

APPENDIX C: Monroe County Quality Of Place And Workforce Attraction Focus Group Notes 2019

Ellettsville Focus Group

January 9, 2019

10 participants

What do you enjoy about your community?

- Diversity, entertainment both cultural and athletic that IU provides just “up the road”
- Our small town next to the international portal is the perfect place to live
- Some of us small town Indiana people like living in this small town.
- We are 50 miles from Indy and the airport
- The topography, hilly, is unique and that is wonderful and beautiful
- We have the small town “it takes a village” feel; we know each others’ children
- We are more politically conservative than Bloomington.
- We enjoy the proximity to other cities and the arts, too. Louisville, Indianapolis
- Ellettsville is growing and shedding some of its good old boy mentality
- Some of us deliberately choose Ellettsville over Bloomington because Bloomington has too much red tape, it’s too bureaucratic and, in that way, unfriendly.
- We’d rather pay our taxes to Ellettsville.
- We have more of a “how can we help you” mentality where Bloomington is more “you must do x, y, and z”
- Tradespeople can afford to live and work here while Bloomington is too expensive for them.
- It’s easy to get around town. And now it’s easier, because of all the new roads, to get to Bloomington, too. So living here and going there is even easier than before.

What challenges/threats do you see in your community?

- There are some people who don’t want anything to change, including Ellettsville. That’s unrealistic and can be unhelpful to the town.
- We are hindered by our city representatives all having to work for free or for a small stipend.
- If we were to apply for a grant, who would write the grant? We have no staff.
- We need to define ourselves better as a town so we can plan for the future. Connected to that we need to market ourselves better so people will know why to come here.
- We were important to reconstructing the Pentagon after 9/11. When the trucks were taking the limestone out east, we lined the streets and waved at the trucks. It was inspiring and it reminded us of how important we are in U. S. history. We need to reclaim that part of our character.
- The schools here are key to what is now attracting people to Ellettsville. Our schools used to not be as good but they have improved a lot over the past few years. Also, our schools are less competitive than Bloomington’s so our high school aged children have more opportunities to participate in sport and arts than they would in Bloomington.
- We love being near Bloomington but we also market ourselves as not Bloomington.

Stinesville Focus Group

January 6, 2019

16 Participants

What makes you love living here?

- It's a small town
- You feel safe
- Your neighbors have your back
- Community cares
- People stop if you need help
- Story- her car broke down and someone pulled up right away and asked if they could help her
- She was known as the "California Wife" but she was welcomed in the community
- It's a good place to quiet down because life is slower and more old fashioned
- It has a small town charm in a rural setting where you can hear the crickets and see the wildlife
- You can still see children running around and there is a mix of all ages
- The church has about 80 members and it is liked enough that people travel from outside of Stinesville to go to church there because of the family type atmosphere
- Pastor - he interviewed in many different places and he chose to come here because people take the time to get to know each other, there is community, family, recreation - for him there was more there to life than just work - he could have gone to Cincinnati and he would have done ok in a big city but he made a deliberate choice to come to Stinesville
- People wave at each other and at strangers

Do you plan to stay here?

- When the school closed several people decided to leave or not even move there
- People had to find "new Meaning" to stay because now their children have to be bussed
- They like their festivals (800 people in attendance at Stone Quarry Festival)
- Like that they have girl scouts - good involvement
- Like their soccer league at the Lion's Club and gathers 500 people in the fall
- They like their little post office but they are afraid they will lose it because the building is for sale

What would you like to have here that you don't have?

- A library - small is ok - something where they could exchange books although the book mobile does come by
- Community center where they can gather - the school used to function as a community center - so now they have no space
- Would like the diner reactivated - they had a diner and it was making some money because of the 2 quarries nearby - but then the lady Pat got sick and the diner closed
- They would like an ice cream shop
- They would like an authentic Mexican restaurant
- They would like to have a general store again- it used to be part of the post office but now that the post office is for sale the general store has closed
- Monthly health screening - someone provides it once a year but they would like to have it monthly
- They have no public building
- They have very poor access to health care and some people don't drive
- They would like public transportation because they have to drive them to the doctor
- They would like to have sidewalks - it's dangerous to walk on the road especially with children
- There is also no exercise area or paths or sidewalks
- Better roads
- They would like to be able to use their taxes for their town - 90% of their taxes go to the county
- They would like people to work for the town council - for example grant writers
- They would like more help with housing - senior housing costs are going up and people have to choose between paying rent or buying food or getting medicine
- They would like to own the school building

What are the biggest barriers to being a family in Stinesville?

- Loss of school
- No sidewalks for walking
- No support for head start or pre-school
- Hard to find properties to live in that don't need to be seriously renovated - no move in ready housing
- No day care
- No high speed fiber - poor cell service and dead zones
- Their economy is on the lower end
- The only employer is the quarry and everyone else works in Btown or Ellettsville
- Difficult to get any help from the county - several people don't even realize that Stinesville is Monroe County and then they refer you back to your township when you

need help with a medical bill or rent but the township is very poor so there really is no assistance

What are your top 3 challenges?

- Lack of public transportation
- No economic development
- Poor infrastructure

What would be your priorities?

- Pastor's wife said - when they had the school as their community center they had a little exercise gym there that people could use and they had various clubs
- They had a kitchen at the school that they used to prepare food for needy people in the community - now they don't have that since the school closed
- Something that addresses mental wellness

Young Professionals (HYPE - Helping Young Professionals Excel) Focus Group

January 3, 2019

10 Participants

Introductions:

- Moved here 6 months ago for work
- Schooling in lots of places but ended up moving here so that she could be closer to work -
- Kelly School of business - came here for MA - intended to stay here for 3 years and is still here
- Bloomington is small but big
- Came out of school elsewhere to Bloomington for work - from larger city-
- Lived all over the world and states - came here in 2010 - and after 3 years away they moved back to Bloomington and convinced their bosses in DC to let them work remotely so that they could live and work in Bloomington
- Moved here for work
- Moved here 4 years ago from California - stayed for a relationship and stayed after the relationship - started MBA at Kelley after moving here -
- Been here 4 years and is originally from CA - PHD here BA and MA elsewhere - primary reason was graduate school - and obtained a full time staff position at IU in 21st century scholars program

What would you say if you were selling it to someone why you like living here?

- Community - Specifically arts and culture community - ultimately stayed here because of a community of shared interests in arts and culture
- Took a year and ½ to find things I liked here - but volunteered and found community organizations that I liked - it was hard to break in but once she did it was good - barrier-in knowing what was for IU people and what was for Townies
- Intimidating to go to different events when you don't know anyone - hard transition from student to living here as a community member
- Graduate school is an awkward age/time to be here because you don't fit in either group - ie single 30 something year olds
- 30 without kids - weird age group because most people are in some sort of relationship - or have families - so it's hard to meet people in this age group that are doing things on their own
- Once you do go to an event by yourself and break through the comfort barrier of meeting new people - it is great here - I love that the people who are from here love it here and I love to hear what townies love about this place - townies are enthusiastic about their town and it inspired her to find out what was great about it here
- Some people question Indiana but if they know Bloomington they seem to understand why you would come here
- I went to college in a city and Bloomington had the best of both worlds - Bloomington has some of the offerings that cities have but the charm of a small town - easier to get around here - only 20 minutes to get anywhere here - you can go to basketball game, auditorium or a theater easily - also it is a progressive place
- Guy who had lived all over the world - moved back to Bloomington because it has everything that DC has but it's on a much smaller scale, less expensive and easier - I can do everything I like here without the stress of big city living
- Favorite places - Heiko China and Bloomington
- Not spending a lot of time and money getting everywhere
- Broadway shows, world class performers, auditorium, art museums, jacobs school of music, city paired down to a small town
- Close proximity to outdoors, and being able to be alone in the outdoors in minimal time, sycamore land trust, lake monroe, griffy, mountain biking park and Everything is so close!!
- Bloomington cares so much about the environment much more than other places in Indiana - it's important to me that people are making an effort in environmental conservation

What would drive you away from Monroe County?

- Housing costs are so high and it makes it prohibitive to buy a house

- Downtown Indy was cheaper than Bloomington
- Some people think that it is more possible to buy a house here than in Indianapolis and vice versa
- 12 month leases make it difficult to buy?
- Live in Prospect Hill and my rent is month to month - cheap rent and she pays utilities but it is NOT common enough to have cheap rent and bills - I may leave here because of work opportunities and if I really want to start a family and date because that just doesn't exist here - you just can't date here - 27 year old problem
- Not enough affordable housing
- There aren't places to go if you're not in college or settled down with kids
- But maybe this problem exists everywhere
- Comes down to the number of people in your age group
- No where for people in this age group to go and meet everyone
- Separation between student things and townie things in other areas is really large - but in Bloomington it's more integrated -
- More employment Needed - Having good employment to draw more young people would be helpful
- Retention is an issue - and having good employment would help that
- Bloomington Arts Commission when she started everyone was over 50 - now it's changed some but needs to change more
- Organizations in Bloomington and commissions and non-profits are made up of people over 50 so they don't adequately address needs of under 35 year olds
- I stay because of the community - she works in finance and she is the youngest and only female administrator and without HYPE she doesn't know where she would meet people

Do you intend to keep living here? Why or why not?

- In his mind housing costs are cheap - and you can walk everywhere you go which cuts costs in another place - lives in Bryan Park - Bloomington is walkable and that makes it more affordable
- We say we are a biking city but we are not - our biking lanes are horrible
- Works at university and he would leave if you look at salaries at IU - they underpay compared to other universities
- Not enough diversity- he has worked at IU for 5 years and only knows 2 other Asian faculty members
- 10-15 different interviews over the past few years and he has not advanced and considers that a possible race issue
- After this year, she is ready to move away because she needs a bigger city - this is too small - she accepts it for what it is but she needs more - diversity is a big issue- she

realized here that she is one of only a few Asian people here - for being in the midwest Bloomington has a lot more compared to other parts of Indiana

Do you feel like Bloomington is a welcoming and inclusive community?

- Other people see that there is a lot of diversity here and others feel that there is not as much - seems to be relative to where they came from - a lot of the diversity is in student population and they leave
- Pick up truck with confederate flag and men yelling racial slurs from the truck on the square - someone told her not to worry that they don't live here they live somewhere else - but she didn't feel that that made it any better
- She doesn't hear anything other than English spoken here - doesn't see enough diversity here
- Everyone advises against getting out of your car in Martinsville
- She didn't hang out with only Asian people in Miami but now that she is here she misses the community because it's not only an option
- Jewish people do not feel comfortable here - don't outwardly portray that I am Jewish here
- Not welcoming
- Came here as a refugee - where she is from there are a lot of Bosnian refugees - here she doesn't feel like she can connect with other refugees here - People make comments about her name - it is a diverse place and bigger than the town she grew up in but still not that great
- We have blinders on because we think we are liberal and open - if you are conservative you do not have a place in Monroe County - so we can't have open communications because we are always asserting how progressive we are - we can't address our issues because we don't admit we have them or work on them
- Conservative people don't want to live in Bloomington so they go out to live in Ellettsville and the outskirts.
- Super liberalism makes us not inclusive - it's not a place for you so you are not wanted here
- People who are super liberal aren't as open as they claim to be
- Conservatives are ok with Monroe County but not Bloomington

What would you like to have here that isn't here? Aspects that are not here but exist in other places that you would like to see.

- Public Transportation - live by Smith's shoes and work at foundation and it would take me 1.5 hours and then walk 1.5 miles to get to work on public transit
- Lines on roads are funky and not well enunciated

- Not enough lighting in town to walk to places - scary to walk around
- Lighting is inconsistent - and I run into people that have made me nervous
- Restaurant scene is not as good as people say it is - I would rather drive to Indy for a nice dinner than stay in Bloomington
- Not enough restaurant and bar options - not creative fun options
- 4th street restaurants are scary and should be quarantined
- Bars are catered to undergrads
- Places to be seen would be good
- Maybe there are young people but they are just going to Indy
- Good restaurants and bars for 30 somethings are scarce
- Entrepreneur - do you feel like there are gaps here? - restaurants are just proportional to the population - it's a smaller place
- Public transport, walkability, bike-ability and if more people were living downtown things would arise organically and it would be better
- Someone wanted to open a wine bar here and they couldn't afford to - make it more affordable to open new businesses
- Urban density is an issue
- More density downtown
- Everything felt old - just old
- Movie theater is gross and needs to be renovated
- Movie theater on the westside is ok - college mall movie theater is gross
- Clothing shopping is very limited here
- Arts films here don't exist
- Everything new created is an apartment complex for students
- We are missing something downtown like an urban park - downtown you are just on sidewalks -
- Infrastructure in this town is crazy - there is no direct route from the eastside to the westside
- Too many one way streets
- City politics- you need new voices
- Made friends with transplants in this town and those people left - and I stayed and then you wonder why you are here - I don't love my job- I never really connected with bloomington - I'm out of here
- Almost all of the groups closest friends are their co-workers
- Domino effect of leaving - one leaves on and on
- So much revolves around IU and there is a big disconnect
- IU is here and most of the people employed by Catalent or cook are from Ball State or Purdue - people from IU leave?
- If I want to make a significant career improvement I would need to go somewhere else

Is salary an issue at all?

- YES
- Especially in the non-profit world - Bloomington has incredibly low salaries
- People feel that they are underpaid
- Engineers, business admin, etc across the board all feel that they are underpaid - not true that it balances out for low wages versus lower price in houses
- Leave to get their salary up and come back so that they can make more - they don't want to leave but they have to to increase their salary
- We get criticized for leaving our jobs as young people but that is the only way to increase our wages
- How do they get away with paying so little?
- They stick you within your pay bracket even within IU - once you make x amount you can't make more?
- Everyone is undercutting
- Underpaying is pervasive
- IU gets away with it because their benefits are good - golden handcuffs
- I don't get paid much but my benefits are great and the main reason she stays at IU
- Came here working remotely and took a 20-30% paycut to work at IU - he can still have quality of life and benefits are huge
- Foot in door out of grad school which was important
- If you come from a smaller area bloomington is a bigger place and an "upgrade"
- Cook employs people from 8-9 counties and these are good paying jobs for the people from the counties
- Companies have not kept up and stayed competitive with the change in economy
- Not high enough paying jobs
- Lack of competition between businesses to pay more - they are creating pay that is locked in
- Employers don't invest in their employees - pull from the graduating crop to fill entry level positions however most people don't stay
- The Bloomington factor - they can pay less because people want to be here - take advantage and exploit that

HR/Talent Recruitment Focus Group

January 9, 2019

7 Participants

All things being equal why would someone move to Monroe County/Bloomington vs. somewhere else?

- Schools/ kids - she sells the schools specifically - developing young girls to be more involved in STEM
- Wives are teachers - so there are opps for them to teach and she sells that
- Sometimes people have spouses in the same industry and if she can find jobs or recommend jobs for both of them that's great
- Industry - types of companies that are here - ie life science
- University - they came here to go to school and they want to come back or stay here - university is a good sell - easier to draw people here if they went to IU
- Tells people to google Bloomington not Spencer
- 95% of their management team lives in Bloomington - they are selling Bloomington
- Hard to get people to come here but once they come it's hard to get them to leave
- Stay to raise a family and for quality of life and the community
- When we hire people from engineering schools in the regional area they inevitably stay here because of how nice it is here plus they are close by to where they came from - ie Louisville, Purdue, Indianapolis, Chicago and other engineering schools
- If someone is talking about the big city and how much they like the big city life - she will talk about proximity to cities and the things we have here that are so great - ie Buskirk Chumley has some great shows
- Crane - teachers and administrators

What specific things do you tell prospective employees to draw them here?

- Parks, outdoor recreation, Hilly 100, bicyclers, compares to Oregon -re outdoor life , parks and outdoor recreation is a big seller, dog friendly
- There is a lot of stuff in this community regarding animals
- Lake Lemon / Griffy Lake / boating
- Cultural diversity/ LGBT community/ powerful role that women have in our community
- 1% female engineers when he started to 50% female engineers now
- Women business owners are a minority in our community
- 4th street as a foodie scene
- Tells a story about how he fixed the Dalai Lama's lunch/ she served John Cougar
- Cost of living they say is high - ridiculous - if they start researching then i'm on the downslope
- They are looking at Indiana or Indianapolis or Atlanta or North Carolina we are high - depends on where you are coming from re whether you think it's expensive or not - people from California they do not think it's high
- We buy talent rather than recruit it
- Quality of place for Monroe County very different than Bloomington
- Boston - Minneapolis - Bay Area - and here - much cheaper here

- Suburban, rural, lake - variety of settings/ homes
- Living here as a resident it can be as small or as big as you want it to be and things are close easy access to campus or downtown or country
- People want land but don't want to be so far out side of the city - you can be 7 miles from Bloomington and live in the country - comes up in selling
- No traffic here
- Things that are 1 mile farther seem so far because we are so used to everything being so close

What are the things you don't bring up?

- Leave out traffic when students are in town
- Cost of living
- Homeless population
- Drug addiction
- Shopping is horrible in Bloomington - people feel - they have to go to Indy to do any decent shopping - but there are lots of boutique shops
- When you are unsuccessful - what are the things you keep under the covers
- Really hard as a single person in this town to connect with other people
- Meetup - your opportunities for finding anything to do to connect with people are zero
- There is not a place in bloomington where a 56 year old could go and meet other professional people like me in their 40s, 50s, 60s
- She loves Bloomington and won't move but there really is no place where professionals can go and feel like they are not with high schoolers - she does not bring this up when recruiting - she says it's her biggest challenge
- She says this challenge is still worth it because it's great here
- We cater really well to families, college kids and retirees - but anything else there is no meeting place for people
- Hides that there is not a lot of good shopping
- Lack of part-time daycares and night shift day care (opens at 4am for example) and lack of daycares in general - agreement that this is a huge issue - they end up relying on family
- School corporation - difficult to attract minority people
- Minorities do not feel that this is a diverse place
- She moved to Portland, Oregon and used meetup to find and meet communities - we don't have anything like that here
- Diversity - we think it's so diverse here because the rest of Indiana is so non-diverse
- If you are a minority - there is no social scene, and it doesn't feel diverse at all - and if you go outside of Bloomington at all you will see confederate flags etc - not welcoming

How many of you actively recruit minorities?

- Several raise their hands
- Hard sell - school corporation gets criticized all the time for not having more diversity - but it's a hard sell
- Grow versus buy talent because they recruit from IU - spencer is like being somewhere in texas

When you are recruiting the area - county vs city - how is it recruiting in Bloomington vs the rest of Monroe County?

- Surrounding bigger cities that they can access
- Sells Nashville, Indiana - how nice it is in the fall - brunch - shopping
- Sells all 4 seasons
- Sell mountain bike trail in Brown County
- Sells Richland-Bean Blossom schools - on paper underwhelming - but people have had great experiences with them - a lot of it is parental support
- Nicer commute
- South side of Bloomington has the best school scores - but the Richland-Bean Blossom schools are less competitive and the kids have better experiences

Are you recruiting internationally?

- Physicians on visa sponsorships - recently recruited from Kenya and Abu Dhabi - she sells 4th street and the international food flair - sells university - people think it's really charming - sell more of the cultural spots if she is recruiting internationally
- They are pleasantly surprised by what we have regarding international foods
- People have overwhelming positive experiences here
- New academic health center - new hospital - state of the art - huge selling point
- Quality of healthcare is very important when thinking of moving somewhere
- We have access locally to good health care and health care specialists and within striking distance is Indy for anything we don't have
- Indianapolis has more hospitals per headcount than anywhere else in the us
- childrens, burn unit, best are in Indy
- Hard to get a doctor here and keep one - hard to get in
- Pediatrics we have a strong group - primary care physicians are great but not enough access
- Partnership with iu and IU Health big strength - the buildings will be connected - and that is something she sells

How successful are you are recruiting people to come here?

- For the schools we are highly competitive - we are getting good people - but there are fewer people going into education
- \$10-\$12 / hour positions are very hard to fill - lower level hard to fill

Salary vs hourly - what are the challenges?

- Supply and demand
- \$13/hr and crappy benefits but we can't even keep \$15 per hour
- How many people do we have here that want to work? Not enough
- They want to work but they want to work on their terms
- I like my flexible schedule - people will do lesser jobs for a flexible schedule - money does not matter as much
- Finding people to work 2nd and 3rd shifts - finding people who can work those shifts - difficult
- Entry level/hourly employees - coming for surrounding areas not too far away
- They look at Bloomington as the next biggest place to Indy
- If people come from farther away for the hourly jobs it's a specific situation that they are coming here for
- Lack of the ability to attend work - not fitting their lifestyle for some reason
- Hourly people don't work in the summer and then we have to start all over in the fall
- We hire a lot of people but it's just not enough

If jobs paid more would people stay longer?

- Maybe if they passed the first year and kept building
- Gone by 60 - 90 days
- People can't seem to get to work on time if at all
- If your kids need health insurance they will stay for that but otherwise
- 15 years ago you could get the best people
- Now - if you can pass the drug screen you can get a job
- Cook, Catalent, Baxter, Boston - lots of places
- 200 million dollar expansion - 200 more jobs posted by the end of next week

Are the organizations expanding here for any particular reason?

- We are the largest Catalent site here in Bloomington which is public knowledge - Bloomington and Madison are their biggest sites
- If an organization is successful - you expand it - expand what you have
- Expanded it because they already had the space and there is exceptional talent in this area

- Not a lot of networking events or job fairs in this area - outside of company specific ones - there was one - turnout was not great - there were a lot of temp agencies there - only a couple hundred people came

Is substance abuse or homelessness a non-starter when recruiting?

- Non-issue for recruiting - you hear that more from people who live there
- Non-issue as far as making this a worse place
- I am surprised at what i see as far as the homelessness and mental illness in our town - surprising and disturbing even compared to big cities
- It came up once when i was taking someone to a restaurant - but generally not a big issue when recruiting

Why would someone leave?

- Only get 10% of the people we try to recruit from top talent pools - mostly we grow our talent
- We have people that leave because of salary
- Trailing spouse - high success rate of people who come along for the ride
- We have trouble finding a place for their spouse to get placed
- A lot of people end up having to commute to indy
- People want to live in Bloomington - the community is highly educated and they like the access in the community - sometimes you have more supply and that presses the salaries down and they the cost of living is high - it's a bit out of whack

Final thoughts?

- One place we could send candidates - where you had all the property managers - short term housing - executive housing - rentals
- All of the property managers were all in one place
- mometobloomington/monroecounty.org
- Everything was consolidated
- If there was a place where i could provide a link to a candidate
- When they explore it on their own - it's clunky and weird- makes them wonder if this is the kind of place i want to live?

Minority Focus Group

January 9, 2019

5 Participants

Introductions

Four of the five participants are African American who have all lived in Bloomington for several years. One is a white woman who moved to Bloomington less than 2 months ago. Three of the five work at the Banneker Community Center, two work at IU.

Positive and negative qualities of Bloomington

- There is a need for Black role models in Bloomington. That gives purpose to work since people are needed in their roles.
- While the university shines bright for people, many children in Bloomington fall by the wayside.
- The KKK was very active in Martinsville. This is a legacy that still plagues the area today.
- Several attendees are from a crime ridden part of Indianapolis. They are glad to not be in the danger of that environment. One person reported having to “grow into” the safety of Bloomington.
- There is a strong sense among the group about the importance of reaching back into the community to bring people along to opportunity. Several people said they stay here for the people, for the strong identity among the Black community here.

Lillian Casillas

Director at La Casa

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What do you like about living in Monroe County?

- You can have the small town feel but also have a big town feel - theaters the university - parks and rec - and other organizations - university is good but we are also a very service oriented community - very much in the arts

What would make you move away from Monroe County?

- If it was hateful - I don't want to say that it is - It thinks it is more progressive than it actually is - if our community becomes hateful like the rest of the state I would leave - there is a greater sense of inclusion here
- Issues of diversity - its a fine balance

What do you see as our biggest issues as a County?

- There is a large poverty issue that we don't see
- There are also a lot of services so people get shipped here
- The university
- Especially housing - people have to move further and further out bc housing is so expensive
- With in some service providers there is a lack of understanding of diversity across the board
- There is a thin veil that covers everything where things are silenced
- Trump has made that voice louder -
- I worry that there is a high poverty level
- Substance abuse is an issue - I liked the days when all we had to worry about was liquor and pot and the more intense drugs worry me
- Maybe the poverty and the drugs are connected
- Immigrants feel that it is not as welcoming here as people think
- It's ok to welcome the foreigners that are university affiliated - there is a preference to who we like as immigrants
- La-la land university - she says she is protected to some degree bc of the university but as a foreigner - who is low class - less opportunities and privileges
- There is a vulnerability - they feel like a whipping post
- Understanding who we need to hold accountable for these Issues

Do you see any solutions to these issues?

- Trying to get the latino community connected to the larger community
- They work crazy hours
- CHILD CARE - affects everything - job opportunities etc
- She wishes she had -
- A woman she was talking with says she cannot afford to the auditorium - we give discounts to students but what about the rest of the community
- How could we tap into this
- Who is working with folks who are vulnerable?
- There was a venezuelan family that didn't speak English but wanted to be involved in cardinal theater group - the director at the time was latino and he made an effort to include people
- Include people isolated at the fringes
- Show that these things are REALLY for everybody
- That ground needs to be broken
- We are doing our inclusion on our own terms
- Mexican gateway?
- We could involve more people who can't afford to come

Is there anything else you would like to add?

- We have a lot of resources
- We have the bones - but we have gotten comfortable in how we do things
- We may need to regroup

- We are ahead of the game so we think we are good but people are disenfranchised and cliquey
- Progressives really need to rethink our own behaviors
- Very little cross pollination between minority groups - more cross pollination would be good
- Because even within these minority groups there are bad attitudes towards each other
- In that sense - people leave - the faculty comes in because they are sold a product and then they get here and realize that that product doesn't exist

Bloomerang Focus Group

January 9, 2019

3 Participants

How did you end up where you are today?

- Graduated from IU 3 years ago - went to Austin to work on cloud tech and then she moved back to Bloomington to help her aunt with a physician's recruiting team and moved back 3 months ago
- From southern indiana - moved to east coast and work for parks service on east coast for 10 years and then she needed to move back to help her father - came specifically to Bloomington for her significant other and cowork space - father is one hour from here - culturally she knew that she would like it here best - been back now for a year and a half
- Graduated from IU in May - her husband is still here and in school - she works for tree Frog Marketing - she is the content manager - she also really loves the cowork environment here

What do you enjoy most about Monroe County?

- Nature related things - Bryan Park , Brown County - coming to IU opened her eyes to different perspectives and backgrounds and she feels that this place is culturally diverse
- Open space and diversity of open space that is amazing - Lake Monroe and Morgan Monroe - opportunity for diversity of recreation in the area - hiking boating fishing - Yellowood
- Culturally this is one of the more diverse areas in Indiana
- She could come back to Indiana and replicate some of the places she loved in the east coast - yoga, coffee shops etc
- I was in a big metro area - what drove you back here from a destination city - Austin
- I was able to say yes to living here bc there are so many open minded individuals here - business leaders, politicians - everyone is very well connected and excited about making this a better place
- Coffee shops are nice and having the university here is great too and a lot of them stick around and the outdoor aspect is huge - there is an extreme number of options for outdoor activity here
- I think another big draw was cost of living - compared to east coast living or other major urban centers this is dirt cheap - i could never have afforded to buy land or a house in another city - now i am in the process of buying a house - I also am on a telework

agreement - so my salary is a Philadelphia salary but i would still be good if i had an Indiana salary

- My boyfriend and I just bought a house here and we could never have done that in Austin

Do you intend to keep living here long term - why or why not?

- I do - my boyfriend is living here and he is working remotely for his tech job in Austin - easy access to everything we need or want - no commute - great cost of living - remote work is huge
- I am staying here because I have a job here that is hopefully going to be a long term career for me
- There is conversation about increased IT development in Bloomington
- We were considering a lot of different options across the country of places to move - but we decided on here for the financial security here that would allow us to take more adventures abroad - plus with I69 and the proximity to Indy and the airport - is a big draw
- We want to be here as our homebase - it gives up a foundation for a home and jumping off place to explore the world
- Telecommuter - what is your sense of intending to live here - probably not - from different areas in Indiana - depends on where he gets a job because optometrists make more than writers - I would like to stay close by so that we can come and visit
- I thought i wanted to live in a big city - but people are so much nicer and more welcoming here - love The Mill - Pat east knows my name - you can network with anyone here and get to know people
- Loved my professors at IU

What things do you dislike about Monroe County?

- Traffic and parking is tough
- Not as good as a cost of living as we could find farther north in Indiana - our bills are a little high for us because I am the sole bread-winner
- Like indianapolis growing tech scene and that will continue to grow and attract people
- Frustration - lack of jobs here - especially people late 20s and early 30s - I know a lot of people that would love living here but could not find and job that would fit their skill set - been a problem for a while
- Not as much development because of government barriers or different local business - tough when we are not growing in ways that we could be to attract more people here
- I have been looking for a job locally - I like my tele work but i miss being part of a team as a job - The Mill is great but we are all doing our own things for our own companies - so i've been exploring that - i applied for a job at Hanapin - but because of local community if you are not part of the Bloomington crowd I don't have name recognition - so it takes a little time to break into that - hesitancy if you are real or long term - there is also a divide between the community and the university - when I first got here people advised me on how to avoid the "kids"
- Who is the university population - who is the year round
- Tough to meet people in your age or industry bracket who are long term residents

- Income is important - cost of living is affordable here but there is an income inequality here and i don't know if we are addressing that

Do you sense a divide between the east and west sides of Bloomington?

- Yes - we are buying a house on the west side bc we want a little land and a cheaper price point - we were living on the se side
- Yes - completely - I worked a cook for a while - its a completely different community - so many people live over there - it needs to be developed more
- Our closing date is in February - but this past Sunday we decided to try groceries on the westside - price is really different - cars in parking lot - significantly different demographic on the west side
- I don't think the westsiders want to be part of the east side
- Makes Bloomington attractive because you can live in Bloomington but have all these different options of what kind of lifestyle you have here - unique characteristics of Monroe County
- I was in my IU bubble but in my 3rd year we started working with Opportunity House - noticing that the homes and the cars and the clientele was very different from the east side - very different from IU and Krogucchi to the west side

How do you perceive crime and safety in Bloomington?

- Feel a little scary walking the streets alone - the street lights are an issue
- Bloomington I feel very safe and comfortable - I never think about crime here - but I don't walk around downtown much at night
- With just a few female friends I feel a little less safe
- The only time I did not feel safe was going through one of the undergrad housing areas on a Saturday night - drunken students are scary

What are your thoughts on workforce attraction in Monroe County?

- If you are not making med devices or the university - there is not a lot of industry here to employ people or attract people

If you are single - is it hard to meet people?

- If someone is coming here with a family or wants to start a family
- I don't really know what that means for them - not sure about schools here
- Schools here are good
- Hard to make friends and meet people if you don't have kids

Is this a welcoming community or a diverse community?

- Both - university helps with that
- I think about it as diverse for Indiana or diverse for the Midwest
- I don't know if diversity here is the goal but I do feel that it is welcoming here

- Did not find it inclusive with the niche part of the jobs

How do you think the government is handling the issues of homelessness and addiction in Monroe County?

- Homeless situation on Kirkwood seems to have gotten better - shelters seem to be good
- In the job search that i have been doing - i've been looking at the social work field to work in addiction
- I see so many organizations that are focusing on addiction but it seems like all of the social work organizations here have bad reviews and i don't know why that is
- Nationwide issue
- Health care is also an issue but seems nationwide
- I know people who are involved with a lot of different nonprofits who are doing a lot to address addiction
- Not enough was being done in Austin at all - so it looks better here

Do you see a lack of public parks and recreation areas?

- I wish there were publications that would tell everyone where all of the trails and parks are - some document would have been nice to find everything
- Switchyard Park is going to be good
- Seems like the westside is lacking - more rural space than the eastside
- Leonard springs is nice
- Not as many on west side as the east
- Health and wellness wise - I could see the diversity of gyms that were available - Hoosier Heights Climbing - Himalayan Salt Cave - really cool resources here for health and wellness
- I never think more parks are a bad idea
- B-line is wonderful - incredibly busy at all times of day - might be nice if there were more trails like that

Any other thoughts about local government?

- It's very tough to get involved in the government if you are just moving here - seems like there could be more groups or sanctioned events - additional ways to provide feedback
- City Council - people have been on that for years
- I don't know how to get involved in government and creating changes I want to see happen here
- Huge fan of parks and rec - there is a vibe here - to get community garden plot i had to go to parks and rec dept
- Seems very high functioning
- People take pride in their jobs - and how it helps the community
- Government seems very accessible to how I've needed to use it so far
- Farmer's market - all agree is a huge plus
- There is a winter market that is not sponsored by the city of bloomington
- The winter market is crowded and not at a public school - worth going to but it is dense

Final thoughts about quality of life and workforce attraction?

- Going through the name change process here was really easy - pleasantly surprised by that