



Title: 325 Blake Road Listening Session Findings and Developer Engagement Update

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Purpose: At the May 13, 2021 Board of Managers meeting staff will present findings from the listening sessions held during February and March 2021 and will provide an update on the status of the developer engagement process.

Summary: Since January 2021, the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment project has progressed through several major milestones along the parallel tracks of design and developer engagement. With respect to project design, staff and MCWD's design firm, HDR, conducted a series of listening sessions in February and March to kick off the design process. Sessions were held with the MCWD Board of Managers, MCWD Staff, Hopkins City Council, and City of Hopkins staff. A final session was held with the community, supplemented by an online survey. The findings from these sessions and survey will inform early design discussions with a selected developer and serve as the basis for future community engagement. The sessions have been documented in a report (attached) and the major conclusions will be presented by staff.

Along the developer engagement track, MCWD and the City of Hopkins initiated the process with a solicitation for letters of interest from a wide pool of developers in January 2021. A selected subset of those developers who submitted a letter of interest were subsequently invited to participate in roundtable meetings held by MCWD and the City. Those developers were invited to submit proposals in response to the Request for Proposals issued jointly by MCWD and the City. With proposals due May 5, 2021, staff will provide an update on the next steps in developer selection and the converging of the design and development tracks over the next two months.

Supporting documents (list attachments):

- 325 Blake Road Listening Sessions Report
- 325 Blake Road RFP Detailed Schedule
- 325 Blake Road Parallel Design and Development Engagement Process

325 BLAKE ROAD RESTORATION AND REDEVELOPMENT

Listening Sessions Report

May 10, 2021



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325 BLAKE ROAD RESTORATION AND REDEVELOPMENT



Listening Sessions Report

This report presents early design considerations for the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment project based on findings from five listening sessions with project partners and community stakeholders and a community survey. The report undertakes this task by providing a summary of the design team's findings from the five listening sessions and subsequently identifies the implications these findings may have on the design of the open space, stormwater features, and the interface between the public realm and the development.

Findings | Key Themes and Design Implications

Between February 11 and March 31, 2021, the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment consultant team asked project partners and community stakeholders to share their visions and priorities for the project site during a series of facilitated virtual listening sessions. These conversations were held with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's (MCWD) Board of Managers, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District staff members, City of Hopkins staff members, the Hopkins City Council, and a public group composed of site neighbors, members of the broader community, and other community stakeholder groups. The MCWD also administered an online survey to seek similar input from the public between April 19 and 30, 2021 and received 108 responses.

This section summarizes the team's key takeaways from the listening sessions and surveys. Detailed notes from each listening session and summary information from the survey are available in **Appendices A and B**. In addition to the listening sessions, staff from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and City also met with agency partners, including Hennepin County, Metropolitan Council, and Three Rivers Park District, to collect additional perspectives, insight, and input that will be considered as the project progresses.

The [City of Hopkin's Comprehensive Plan](#) discusses community goals in terms of four environments: the natural, social, economic, and built. The listening sessions' key themes fit nicely into these categories, and this section respectfully borrows them as an organizing device.

Natural Environment

Summary of Interests

Many points of consensus emerged across conversations. All five groups and a plurality of survey respondents emphasized the value of nature in an otherwise urban setting. Each listening session group envisioned some amount of natural space with a wild, unmanicured feel. Visions of families splashing on the creek's banks, paddlers and regional trail users drawn into the site's green depths, and neighbors recharging in its restorative, contemplative atmosphere came up across sessions.

Comments touching on the preferred ratio of less-cultivated, natural space to more curated, parklike space varied among groups. Participants in the MCWD and City listening sessions generally focused on the way the site's natural character would distinguish it within the City's already-strong park system while those in the public listening sessions tended to describe a continuum, ranging from an almost wilderness feel near the creek (i.e., untouched natural spaces accessible via boardwalk, trail, or canoe and kayak) to active recreation and group gathering spaces closer to Blake Road (i.e., picnic areas, basketball courts, demonstration gardens, etc.). Most of the survey responses that discussed natural space emphasized the restoration of nature, native plantings, and stormwater treatment as priorities. The differences, however, seemed a matter of emphasis rather than kind. No group indicated a desire to rule out less natural outdoor spaces, and the MCWD Board, City staff, City Council, and public specifically noted a desire for compatibility with nearby Cottageville Park.

Participants in all four MCWD and City sessions noted the importance of on-site stormwater treatment. They characterized the site as a cleanup engine for large sections of the community and identified clean water as a high priority (City staff and Council) or their highest priority (MCWD Board and staff). Participants in the two MCWD sessions placed special emphasis on the aesthetic beauty of ponds and other stormwater management features. The site must be designed to look good with relatively little maintenance in many conditions: wet and dry, summer and winter.

Suggestions for specific natural amenities and experiences were frequently cited, including:

- Boardwalks in the site's most natural areas.
- The restoration of trees removed during LRT construction.
- Accessible and extensive pathways with a natural feel.
- Native plantings.

- Thoughtful water use practices and rainwater runoff management in the developed portions of the property.
- Educational resources focused on watersheds, wildlife, native plants, sustainability, and resource conservation, potentially provided through interpretive signs, volunteer-led tours, handouts, etc.
- Canoe and kayak access points along the creek.

Design Implications

Several possible design implications emerge from the interests expressed about the natural environment, including the need to provide:

- Clean water and vibrant natural conditions along the creek.
- Unobstructed visual connections to Minnehaha Creek from outside and inside the development, especially from along Blake Road.
- Unobstructed physical access to Minnehaha Creek for recreational, residential, and commercial visitors and neighbors.
- A range of types and scales of recreational activities, with an emphasis on water-based recreation.
- A fully integrated stormwater management plan that uses runoff as a place-making tool in the design of the public realm.
- Measures that enhance the attractiveness of stormwater features and encourage participation in water-oriented activities.
- Measures that reduce runoff, especially by minimizing paving or other hard surfaces.
- Adequate space above and below ground for the vigorous growth of a substantial amount of vegetation, particularly as an overstory tree canopy along streets, trails, and walkways.

Several other interests related to the interplay between the built environment, the public realm, and the natural environment which could potentially influence the development include:

- Distributing the types, forms, and density of residential and commercial uses to optimize the amount and quality of open space available for the public realm.
- Using landform, trees, and shrubs to mitigate the effects of harsh weather on activities and buildings.
- Encouraging the use of alternative sources of energy including wind, solar, and geothermal.
- Eliminating overhead utilities, including for electricity and all forms of telecommunications to enhance the aesthetics of the public realm.

- Promoting the health of biological and ecological systems by moderating the use of materials or elements, such as fertilizers or artificial lighting, that can interfere with sensitive species or easily disturb natural processes.

Social Environment

Summary of Interests

All five listening session groups articulated powerful, consistent visions of a social environment centered around diversity, inclusion, and access. While most of the feedback remained aspirational, participants across sessions identified a need for ongoing collaboration to translate social priorities into real-world outcomes. They recognized the task as a challenge but essential to the project's multifaceted standard of success and social return on investment.

Feedback from all five sessions identified the diversity of the neighborhood – in terms of ethnicity, language, household size, economic status, age, and beyond – as an incredible asset. This led to a shared premise: the site design should not only maintain but enhance this unique source of value. Individual comments described this desire for diversity in terms of enhancing rather than crowding out the existing character of the neighborhood; serving as a draw for people of many different backgrounds; avoiding domination by a single social or economic group; and functioning without invisible lines of separation between residents of the development from day users of the public spaces.

All five groups also characterized the site as both a neighborhood asset and a regional destination, not just a passthrough along the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail, Blake Road, or the Southwest LRT corridor. There was broad agreement that the site should provide neighborhood services and amenities. The two MCWD groups put the most emphasis on the site's regional significance as a draw and a model for future development. The public tended to focus on the site's neighborhood functions more heavily, and the City of Hopkins groups fell somewhere in between.

Design Implications

This feedback suggests several possible design implications for the social environment. They include an interest in maintaining existing diversity by providing:

- A variety of residential units to accommodate a wide range of household sizes and types, including units for individuals or families with children.
- Units or clusters of units for housing large, multi-generational families.

- A balance of affordable and market-rate housing units.
- Public spaces that support opportunities for people with different social or economic backgrounds to interact.
- Public spaces in a range of sizes to accommodate individuals to large groups.

Another emerging interest in the social environment revolved around transportation including:

- Connecting homes within the development with sidewalks and trails to and from destinations like Blake Road LRT Station, the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail, Cottageville Park, or shops along Blake Road.
- Accommodating emerging trends related to passenger travel, such as ride-sharing and autonomous vehicles and shipping practices requiring frequent residential delivery of packages.
- Reducing the physical and visual dominance of motor vehicles to in turn reduce the need for streets and parking and their impacts on housing costs.
- Restricting the number of vehicular entrances to the site while emphasizing pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Incorporating environmental cues that slow motorized traffic within the development.
- Providing amenities, such as street trees, that encourage walking by improving the pedestrian experience.
- Providing sidewalks and trails with adequate width to accommodate three adults walking abreast.

Economic Environment

Summary of Interests

Similar economic themes also emerged across sessions. Every group took private development on the site as a given, and a consensus emerged in favor of neighborhood-appropriate and neighborhood-serving uses.

All five groups and many survey respondents indicated an interest in affordable housing, although comments on the topic were not always homogenous, even within sessions. Some individuals discussed affordable housing as desirable, others treated it as a given, and a handful, especially issue advocates in the public listening session, described it as fundamental to the project's success. Despite the range of emphasis, questions about how to make affordable housing pencil out were raised and acknowledged as valid in every conversation. Survey responses were more varied. Participants' answers covered the full range of views

expressed in the listening session and added a handful of concerns related to residential turnover, the cohesiveness of the neighborhood, and the potential impacts of a project devoted entirely to low-income or affordable housing on Hopkins' long-term development.

On the commercial spectrum, input from the City Council specifically described the area as complementing rather than competing with Hopkins' downtown. Specific suggestions ranged widely. Feedback from across groups suggested that establishments serving food, coffee, or ice cream would be welcomed. City Council and public session participants expressed a desire for pop-up economic activity space (i.e., for farmers' markets, food trucks, or outdoor recreation equipment rentals). Survey respondents and multiple listening session groups, especially City and public session participants, also expressed a desire to see "mom and pop shops" thrive in the area. They identified locally owned commercial outlets that would reflect the cultural diversity of the area as the ideal. Comments from the public listening session proposed shared workspaces or services for on-site workers and residents (i.e., daycare, laundry and dry cleaning, and restaurants). Many survey respondents called for commercial uses that regional trail, greenway, creek, and light rail travelers would enjoy. Others shared concerns about occupancy, asking for anything but vacant retail space. MCWD staff pushed the issue of economic environment further by asking whether this development should try to include everything that would be desirable or – through the site's catalytic power – create an environment where complementary commercial activities could flourish nearby.

Design Implications

In addition to the implications previously listed under the other environments that also related to the built environment, there were several specific design implications that focused on the Economic Environment including:

- Offering spaces for commercial opportunities that complement (not rival) downtown Hopkins.
- Creating adjustable commercial spaces capable of expanding or contracting in size as needed in order to optimize space for local, small businesses.
- Providing indoor and outdoor street-level commercial activity.
- Providing attractive jobs for residents.

Built Environment

Summary of Interests

The most common built environment themes centered around priority for alternative modes of travel and the integration of human and natural landscapes.

Although details differed among and within groups, a sense of commitment to pedestrians, cyclists, and transit-users was ubiquitous. Strong, easy-to-navigate connections to Blake Road LRT Station, the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail, the Minnehaha Creek Greenway, other local transit options, and the surrounding neighborhood were flagged as tools for making a low- to no-car site design possible. These themes were also common in the survey responses.

Many survey responses asked the team to exercise care with traffic planning and expressed concerns over the potential for negative impacts to Blake Road. In the four MCWD and City sessions, questions about responsibility for streets, parking, and other public infrastructure; public safety access; ongoing maintenance; and the balance of public versus private investment were raised as challenges for the redevelopment process to confront and unravel. A belief that no single participant will be able to bring about a winning solution alone seemed to underpin these discussions, and their tone consistently placed weight on communication and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Ideas about the built environment and the natural environment intertwined. Keeping the creek visible from the street and easy to access between the development's buildings; incorporating sustainable energy, waste, and water management features across the site; and taking steps to prevent natural spaces from feeling like private amenities for the development were uncontroversial. City of Hopkins staff members expressed interest in seeing a development that prioritized creek views for as many residential and commercial units as practicable. Public listening session participants and survey respondents raised concerns about large-scale apartment complex buildings obscuring the creek and blocking access.

City staff and the City Council emphasized the importance of achieving easy, inexpensive maintenance through thoughtful design and durable materials. They highlighted a desire to see buildings and grounds that still look inviting after decades of use. The two City groups also urged the design team to use principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Similar ideas arose during MCWD and public listening sessions, although more often alongside questions about the tradeoff between open lines of sight, nighttime lighting, and the character and needs of the site's natural areas.

Development density came up in at least three sessions and many survey responses. The MCWD Board raised the issue as a question – what is the right level of density for the development? City staff referenced the density ranges in Hopkins’ Comprehensive Plan. Many participants in the public listening session requested housing units designed to accommodate larger, potentially multi-generational families, and a handful expressed concerns about building height, couching the idea of appropriate dimensions as in terms of appropriateness in the existing neighborhood context.

For participants in all four MCWD and City sessions, activity and use will serve as long-term signs of a healthy built environment. Whatever the ultimate design of the site, a popular, well-used place with constant activity and consistently high residential and commercial occupancy rates will signal success.

Design Implications

The design implications that emerged expressly about the built environment include:

- Providing easy access to the outdoors, both visually and physically from the proposed structures.
- Creating a site layout and structural design that promotes physical activity.
- Connecting the 325 Blake Road property to the two triangular outlots on the other side of the creek and also Cottageville Park to form a more cohesive site.
- Creating a development with a unique identity to foster a sense of community for residents while creating an attractive destination for visitors.
- Using healthy, durable, and sustainable building materials.
- Creating a gateway for Hopkins that mirrors the uniqueness and identity of the community while inviting exploration by visitors.
- Using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), which recognize the role the natural and built environments play in creating safe spaces.
- Promoting physical health by encouraging active living including the promotion of walking, and bicycling.
- Facilitating mental health through a design that encourages interaction with the natural environment.
- Reducing the crashes and the potential for crashes between motorized vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists by reducing the width of street crossings, slowing traffic, installing pedestrian activated crossing signals, and separating bicycle traffic from motorized traffic on the basis of bicyclist skill and comfort.

- Providing space for public and commercial social services such as daycare, gyms, classrooms, and meeting halls.
- Providing year-round recreational opportunities for all ages from tot-lots and playgrounds for children to field games for teenagers, yoga lawns for adults, and spaces for public events, such as art festivals, plays, movies, and concerts.

Conclusions | Next Steps

The five listening sessions and public survey provided an opportunity for stakeholders to express preferences for the public realm, open space, and the integration of the built environment into a cohesive site. This report summarized these expressions, which will form the basis for future community engagement and a starting point for design. As the project partners continue to engage with the community and other interested agencies, the Design Implications laid out in each section above will be further refined into design criteria that will assist MCWD, the City, and a future development partner in meeting the project goals and assessing tradeoffs amongst desired qualities to help maintain responsiveness to the aspirations of the community and practicality in the marketplace.

Appendix A

Listening Session Notes



RESTORATION & REDEVELOPMENT

MCWD Board Listening Session Summary

On Thursday, February 11, 2021, the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment consultant team led a 90-minute listening session with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's (MCWD) Board of Managers. During the session, the consultant team asked the Board members to share their vision and priorities for the project site and reflect on the key issues that might arise during the restoration and redevelopment process.

The consultant team will use the insight gleaned during this listening session – along with additional input from City of Hopkins staff, the Hopkins City Council, other agency project partners, community stakeholders, and the public – to guide its design efforts.

Core Questions

- What roles does the Minnehaha Creek Greenway play in the community? What makes it special and important?
- What does the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment Project mean for the District? How does it align with your Balanced Urban Ecology approach?
- Imagine it's 2040. You look at the project site and conclude that the effort was a huge success. How can you tell?
- How will you measure success on the way there? What kinds of success indicators might we see one year or five years after completion?
- What concerns do you have regarding the design and development of the Greenway or the site as a whole?
- What one or two challenges do you want to make sure the design team is thinking about up front?
- This project has the potential to deliver many different kinds of benefits. Given the range of options for the future of this site, which issues or outcomes would you peg as most important?

Participants

- President Sherry Davis White
- Manager Bill Olson
- Manager Kurt Rogness
- Manager Jessica Loftus
- Manager Richard Miller
- Manager Eugene Maxwell

- Manager Arun Hejmadi

Common Themes

Site Vision

This project can serve as...

- A real-life model and a regional example of redevelopment that contributes to the health of urban watersheds and their human residents.
- A place of escape that combines peace and activity.
- A massive stormwater cleanup engine for large sections of the community.
- The realization of visions that have long appeared in planning documents.
- An example of transit-oriented development in practice.
- A catalyst for development along the Blake Road corridor.
- A showcase to help developers see watersheds as assets, not barriers.

Signs of Success

- People are drawn to the site as if by magnetic force – pulling in from the creek, turning off from the trail, arriving by transit, and consistently occupying the development on the site.
- The site remains clean and attractive as the years pass. It is durable and easy to maintain.
- The water features are attractive. They do not dry out.
- It's easy to see and access the creek.
- Other developments like this have popped up in the region.
- It contributes to the quality of life of those who live on the parcel and travel through or recreate in the area.

Challenges

- How will form and function fit together?
 - What's the right level of development density?
 - How can development include ecofriendly features to integrate into the restoration of the parcel?
 - How do we create durable water features that clean stormwater and look attractive year-round?
- The integration of streets into the site will pose a challenge.
 - What design requirements will drive their size, configuration, and location?
 - Should there be streets at all? What's the right level of vehicular access?
 - Are there creative ways to work with the City to satisfy public safety requirements while maintaining the ecological integrity of the site? (Think fire lanes, street width, parking requirements, and fire and first-responder access.)
 - Who will pay for and maintain the streets?
- Land ownership and the potential for other visions west of Blake Road could raise challenging land use questions.

- To succeed through the lens of balanced urban ecology, to what extent and with what density does development need to take place on the site versus around it with the site serving as a catalyst? (Consider Atlanta’s Historic Fourth Ward Park, for example.)

Key Issues

To close the session, the consultant team asked the group to reflect on their three highest-priority outcomes for the site. The Board members entered their answers into an online tool (Mentimeter) that generated a word cloud of the responses. The word cloud and an accompanying discussion produced the following themes.



Water

- Stormwater treatment first
- High-quality, clean water
- Emphasize water on the creek
- Attractive water elements that always have water in them

Balanced Urban Ecology & Integration

- Natural and human ecology blending harmoniously
- Water cleanup *and* human development

- Private development
- Getting the site density right
- Transit and connection to the light rail station
- Early identification of nexuses with funding partners’ goals

Beauty & User Experience

- Beauty that attracts
- Creek access with welcoming amenities
- Recreation as an energizing but intimate experience
- Blending potential site benefits together into something durable and long-lasting

Community

- Accommodate neighborhood concerns while recognizing the regional nature of the site – and vice-versa
- Compatibility with Cottageville Park and other Greenway investments
- Housing as a piece of the site
- Site design supports a dynamic sense of community
- People who feel a sense of ownership and belonging

Other Observations

- This project will cost money, but the MCWD has been planning for it for a long time.

- The return-on-investment will be multifaceted. The project's success in stormwater cleanup and its contributions as a catalyst and creator of value in the urban fabric of the community – not just financial return – are crucial.
- Transparency on the use of taxpayer dollars is very important.
- Cooperation and partnership with others – the City, the County, Metropolitan Council, potential funding partners for development, civic partners, and more – will be crucial to success.



RESTORATION & REDEVELOPMENT

MCWD Staff Listening Session Summary

On Friday, February 26, 2021, the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment consultant team led a 90-minute listening session with Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) staff and advisors. During the session, the consultant team asked participants to share their vision and priorities for the project site and reflect on the key issues that might arise during the restoration and redevelopment process.

The consultant team will use the insight gleaned during this listening session – along with additional input from the MCWD Board, City of Hopkins staff, the Hopkins City Council, other agency project partners, community stakeholders, and the public – to guide its design efforts.

Core Questions

- What roles does the Minnehaha Creek Greenway play in the community? What makes it special and important?
- What does the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment Project mean for the District? How does it align with your Balanced Urban Ecology approach?
- Imagine it's 2040. You look at the project site and conclude that the effort was a huge success. How can you tell?
- What concerns do you have regarding the design and development of the Greenway or the site as a whole?
- What one or two challenges do you want to make sure the design team is thinking about ahead of time?
- This project has the potential to deliver many kinds of benefits. Given the range of options for the future of this site, which issues or outcomes would you peg as most important?

Participants

1. Alex Steele – GIS Coordinator
2. Erin Manlick – Permitting Assistant
3. Janna Jonely – Project and Land Management Technician
4. Kailey Cermak – Hydrologist
5. Tiffany Schaufler – Project Land Manager
6. Tom Dietrich – Permitting Program Manager
7. Trevor Born – Outreach Manager

8. Kim LaBo – Education and Engagement Coordinator
9. Michael Hayman – Project Planning Manager
10. Gabe Sherman – Planner - Project Manager
11. James Wisker – Executive Director
12. Chuck Lutz – Development Advisor
13. Mary Bujold – Market Advisor
14. Jon Commers – Financial Advisor
15. Michael Schroeder – Strategic Advisor
16. Louis Smith – Legal and Strategic Advisor

Common Themes

Site Vision

This project can serve as...

- A community recreational asset.
 - Create continuity and connection to the larger Greenway system.
- An anchor for sense of place and quality of life.
- The district created the Greenway (to which the site will contribute) out of an obscured and neglected stretch of the creek. Now it's inviting and the "lungs" of this part of the city helping to underpin the identity of the area.
- A place for peace and contemplation.
- A playground and place of peace and contemplation for surrounding multifamily housing. The neighborhood's "front yard."
- A safe pedestrian route to skirt busy urban roads (Excelsior, Blake, Hwy 7, etc.)
- A transit connection – and insomuch a regional amenity.
- An example for other areas and developers with unused or under-used natural assets.

Significance for the District: Balanced Urban Ecology

- This site can serve as a major data point showing how balanced urban ecology can work. It can demonstrate the success of the vision – a viable way to move forward.
- A toehold for water quality/quantity management as a valued piece of good development.
- The transit connection gives this regional significance and will be transformational for the City of Hopkins. MCWD will be viewed as a desirable partner to the marketplace.

Signs of Success

- People stop to explore or enjoy the site as they travel along the Greenway – this is a landmark and a destination. It draws people as an escape from the normal constraints of urban life.
- Anyone – local or not – can enjoy this site. Access is open and equitable. Individuals take advantage of public transit to travel to the site.
- People who currently live in the neighborhood are reflected in the set of people who use the site – no one feels crowded out or displaced.
- Other similarly situated parcels along the creek and around the watershed have followed the lead we set here.
- The restoration and redevelopment feel like one cohesive unit.
- Recreational opportunities still exist in the colder months, not just warmer months as we tend to picture.
 - How would this site look on a harsh winter day? How will people connect with nature (i.e. skating, skiing, bonfires, etc.)?
- There's a balance between people who live on the site and people who use it for the day. There's harmony instead of invisible lines separating which parts are used by different demographics.
- Absence or near-absence of vehicles – this would prove that it's pedestrian-, bike-, and transit-friendly, not focused on personal vehicles as a means of transportation.
- The development process was executed so well that it has been used in other locations.

Challenges

- How do we gracefully blend different aspects of the site into one cohesive, exciting vision?
- How do we make sure this is a regional asset that is integrated into the neighborhood but still has its own identity?
- Do people feel like the restoration component is the development's backyard or something open and inviting to everyone?
- The site must look good – how do you maintain it? What does it smell like? What does the ecology around the stormwater pond look like? Who maintains it?
- The stormwater coming to the site could create a barrier to the creek when its volume is high.

- Designing the street network will be a challenge. What is the footprint of the right-of-way? Who takes financial responsibility for it (developer, MCWD, City)? How do we meet residents' mobility wants and needs (e.g., parking, car storage, site circulation).
- Alignment must be gained with regulatory bodies: City, DNR, USACE.

Key Issues

To close the session, the consultant team asked the group to reflect on their three highest-priority outcomes for the site. Participants entered their answers into an online tool (Mentimeter) that generated a word cloud of the responses. The word cloud and an accompanying discussion produced the following themes.



- **Integration**
 - ...of land use with water quality management.
 - ...of affordable housing options with development that helps to carry the project economically.
 - ...of neighborhood and regional value.
- **Water/Water Quality**
 - Ability for water to be a central theme to everything that happens on the site.
 - Can everyone see water from their home?
 - Expressed water conveyance systems on the landscape.

- How people play or interact with water.
- **Financial Return on Investment/Bridging the Financial Gap**
 - If there is a financial gap between the cost of the property and the price for which it can sell, we will need to figure out (and probably monetize) the social and environmental benefits of the redevelopment and restoration to minimize or eliminate the gap.
 - If the watershed district falls short of its social and environmental goals, the gap will be expanded.
 - If we define vision around vibrance and activity, we will need tools that measure the triple bottom line to bridge the financial gap to justify accomplishing those goals.
- **Development**
 - Navigating equitability/social issues associated with the development.
 - We have a dramatic opportunity to do something innovative, and real estate development is part of that.
 - When we envision how people move around the site, we will need to be deliberate.

Other Observations

- We need a process to help us identify issues that may arise with the development partner early. A tight feedback loop should help address areas of potential friction.
- This site should be a landmark for people, regardless of whether they know it by name.
- This process must include a significant collaborative approach.
 - How do we reach the vision together?



325 BLAKE ROAD RESTORATION & REDEVELOPMENT



MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE



City of Hopkins Staff Listening Session Summary

On Friday, March 5, 2021, the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment consultant team led a 90-minute listening session with staff from the City of Hopkins. During the session, the consultant team asked the participants to share their vision and priorities for the project site and reflect on the key issues that might arise during the restoration and redevelopment process.

The consultant team will use the insight gleaned during this listening session – along with additional input from the Hopkins City Council, MCWD Board and staff, other agency project partners, community stakeholders, and the public – to guide its design efforts.

Core Questions

- What roles does the Minnehaha Creek Greenway play in the community? What makes it special and important?
- How does the project fit into the mission and vision of the City of Hopkins Comprehensive Plan?
- Imagine it's 2040. You look at the project site and conclude that the effort was a huge success. How can you tell?
- What challenges lie ahead for the design and development of the site? What one or two specific challenges do you want to make sure the design team is thinking about from the start?

Participants

- Anne Marie Buck – Police Services Liaison
- Christopher Kearney – Building Official
- Garrett Grniet – Fire Marshal
- Jan Youngquist – Community Development Coordinator
- Kersten Elverum – Director of Economic Development and Planning
- Jason Lindahl – City Planner
- Mike Mornson – City Manager

- Nate Stanley – City Engineer
- Steve Stadler – Public Works Director

Common Themes

Site Vision

What makes the Blake Road corridor and the site important and special?

- This addition to the corridor can provide more services and options for nearby multifamily residents.
- The area has a strong sense of community. Enhancing this site will add to the neighborhood identity.
- The neighborhood has affordable housing that supports multigenerational families that have been important in creating the character of the neighborhood. This site should be used as an opportunity to connect those families.
- The population in this part of Hopkins is diverse and less segregated than elsewhere. The project should contribute to bringing people together.
- The METRO Green Line light rail extension is a huge asset that's already having impacts on the market and with our developers.
- The creek – it's calming and good for mental health.
- Cottageville Park helped people get down to the water. Now we have an opportunity to make it even more visible and accessible (e.g., a canoe/kayak launch).
- Multimodal nature of the site – regional trail, automobile access, bus transit, and light rail.
- The area has major east/west (LRT/Excelsior) and north/south (Blake Rd) connections for people traveling through town. The development can attract people who are passing through.

Connection to Comprehensive Plan

- The site blends the Comprehensive Plan's four environments together.
- Built environment
 - Mixed-use, transit-oriented development
 - Public art has been produced in cooperation with local artists
 - Includes affordable housing
 - Promotes biking and walking
 - Not a new retail destination; does not compete with downtown
 - Integrates into the neighborhood

- Natural environment
 - Includes renewable energy
 - Native plantings
 - Water use, quality, and management are thoughtfully executed
 - The site's natural edge sets it apart as unique within the City's already strong park system
 - An immersive natural experience with a less-planned feel
- Economic environment
 - Contributes to a long-term increase in the City's tax base
 - Includes neighborhood-serving commercial uses
- Social environment
 - The cultural richness of the neighborhood is enhanced, not crowded out
 - The space invites many kinds of people together
 - Developed with guidance from a robust community engagement process

Signs of Success

- People feeling safe and secure in the area – the site and landscaping are designed to promote positive natural surveillance.
- The area remains attractive over time. Durable materials and thoughtful design make it inexpensive to keep up.
- There are consistently users in the space. The green space has become a destination for nearby residents, as well as for people in the rest of Hopkins and surrounding cities.
- There is continuity between Cottageville Park and this site (e.g., outdoor areas for grilling/cooking, more natural feel than Cottageville Park but still consistent in a broad sense).
- Access to the site works properly. It has pedestrian-scale buildings that promote activity on the ground floor and in the adjoining public space.
- The site has become a gateway to Hopkins for people traveling west on the light rail and regional trail. It enhances Hopkins' identity.
- Creative public art – for instance, landscape design as part of the art – is well-liked and creates pride.
- The site remains accessible to all. Gentrification hasn't pushed out the people who are living in the corridor today.
- This becomes an award-winning site. It is recognized at the local, regional, and national levels.

- The site is energy- and water-efficient.

Challenges

- Corridor residents fear that gentrification will displace them. Community engagement will be key as the design process moves forward.
 - Allow multiple opportunities for voices from all communities to be heard.
- A variety of partners need to come together and work collaboratively to pull this off.
- Who will maintain specific pieces of the site?
- How will design standards be met for public streets?
 - A through-street could be dedicated as a public street. City maintenance would be curb-to-curb.
- Streets and parking relationship – who will control the parking lots and how will maintenance and control work together?
 - Structured rather than surface parking (TIF could be needed) seems appropriate given the TOD goal. This needs to be negotiated as a public-private benefit.
- Fire access – landlocking, accessibility, efficiency.

Other Observations

- The City can help the consultant team navigate design standards before plans are submitted.
- A good example to keep in mind: Thorton Place in Seattle
 - How was this handled – no interior road system, access took place from the existing street grid.
 - The site is inviting from the exterior street grid. Walking along the creek feels pleasant and inviting even though the site has high-density housing. The creek doesn't feel like a private amenity.
- What public facilities are needed or have been discussed for the site?
 - Build crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) tools into the plan.
 - Fire – the consultant team may want to reach out to Hennepin County to discuss the light rail and other traffic issues tied to response time.



325 BLAKE ROAD RESTORATION & REDEVELOPMENT



MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE



Hopkins City Council Listening Session

Summary

On Tuesday, March 16, the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment consultant team led a 90-minute listening session with the Hopkins City Council. During the session, the consultant team asked the Mayor and Council Members to share their vision and priorities for the project site and reflect on the key issues that might arise during the restoration and redevelopment process.

The consultant team will use the insight gleaned during this listening session – along with additional input from City of Hopkins staff, the MCWD Board members and staff, other agency project partners, community stakeholders, and the public – to guide its design efforts.

Core Questions

- What makes the Blake Road corridor special? How might successful redevelopment along the corridor contribute to City residents' quality of life?
- How does the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment fit into the goals, mission, and vision of the City's Comprehensive Plan? How would you like to see this project serve your strategic goals for the community?
- Imagine it's 2040. You look at the project site and conclude that the effort was a huge success for the City and its residents. How can you tell?
- What features or design elements contribute to the site's success?
- What practical challenges lie ahead? Are there uncertainties to settle or priorities to balance before the vision for 325 Blake Road can become reality?
- What one or two key hurdles would you advise the design team to keep in mind from the start?

Participants

- Mayor Jason Gadd
- Council Member Alan Beck
- Council Member Rick Brausen
- Council Member Kristi Halverson
- Council Member Brian Hunke

Common Themes

Site Vision

This project can serve as...

- A source of value to this racially, financially, and demographically diverse neighborhood.
 - Enhances, doesn't displace
 - Contributes to the ability of residents to meet their daily needs
 - Supports multi-generational families and mirrors the multi-diverse community
- A connection and a destination.
 - From the east/west (LRT/Excelsior Boulevard) connecting to Minneapolis and western suburbs and north/south (Blake Road) connecting to Excelsior Boulevard and Highway 7 roadways
 - From the light rail
 - From the bike path
 - From the creek, via kayak or canoe
 - From other places along the Greenway
- Complements downtown by providing people with more housing options and a neighborhood economic center.
 - A new model – a transit-oriented part of town.
- An opportunity to strengthen other businesses along the corridor.
- A place for pop-up economic activity (e.g., farmers market).
- A connection to the creek – a place for families and kids to get in the water, catch frogs, and delight in urban nature.
- An opportunity to add to the successful work at Cottageville Park.

Connection to Comprehensive Plan

- The site blends the Comprehensive Plan's four environments together.
- Like Hopkins itself, it can be a place where water, transportation corridors, and cultures meet.
 - Connection to the watershed and creek
 - Community spaces connected by travel on foot, bicycle, and transit
 - Using diversity as a strength
- The Comprehensive Plan pushes us to create highly adaptable sites that can thrive in different possible future conditions and outcomes.
- Economically, the site presents opportunities to strengthen businesses along the corridor.
 - Possible to connect people all the way to Shady Oak Road.
- It would be valuable for the project to encourage an environment where small businesses can thrive.

Signs of Success

- Easily understood wayfinding makes the creek easy to access.
- The entire site is welcoming. It doesn't have a private, gated community feel to it.
- Vibrant street life dominates the area.
- People move through and around the site on foot or by bicycle. It's designed for people, which makes it safe, interesting, and comfortable.
 - There should be a lot of room for people just to show up.
 - The outdoor space is enjoyable, even if the visitor doesn't have a specific intent.
- There is a kayak/canoe landing area to let people get on and off the creek.
- The space looks green and healthy like Cottageville Park.
- People recognize the area as a standalone destination. All types of people – kids, seniors, families – interact and fill the space together.
- People who drive, walk, bike, or paddle by can't help but say to themselves, "I need to come back and check this place out."
- The area mirrors the type of living available in the downtown area of Hopkins now.
- When you look at the site, you don't see trash, and you don't see parking lots dominating the space.

Challenges

- Affordability – keep the naturally occurring affordable housing. Don't push people out with expensive, high-end apartments or condos.
- Living spaces for multi-generational families (i.e., three- and four-bedroom units) will be a challenge to build, but they are also a key component to mirroring and enhancing the neighborhood's unique and valuable diversity.
- The components of the project must be designed to hold up. How can the site be built so it doesn't look worn-out or dated in 20 years?
- The team will need to create a safe space. This probably means it's well-lit since it will be so pedestrian-oriented.
 - Cottageville Park can serve as a good example given how safe it feels to walk past at nighttime.
- Financing for the project and its ongoing maintenance will be a challenge.
- A lack of on-site vehicle parking is not a concern as long as the design encourages people to go on foot, bicycle, etc. and the concept is formulated with surrounding properties, uses, and transit options in mind.
- Ideally, some of the positives we envision will spring up on nearby sites – not everything will have to be at 325 Blake Road to be part of the experience it creates and to which it contributes. The design team should work with City staff to make sure positive spillover opportunities are coordinated well.

Key Outcomes

To close the session, the consultant team asked the group to reflect on its three highest-priority outcomes for the site. The Mayor and Council Members entered their answers into an online tool (Mentimeter) that generated a word cloud of the responses. The word cloud and an accompanying discussion produced a set of themes that echoed the evening's conversation.



Other Observations

- This development is an opportunity to build something unique in the community. Take time to understand and apply lessons-learned from what might not have worked in the past.
- The experience in the corridor should be about the connection to nature, retail, music, art, and neighborhood activities.
 - Individuals or families should be able to access the site in multiple ways – foot, bicycles, trails, paths, etc. – and stay there for a day.
 - While the site is undoubtedly a standalone destination, people might also use it as a springboard to connect to downtown, including its Children's Theatre and other local attractions.



RESTORATION & REDEVELOPMENT

Public Listening Session Summary

On Wednesday, March 31, 2021, the 325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment consultant team led a 90-minute virtual listening session with community members and residents near the project site. During the session, the consultant team asked the participants to share their vision and priorities for the project site and reflect on the key issues that might arise during the restoration and redevelopment process.

The session began with team member introductions and a presentation on the project's history and high-level objectives. Following the presentation, the full group was split into four smaller breakout groups to ensure each participant had time to give their input. Following the breakout groups, the participants and consultants returned to the large group session to summarize the conversation and introduce the next steps of the project.

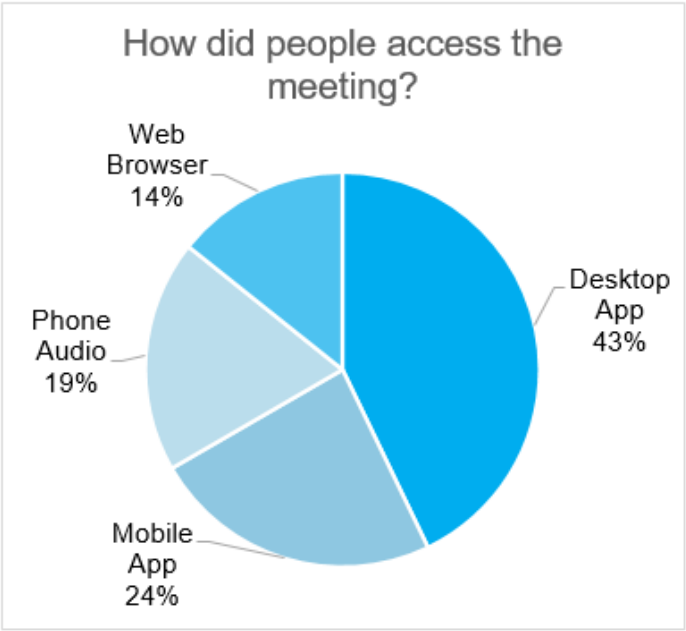
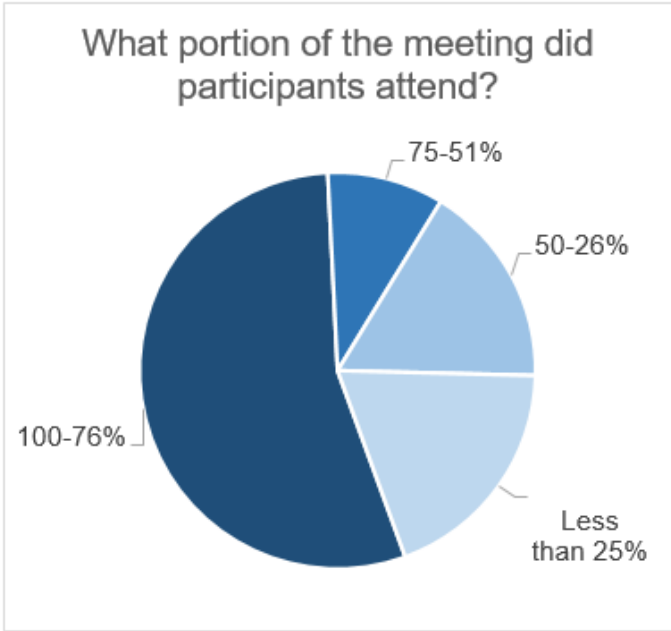
The consultant team will use the insight gleaned during this listening session – along with additional input from the Hopkins City Council, City of Hopkins staff, the MCWD Board, MCWD staff, and other agency project partners, including Hennepin County, Metropolitan Council, and Three Rivers Park District – to guide its design efforts.

Core Questions

- What makes the project area special today? What's your favorite thing about living here, working here, or visiting the area?
- What kind of natural space would you like to have on this site? What kind of outdoor activities would you like to be able to do here?
- How can the development and the natural space at 325 Blake Road work together? What might the development look or feel like to visitors?

Participant Summary

Of 66 total registrants, 42 people attended the listening session. Over half of the participants stayed connected to the meeting for over 70 of its 90 minutes using a variety of device types. The images below show a representation of how people joined and what portion of the meeting they attended.



Common Themes

Project Area Values

What makes the project area special today? What’s your favorite thing about living here, working here, or visiting the area?



Figure 1 Participants were asked what they value most about today’s project area and the Blake Road Corridor in the full-group session before breaking into smaller groups for discussion.

Breakout Group 1

- It is a great connection point and opportunity to be near nature.
- The boardwalks, nature, and bike trails for walking and biking make today’s Greenway corridor great.
- The diversity of race, economic status, families, and culture is unique to the area and should continue to be a focus.
- The congeniality of Hopkins and other suburbs has an

opportunity to teach the Metropolitan Area and the nation how to embrace diversity and live well together.

- Access to a variety of small businesses that provide everyday services strengthens the community.
- Affordable housing units allow the continuation of diversity in and around the corridor.

Breakout Group 2

- Small businesses are valued heavily in this area due to the amount of diversity they bring.
- The Cedar Lake Trail allows surrounding community members to access this corridor.

Breakout Group 3

- The creek is a special place for many families already. Many children enjoy biking and walking around it. Having public access to it has been a big improvement that should continue.
- The reconstruction and addition of new elements in Cottageville Park (landscaping, lighting, etc.) and along Blake Road (wider sidewalks, plantings, signage, lighting, and marked pedestrian crossings) have been successful in the area.
- Access to the Cedar Lake Trail is a big asset for the community.

Breakout Group 4

- The diversity of residents, the proximity to retail, and the range of living spaces are unique and important. Diversity in housing for renters specifically is important and should continue to be available.
- The creek is here. The light rail's nearness to a natural spot serves as a unique opportunity to continue enhancing the corridor's greenspace access.
- Businesses in the area work well with the affordable housing that already exists. The diversity in the community (racially, culturally, and economically) is shown through this partnership.
- The corridor and neighborhood have good momentum. The area has been evolving in a positive way.

Visions for the Public Space

What kind of natural space would you like to have on this site? What kind of outdoor activities would you like to be able to do here? How do you envision moving through the site?

Breakout Group 1

- Include a natural space that is untouched but accessible via boardwalk and trail.
- Natural spaces should offer a continuum of experience, from contemplative spaces in an almost wilderness setting (probably closer to the creek) to more group-gathering and active recreation areas (probably closer to Blake Road).
- Design the site to get people outside to discover nature throughout the year, especially during the winter months. Having a space like a greenhouse or biome would encourage the public to experience nature in the winter.
- Have creek access (similar to Arden Park) where people are splashing around enjoying the creek. Focus on areas for tubing, kayaks, and other water activities with access to the creek.
- The emphasis should be on natural space, including restoring the trees along the trail that were removed during LRT construction.
- Pathways should connect to everything that exists while still keeping the area as natural as possible. Themes to keep in mind when creating these ideas are serenity, contemplative spaces, and naturalization.
- People should move through the site primarily on foot or bicycle. Motor vehicle access should be limited, but providing a few parking spaces is necessary if the area is to become a destination. Consider shared parking off-site.
- Having gathering places is important for families and larger groups. Keep them unprogrammed or not overprogrammed so they are more accessible to all.
- The natural spaces need to foster interaction between the diverse populations of Hopkins.
- Provide space for occasional activities like a farmer's market.

Breakout Group 2

- Kayak and canoe access to the creek should be implemented for additional travel through and around the surrounding communities.
- This site should be treated as a destination or endpoint.
- This site could provide an entryway to nature. It should introduce individuals to and educate them about the creek, nature, and watershed.

- Consider the addition of small shops that allow people to rent bicycles, canoes, and kayaks to allow access for all individuals.
- This group envisions a mix of driving, canoes, and bicycles for movement through the site.

Breakout Group 3

- The area along the creek should be maintained in a way that allows continued safety of canoers and kayakers.
- If there is a prescribed entrance to the park, it may be harder to access. Allow access from multiple places.
- This redevelopment should connect to and help expand already-existing land trails and creek trails.
- This group envisions mostly walking and biking on the site but agrees that there should be some parking to allow for car access.
- Open spaces should feel welcoming - open to all ages and ethnicities
- Provide direct connections through the site from 2nd Ave to the creek so that people don't have to go around the site to access the creek
- The feel/character and program of the open space on this site should be more urban and less "natural", complementing, but not competing with the character and program at Cottageville Park
- Potential open space features mentioned by the group:
 - Splash pool for kids
 - Variety of gathering areas for small and larger gatherings
 - Yoga in the park
 - Grills and picnic shelters
 - Natural spaces
 - Interactive uses for children and older people
 - Music in the park events

Breakout Group 4

- Cottageville Park is not huge, but it still manages to offer many things to do. That's a great example. This larger space could incorporate many different activities and attractions.
- Boardwalks in the natural areas would be great.

- The natural space should feature native plants. Interpretive signs and/or handouts would add value, too. Consider a pollinator garden as well.
- The natural space could mean volunteer opportunities like leading nature walks, caring for the vegetation, etc.
- Connections to the Greenway and regional trail are so vital and obvious they almost don't need to be mentioned.
- The development should include activities like snowshoeing that are suited to the winter and cold weather months. Partnering with small businesses to make snowshoe rentals available on-site would help. Partnerships with nonprofits and community groups for snowshoe borrowing would make the activity accessible to people who don't have the disposable income for traditional commercial rentals.
- An outdoor theater space for movies in the park or an amphitheater for performances could bring back art in the community that was lost when a nearby movie theater closed.
- The site should be set up for youth activities. This neighborhood does not have many indoor resources for young people, and a community center or sheltered recreational or gathering facilities of any sort would give kids who would otherwise be stuck at home a place to socialize in the winter.
- People should walk, bike, and use the light rail and water to move to and through the site.
- Pathways should be accessible to wheelchairs, strollers, etc. There should be dedicated accessible parking spaces and wheelchair access to make visiting the natural space easier for anyone with mobility limitations.
 - All spaces and amenities should be accessible to all ages (think "8 to 80" and more).
 - Can the parking lot from the light rail across the street be used for shared parking? Are there incentives we can use to encourage people to come by light rail instead?

Better Together – Natural Space and Development

How can the development and the natural space at 325 Blake Road work together? What might the development look or feel like to visitors?

Breakout Group 1

- The design of buildings should reflect natural form and materials to allow integration of indoor and outdoor amenities to be seamless.
- Maintaining easy and obvious access to the creek is a must.

- Materials need to work in all seasons and weather conditions – the current boardwalk is slippery in winter or when wet.
- The site should provide serenity to the extent possible so people moving through can breathe. Buildings on the site should be built not as a single large structure, but rather as a collection of smaller structures with open spaces flowing between them.
- Residential and small office spaces may be preferred with support services like childcare for neighborhood residents or possibly a hotel for nearby businesses.
- Publicly owned land needs to be used to create opportunities for all. The public spaces within the development need to recognize that different groups of people have different spatial needs. Some require space for large inter-generational and multiple-family group gatherings while others need smaller spaces for more nuclear groups.
- An emphasis on diversity means promoting housing for people across the full spectrum of economic status and not allowing one economic group to dominate the site. There needs to be a balance between affordable, market-rate, and luxury housing.

Breakout Group 2

- Restaurants should be a focus along the corridor to enhance the idea that this site is a destination. Individuals can use the creek to get to a restaurant on the water – similar to restaurants near Bde Maka Ska.
- Locally owned businesses should be the only businesses going into this new development. Whatever the businesses are, they should be unique to Hopkins to attract more individuals from surrounding communities.
- The development should be assembled as quickly as possible to keep up with the momentum it's gaining from its residents.
- The need for high-density housing at an affordable rate should be included in this but be careful not to build too high and obstruct the natural views.

Breakout Group 3

- The space should flow between natural space and business or other development space. It should feel like a community that is open to all – not a gated community.
- Additional lighting and crosswalks will make pedestrians feel safer.
 - The development should be done in a way that puts more “eyes on the park” to make sure the open space is a safe place to be.
- The development should integrate nature in a way that makes visitors feel like they can access any point easily.

- The development should consider adding ice cream and coffee shops. Many were previously torn down or bought-out and replaced with corporate spaces. “Mom and pop shops” would thrive in this area.
 - Many of the places mentioned reflect or reflected the cultural diversity of the area. The group would like to see those tenants, or others like them, integrated into the new development.
- The development should allow people of all ages, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds to come together.
- Art should be incorporated throughout the development, such as a small pavilion for live music or other performances.

Breakout Group 4

- A pavilion could be added and used to rent out equipment (snowshoes, canoes, etc.) and educate the community about the development and natural area.
- This development could have a similar feel to Cottageville Park in its transition spaces from more developed and curated to more natural space. The space should be more natural by the creek with multiple trails and walking spaces, then transition to larger building complexes closer to Blake Rd.
- Consider constructing things out of sustainable material and making it known to the public. An example of this could be solar panels for lighting, recycling containers that include signage on what to compost or recycle, and who is benefiting from local herbs/plants that are growing.
- The development should not create a barrier to the creek. It should be designed in a way that minimizes erosion, cleans its own runoff, and connects people to the water.
- Both the natural space and development should be accessible and should make sense together. If there is retail or commercial space, it should not cause displacement, but rather enhance what is already there.
- The development needs to be physically and financially accessible.
- If the development attracts a lot of vehicles, that could be contrary to the natural vibe.
- Lighting in the natural areas should be subtle or only present in strategic “safe zones.”

Other Observations

- Work and lifestyles that have come as a result of COVID show the way of the future. Focusing on supporting the smaller businesses of local entrepreneurs versus larger national chains is preferred. Similarly, business incubation centers, temporary or shared office spaces for virtual- or co-working arrangements would be attractive, especially

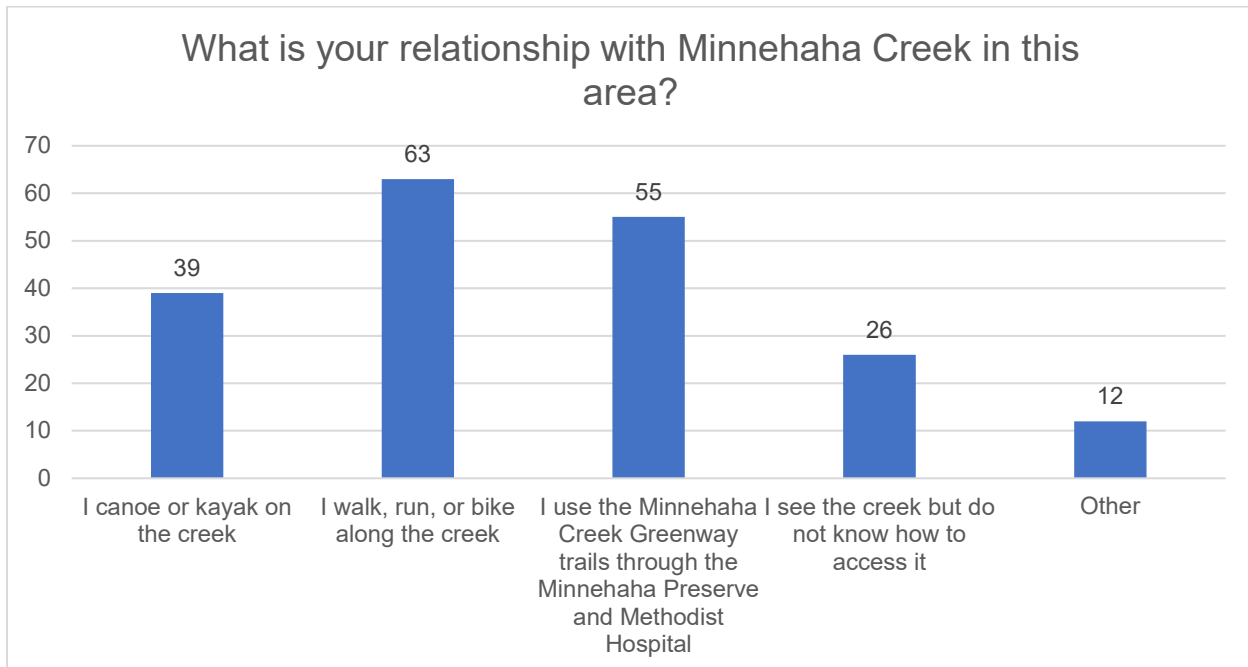
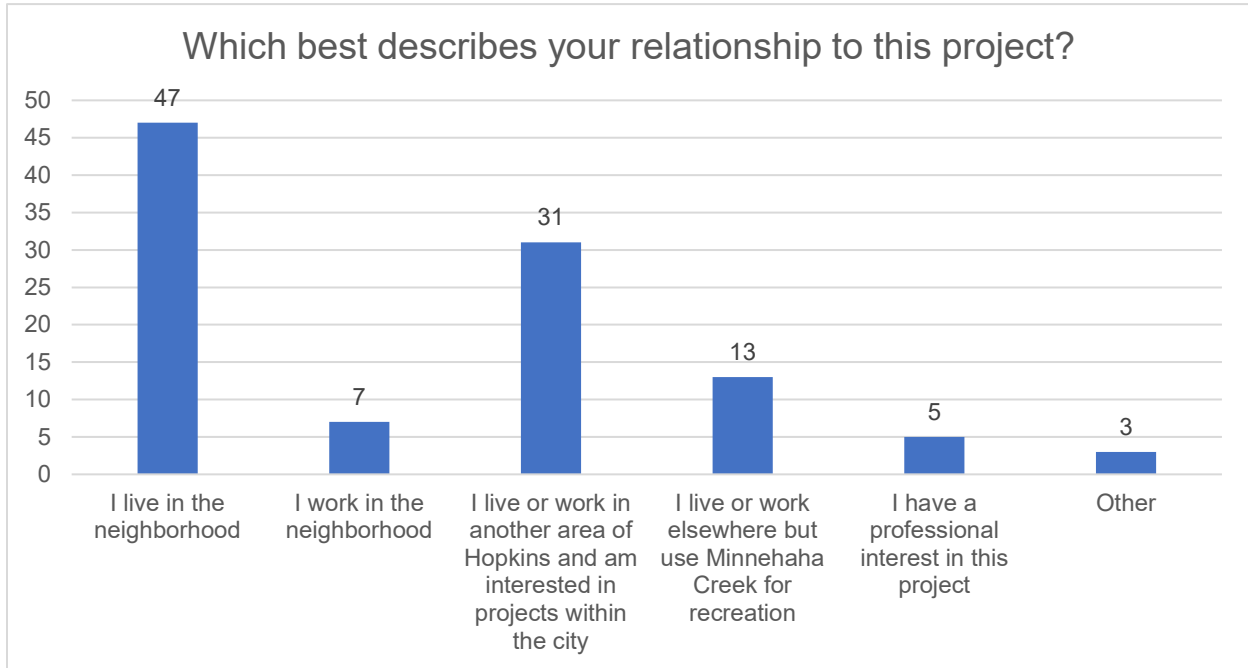
coupled with the opportunity to take breaks in natural surroundings (like Centennial Lakes in Edina).

- Lighting and safety along the trail are important. Add ambient light—not a spotlight, but lighting for safe use of the trail.
- If the development has park-facing properties with walkouts, it will help others visiting not feel alone and may increase safety.
- Educational opportunities can be placed throughout the development to teach others specifically about native plants or other historical aspects of Minnesota.
- Inclusivity should remain a top priority. Think about how language and technology barriers may affect how individuals access information and updates on this project.

Appendix B

Multiple-Choice Survey Feedback

Appendix B: Multiple-Choice Survey Feedback



There are several aspects to the planned restoration and redevelopment. Which are you most interested in? (Rank in order of priority, with number one being your top choice.)

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Trail connections	20.37% 22	24.07% 26	32.41% 35	17.59% 19	5.56% 6	108	3.36
Natural area	41.12% 44	27.10% 29	14.95% 16	10.28% 11	6.54% 7	107	3.86
Water quality improvements	14.02% 15	23.36% 25	37.38% 40	15.89% 17	9.35% 10	107	3.17
Housing	19.05% 20	17.14% 18	7.62% 8	39.05% 41	17.14% 18	105	2.82
Retail or commercial space	6.73% 7	9.62% 10	7.69% 8	15.38% 16	60.58% 63	104	1.87

Which amenities do you think the Blake Road community needs more of that could go on this site? (Rank in order of importance with number one being the most important.)

	1	2	3	4	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
Access to nature	62.63% 62	21.21% 21	12.12% 12	4.04% 4	0.00% 0	99	3.42
Bike or walking trails	29.00% 29	45.00% 45	11.00% 11	15.00% 15	0.00% 0	100	2.88
Community gathering spaces	8.25% 8	20.62% 20	44.33% 43	25.77% 25	1.03% 1	97	2.11
Play areas for children	1.03% 1	13.40% 13	30.93% 30	50.52% 49	4.12% 4	97	1.63

This project will connect the community to restored natural space along Minnehaha Creek. What level of activity would you like to see in this restored space? (Choose one option.)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Minimal activity - a natural space with a few places to quietly enjoy nature	17.59% 19
Moderate activity - a place for people to pass through while waking or riding bikes	58.33% 63
High activity - a lively gathering space for groups of people and public events	24.07% 26
TOTAL	108

325 Blake Road RFP – Detailed Schedule

The following is the detailed schedule of key dates for selecting a development partner for the 325 Blake Road site. Dates of interviews, tours and selection are tentative, but are the targeted dates based on Review Committee feedback:

Date	Group	Facilitator	Process step
May 5, 2021	Staff Coordination Team	MCWD Staff	Deadline for proposals to be submitted. Delivery of proposals and evaluation documents to the Staff Coordination Team and Review Committee.
May 6-11, 2021	Staff Coordination Team	MCWD Staff	The Staff Coordination Team will review developers' initial proposals and will generate comments, questions and requests for clarifications to further refine proposals. The Staff Coordination Team will meet May 11, 2021 to discuss proposals and finalize questions for clarification.
May 12, 2021	Staff Coordination Team	MCWD Staff	Clarification requests provided to developers to allow them one week opportunity to respond to questions and prepare refined, final proposals.
May 13-17, 2021	Staff Coordination Team	MCWD Staff	The Staff Coordination Team will finalize the developer proposal matrix and deliver the document to the Review Committee by May 17, 2021. The matrix will identify areas that clarification has been requested of developers.
May 19, 2021	Staff Coordination Team	MCWD Staff	Clarifications due from developers.
May 20, 2021	Review Committee	Staff Coordination Team	The Review Committee will meet to discuss preliminary review of proposals, and prepare for developer interviews.
May 26-27, 2021	Review Committee	Staff Coordination Team	The Review Committee will conduct interviews in consideration of developers' final submittals. Following interviews, the Review Committee will vote on a finalist list for joint City Council and Board of Managers consideration.
June 7-11, 2021	Joint MCWD Board and City Council	Review Committee and Staff Coordination Team	The Staff Coordination Team will facilitate tours for the Joint City Council and Board of Managers of the finalist developers' representative projects.
June 16-17, 2021	Joint MCWD Board and City Council	Review Committee and Staff Coordination Team	The Board of Managers and the City Council will hold a joint meeting for the purpose of conducting interviews of the finalist developers and discussing these interviews. Thereafter the joint Board of Managers and the City Council will vote to select a master developer partner.
June 28-30, 2021	Staff Coordination Team	MCWD Staff	The Staff Coordination Team will host a public open house on preliminary open space design as a pre-charrette check-in with community.

325 Blake Road RFP – Detailed Schedule

July 12-16, 2021	Staff Coordination Team	MCWD Staff	The Staff Coordination Team, in close coordination with MCWD’s design consultant, will host a 2-day design charrette with the select developer to generate preliminary concepts for the project site.
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325 Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment

Parallel Process Alignment

