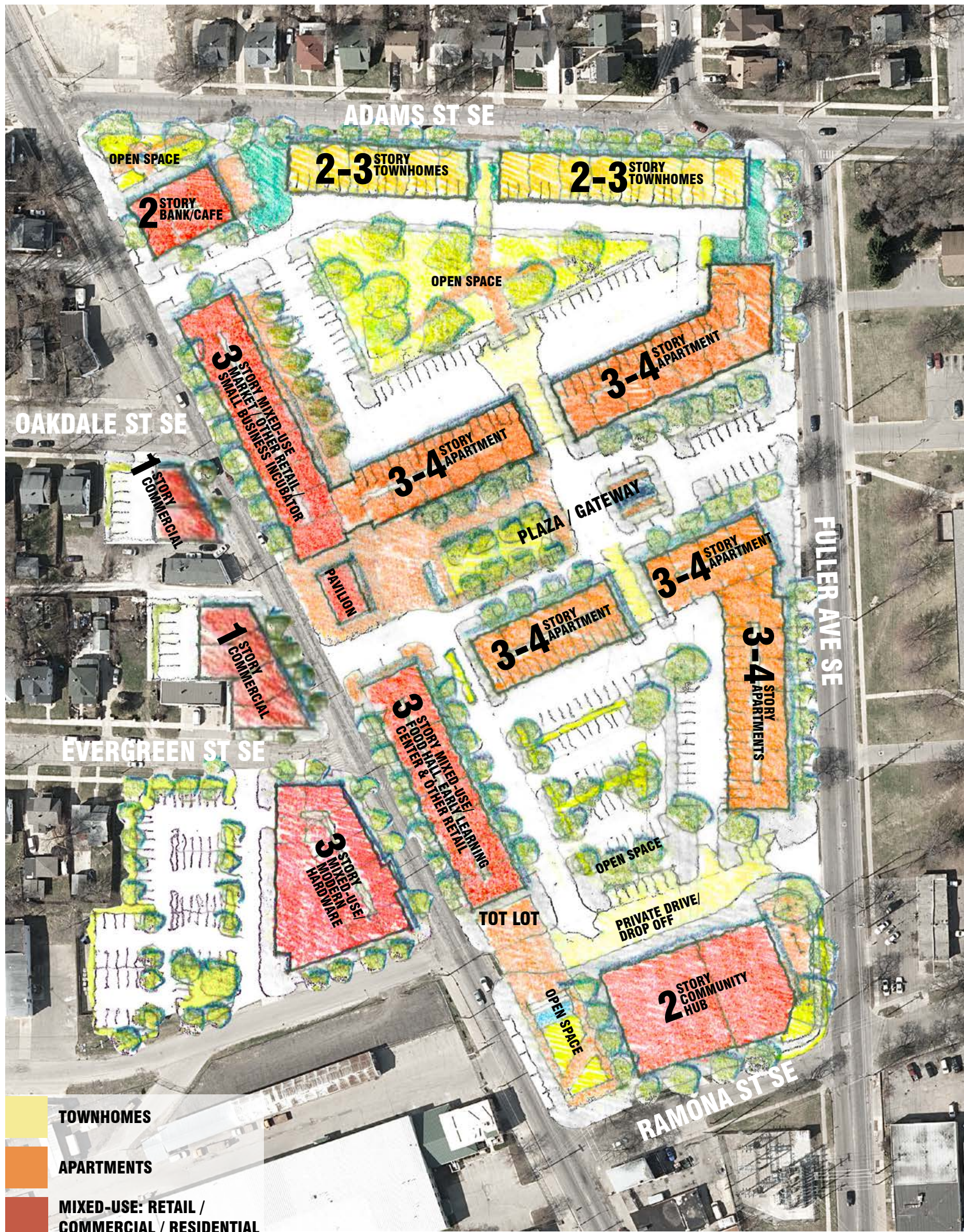
- ♥♥♥♥ Likes esplanade
- ♥ Likes how it is connected
- Likes the flow
- Likes the continuity
- Green streets

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE/PARK?

- Likes the midrise apartments
- Likes taller buildings in center
- ♥♥♥ Likes the mixed-housing
- ♥♥♥♥ Townhomes

LOCATION OF BANK, SMALL BUSINESSES, MARKET, MODERN HARDWARE, ETC.

- Likes the place for small businesses
- Likes that it is blended
- Likes business on the outside
- Likes the market space
- Local businesses
- Hardware store
- I want to keep the Hardware Store



CONCEPT B INSPIRATION: GATEWAY

- TOWNHOMES
- APARTMENTS
- MIXED-USE
RETAIL/COMMERCIAL
- ADDITIONAL PEOPLE
THAT HAD THE SAME
COMMENT

Concept B celebrates Boston Square as a destination by creating an entryway that invites the surrounding community to partake in the activities taking place on the site.

GENERAL

- Not cluttered as Concept A
- Looks like a maximizing of profit rather than livability

CONFIGURATION OF GREEN SPACES

- ♥♥♥ Open space is good
- More open to surrounding community
- Space in one area together
- Could this be a city park?
- North more private, south more public space
- Open space for food trucks, movies at night
- No green space, not benefiting the surrounding neighborhood
- Need park for community
- Likes the corner gateway area
- Play access
- Green space, outdoor / indoor community space
- Walking park, trail
- Likes the safety of closed-off area

LOCATIONS OF AMENITIES

- Housing, employment, education
- Need Bridge Street Market concept
- Community health
- Likes Early Learning Center in Community Hub

STREET LOCATIONS & CONNECTIVITY

- Need to allow through traffic
- Flow connecting existing streets (Oakdale, Boston, Kalamazoo)
- Invited into space outside of development area

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE/PARK?

- Family parking
- Parking convenience
- Move and don't demo housing on Kalamazoo
- Affordability
- Senior living?
- Not too tall of buildings
- Great parking spaces
- Need more parking for Early Learning Center, food center

LOCATION OF BANK, SMALL BUSINESSES, MARKET, MODERN HARDWARE, ETC.

- Employment IN the community
- Commercial in main street
- BBQ
- Business on Kalamazoo
- ♥ Is there enough parking? Likes the parking layout
- Increase black business ownership if possible
- Laundromat needed
- Growth to ownership of space
- Financial literacy



CONCEPT C

INSPIRATION: CELEBRATING THE CREEK

- TOWNHOMES
- APARTMENTS
- MIXED-USE
RETAIL/COMMERCIAL
- ♥ ADDITIONAL PEOPLE
THAT HAD THE SAME
COMMENT

Concept C symbolically and physically weaves water elements to link the neighbors and our local waterways. This emphasis is intended to increase appreciation of the existing natural features surrounding the neighborhood, while creating unique and engaging community amenities.

- ### GENERAL
- This excites me
 - I like the concept of exposing the creek and using it for recreational purposes
 - I love the water aspect of Concept C. Each of the concepts is well thought out and similar. It is important to make the outside of the area

- ### CONFIGURATION OF GREEN SPACES
- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water is great if it remains clean • Like the water feature • Open space • Meet / mingle green space • ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥ Likes the creek concept • Playground | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking trails • Exercise stations • Tranquil water feature – love it • Didn't know there was a creek, to walk with son • Nostalgia of water / creek • Great healing / peace / power with water |
|---|--|

- ### LOCATIONS OF AMENITIES
- Early Learning Center across street with creek in an issue

- ### STREET LOCATIONS & CONNECTIVITY
- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes the pedestrian experience • Concerned about safety • Need bus stop upgrades | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to Fuller not welcomed • Likes the walking spine • Like the North-South connection |
|---|---|

- ### WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE/PARK?
- ♥♥♥♥ Parking
 - Housing stock reflection, not too sleek
 - Concerns of building heights
 - Can we have 1½ stories on the perimeter of the site?

- ### LOCATION OF BANK, SMALL BUSINESSES, MARKET, MODERN HARDWARE, ETC.
- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a breakfast spot • Swap location of the creek and the retail • Like the food trucks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a laundromat • ♥♥♥♥ Like the overall business concept |
|--|---|