

Brookline Community Workshop #4

Draft Strategies: Summary of Results

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Summary

The purpose of the fourth and final Brookline Community Workshop held on June 20th was to solicit community feedback on draft strategies to be included in the 2016 Housing Production Plan. The strategies covered four categories: Regulatory, Resource Allocation, Education and Advocacy, and Local Planning and Policy. The following themes emerged from the evening's discussions:

- **Regulatory:** These strategies have potential to make significant impacts. Use these tools to their best effect to bring Brookline into the 21st century-increase density, reduce parking requirements, and consider ending the overnight parking ban in key areas.
- **Resource Allocation:** Protect existing affordable housing and pursue specific strategies to expand local funds.
- **Education and Advocacy:** Combine strategies into an education platform that captures key decision makers, property owners, neighbors, as well as those most at risk of suffering adverse effects of discriminatory housing policy.
- **Local Planning and Policy:** Partnerships with mission-based organizations and the BHA work. Be strategic in pursuing partnerships and set a tone for development in Brookline.

Workshop Design

The workshop took place on Monday June 20, 2016 in the Brookline Town Hall meeting rooms. Thirty-four people attended. The purpose of the workshop was to engage Brookline community members in an interactive process that both informs and solicits feedback. The main objectives of the forum were the following:

- **Information:** The consultant team reviewed the purpose of the Housing Production Plan process and presented draft strategies for participant consideration.
- **Feedback:** Participants worked in small groups to consider twenty draft strategies in four categories: Regulatory, Resource Allocation, Education and Advocacy, and Local Policy and Planning.

Methods

The workshop began with a presentation by the consultant team. To start, the presentation described the Housing Production Plan process and its purpose. Next, the team presented each of the twenty draft strategies in detail, explaining their purpose and impact. Finally, participants

received instructions about the small group discussion portion of the evening. Participants also answered three digital polling questions.

After the presentation, participants worked in groups of eight or nine on each strategy category. The room contained four tables each facilitated by members of the Housing Advisory Board, Planning Board, or Planning Department, or a consultant team member. Each table represented one of the topic categories, Regulatory, Resource Allocation, Education and Advocacy, or Local Planning and Policy. Participants rotated around the room and spent twenty minutes at each table reviewing and discussing strategies from each category. Participants determined if they thought each strategy was very Important, somewhat important, not Important or if they had no opinion and why. Facilitators recorded themes and noteworthy comments from each discussion. Finally, table facilitators presented a brief summary to the entire group of the discussions they had at their tables at the close of the evening.

A revised site map was also on display throughout the evening. The consultant team drew the revisions to the map from the results of Workshop #3, Site Selection Analysis. Participants were invited to share comments or thoughts on the new iteration. These are transcribed in Appendix II.

Digital Group Polling

The consultants use digital group polling to get a picture of who workshop participants are and what brought them to the workshop. Are participants Brookline residents? Do they work in Brookline? Are they members of Brookline boards and committees, or town meeting members? What is their interest in affordable housing development? Digital group polling consisted of three questions.

- Ninety-one percent of attendees live in Brookline
- Fifty-one percent are members of town boards, committees or Town Meeting
- Thirty-nine percent attended as advocates of affordable housing development
- Twenty-nine percent participated to ensure protection of neighborhood integrity
- Eighteen percent were there to learn more about affordable housing and the HPP process

Small Group Discussions

Regulatory Strategies

Participants responded favorably to the regulatory strategies. Brookline needs to update its zoning by-laws to the “21st century” by reducing parking restrictions and increasing density where appropriate. Participants recognize that zoning changes and regulatory strategies can have tangible and long-lasting effects. As in previous workshops, participants noted Brookline’s parking regulations as a significant barrier to development.

Recommendation: Pursue all five regulatory strategies listed below.

*Strategy #1: Amend zoning in select areas that correspond to site selection analysis, such as commercial corridors, to encourage multi-family or mixed use development (e.g., units/per acre, FAR, height, parking). **Very Important.***

*Strategy #2: Amend zoning to provide more incentives to create affordable units beyond the minimum required by Inclusionary Zoning. **Very Important***

*Strategy #3: Adopt Zoning Overlay Districts that correspond to site selection analysis, or for specific redevelopment sites, to encourage multi-family or mixed-use development with affordable housing. **Very Important***

*Strategy #4: Amend zoning to encourage more diversity of housing types (e.g., micro-units, artists live/work, accessory dwelling units). **Very Important***

*Strategy #5: Promote use of 40B on appropriate sites for development/redevelopment (as correspond to the site selection criteria). **Very Important***

- Despite experiences with “unfriendly” 40B development, participants recognize that 40B can be a useful tool when the town has more control over its application.

Resource Allocation Strategies

There was agreement that the town should be creative in its approach to raising funds for affordable housing. Participants showed less support for re-directing existing funding and more support for innovative approaches to raising new funds.

Recommendation: Pursue strategy #2; Consider how to pursue #3, given it was not the highest priority; Pursue expanded #5 into discrete and specific strategies; Do not pursue strategies #1 and #4.

*Strategy #1: Direct local funds to increase the number of affordable units in proposed developments (less market rate units). **Not Important***

*Strategy #2: Direct local funds and staff time to preserve long-term affordability of existing affordable units with expiring restrictions. **Very Important***

- The town should be proactive in protecting existing affordable housing.

*Strategy #3: Direct local funds to support rehab and preservation of public housing units. **Somewhat Important***

*Strategy #4: Direct greater portion of federal CDBG funds to create affordable housing. **Not Important***

Strategy #5: Expand local funds available for creation and preservation of affordable housing (e.g., examine free cash and inclusionary zoning cash payment policies; examine adopting

linkage fees for new commercial development; adopt Community Preservation Act; examine options for special assessment or property tax incentives). **Somewhat Important**

- Yes, to this strategy but with more specificity. Brookline should be creative and strategic in its efforts to raise funds by using linkage fees and tax incentives that address affordable housing only. There was less support for adopting CPA - participants viewed CPA as having too many competing interests.

Education and Advocacy Strategies

Participants recognize that education about affordable housing –policies, design, who benefits and how, positive and negative impacts- is important for neighbors, policy-makers and leaders, residents and landlords. The people with the most accurate knowledge will become the best advocates for affordable housing but what is the most efficient way to provide this education?

Recommendation: Pursue strategies #1, #2, and #5. Do not pursue #3; Consider how to pursue #4, given it was not the highest priority.

*Strategy #1: Develop a comprehensive housing education plan and partner with community groups to promote broader and deeper community understanding about local affordable housing needs and issues. The plan could include regular forums, use of social media, cable TV Show, newsletters/publications, as well as tours and case studies of successful development projects. **Very Important***

- Partnerships and coalitions that combine resources and strengthen impact should be pursued.

*Strategy #2: Create a part-time Town Housing Assistance Coordinator position to be the point of contact for people in need of housing assistance or those experiencing discrimination. **Very Important***

- If there is funding, create this position and allow current housing staff to focus on creation and preservation of units.

*Strategy #3: Hold regular first-time homebuyer classes. **Not Important***

*Strategy #4: Hold Fair Housing Trainings for landlords, realtors, town officials and employees, and tenants. **Somewhat Important***

- This is an important strategy but as part of an education policy or platform that encompasses more than just Fair Housing.

*Strategy #5: Conduct focus groups for Town Meeting members about affordable housing needs, policies, programs, initiatives, and financing. **Very Important***

- It is essential for leaders and decision-makers to have accurate information about the need for affordable housing and the impact of its development.

Local Policy and Planning Strategies

The town should support and pursue partnerships with proven developers and housing advocates like the BHA and mission-based development organizations. Politically and financially town-owned property may offer the best opportunities for development, so an inventory of properties is essential.

Recommendation: Pursue strategies #1, #3, and #5; Do not pursue strategies #2 and #4.

Strategy #1: Undertake strategic asset plan to consider which town-owned properties could be the highest priorities for development of affordable housing as weighed against other town needs. **Very Important**

- It is important for the town to know what it has and what is available for development. This baseline information may also present new opportunities.

Strategy #2: Work with the Parks and Recreation Department to determine if any portions of parks/recreation properties could be suitable for housing (with recognition that could be various approvals at the town and state level needed to release any parks/rec land for development).

Not Important

- There are possible opportunities for housing development on Parks and Recreation land but the ensuing controversy between housing advocates and open space advocates will paralyze the process.

Strategy #3: Support Brookline Housing Authority to promote additional affordable housing development (could include transfer of existing town-owned property for BHA development).

Very Important

- The BHA is a respected and well-regarded entity. Participants want to continue to support the BHA but wonder whether its capacity can be expanded.

Strategy #4: Seek partnerships with employers to promote employer-assisted housing, this could also include additional transportation options (e.g., in the Longwood area). **Not Important**

Strategy #5: Continue to nurture partnerships with mission-based development organizations to help foster affordable housing development. **Very Important**

- This strategy works. Nurture existing partnerships and pursue new ones.

Appendix I: Transcription of Small Group Discussions

Draft Regulatory Strategies

Regulatory Strategy #1: Amend zoning in select areas that correspond to site selection analysis, such as commercial corridors, to encourage multi-family or mixed use development (e.g., units/per acre, FAR, height, parking).	
Round 1	Comments
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory strategies one of most important strategies
Round 2	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worried Change parking to allow micro units Change parking standard Add more 55+ developments Large buildings should be on Main Sts A tricky issue-what is cost to town?
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wary of unintended consequences Lots of talk about building up-1-story commercial, go to 3-4 stories Worried about shadows when mixed use w/housing above Yes, to less parking, more height Move into 21st century, change parking regs-less Does low FAR limit the necessary size of affordable units? Adjust thinking, people have to get used to density if they support AH
Round 4	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-car requirement bad for development of housing Parking requirement is good to discourage development Depend on experts in town to identify sites and change zoning-citizen doesn't have enough info to make decisions Change ban on overnight parking to allow existing smaller units in N. Brookline to be affordable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking vs. access to public transit is an issue • Reducing parking may increase development-more school children • 2 cars/unit is misguided-should reduce
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Regulatory Strategy #2: Amend zoning to provide more incentives to create affordable units beyond the minimum required by Inclusionary Zoning.	
Round 1	Comments
N/A	
Round 2	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be very careful about long-term results-worried • Incentive important development needs, create open space somewhere, not necessarily on site
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide real public incentives, too often self-serving
Round 4	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to amend regulatory strategy into 21st century-uses and density • Ensure changes are long-term • Incentivize by reducing parking requirements, but not where areas are already dense • Sees 40R as encouraging more density in N. Brookline • Former open parking lots in N. Brook are being developed + displacing affordable off street parking • Consider ending ban on overnight parking

Regulatory Strategy #3: Adopt Zoning Overlay Districts that correspond to site selection analysis, or for specific redevelopment sites, to encourage multi-family or mixed-use development with affordable housing.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overlays could allow change in future (not spot zoning)

Round 2	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried about unintended results • 40R/40S as an example
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wording too vague, worried about unintended consequences • Station St. parcel can't be appropriately developed because of current FAR
Round 4	
N/A	

Regulatory Strategy #4: Amend zoning to encourage more diversity of housing types (e.g., micro-units, artists live/work, accessory dwelling units).	
Round 1	Comments
N/A	
Round 2	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried about unintended results • 55+ units • 40R
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All important need to bring zoning into 21st century, deal with social climate change • May need to change people to change laws
Round 4	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could get diversity from other means • Micro-units should be encouraged in S. Brookline-young people who use bikes, Uber, T, etc.

Regulatory Strategy #5: Promote use of 40B on appropriate sites for development/redevelopment (as correspond to the site selection criteria).	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Town-owned property, mixed use • Emphasize “appropriate” nature of sites • Fastest way to get to 10%-40B + town-owned site

Round 2	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use 40B w Town property, mission developers • Pushing 40B rather than having it done to us • 40Bs are 80% luxury, only 20% AH, problem unless town pushes it, like St. Aidan's • Affordable should be greater % of whole • Beyond 20% and perpetuity
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does "appropriate" mean?
Round 4	
N/A	

Resource Allocation Strategies

Strategy #1: Direct local funds to increase the number of affordable units in proposed developments (less market rate units).	
Round 1	Comments
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize funds for certain types of housing • Rank types of housing that are important
Round 2	
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much funds required to produce too few units
Round 3	
Somewhat Important	
Round 4	
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund deeper affordability • Use more but only if local funds can be leveraged eg., use to buy down to get a deeper subsidy-needs the same income

Strategy #2: Direct local funds and staff time to preserve long-term affordability of existing affordable units with expiring restrictions.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be highest priority • 99 Kent St.
Round 2	
Very Important	
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give priority to displaced persons
Round 4	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep what's affordable

Strategy #3: Direct local funds to support rehab and preservation of public housing units.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	
Round 2	
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation vs. production-shouldn't be "either /or"
Round 3	

Somewhat Important	
Round 4	
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHA should re-syndicate • BHA should not need local funds to maintain public housing • Mixed views

Strategy #4: Direct greater portion of federal CDBG funds to create affordable housing.	
Round 1	Comments
Not Important	
Round 2	
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small amounts
Round 3	
Not Important	
Round 4	
Not Important	

Strategy #5: Expand local funds available for creation and preservation of affordable housing (e.g., examine free cash and inclusionary zoning cash payment policies; examine adopting linkage fees for new commercial development; adopt Community Preservation Act; examine options for special assessment or property tax incentives).	
Round 1	Comments
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property tax relief to help existing owners
Round 2	
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific tax strategies, not straight reduction • Look for new ways to tax • Linkage fee for *** dev't • Hard to raise property taxes w/ overrides coming
Round 3	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusionary zoning important • CPA: politics-competing interests, no consensus on competing interest • Schools: strong effective deterrent to not build AH • Yes-CPA • Yes-Inclusionary zoning • Need to achieve consensus town wide

Round 4	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for mixed-use dev't that can produce more tax revenues• CPA vs school lobby• Commercial dev't w linkage fees• Keep senior housing affordable• Fees for sewer and water add to affordability issues• CPA and any tax increase hurts low income residents• the more tools the better

Education and Advocacy Strategies

Strategy #1: Develop a comprehensive housing education plan and partner with community groups to promote broader and deeper community understanding about local affordable housing needs and issues. The plan could include regular forums, use of social media, cable TV Show, newsletters/publications, as well as tours and case studies of successful development projects.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low/moderate income housing is looked down upon, good to promote and broader deeper understanding • A lot of people don't understand the range of affordable housing (it's not just very low income)-educate about the variety of types of AH • Educate on design and integrated design • Seniors need housing too-break through stereotypes • Education is needed for decision makers-ZBA
Round 2	
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookline Community Foundation already does an annual report-rely on this • Relationship with health centers as advocates • Could housing staff hold public meetings to answer questions? • Cross references on websites b/w housing orgs • Create coalition, broader group that triages housing issues
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could partner with community groups • Educate on 40B • Many residents support AH until its proposed in their neighborhoods • Combine #1 & 4 together
Round 4	

Mixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form coalitions with other depts., commissions, agencies to limit • Brookline is in a period of transition, can channel that, not stop it • Are there successful case studies from elsewhere that can be applied to Brookline? • League of Women Voters spent last year on AH
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Strategy #2: Create a part-time Town Housing Assistance Coordinator position to be the point of contact for people in need of housing assistance or those experiencing discrimination.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about lack of monitoring • Could free up other staff time for other issues
Round 2	
Somewhat/ Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive-is it needed? • Work more closely with other agencies
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a budget to do this? Space in town hall? • Very important-real need
Round 4	
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about limited resources • Prefer to have staff working on creation and preservation of AH

Strategy #3: Hold regular first-time homebuyer classes.	
Round 1	Comments
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less important unless directed to low and moderate buyers • If linked to affordable homebuying • Don't make it financially onerous to the attendees
Round 2	
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already done by other agencies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't duplicate
Round 3	
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookline Community Adult Ed already does this
Round 4	
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be found elsewhere

Strategy #4: Hold Fair Housing Trainings for landlords, realtors, town officials and employees, and tenants.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity commission-do they do it? • Necessary in all projects
Round 2	
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of this goes on at the state level • Important for tenants • Provide a packet of info for everyone or provide at the town's website
Round 3	
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of overall education • Raise public awareness, spread comprehensive message about what AH is • Is there interest? Who would attend?
Round 4	
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement is a priority • Refer to diversity

Strategy #5: Conduct focus groups for Town Meeting members about affordable housing needs, policies, programs, initiatives, and financing.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be all inclusive • Brookline Foundation?
Round 2	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to hear about different policies and programs • These are the policy makers • TM member says this would be helpful
Round 3	

<p style="text-align: center;">Very Important</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get more TM members knowledgeable and involved • These are the leaders of our town- they need to be knowledgeable • More educated citizens would put pressure on TM members
<p style="text-align: center;">Round 4</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p>	

Local Policy and Planning Strategies

Strategy #1: Undertake strategic asset plan to consider which town-owned properties could be the highest priorities for development of affordable housing as weighed against other town needs.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAP is important to weigh needs of town, AH is one component
Round 2	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage properties-put them to productive use • Needed as a long term strategic plan to look to future needs • Town needs population assessment • Key word is “which” parcel • Long term comprehensive plan is needed
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking inventory is important
Round 4	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lots could be an option • Makes sense and will set a tone • Are there any town owned properties? •

Strategy #2: Work with the Parks and Recreation Department to determine if any portions of parks/recreation properties could be suitable for housing (with recognition that could be various approvals at the town and state level needed to release any parks/rec land for development).	
Round 1	Comments
Not/ Very Important (SPLIT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to be stewards of open space, can’t sacrifice open space for housing • Brookline is special because of its open space • Green space advocates have lost sight of being part of a town with many needs • Town already lacks open space • Parks and Rec won’t cooperate

Round 2	
Somewhat Important (SPLIT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could leave it in if there was a swap , some property could be developed, other could be made open space • A political “hot potato”
Round 3	
Somewhat Important (SPLIT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some merit to working with Parks & Rec-Skyline, golf course • Do not lose green space in N. Brookline • Would help to spread AH around town
Round 4	
Not/Very Important (SPLIT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should do a feasibility study • Don’t do it • The parks in Brookline have a lot of character • Parks & Rec has a lot of power-a non-starter • Rec facilities are important to the community-especially urban areas

Strategy #3: Support Brookline Housing Authority to promote additional affordable housing development (could include transfer of existing town-owned property for BHA development).	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to partner with BHA
Round 2	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, we should partner with BHA • BHA is doing badly with properties and waitlists • Not BHA exclusively
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to BHA before other agencies • How much more can they do? • We should look to them first • This seems like top priority
Round 4	
Somewhat/Very	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should explore it • BHA has no cash and too many units to fix, no capacity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with BHA, a capable developer
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Strategy #4: Seek partnerships with employers to promote employer-assisted housing, this could also include additional transportation options (e.g., in the Longwood area).	
Round 1	Comments
Somewhat/Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't know what employers to partner with
Round 2	
Not/ Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Rd may present an opportunity • As long as housing is targeted to low/mod income, doctors are subsidized by hospitals • Hard to achieve • It shouldn't be all non-profits
Round 3	
Somewhat Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is served by this program? • There is long lead time for this • Mixed use development • Should provide housing in the medical area • If opportunity exists, they should pursue it
Round 4	
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to achieve • It's very expensive • Not important-too much work for low return

Strategy #5: Continue to nurture partnerships with mission-based development organizations to help foster affordable housing development.	
Round 1	Comments
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments not compatible with neighborhood (dissenter)
Round 2	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen partnerships with existing
Round 3	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookline has a non-profit CDC, nurture this partnership • Local developers, look to BHA first • Strengthen partnerships

Round 4	
Very Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They want to help the public• BIC is great• Yes, Pine Street Inn

Appendix II: Comments on Revised Site Map

- Don't eliminate all condos. Some owners might be willing to leave their condo with an income-restricted condition.
- All town-owned parking lots are a possibility-some are just easier! But all should be seen as options for air-rights development.
- Be aggressive and innovative while respecting that Brookliners live here because of access to parks and open spaces of all types.
- Access to active fields is nice but terrible when it's along your residential windows!
- It would be great if in selection you could say if this is public or private affordable housing-which is it?
- Affordable housing for single urbanites and elderly (private housing) belongs in upper Brookline.
- Family affordable housing belongs in South Brookline with other families.
- Map should show bus routes, especially #51 & #55.
- 1280 Boylston-building is always up for lease.
- We need more "red" (suitable) properties in South Brookline-get rid of transportation requirement.
- Just as the "Village School" site is being considered for mixed use, so should the Baldwin/Seoule and Baker/14 acre sites be considered for mixed use: school, residential, and commercial.