



## FOREWORD

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### The Foundation

Several general presumptions and findings underscore the need for a Growth Policies Plan in Bloomington. These are:

- *Some Bloomington residents have the perception that growth has overrun the effective capacity of urban infrastructure - especially roadways. Moreover, it is commonly perceived that much of the development that has occurred during recent years has resulted in more, but not necessarily better, growth.*
- *During the past three decades, much of the growth of Bloomington and its surroundings was driven by growth associated with Indiana University. Over the next decade, Indiana University will continue to be a vital and stabilizing force in the local economy but less of a factor compelling growth.*
- *Finally, there has been no broadly shared sense of what constitutes appropriate growth and development for Bloomington.*

These elements have generated a strong and compelling need for a new set of community based policies that can be translated into mechanisms for positive and progressive change.

Based upon this need, what does the Growth Policies Plan offer?

The Plan is designed as an instrument of public interest to guide development decisions over the long-term. It establishes principles of appropriate and beneficial development and provides a cohesive structure through which various urban activities can be spatially related.

*The Plan creates a framework or context for public policy as it may affect the urban form and built environment of Bloomington.*

*The Plan is not site specific nor does the policy plan anticipate all possible special situations that may apply to a particular development project.*



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*The Plan adopts a long-term view and is intended to be prescriptive rather than retroactive. It does not automatically fix or correct existing problems. It does seek to eliminate past problems from arising in future developments.*

*The Plan is not a regulatory tool. Clearly, the policies establish a firm public resolve through which regulatory tools and implementation standards can evolve. The plan expresses a clear intention of what the zoning ordinance shall be.*

*The Plan is not absolute. It encourages flexibility and compels constant review and revision as development and socio-economic conditions change.*

*The Plan provides guidance for the development of both undeveloped lands as well as redevelopment sites, where important policy directions can either reinforce or detract from the vitality and quality of Bloomington's existing character.*

*The Plan establishes a cohesive and integrated structure by which future development decisions - public and private - shall be guided.*

*Finally, the Plan sets in motion a series of planning and evaluation actions that will cause the policies to change over time.*

*The Plan will serve as a stable point of reference to evaluate the effect of planning and development on our communal identity.*

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### Priorities & Relationships

Some of the current priorities of the Bloomington community have already emerged through the Plan

update process. For example, it is clear that citizens place a higher priority on preserving greenspace than on encouraging further residential and commercial growth of undeveloped property. Citizens also recognize that not widening City streets will increase traffic congestion in the short term, yet many still support such a concept because it may be a necessary way to facilitate alternative transportation. These and many other priorities reflected in the Plan must serve immediately as a guide to public policy decisions. However, many hard choices remain to be made during the implementation of the Plan. These hard choices must be made on the basis of significant public input. It is essential, therefore, for Bloomington's citizens to remain involved in the ongoing process of making the necessary hard choices that will arise in connection with the Plan's implementation.

In making hard choices, certain aspects of the GPP should be seen as integrally related to other aspects of the Plan. One important example would be the relationship between future retail commercial and residential development on the one hand, and the Plan's policies concerning greenspace, tree preservation, and provision of bicycle and walking paths on the other hand. Citizens have strongly expressed the view that, over the past thirty years, retail commercial and residential development has occurred at a pace that has outstripped the community's ability to maintain its desired quality-of-life standards. Therefore, during the next ten years, it will be important for the planning process to ensure that these quality-of-life amenities are provided along with further development in the commercial and residential sectors.

This does not mean that greenspace, bicycle paths, and other such amenities must necessarily be provided or paid for by the developer in order to obtain permission to proceed with future commercial or residential projects. In fact, it may be neither equitable nor legal to insist on



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such developer contributions in at least some instances. Rather, the idea is simply that the community has the right to expect that quality-of-life amenities (parks, roads, schools, etc.) be able to “keep up” with the pace of development, through whatever public or private funding methods may be available. By recognizing the integral nature of the relationship between commercial and residential development on the one hand, and quality-of-life amenities on the other hand, citizens will be far more likely to achieve higher quality-of-life to which they collectively aspire.

### Monitoring the Growth Policies Plan

In order for the GPP to become a true guide for directing long-term community development, it is vital that the Plan be periodically reviewed and updated. More specifically, several components are critical to the long-term success of the Plan and must be integrated into the document.

- *Measurable outcomes or benchmarks should be developed to gauge the community’s progress on Plan goals and implementation measures. Examples of initiatives that could be benchmarked include areas of preserved greenspace, increased numbers of downtown housing units, and miles of new sidewalks or trails constructed. The Planning Department and Plan Commission shall work with stakeholder groups to create these benchmarks and incorporate them into the GPP document.*
- *Within the next two years, a visioning process should be initiated to determine the long-term priorities for Bloomington and its surroundings. This visioning process should be a grassroots effort not focused solely on growth and development issues. Results of this visioning process shall be incorporated into amendments to the GPP.*
- *If warranted, the Plan should be amended to reflect Plan Commission/Common Council decisions regarding development petitions. Over the last 11 years of the GPP existence, there has never been an update of either the Critical Subarea portion or the Land Use Map portion of the GPP to reflect significant land use decisions by these bodies. If the Plan Commission or Common Council is considering a development project that in their view would represent a deviation in the GPP’s policies for a particular area, a comprehensive plan amendment should be simultaneously considered as an aspect of the developer’s proposal.*
- *The Growth Policies Plan should be viewed as a living document. A regular process of analysis and revision must occur to ensure that the goals and policies contained in the GPP remain valid. The Plan should be reviewed, and amended if necessary, on a cycle of every two years at minimum. More comprehensive updates are recommended at five and ten year intervals. This process will allow the GPP to change in a manner that reflects the evolution of the values and development of the community itself.*



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## Guiding Principles Introduction

It is not the intent of the Plan to have one principle take precedence over the other. Each principle is critical and contributes to the strength of the entire policy document. When evaluating the comprehensive plan compliance of a particular proposal, decision-makers should recognize that determining project compliance will often not be a black and white issue. Decision-makers must determine which principles and underlying policies are most relevant to a given proposal. In many cases, certain proposals will comply with some principles, be unrelated to others, or even appear to be in conflict with a particular principle. In this case, it is incumbent upon the Planning staff to provide a detailed analysis and recommendation concerning the applicability of each principle and its underlying policies.

In order to help achieve the community’s planning goals outlined in the Vision Statement, the GPP outlines Seven Guiding Principles which, taken together, form the policy essence of the Plan. These Principles are as follows:

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3. Leverage Public Capital .....	pg 12
4. Mitigate Traffic .....	pg 14
5. Conserve Community Character .....	pg 17
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### Compact Urban Form

Compactness is a difficult characteristic to perceive if one is viewing land development on a site by site basis. It is the broader view of the community that provides the best observation of compactness. In essence, the value of compactness represents the value of spatial organization, planned growth and public fiscal responsibility. Compactness stands opposite of urban sprawl – as denoted by low density, discontinuous residential growth, and strip commercial development. Pragmatically, contained development is less costly to develop and serve. Spatial expansion costs more because sewer lines, roadways and school bus routes are longer. Additionally, discontinuous development at the urban periphery interrupts open space. Transit service is also negatively impacted by sprawl. Compact urban form creates an environment in which transit service can thrive.

Bloomington has a series of barriers beyond which urban development becomes either difficult or inappropriate. To the southeast, the Lake Monroe watershed restricts development. To the east, topography limits the magnitude of development possibilities. Beyond State Road 37 to the west, the peculiarities of karst topography create prohibitive development circumstances. To the north, the steep slopes of the Lake Griffy watershed also constrict development.

In order to achieve compact urban form, outward expansion of development must be limited through effective growth management policies. At the same time, these policies should be supplemented by strategies to increase housing densities within the planning jurisdiction. These strategies must also be coupled with a strategy for containing commercial development. Rather than open up large amounts of land for new commercial development on the periphery, the emphasis should be on providing incentives to re-use vacant or underutilized commercially zoned sites. An example of this would be redevelopment of the ST Semi-Con property in Downtown Bloomington.

To compact also means to integrate - to be drawn in. In Bloomington, there are strong environmental constraints which push development inward. Much of what makes Bloomington special is its shared “sense of place”. While this sense cannot always be defined to the satisfaction of all interests, it is irrevocably connected to

Bloomington’s town core and the harmony of its architecture, its neighborhoods and their respective contexts. Disorganized development sprawl dilutes this sense of place.

Compactness does not, however, mean or imply static population growth for the community as a whole. Within the planning horizon of the next ten years, Bloomington can physically accommodate more people, more employment, more homes and more activities within its current planning jurisdiction. Yet, in order to assure that population growth does not translate to a reduction in the perceived quality of life, Bloomington must grow with care, with conviction and with efficiency. Compactness implies directing growth - directing growth toward those locations where it is desirable, where it is in the public interest to grow, and where options conducive to future growth can be exercised.

Compact urban form refers to the overall development pattern. It does not imply the intrusion of higher density development into established neighborhoods, crowding, or high rise development of a scale more appropriate to larger cities. Compact form is not to be achieved at the expense of greenspace, environmental protection, and other policies.

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#### Compact Urban Form Goal

Create a compact land use development pattern that is sufficiently compact to provide efficient delivery of services, to effectively manage existing infrastructure resources, and to maximize return on public expenditures while limiting sprawl and maintaining the special nature of Bloomington.

#### Policy 1: Limit the Spatial Extent of Community Growth

As the community has expanded outward from its beginnings at the urban core, an ever-greater strain has been placed on the City’s ability to provide adequate urban services. Likewise, some citizens have stated that it has become increasingly difficult for residents to enjoy the quality of life that a diverse urban community like Bloomington offers. Bloomington must look inward for opportunities to accommodate continued growth within the existing limits of the community. The first part of any serious strategy to accomplish this is to explore methods of curtailing outward expansion.



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Land use planning policies offer one method of achieving this end. Clearly, the west and southwest sectors of Bloomington offer the most opportunities for residential growth, while areas to the east and southeast have been virtually built-out with residential development in recent years. Bloomington must work to shift more residential development to the west and southwest as development limits are reached in other sectors of the community. This development will not compromise nor diminish the conservation of sensitive areas and will take advantage of opportunities for greenspace preservation and acquisition.

Sewer extension policies can also be utilized as a tool for directing development to appropriate areas of the community. Currently, sewer extensions can be granted for developments located outside of the City's planning jurisdiction upon positive findings rendered by the Monroe County Plan Commission. This creates a scenario whereby another agency is providing policy guidance for the location of an important City service. A revision to this sewer approval process is clearly needed. The first step is to convene a series of meetings including both the City and County Planning Directors, the City Utilities Department, City and County decision-makers, and regional utility providers (Ellettsville Utilities, the Lake Monroe Regional Waste District, etc.). These meetings should be oriented towards determining likely areas of future growth as well as the associated geographic areas where service should logically be provided. The result of these discussions would be the creation of both sewer service districts as well as non-service areas. Once these determinations have been made, the City shall proceed in amending its existing Utility Service Overlay Map as well as its associated Utility Service Board rules and regulations regarding sewer extensions. In the interim, the City should strongly discourage the extension of sewers beyond its planning jurisdiction.

### *Implementation Measures*

**CUF-1** Encourage new housing starts toward the west and southwest sectors of the community; discourage urban development to the east of the east fork of Jackson Creek; and north and east of the State Road 45/46 Bypass.

**CUF-2** Develop revisions to the City's existing Utility Service Overlay Map as well as associated Utility Service Board rules and regulations to create sewer service districts as well as non-service areas. In the interim, strongly discourage sewer extensions beyond the planning jurisdiction.

### **Policy 2: Increase Residential Densities in the Urbanized Area**

As a counterbalance to policies that limit the spatial expansion of growth, denser infill development in areas that already contain City services must be encouraged. Increasing the density of residential development within the community can provide several benefits. Concentrating densities in certain areas allows others to be preserved as greenspace, a vital urban amenity. Further, as densities increase, the efficiency and quality of urban services can be improved, and public transit becomes a much more feasible service.

The 1995 Zoning Ordinance attempted to address this issue by creating such incentives as the Planned Residential Overlay (PRO) district and the Downtown Development Opportunity Overlay (DDOO). Although overall residential densities have increased since the early 1990s, both overlay concepts have received some criticism from developers, neighborhood associations and historic preservation interests. While the overlay regulations achieved some measure of success, they were clearly not an adequate solution. These issues must be resolved as a crucial step in bringing residential growth and vitality back to the urbanized area.

### *Implementation Measures*

**CUF-3** Revise the Planned Residential Overlay requirements of the Zoning Ordinance to provide incentives for the development of mixed-use neighborhoods on infill development tracts. In general, however, multifamily residential developments that are likely to serve significant numbers of Indiana University students should be strongly discouraged in locations distant from the IU campus.



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**CUF-4** Revise development regulations to increase the allowed level of residential density to 100 units per acre in the Downtown Commercial District. Link this increased density with required design standards (i.e. building setback, height, roof orientation, blank wall controls) and appropriate historic preservation for specific areas located within the Downtown Commercial District. Revise the Downtown Development Opportunity Overlay (DDOO) district to remove high-density incentives in specific areas which could result in a negative impact upon historic and culturally important buildings and districts.

**CUF-5** Revise development regulations for near-downtown and near-campus areas to encourage increased residential densities.

### Policy 3: Redirect Commercial Development

Like residential growth, the continued spread of commercial growth has a profound impact on the community. As the locations of commercial centers move farther from established residential areas, people must spend more time driving to reach them, and thus create increased traffic throughout Bloomington. This is a pattern of development that has occurred over several decades, and has pushed the community away from the pedestrian-friendly vision that residents share.

A renewed emphasis must be placed on closely scrutinizing the location of new commercial development, especially on the periphery of the community, while providing incentives for infill-style commercial projects. This incentive strategy is particularly needed along arterial roadway corridors that are zoned for commercial development, but have been largely bypassed in favor of vacant land at the edges of the community. Commercial retail growth in well established commercial centers such as College Mall and Whitehall Crossing must be contained if such incentives are to have a substantial impact. To this end, no new regional commercial land has been identified in the plan, placing a greater focus on redevelopment of existing commercially designated land to meet future needs.

Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized commercial sites for uses compatible with prior uses of the same site can present significant advantages for the community. Such redevelopment reduces the need for consumption of raw land and avoids conflicts with neighborhoods over the impacts of new development. Such redevelopment, including adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings, can help to achieve many of the

GPP's goals. Therefore, such redevelopment should be encouraged through incentives and a streamlined, flexible regulatory process.

Redirecting commercial development also encompasses the form that commercial development should take in the future. Current commercial development patterns are characterized by one-story buildings set back great distances from roadways, large expanses of parking lots and frequent driveways along streets. The City should investigate zoning strategies that facilitate multi-story construction, mixed uses and potentially structured parking in the redevelopment of commercial areas. This would allow for the evolution of existing commercial areas into high-density nodes containing residential components and connected by transit and other alternative transportation facilities.

The final element of directing commercial growth goes back to the concept of a pedestrian friendly community. Certain neighborhoods may be able to support small-scale commercial development at strategic locations within them. This must only be done after the creation of neighborhood commercial development guidelines to ensure that any new commercial development is compatible in scale and design with existing neighborhoods. Neighborhood associations must be involved in the development of both the guidelines and site selection for new neighborhood commercial nodes.

### Implementation Measures

**CUF-6** Direct commercial development to existing commercially zoned land, and provide incentives to encourage the re-use and improvement of vacant or under-developed commercial sites, particularly along arterial roadway corridors.

**CUF-7** Restrain new commercial development in the southeast sector of the community while providing opportunities for re-use and redevelopment of existing commercial land such as the College Mall shopping center.

**CUF-8** Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide opportunities for mixed uses, multi-story construction and structured parking in community and regional scale activity centers.

**CUF-9** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow the development of appropriately located, designed and scaled neighborhood serving commercial centers in all geographic sectors of the community.



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### Nurture Environmental Integrity

Human activities are causing unprecedented rates and types of global environmental changes. Humans have transformed nearly half of the Earth's habitable land to urban and agricultural systems, altered atmospheric chemistry, and accelerated rates of both species extinctions and invasions into previously unoccupied habitat.

As a result, awareness of environmental issues has increased significantly over the last thirty years and achieving a sustainable biosphere has arguably become society's most pressing challenge. Many contend that the concept of "sustainability" - meeting society's present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs - must become the organizing principle for our society. Bloomington has always fostered a keen sense of environmental awareness and is committed to environmental stewardship. Therefore, it is not surprising that environmental protection and sustainability are integral components of this Guiding Principle.

This principle recognizes that the natural environment in Bloomington is an important and vital element of the community. Natural ecosystem processes provide basic life support goods and services such as air and water purification, waste decomposition, food production, and recreational opportunities. Thus, the provision of adequate greenspace and the protection of sensitive environmental areas must be considered as necessary public facilities similar to utility services or roadway capacity.

The principle of Environmental Integrity acknowledges the complex matrix of interrelationships within the environment that must be maintained and enriched to sustain these ecosystem processes, goods and services. As a policy goal, this principle states that the environmental integrity of Bloomington should not be compromised or diminished through future development. Moreover, environmental stewardship should result from development processes. Environmental integrity can be best sustained through proactive measures such as the preservation and enhancement of natural systems rather than the mitigation of negative effects. In addition, environmental integrity demands an understanding and respect for the environment focused on preserving and enhancing biodiversity and sustainability. Development

must be compelled to respect and complement natural system processes through a more holistic vision.

Bloomington has a number of environmentally sensitive areas, including flood plains, karst features, steep slopes and wetlands. This plan adopts values that clearly identify these environments in advance of land development activities and ensures that development does not impose on them. When development does occur near sensitive areas, conservation techniques and best management practices must be employed to encourage the protection of environmental quality. Since the science and technology of environmental protection is always evolving, the City should regularly review and update its environmental ordinances to ensure that they reflect the most effective environmental standards. Furthermore, this plan calls for greater education and awareness about sustainable development, including the day-to-day changes in energy and resource use required to move our city towards a sustainable future.

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#### Nurture Environmental Integrity Goal

Promote an ecologically sound environment through nurturing, protecting, preserving and enhancing natural resources and through advancing sustainability.

#### Policy 1: Enhance Karst Feature Protection

In Indiana, karst geology is characterized by a limestone bedrock with surface and subsurface features such as sinkholes, swallowholes, springs, caves, and vertical shafts. Karst terrain plays a significant role in Bloomington's hydrologic cycle, and dominates the natural landscape. Where karst terrain exists, development must adequately protect these features to avoid negative impacts on surface and subsurface water flow, as well as to avoid unstable ground.

Currently, the City of Bloomington does not possess a comprehensive inventory of karst features to help guide future decisions concerning zoning and development regulations. An inventory should be completed prior to the update of the City's Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, conservation easements must be more widely used for karst feature protection. These conservation easements could be used to protect both individual features and more dense karst topography.



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### *Implementation Measures*

- NEI-1** Create a detailed inventory of surface and subsurface karst terrain features in order to develop a protective zoning overlay. After this inventory is completed, areas found to be dense with karst features should receive stronger protection than individual sinkholes. The preservation of sinkhole clusters rather than just individual features is essential to groundwater protection.
- NEI-2** Require surface sinkholes and other karst features to be protected by conservation easements.
- NEI-3** Update the current Karst Terrain requirements of the Zoning Ordinance to reflect recent scientifically accepted karst protection practices.

### **Policy 2: Protect Trees and Greenspace from Development Impacts**

Open space and greenspace enhances the quality of life in Bloomington. To enhance the preservation of open space and greenspace, the City must adopt a detailed tree preservation ordinance. The objective of this measure is to make regulations concerning tree preservation more specific towards the preservation and enhancement of existing trees and greenspace for all commercial, industrial and residential developments. This will place an emphasis on maintaining species diversity, preserving blocks of vegetation to create corridors, and preserving tree canopy. If trees must be removed as part of any development, then developers shall be required to adhere to tree replacement standards that will be created as a component of this tree preservation ordinance.

In order to preserve Bloomington’s rich and diverse environment, a “no-net-loss” policy for community wide tree crown coverage must be implemented. In fact, the City should strive to implement mechanisms to increase Bloomington’s tree crown coverage. In doing so, the use of native tree species will be encouraged and the use of invasive exotic species will be prohibited.

Furthermore, the City must strive to expand the range, diversity, and magnitude of greenspaces, passive natural areas, and urban landscapes in Bloomington. This land preservation can be accomplished through a variety of means, whether it is through private conservation easements, dedications of land, or when appropriate, through the purchase of land. The City should take a leadership role in working with non-profit groups who are involved in greenspace acquisition and provide

partnership opportunities. In fact, the City has already worked with groups such as the Sycamore Land Trust and various community foundations to obtain environmentally sensitive property such as Lake Griffy and Latimer Woods. Partnerships such as these have increased the City’s park acreage from 1779 acres in 1996, to 2160 acres in 2001. That presents a 21% increase over that five year timeline. However, a study done by the City of Bloomington Environmental Commission indicates that in general, overall greenspace in Bloomington is still being lost at a rate of 2.5% per year.

Currently, the City has a fund dedicated to preserving greenspace and open space. However, this fund may not be sufficient to meet community expectations and/or needs. In response to this, a policy to allow the City to pursue the available options for expanding current greenspace acquisition will be implemented. Acquisition of greenspace for passive preservation should be accomplished along with other City land acquisition needs. These efforts will not only include coordination between City departments, non-profit organizations and other agencies, but will also include developing a more effective City-wide greenspace funding mechanism.

To help facilitate this endeavor, the Planning Department must conduct a comprehensive environmental resource inventory within the City Planning jurisdiction and create a greenspace plan. This will allow for the identification of key greenspace, with the priority focused on identifying sites with environmental constraints such as karst geology, steep slopes, wetlands and sensitive habitats. The completed greenspace plan would provide a foundation for a similar study that could be undertaken by Monroe County. Additionally, results of this inventory must be incorporated as an overlay to the City’s updated Zoning Ordinance.

### *Implementation Measures*

- NEI-4** Adopt a tree preservation ordinance that emphasizes species diversity, protecting blocks of high quality vegetation and natural corridors, and preserving community wide tree crown coverage.
- NEI-5** Revise landscaping standards to better address tree crown replacement and enhancement; encourage the planting of a range of native vegetation while prohibiting the planting of invasive exotic species; and require long-term bonding for new landscaping.



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- NEI-6** Encourage utility placement underground, especially in new developments, to reduce the need to trim the crowns of trees growing underneath utility lines.
- NEI-7** Conduct an environmental inventory of land located within the City planning jurisdiction allowing for the identification of high quality open space and greenspace. This inventory will form the basis of a joint effort between the City and non-profit organizations to explore acquisition opportunities.
- NEI-8** Develop an ongoing program to acquire greenspace for passive recreation and conservation with an emphasis on obtaining substantial blocks of environmentally sensitive lands with high quality vegetation. This will be done along with other City land acquisition needs and/or priorities. Specific strategies should include public outreach, pursuing available grants and loans, developing a more effective City-wide funding mechanism, coordinating efforts between City departments and non-profit organizations, and the use of private conservation easements and dedications of land.

### **Policy 3: Protect and Enhance Water Quality**

Bloomington contains main channels and tributaries of several perennial streams. The water quality and aquatic communities of these creeks are heavily dependent on the quality of their tributary network and contributing watersheds. The majority of water resource's land-water interface and nutrient trapping ability occurs in its headwater tributaries. The loss of water storage capacity in these tributaries results in increased downstream flooding, erosion and channel instability. The City of Bloomington recognizes that we cannot protect the quality of our stream systems without conserving the health and quality of their tributaries. Therefore, protecting and enhancing existing water resources, including intermittent and ephemeral streams, is a high priority for the City of Bloomington.

In order to effectively plan and manage Bloomington's water resources, all new development projects must incorporate best management practices for mitigating the effects of construction to control the quality of stormwater runoff diverted to them. The City will achieve this by taking a watershed protection approach that endorses the use of such measures as bio-filtration and streamside graduated buffer zones. This will also require an update of the existing Water Resource

Ordinance. In addition to this regulatory change, the City of Bloomington shall initiate a stormwater quality monitoring program to provide baseline studies for future studies and to encourage public outreach.

### *Implementation Measures*

- NEI-9** Develop regulations that require water quality best management practices for controlling stormwater runoff.
- NEI-10** Develop an on-going program, through the assistance of grants, to monitor and evaluate the quality of stormwater runoff in primary drainageways that flow into lakes and subsurface water resources.
- NEI-11** Create a detailed inventory of all streams in Bloomington's Planning Jurisdiction. This inventory will identify all perennial, intermittent and significant ephemeral waterways and natural drainage features including streams that emanate from or flow to karst features. A more precise definition of streams, in accordance with recognized scientific stream classification systems, will accompany the inventory.
- NEI-12** Revise the existing water resource regulations in the Zoning Ordinance to protect water resources using graduated buffer zones to prohibit or limit development in sensitive and streamside transition zones.

### **Policy 4: Manage Community-Wide Drainage Impacts**

As Bloomington continues to become more urbanized, stormwater runoff control becomes a more significant issue. The City of Bloomington has not received a complete flood insurance study since 1972. Since that time, Bloomington's built environment has changed significantly. A more accurate baseline of flood hazard areas must be established so that development in these areas can be better managed. In addition, acceptable standards for post-development runoff rates must be strengthened through the adoption of a more comprehensive watershed management policy and the reexamination of the City's Stormwater Ordinance.

### *Implementation Measures*

- NEI-13** Petition FEMA and the Department of Natural Resources to conduct a new flood insurance study of all Special Flood Hazard Areas within the jurisdiction of the City of Bloomington.



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**NEI-14** Coordinate with the City Utilities Department to strengthen regulatory controls for post-development stormwater runoff rates.

**NEI-15** Revise Zoning and Subdivision regulations to require areas located within 100-year floodways as well as intermittent stream channels to be protected by drainage and conservation easements.

### **Policy 5: Promote Environmentally Sensitive Development**

It is essential that more conservation oriented design standards be incorporated into the policies that govern development proposals, so that the majority of new developments will contain a substantial percentage of protected open space. Once environmentally sensitive areas such as karst features, native tree stands, steep slopes, and wetlands are identified and mapped, a creative site plan that preserves these features can be designed. Techniques such as the use of clustering, mixed uses, pervious pavement surfaces, and variations in height, bulk, and density standards to achieve these goals should be incorporated into the development review process. It is equally essential that development move toward sustainable design practices that emphasize renewable energy and resource use and pollution prevention. Education about and promotion of sustainable design are critical steps in Bloomington's development as a sustainable city.

### *Implementation Measures*

**NEI-16** Require an inspection of parcels proposed for development and the mapping of all environmentally sensitive areas identified in the inspection prior to development petition filing.

**NEI-17** Require the usage of such mechanisms as conservation easements and land dedications to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, open space, and greenspace.

**NEI-18** Establish specific density bonus incentives to promote innovation in environmental design and greenspace preservation (i.e. clustering and mixed use development).

**NEI-19** Revise Zoning and Subdivision regulations for sites having environmental constraints to better protect such features as wetlands, steep slopes, and water resources.

**NEI-20** Coordinate with the Environmental Commission and Indiana University to develop an on-going program, through the assistance of grants, for promoting and educating about sustainable design and development. Specific strategies include public outreach, workshops and seminar series featuring sustainable design and development experts, incentives to developers, and creation of web and library based sustainable development resource centers.



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### Leverage Public Capital

Financing investments in public facilities is a challenge for every community, Bloomington notwithstanding. As Bloomington's population increases, the need for maintenance and replacement of existing infrastructure such as streets and utility lines grows ever greater. In addition, other public services such as parks, schools, and fire and police protection are affected by population growth, and the goals of traffic mitigation and increased compactness require better public transportation. Both public and private investments will be necessary to ensure that all physical infrastructure facilities and essential public services are adequately maintained. Maintenance of these facilities and services is necessary to ensure preservation of the quality of life that Bloomington's residents enjoy. To this end, the goal of the community should be to strive for *concurrency*; whereby growth is maintained commensurate with the provision of public facilities and services.

The City of Bloomington has already initiated a number of projects and investments that have enhanced public infrastructure and provided incentives for urban infill development. Examples of this type of capital investment include the City's *Transportation 2000* initiative, *Bloomington's Digital Underground* program, downtown stormwater improvements, and the demolition of Plant #1 on the former Thomson site.

There are two primary approaches that can make public facility investments more effective and efficient. First, certain infrastructure costs can be reduced by guiding development to land that is contiguous with those areas already developed at urban densities. This results in fewer utility extensions and new roadways, thereby providing an opportunity for additional infrastructure to support a more dense development pattern. Second, existing areas that have excess road, sewer, and water capacity where development has not occurred can be more effectively used. Development of these under-utilized areas should occur in preference to those areas where adequate facilities do not exist.

### Leverage Public Capital Goal

Plan and implement public capital investment to maintain existing public facilities, enhance the urban area, and stimulate private investment in the community.

#### Policy 1: Comprehensively Evaluate Public Facilities

In order to better understand the linkage between increasing population growth and its impact on public facilities, it is necessary to conduct an evaluation of these facilities. Some public facilities have already been evaluated by the Planning Department. For instance, the Department has recently completed a sidewalk inventory within the City's planning jurisdiction. In addition, both existing and future levels of service for the street network within the City's Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) study area have been analyzed. Results of this analysis are contained in the MPO's *Year 2025 Transportation Plan*.

However, the City has not engaged in a more comprehensive analysis of all public facilities that can be impacted by population growth. In order to complete this analysis, it will first be necessary to define what facilities should be evaluated. At this point, each provider of the facility (for example, the City's Parks Department, Utilities Department or Bloomington Transit) would be charged with performing an analysis focusing on current conditions, future facility needs, areas of deficiency, and the spatial distribution of facilities and deficiencies. Each separate analysis can then be aggregated into an overall assessment that would include both a report and a mapping component.

Once the City has performed this comprehensive public facility analysis, the results should be annually reported to the City Plan Commission. Furthermore, the City should develop and adopt changes to its Zoning Ordinance that allow the Plan Commission to consider the adequacy of current levels of service, based on the comprehensive public facility analysis, when evaluating a development petition. Desired levels of service for roadway facilities should recognize that some level of congestion is typically associated with a community that promotes a compact urban form strategy.



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### *Implementation Measures*

- LPC-1** Complete a comprehensive public facility analysis, annually update this analysis, and integrate this analysis into the City’s capital improvement planning process.
- LPC-2** Ensure that the results of the comprehensive public facility analysis are annually reported to the City Plan Commission.
- LPC-3** Develop and adopt changes to the Zoning Ordinance that allow the Plan Commission to consider the adequacy of current levels of service, based on the comprehensive public facility analysis, when evaluating a development petition. For roadways, desired Level of Service ratings should be consistent with the GPP’s goal of achieving compact urban form.

### **Policy 2: Improve the Capital Improvement Planning Process**

As stated earlier in this section, the City of Bloomington is already implementing important capital investments in needed facilities. However, there can be improvements to the City’s Annual Capital Budget process that will allow capital investments to be bundled into a more integrated package; one that is explicitly tied to the Growth Policies Plan. A more comprehensive investment approach will allow decision-makers the ability to directly compare public facility investments over a wide range of categories.

On a smaller scale, the City must continue to allocate significant resources to upgrading the facilities of existing neighborhoods through investments in streets, sidewalks, utilities, and parks upgrades. These investments can be further targeted and made more efficient through the development of specific neighborhood facility plans. To this end, the Planning Department and Housing and Neighborhood Development Department can share staff resources to expedite the development of such plans. In order for these plans to be effective, such plans must include the involvement of neighborhood associations and a wide range of City Departments.

### *Implementation Measures*

- LPC-4** Develop a more integrated Annual Capital Budget process that addresses community-wide facility needs on a long-term basis.
- LPC-5** Develop neighborhood-specific Capital Improvement Plans to upgrade existing public facilities.

### **Policy 3: Link Public Facility Impacts to the Development Process**

Based on the results of the proposed public facility analysis, it will be possible to map areas where development should be encouraged versus areas where public facility needs should be addressed in conjunction with any new development. More specifically, public facility need areas can be mapped as zoning overlays that require special attention in the Plan Commission review process. If a given development proposal in one of these overlay zones features a large number of residential dwelling units or a large amount of nonresidential building square footage, a facility impact study could then be required much along the same lines as the City currently requires traffic studies for large projects.

In addition, the City should always strive for creative solutions in areas where infrastructure deficiencies occur. This includes such mechanisms as Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts to fund public improvements, or the acquisition of land for public facilities concurrent with development. Examples of public goods associated with such land acquisitions include new utility collection facilities, parks and greenspace, and emergency facilities such as fire stations. Where public monies are being expended for infrastructure that supports private development investments, allocation of funds should be linked to proposals that provide public benefits. Examples of such benefits include the creation of affordable housing, provision of living wage jobs, and rehabilitation of brownfield properties.

### *Implementation Measures*

- LPC-6** Identify geographic locations where public infrastructure deficiencies exist, and create guidelines to evaluate projects in these areas.
- LPC-7** In areas with infrastructure deficiencies, employ public and private financing mechanisms in order to underwrite capital projects with a significant public benefit.
- LPC-8** Use the development process to acquire land at the appropriate locations for public use based on recommendations in the City’s Annual Capital Budget.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

### Mitigate Traffic

Traffic congestion is an increasingly apparent characteristic of urban growth, nationally as well as in Bloomington. Part of this congestion can be attributed to national trends such as smaller household sizes and increases in the number of personal vehicles. New development in general is commonly identified as a major culprit of traffic congestion. More accurately, it is the geographic disbursement and the type of such development that can cause traffic problems. In addition, the City of Bloomington is evolving into a regional center for commercial services, employment, and recreation that draws traffic from multiple counties.

In order to mitigate these national, regional, and local factors which are all contributing to increased traffic, Bloomington must strive to reduce the number of vehicle trips traveled per resident. Reducing automobile trip-making not only reduces congestion but improves air quality, saves energy, and increases bicycle and pedestrian safety within the transportation system. Fundamentally, traffic mitigation describes a set of public policies focused on actively reducing the demand for automobile trip-making.

Traffic mitigation is a logical principle to accept but presents difficulties due to existing national trends in vehicle utilization, current patterns of spatial separation between land uses, and lack of alternative transportation facilities. However, Bloomington, because it is relatively compact and contains a high ratio of university students, has an opportunity to change the pattern of automobile trip-making over time by embracing alternative forms of transportation. Walking is a widely underestimated mode of alternative transportation. Walking trips generally out-number biking and transit trips by about ten to one. In an effort to mitigate traffic, support for walking should be paramount. Additionally, trip-making patterns can also be altered through increasing mixed land use development, pursuing a compact development strategy, and achieving more interconnected street systems.

### Mitigate Traffic Goal

Enhance the community transportation system in a manner that reduces automobile dependency and increases access to multiple transportation modes such as walking, bicycling and transit.

#### **Policy 1: Enhance and Expand Public Transit Services**

Through the development of a universal access system between Bloomington Transit and Indiana University, transit ridership rates increased significantly during the Year 2000. In fact, ridership has increased from 437,000 in 1982 to 1.37 million in 2000. This achievement prompted Metro Magazine, a national transit publication, to list Bloomington Transit as one of the 10 Most Improved Transit Systems in North America. Further gains in transit usage can be realized by more directly linking development form and location to city transit routes. For example, communities which have incorporated such features as building-forward orientation, attractive and convenient bus shelters, and safe bus pull-offs into new development and redevelopment projects have experienced a noticeable impact on ridership levels.

Ridership rates can also increase by ensuring high development density in direct proximity to transit routes. This synergy between population density and transit service can be readily seen in larger urban communities. These transit characteristics dovetail nicely with the Plan's principle of Compact Urban Form. Where development has already occurred outside the City limits, the City should not overlook the possibility of transit service agreements with large trip generators. An example of a possible future service area would be the new Ivy Tech facility located in the Park 48 Industrial Park on State Road 48. Additionally, the City and Indiana University should partner to continue the success of the existing Park and Ride system within the corporate boundaries.

#### *Implementation Measures*

- MT-1** Develop transit-oriented site planning standards as a required component of development and redevelopment projects.
- MT-2** Require the siting of future high density multifamily and commercial projects within walking distance to transit routes.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

- MT-3** Expand the Park and Ride system by creating additional lots in under-served sectors of the City, particularly in proximity to arterial street corridors.
- MT-4** Pursue an integrated mass transit system between Bloomington Transit and Indiana University, either through the continuation of a universal bus pass system or a merger between the two service agencies.
- MT-5** Coordinate with Bloomington Transit to study the feasibility of allowing universal transit access for all citizens of Bloomington.

### **Policy 2: Enhance Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Facilities**

While most residents may not be able to walk or cycle to work, trips for entertainment and socializing are more discretionary. Nationally, less than one-fourth of all trips are to work, while a larger percentage of trips are for social and recreational purposes. If walking and cycling become more enjoyable, their potential trip percentage increase is large, especially since many destinations in Bloomington are within relatively easy walking distance.

A very high percentage of residents own, or have access to, motorized vehicles. For these residents, walking, biking, or taking transit is largely a matter of choice. This choice is determined not only by cost and convenience, but also by comfort. When sidewalks are immediately adjacent to moving vehicles, and lack shade and visual interest, residents will tend to use their cars, even if it means sitting in traffic jams.

If walking is to compete with driving, the sidewalk environment must be very inviting. Separating sidewalks from moving traffic is essential. Wide tree plots, or in some cases, on-street parking, not only makes walking safer, but also buffers pedestrians from spray, dust, and noise. Good site design is also crucial to entice walkers. Regularly spaced, large species, street trees provide shade and beauty. Buildings placed close to the sidewalk offer visual interest and social interaction.

Bloomington is making progress in developing more options to foster non-automobile travel. For instance, in the Year 2000, the City created a Multi-Use Pathway fund of \$500,000 to be annually allocated for the development of sidewalks, sidepaths, bike lanes, and additions to the City's multi-use path system. While the intention of this fund is to be renewed annually, the City Parks Department has also pursued transportation enhancement grants to supplement this investment and

facilitate trail development. For example, approximately one million dollars of non-local money has been spent on development of the Clear Creek Trail system. Additionally, the City has adopted a 10-year Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan. This plan will act as a guide to facilitate annual investments in alternative transportation. Investments in the Greenways Plan, potentially beyond the money currently allocated, will be necessary to affect the trip-making patterns of Bloomington's citizens.

### *Implementation Measures*

- MT-6** Implement alternative transportation projects annually as outlined in the City's Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan. Seek to increase current local funding to ensure more rapid plan execution.
- MT-7** Identify and solicit transportation enhancement grants to assist in the funding of selected alternative transportation projects such as the construction of a multi-use trail along Jackson Creek and a multi-use trail along the CSX rail corridor.
- MT-8** Require the construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that provide safety and convenience in all new and redevelopment projects. Examples of features to be considered are sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, sidepaths, bicycle lanes, and bicycle racks.
- MT-9** Create true pedestrian corridors by increasing the number of large species, street trees in tree plots, and other pedestrian amenities within the right-of-way.
- MT-10** Ensure that designs for new construction and/or the retrofitting of existing intersections provide a safe environment for pedestrians to reduce crossing distances and include pedestrian signalization.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

### Policy 3: Implement Traffic Management Strategies

While the development of alternative transportation options is a key factor in mitigating traffic, systematic operational and regulatory changes must also be made by the City in order to optimize the efficiency of the existing roadway network. Substantial road widenings should only be considered as a last option after a thorough analysis of all alternatives. An on-going monitoring system to track traffic growth throughout the community must be established. The purpose of this monitoring is two-fold. First, it will allow for the prioritization of street improvements as identified in the *Bloomington/Monroe County Year 2025 Transportation Plan*. Second, it will allow congested roadways to be identified as areas that require special analysis during the development review process.

Regulatory approaches are also effective in managing the impacts of traffic growth. As development continues within the urbanized area, the demand for driveway cuts on arterial roadways will increase. In order to increase the efficiency and safety of major arterials, greater controls on the location and spacing of driveway cuts are necessary. The reduction of access points onto these street networks also greatly enhances the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Decades of suburban-style development have created a transportation system that concentrates traffic on a limited number of major arterial roadways. As the community grows, more and more pressure is placed on these limited roadways to handle the traffic burden. One of the major factors underlying this trend is the lack of roadway connectivity from neighborhood to neighborhood, as well as from neighborhoods to commercial areas. Residential development trends have created enclaves of homes isolated from one another, all relying on the same arterial roadway to connect to each other and the wider community. Increased connectivity would provide for multiple routes of travel, relieving pressure on major arterials by providing options to the traveler.

#### *Implementation Measures*

**MT-11** Continuously monitor traffic growth along major arterial corridors through the development of an on-going traffic counting program. Additionally, investigate the feasibility of creating an alternative transportation counting program.

**MT-12** Develop rigorous access management standards for collector and arterial level streets.

**MT-13** Ensure the provision and linkage of street stubs to improve connectivity within all sectors of the community.

**MT-14** For street stubs ending in vacant property, install signs indicating that these streets will be connected at the time of future development approval.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

### Conserve Community Character

Bloomington residents have a strong attachment to their community that emanates from a bundle of qualities that make Bloomington special and worthy of collective pride. Maintaining that community pride requires conservation, maintenance, and replication of those attributes that evoke positive feelings among residents. The challenge is to ensure that as growth occurs, community character is not lost. Future development and redevelopment should serve to strengthen the attachment that Bloomington residents feel toward their community.

Bloomington is often described as possessing “small town character.” The community boasts a wealth of amenities usually associated with much larger cities yet within the context of a more traditional “small town” environment. Landmarks such as community parks, a traditional and vital downtown, high quality public safety services, and active and diverse neighborhoods are just a few of the elements which are crucial to Bloomington’s character. In addition, community character has to do with the look and feel of Bloomington, especially the design of development in the downtown. Bloomington’s downtown has a history of traditional, “Mainstreet” design, and this legacy must be protected and reinforced in the future.

#### Conserve Community Character Goal

Conserve Bloomington’s unique community character through neighborhood protection, downtown investment and revitalization, and context-sensitive infill development.

#### Policy 1: Protect and Enhance Neighborhoods

Central to the community character of Bloomington are its neighborhoods. These neighborhoods must be protected and invigorated. They contain a diversity of housing stock reflective of different periods of development, and which demonstrate a relatively compact pedestrian scale context. New development that alters the architectural character of these neighborhoods should be avoided. Additionally, the City shall promote structural maintenance and reinvestment of both owner and rental units and promote affordable housing. This includes the renovation of blighted, incompatible or functionally obsolete structures, in a manner that is sensitive to the existing residential context.

More specifically, Bloomington’s core neighborhoods, located in close proximity to the downtown, represent the historic identity of the city. These neighborhoods are an irreplaceable resource in terms of location and relative affordability. Additionally, it is essential to maintain the historic context and architectural character of the older core neighborhoods. In order to allow these neighborhoods to flourish and continue to grow in tradition, the maintenance of existing structures should be coupled with context sensitive development. Neighborhood character can evolve in a gradual and compatible way to allow additional density through subdividing lots, and the creation of granny flats and duplexes.

The City should strive to work with neighborhoods to improve service provision and to facilitate effective communication between the neighborhood and City agencies. This can be accomplished through the development of neighborhood plans, which can serve as guides for implementing public improvement projects and steering private investment in a specific neighborhood. An important component of this process is locating and empowering people in the community who have leadership talents and strong ties to their neighbors. The resulting plans will create mutual trust and bring together an association between citizens, business and government.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

In 1985, the City, in response to community concerns, changed the zoning ordinance to restrict the occupancy of single family homes to three (3) unrelated adults. The zoning ordinance was further amended in 1995 to place more properties within the single family occupancy restriction. This was carried out in order to prevent core neighborhoods from going to a majority of rental units. The effect of this regulation has been that the proportion of owner occupied units has increased in some core neighborhoods.

### *Implementation Measures*

- CCC-1** In coordination with the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department, adopt neighborhood plans that will be designed to address housing, land uses, the provision of public infrastructure and services, affordable housing and infill development strategies.
- CCC-2** Maintain the current maximum occupancy standard of three (3) unrelated adults within single family residential zoning districts.
- CCC-3** Revise the Zoning Ordinance to include standards for infill development in residential areas that are consistent and compatible with preexisting development.
- CCC-4** Develop a program that provides incentives (i.e. tax abatements or purchase/rehab assistance) for rehabilitating older housing stock in established neighborhoods for affordable housing.

### **Policy 2: Improve Downtown Vitality**

Downtown Bloomington represents an extraordinary collection of predominantly traditional late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial, residential and institutional buildings with a great variety of structural styles, ages, and masses. With that in mind, maintaining a vibrant and visually cohesive downtown is crucial to the future of Bloomington. This downtown serves as a cultural, recreational, and economic focal point as well as an employment center for the entire community. Bloomington’s historic downtown character is a major economic development tool and must be nurtured and encouraged. The activities and services found in the Downtown are uniquely positioned to provide opportunities for a diverse array of users, from local residents to visitors from other communities. It is thus important that growth and development policies in Bloomington foster the continued vitality of the downtown by stimulating new downtown development

and redevelopment of underutilized parcels and buildings.

According to the Downtown Bloomington Commission, in the last 20 years, both the City and private property owners have demonstrated their commitment to the downtown by rehabilitating 112 existing buildings. This momentum can be maintained by continuing to rehabilitate and restore structures, build new structures on vacant or underutilized lots, and clean up environmentally contaminated sites downtown. In order for new development in the downtown to be successful, and to ensure compatibility of both function and form as growth progresses, the city will need to pursue more detailed design standards for the downtown area. These design standards (i.e. building setback, height, roof orientation, blank wall control) should be coupled with financial and zoning incentives, as well as design assistance to allow for innovative development.

In order to ensure that new downtown development and redevelopment does not detract from the area’s historic and traditional character, properties and districts that contain important structures should be clearly identified. Once these structures are identified, mechanisms should be established to ensure that demolition of these structures is reviewed as a component of the Plan Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals hearing process.

### *Implementation Measures*

- CCC-5** Establish site planning and design standards for development and redevelopment in the downtown areas that emphasize compatibility of form with existing structures using a public community process directed by a professional urban design consultant.
- CCC-6** Expand the geographic boundaries of the Downtown Commercial zoning district while ensuring appropriate protection of structures and districts of historic importance. Work in cooperation with a professional urban design consultant in this process.
- CCC-7** Provide incentives (i.e. tax abatements, design assistance) to facilitate the construction of downtown development projects.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

**CCC-8** Hire a professional urban planning firm to create, in cooperation with key stakeholder groups, a subarea plan which addresses the long-term viability of the downtown area.

### **Policy 3: Maintain Bloomington's Historic Character**

Historic preservation creates better communities by ensuring protection of culturally and historically significant structures and districts in downtowns and urban neighborhoods. From Queen Anne to Carpenter-Builder style structures, Bloomington's built environment features an array of architectural styles and eras. In some areas, preservation efforts such as local, State, and Federal districting have been utilized to help maintain the character that was evident years ago.

Preservation refers to the maintenance of a property without significant alteration to its current condition. This approach should be taken when it is appropriate to maintain a building or structure as it was originally constructed. A structure changes over its lifetime and each change represents a part of its history and integrity. The preservation of a historic building accepts those changes but maintains its historic integrity and as many original features as possible. In order to build on the community character of Bloomington, it is important to promote preservationist techniques (i.e. restoration, rehabilitation), in historic areas.

Currently, there are many sites in Bloomington with national, state, and local historic designations. The last historic sites and structures inventory was completed in 1988. Through the Historic Preservation Commission, an updated inventory of historic sites and structures is being completed. After the completion of this inventory, historic sites and districts can be sought out for national, state or local designation.

#### *Implementation Measures*

**CCC-9** Encourage public/private partnerships in the rehabilitation of existing structures downtown and in other areas of the community.

**CCC-10** Update the City of Bloomington *Interim Report on Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory*.

**CCC-11** Protect historic areas against erosion and loss via demolition and alteration by using both Historic Conservation Districting and Local Historic Districting.

**CCC-12** Bring interested parties together to formulate and make recommendations regarding demolition delay provisions to be included in the municipal code.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

### Sustain Economic and Cultural Vibrancy

Much like the national economy, the economy of Bloomington and Monroe County is undergoing a transitional period as it enters the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In the last few years, there have been employment losses as a result of the closing of the Thomson RCA facility as well as job cuts at General Electric and Otis Elevator. At the same time, Bloomington has the distinction of having one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state. This is primarily due to the presence of Indiana University, the largest employer in the community. The local economic impact of Indiana University operations is substantial and a stabilizing influence on the local market. The manufacturing sector of the local economy accounts for approximately 19% of total wage and salary earnings, while the government sector which includes Indiana University employment accounts for nearly 30% of earnings.

Despite some challenges in the manufacturing sector, Bloomington's economy does have sectors that have excellent growth potential. For instance, Bloomington's health care industry is growing steadily as exemplified by Bloomington Hospital's expansion as well as development of the Southern Indiana Medical Park on Tapp Road and recent medical office development at Landmark Avenue. Additionally, the community is making substantial investments in the area of information technology. These investments include development of the Bloomington Digital Underground project, the recent construction of the telecommunications hotel located in the Walnut Center at 7<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets, and the recent creation of the School of Informatics at Indiana University. Indiana University's partnership with City and County officials in this endeavor is particularly noteworthy because this same partnership will be important in the continued development of the education sector of Bloomington's economy. In addition, the protection and enhancement of Bloomington's quality of life amenities as well as the leveraging of its cultural and artistic excellence give the community great opportunities to recruit both new businesses as well as capture dollars associated with the tourism industry.

### Sustain Economic and Cultural Vibrancy Goal

Enhance Bloomington's strong economic base by encouraging quality job creation and new capital investment by building upon the community's quality of life assets and cultural amenities.

#### Policy 1: Encourage Quality Employment Opportunities for Citizens

In order to encourage prosperity in the local economy, Bloomington must ensure that adequate appropriately zoned land is available for future employment opportunities. In some cases, this means ensuring that vacant land is not converted to uses that are incompatible with economic development goals. An example of such vacant land is the property located at the intersection of State Road 37 and Acuff Road. Rather than allow this property to be developed for residential or commercial use, this parcel should continue to be preserved for employment-based activities with some accessory services being allowed. In other cases, the City can partner with the private sector to facilitate redevelopment of existing industrial tracts. An example of this partnership is the current conversion of the former Thomson site to the Indiana Enterprise Center, a future high-tech office park. The City of Bloomington can assist in these economic development activities by taking proactive steps to assure that the necessary streets, utilities, and communication infrastructure are available to employment centers concurrent with development.

#### Implementation Measure

- SECV-1** Identify and maintain a 20-year supply of appropriately zoned land necessary to accommodate long-term employment needs and report annually on the consumption of such land.
- SECV-2** Assure that adequate infrastructure is installed in conjunction with employment center development.
- SECV-3** Support the continued installation of fiber optic conduit rings linking key future employment sites within the City of Bloomington.
- SECV-4** Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide a greater flexibility of land uses as well as the ability to incorporate retail service uses within office/employment development projects.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

### Policy 2: Spur Redevelopment Activity

In the quest to meet economic development needs, it is important that projects with the potential to provide economic benefits be evaluated carefully to ensure compatibility with the Plan’s guiding principles. While some projects may have negative impacts on quality of life considerations, these impacts should be mitigated to the extent possible without hindering efforts to create quality jobs and investment that support the overall economic strength of the Bloomington economy. It is only through a clear recognition of the interdependence of jobs, investment, and quality of life, that this goal will be met.

To this end, the redevelopment of under-utilized parcels should not be neglected in favor of open land outside the City. Redevelopment of such sites as the former Thomson property, the Semi-Con site, the Regester Parking Garage, and the McDoel Switchyard represent opportunities to provide economic benefits to the community in a manner that is compatible with the Plan’s guiding principles. Within Bloomington, there are significant numbers of properties within the downtown, along arterial roadways, and even in core neighborhoods that could be better utilized through redevelopment strategies. These strategies include tax abatements, expansion of Bloomington’s Urban Enterprise Zone, brownfield designations, and revised local building codes that make redevelopment much more cost-effective.

#### Implementation Measures

- SECV-5** Designate Economic Development Target Areas (EDTAs) to facilitate tax abatements for redevelopment projects in the following locations: 1) the downtown, 2) arterial roadway corridors, and 3) specific Core Neighborhood areas.
- SECV-6** Develop a Brownfields Redevelopment Program that facilitates the re-use of underutilized or abandoned properties.
- SECV-7** Develop local building code revisions that encourage redevelopment activities.

### Policy 3: Link Economic Vibrancy with Quality of Life Amenities

Maintaining a diverse, thriving economy in Bloomington is increasingly contingent upon quality of life considerations. To this end, the community must conserve and enhance those elements that embody quality of life such as pleasing greenspaces, attractive and historic neighborhoods, a vibrant and visually appealing downtown in a traditional block pattern, and a thriving artistic and cultural environment. On this point, it is important to note that Bloomington’s economic vibrancy is inherently associated with its cultural excellence. Events such as the Farmer’s Market, Fourth Street Art Fair, Hoosierfest, The Taste of Bloomington, and the Lotus Festival not only represent staples of Bloomington’s life-style but also represent economic benefits associated with cultural tourism. In addition, Bloomington’s recreational and sports amenities as illustrated by Indiana University sporting events, the Twin Lakes Sports Park, and the new Bloomington Sportsplex represent additional opportunities for tourism-based economic development. As Bloomington strives to improve its economic advantages in these areas over other communities, it will be important to market Bloomington’s cultural, artistic, historic and recreational assets as components of the overall livability of the community.

#### Implementation Measures

- SECV-8** Facilitate the location of a new, upscale hotel facility to capture available tourism income within Bloomington’s downtown area.
- SECV-9** Increase the usage of artistic displays in both private and public development projects.
- SECV-10** Work with cultural agencies and economic development agencies to create a promotional program linking economic development with Bloomington’s quality of life amenities.
- SECV-11** Enhance the marketing of Bloomington’s downtown as a retail environment by affirming the theme of historic preservation.
- SECV-12** Encourage the post office, churches and other institutional uses to remain in the downtown.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

### Advance Communication and Coordination

The growth and development issues facing Bloomington today require innovative approaches to managing the planning process. These challenging issues require the enhancement of relationships on many levels. This includes relationships between governments, between government and developers, and finally between government and the community it serves. City government should provide a predictable development process for those who wish to build homes or businesses in the community. City government should also strive to reduce the volatility in the planning process, providing ample information to citizens and neighborhoods regarding the development that occurs around them. These three areas must be strengthened if Bloomington is to achieve its planning vision.

It is imperative that this planning vision also encompasses issues beyond the borders of Bloomington. As the growth and development issues facing Bloomington become ever more intertwined with those facing Monroe County, measures must be taken to improve the interface between City and County planning policies and programs. There are a number of directions that this action could take, but before anything can happen, both governments must recognize the urgency of the issue and begin to strategize. One possible solution is to merge the planning functions of the two governments, creating a unified set of planning policies to govern growth and development in all areas of the community. While the Growth Policies Plan does not specifically endorse this option above others, it is an effective means by which to achieve the mutual goals of City and County planning efforts.

#### Advance Communication and Coordination Goal

Improve the planning process to enhance regional growth management, stimulate public involvement, and generate creative site planning solutions.

#### Policy 1: Enhance Intergovernmental Cooperation

Many of the areas where the fastest growth is occurring are outside of the City’s planning jurisdiction. In 1997, the City entered into an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Monroe County. This agreement allowed the City to retain control over certain portions of the former “Two-Mile Fringe”, while the remainder reverted to County jurisdiction with the adoption of the County’s comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance. In addition, a new system for permitting was developed whereby all building permits would be applied for and issued at the County Courthouse. This permitting process can, with some adjustment, become an even more efficient service for the citizens of Bloomington and Monroe County.

Recent development trends, such as the continued spread of large scale commercial development and growing pressure to extend urban services beyond City boundaries, have illustrated the need for the City to have more input on the growth occurring at its jurisdictional edge. The City must work with the County to establish coordinated plans to effectively manage such growth. As stated earlier, this could come in many forms. Examples include joint agreements regarding utility service jurisdictions, extension of the City’s greenspace and alternative transportation efforts into the County, or the development of rural residential zoning designed to conserve greenspace. The key to creating a lasting solution is to spur both jurisdictions to begin taking positive steps to create planning policies and programs that benefit the entire community.

#### Implementation Measures

- ACC-1** As part of the Interlocal Agreement update, enhance the current permitting arrangement between the City and the County in order to make the process more efficient and customer-friendly.
- ACC-2** Enhance the current coordination between the City and County Planning Departments, including both staff and Plan Commission members, to pursue longer range planning objectives of mutual interest.
- ACC-3** Study the feasibility of creating a consolidated planning department for the City and County as a method of improving planning and development management.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

### Policy 2: Develop a More Inclusive Planning Process

All too often, Bloomington neighborhoods feel that they are left out of the planning process, and that their needs and concerns are not being adequately considered. These reactions occur not only in response to development proposals, but to long range plans and studies as well. The City must make a stronger effort to be inclusive by reaching out to the community on a regular basis. In the review of development proposals, more and better information must be provided to surrounding neighborhoods, and notifications to neighborhood associations must be made. These neighborhoods will ultimately have to live with the product of the development review process, and should have an active role in achieving high quality results.

Equally important are the long-range plans and programs, like the Growth Policies Plan, that must be implemented before development can even occur. It is crucial that the entire community is involved during the development of these plans in order that they reflect the needs and desires of a diverse public. The results of these processes will determine the location, type, and scale of development for decades to come. The City must strive to provide ample opportunities for public input to ensure every voice is being heard before such crucial decisions are made.

#### *Implementation Measures*

- ACC-4** Inform adjacent neighborhood associations and Common Council district representatives in advance of land development petitions.
- ACC-5** Require at least one neighborhood briefing, conducted jointly by City staff and the developer, in advance of petition filings that either encompass large acreage or encompass major policy issues.
- ACC-6** Conduct a forum for citizen input regarding growth and development issues within the City of Bloomington at least once every year.
- ACC-7** Establish regular meetings between Planning Department staff and representative organizations of established neighborhood associations, such as the Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA), to update these groups on long range planning initiatives and development petitions.

### Policy 3: Increase Development Review Effectiveness

The current development review process has frequently been perceived as cumbersome, and sometimes subject to distortion or alteration to protect special interests. Citizens as well as the developers that must go through the process hold these perceptions. The planning process serves the entire community and must be fair to all-neighborhoods, citizens, and developers. The process also must be predictable, efficient, and effective for creative development to occur in Bloomington. This means that processes internal to the City Planning Department must be optimized to ensure that permits and projects are reviewed as quickly and thoroughly as possible, and that Planning staff works closely with developers throughout the review process. In addition, stronger mechanisms for enforcing development approvals and codes must be implemented to make sure compliance is maintained throughout the construction process. Rigorous enforcement of zoning regulations is a key factor in building community trust in the development review process.

#### *Implementation Measures*

- ACC-8** Encourage direct developer participation in pre-petition filing meetings, and require attendance by the developer or consultant at Development Review Committee meetings, as a means to augment the search for creative solutions to site planning issues.
- ACC-9** Utilize development review checklists and procedures designed to enhance the screening and review of projects prior to filing for public hearing review.
- ACC-10** Continue to increase the Planning Department's capacity to adequately respond to citizen complaints concerning the enforcement of zoning and subdivision regulations.



## PART 1: Policy Essence

### **Policy 4: Strengthen Indiana University-City Planning Interaction**

Past development of the community has been strongly tied to the growth of Indiana University, which will continue to be a major force directing development and change in Bloomington. While decisions made by the University advance its institutional mission, development and policy decisions made by Indiana University always have implications for Bloomington as a community. Likewise, the projects and programs that Bloomington pursues affect Indiana University. For example, planning and zoning decisions influence the location of student housing opportunities, while policies allowing students to have vehicles on campus affect parking and traffic patterns throughout the community.

This relationship must be recognized and carefully managed to the mutual benefit of both entities. Indiana University is currently in the process of updating its own campus master plan. This presents both the City and University with an opportunity to begin closer coordination on the land use, transportation, housing, and parking issues that affect both entities. Through openness and cooperation, Bloomington and Indiana University can create a better community together.

#### *Implementation Measures*

**ACC-11** Pursue an on-going exchange of land development and infrastructure information with Indiana University through regular meetings between Planning/Engineering staffs and the Indiana University Real Estate/Architecture offices.

**ACC-12** In coordination with University officials, develop strategies which address planning issues of clear mutual interest (for example: transit connectivity on North Dunn Street and North Woodlawn Avenue, new Park and Ride locations in the southeast sector of the community, and structured parking solutions in the downtown 3<sup>rd</sup> Street/Atwater area).