

Consolidated Answers to First Meeting Chat

Question Number	Question/Topic	Response
1	Opposition to changes in the historic neighborhoods.	Yes, we are aware of opposition. All input was considered as the new draft was created.
2	How will you measure results of the success of R4/plex?	Success looks like increased units across the City, especially in areas that are walkable, near public transit, and near developed areas. Successful development will not cause harm to the areas in which it is located.
3	Why weren't more small lot PUDs made R4?	The PUDs that were left unchanged either have recent approvals, development, or standards that do not easily match existing zoning districts.
4	How was the R4 selected?	The R4 areas were chosen beginning with R4-sized parcels and expanding. That dictated the areas chosen. Those areas were altered in the new proposal.
5	Why was McDoel Gardens not in the R4?	The R4 areas were chosen beginning with R4-sized parcels and expanding. That dictated the areas chosen. These areas were altered in the new proposal.
6	How are plexes in historic neighborhoods justified?	Plexes in historic neighborhoods exist, and those neighborhoods are also those where increasing density can have the most positive impact because of their adjacency to downtown, campus, and transit.
7	How will existing covenants limit plexes? Can you explain their limitations?	Some covenants address plexes and some do not. It depends on the location. Zoning codes (UDO) do not always match outdated covenants. For example, we see that with limitations on home based businesses in covenants where the UDO allows.
8	Can you provide information on the previous ADU proposal?	Yes. ADUs were added as Conditional in September 2017; ADUs were changed to by-right in April 2020.
9	Is there pressure from IU to build student housing?	No. The proposal was created by professional staff to meet City goals, not in response to anything from IU.
10	Why small lots for R4?	R4 was intended to be used in areas immediately adjacent to downtown, in areas where increased development would provide greater access to more people.
11	Isn't a single family house on a small lot environmentally friendly? How is adding more units?	Small lots can be environmentally friendly. Having more units using smaller amounts of land can also be environmentally friendly.
12	Shouldn't R4 be expanded to spread the density?	That could be one strategy. Plexes are proposed to one degree or another in all residential districts. The R4 locations were reviewed and amended in the new proposal, while plexes are still proposed in all residential districts.
13	Why density on the R4 lots that are smaller than the R3 lots?	R4 was intended to be used in areas immediately adjacent to downtown, in areas where more density would provide more access.
14	Does changing from R4 to R3 affect how a property can be listed? Does it have an effect on taxes?	Not sure of the question. Any uses allowed at the site would hopefully be available from a listing agent. Property taxes are based on what is on the site and also partially what is in the surrounding area.
15	R4 clustering captured too many areas.	dictated the areas chosen. We wanted a starting point for discussion. R4 areas were revised in the new draft map.

16	How does controlling the building size protect green space from needed parking?	Impervious surface coverage maximums limit all development including parking.
17	What is occupancy limit on triplexes?	Definition of family for each unit. (Three unrelated adults per unit in the R1-R4.)
18	Does BZA have to weigh neighborhood input?	In a Conditional Use scenario, all findings must be met, including those related to no ill effects on surroundings.
19	Why line the pockets of developers? Why not rent control?	This is a planning-based proposal, not a developer-driven proposal. And rent control is not controlled by the zoning code.
20	What stops demolition?	In historic districts, BHPC must approve. In Demo Delay, BHPC must release. In other areas, no restriction on demolition.
21	Where are duplexes currently located?	P&T staff is parsing City and County data to provide the most accurate information possible. We presented similar summary information in 2019.
22	Have you looked at the occupancies of current duplexes?	P&T staff is parsing City and County data to provide the most accurate information possible.
23	Where are triplexes and quads currently located?	P&T staff is parsing City and County data to provide the most accurate information possible.
24	How long have impervious surface coverage requirements been in place? A rental was built near me that does not meet?	Since at least 2007. If you observe a zoning violation, please contact the Department.
25	Can you explain that while new housing is expensive, it creates opportunity?	Yes, new housing is often more expensive than older stock. But, many times when someone moves into new housing, they are vacating an older (more affordable) unit that then becomes available again.
26	How do we communicate with website? Is that the best way?	Feedback forms were provided on the website.
27	Can we communicate with staff in other ways?	Sure, we have had and are having multiple meetings with Neighborhood Associations, Council people and their constituents, and any other groups, and office hours.
28	Upzoning prices out affordable home ownership. How is this in line with community goals?	Affordable home ownership in Bloomington is already scarce. The proposal is in line with the goal of increased housing options for all types of residents.
29	The goals of racial and socioeconomic diversity won't happen because of developers for IU.	The proposal is to add options for all residents.
30	How is parking addressed?	Council added 1/2 space required on site per unit. Parking areas are limited by setbacks and impervious surface coverage requirements.
31	If an owner has several properties on a block, could they tear them down and apply for plexes?	Yes, in the Public Outreach Draft. The new draft includes a separation requirement to address this issue.
32	Will this go before City Council? If so, when?	Yes. After Plan Commission makes recommendations. Likely late spring 2021.
33	How do code and historic preservation affect neighborhood character?	Zoning code (UDO) incorporates size and materials requirements to reflect surroundings, while historic regulations incorporate much more specific guidelines to reflect historic surroundings. Where they apply, all must be met.
34	During the Council debate, the community was told R4 would be in new areas only.	The purpose statement for R4 does not indicate that and sensitive inclusion of R4 where appropriate is possible.

35	Why rezone Atwater/Jordan?	As the existing businesses indicate, the location is a good one for a healthy commercial node. The zoning in the new draft was changed to reflect a focus on commercial.
36	Is the role of City government for existing or future residents?	There are many roles, but the zoning code attempts to foster health and vitality in the City, both present and future, through regulation of the built environment.
37	Limiting plexes per block creates a win/lose situation.	We understand this perspective, and included a time limitation in the new proposal.
38	Is there demonstrated proof that people who work in town want to live here?	The average home price and days on the market indicate that housing in Bloomington is desirable. We have also heard this information from local businesses.
39	Can the public comment/observe during special sessions?	The Map and Text Amendments will be heard by the Plan Commission in mostly Special Sessions so as not to disrupt regular business. Yes, that is the opportunity for the public to comment to the Plan Commission.
40	What is the maximum size for a Conditional Use Multifamily use in R4? How many units? Is the height the same as a single-family house?	8 units, same height limit as single-family residential of 40 feet.
41	Have you seen similar development models in similar-sized college towns?	A number of college towns allow plexes to varying degrees. Plexes are allowed in Lafayette, IN; Iowa City, IA; Champaign, IL; Urbana, IL; and Madison, WI.
42	What is the extent of the housing shortage? How else can we fill the gap besides plexes?	The housing shortage is discussed at length in the recently released Housing Study. The shortages are addressed in multiple ways, including the new Mixed-Use Student Housing district; ADUs; Cottage Development; plexes; and projects outside of the Planning and Transportation Department including down payment assistance programs.
43	If there is enough public outrage, can the plan be shelved?	Support and opposition will always shape the course of policy proposals.
44	Can there be other ways to locate R4 besides size?	Yes, the locations have changed in the new proposal.
45	We have many vacant apartments? How does this help with alleged lack of affordable housing?	We are proposing to offer housing choice, which could create more units if utilized.
46	Does a new plex effectively change the historic district rules?	No. It would have to follow them.
47	Why aren't we encouraging entry-level ownership?	We are. Plexes do not proclude ownership and may be a cheaper alternative than a new detached single family unit.
48	Could existing buildings be converted to plexes?	Yes, if they can meet the requirements.
49	Can the historic districts be added to one of the interactive maps?	Done.
50	Can you indicate on a map the original R4-sized lots? Can you explain the process?	Done.
51	Is this a betrayal of existing homeowners?	That is not the intention. Increasing housing options for residents across the spectrum is the intent.
52	How does the tax cap effect property taxes if they increase?	Each property has a maximum allowable percentage tax based on value of the property. If the property value increases, the tax will also increase.
53	Is infill more of a priority than demolition?	Infill and remodeling are desired in many situations, but in some cases, demolition may be appropriate.

54	How were PUD changes decided? Total number of PUDs? Total number of proposed rezoned PUDs?	All PUDs were analyzed, and those that met the UDO thresholds for expiration (almost entirely built out or not begun) were identified for rezoning. Please see the PUD meeting video for details.
55	Is there any way to make suggestions regarding potential property tax increases? For example, could the city offer "grandfather rights" or a scaled taxation system to residents based on, maybe, things like level of income (retirees living on social security for example).	That is outside of the purview of the UDO.
56	Why not make it easier to subdivide? Wouldn't that help address the taxation issue by creating more taxable lots?	We reduced minimum lot size for R2 and R3 in the April 2020 adopted UDO.
57	Why aren't ADUs enough for gentle density increase?	ADUs are great and provide small units, but do not offer ownership opportunities for both units. Both ADUs and plexes can be utilized to add 'gentle density' to the City.
58	Why do people object to increased property values when there is a tax cap?	The tax can increase below the cap as the value of the property increases.
59	Were R2 areas looked at for potential R4?	Yes.
60	Can we create a high quality pedestrian network in MS areas before increasing their density?	As development occurs, more improvements based on the Transportation Plan will be implemented.
61	Can we wait to see what effect the large student housing developments have?	The plex units are not only for students and offer housing choice for other sectors of the community now.
62	The housing study states we need more small homes for sale.	Yes, and plexes can be owner-occupied.
63	New homebuyers will have to compete directly with investors.	They already do. The creation of more units can have a positive effect.
64	Where can I find a detailed description of the districts?	The UDO.
65	Why are you choosing to line developer pockets?	That is not the intention. Increasing housing options for residents across the spectrum is the intent.
66	The hospital area is seeking to add new units? Are we overbuilding?	None of these proposals are a mandate. They are only an option that can be used to add units.
67	How will the proposal affect people's ability to choose to live within walking distance of work?	The proposal adds the option for more units across the City, increasing the chance of the opportunity to locate near employment.
68	Could a metric like Walkscore be used to determine R4?	Yes.
69	What about the enrollment cliff? Will Bloomington be the same in 10 years?	Some think IU will be affected by the cliff and some do not. Additional housing outside of the MS area is not only for students.
70	What is the best comparison city where infill/plexes have been implemented? Other places you have researched? We aren't Portland.	Minneapolis, MN is the most notable for adding the option for plexes in large swathes. Plexes are allowed in a number of comparable cities including Lafayette, IN; Iowa City, IA; Champaign, IL; Urbana, IL; and Madison, WI. We are not Portland, but positive planning policy can come from any sized locality.
71	When there are too many rentals, families leave. How will you counter that?	Families also rent. You might mean undergraduate rentals. The revised proposal includes separation requirements, so that plexes will not easily be centralized.
72	708 S Henderson Impervious Surface	A Planner is happy to discuss specific site questions. Please call the Department 812-349-3423.
73	Is the City planning increased support for HAND?	That is outside of the purview of the UDO.

74	Will this issue be revisited after every City Council election?	Future legislation is set by each administration, so it is difficult to answer this question. Each time we do a legislation change, we are trying to get the regulations right.
75	Will these meetings be online?	Yes. All meetings are available on the website.
76	Is this action supported by the Comprehensive Plan?	Yes, the Comprehensive Plan is a multifaceted document that has multiple goals, and sensitively increasing housing choice supports a number of those goals including increasing housing stock and type, encouraging development in walkable areas to support alternative transportation and discouraging sprawl.