



# Housing and Neighborhood Development

## Who We Are . . .

The Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Department was formed as a result of the merging of the Redevelopment Department and City Code Enforcement. These two departments were brought together in January 1997 to offer comprehensive services to the community. The mission of HAND is to “enhance the quality of life for Bloomington residents by developing programs, services and partnerships with public and private organizations to preserve community character, promote safe and affordable housing and neighborhood vitality.”

HAND has 17 employees:

- Executive Director
- Assistant Director
- Office Manager

- Program Manager — construction
- Program Manager — historic preservation
- Program Manager — loans
- Program Manager — housing counseling
- Program Manager — neighborhood services
- Program Manager — special projects
- Neighborhood Compliance Officers (5)
- Office Assistants (4)



The City of Bloomington receives funding annually from the U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development. These funds are administered by HAND. The five-year strategic plan for spending these dollars is the Consolidated Plan 2010-2014. This plan can be accessed at [www.bloomington.in.gov/consolidated-plan](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/consolidated-plan)

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## What We Do . . .

Have you ever lived in a rental unit in Bloomington? Called City Hall about a trash or weed complaint? Needed information about housing? Used the services of a social service program such as Middle Way House, Community Kitchen or Monroe County United Ministries? Then you have been served by HAND.

The HAND Department includes three divisions: Housing; Neighborhood; and Community Development. What exactly does that mean? Well, let us try to explain.

**Housing** — HAND provides a number of services with regard to housing. HAND runs the City’s comprehensive rental

inspection program. Through this program, HAND inspects every rental unit within City limits on a three-to five-year rotation and by complaint. This insures that all Bloomingtonians will have a safe and sanitary place to call home. HAND also provides assistance to those facing serious housing issues such as foreclosure. HAND offers direct housing assistance in the form of rehabilitation loans and grants and down payment and closing cost assistance. Educational program such as the Home Buyer’s Club and R101 - Renting in Bloomington help citizens negotiate Bloomington’s complex housing market.

**Neighborhood** — HAND

provides services to neighborhood such as assistance to neighborhood associations, grants for neighborhood improvement projects.

**Community Development** — HAND provides funds for community development projects through Community Development Block Grant. (CDBG). Both physical improvement projects, such as facility repair, parks and infrastructure, and social service programs are funded with CDBG. HAND also administer the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association which provides funding to zone businesses and residents.



## Title 6 — or Weeds & Trash



Trash complaint.

Title 6 of the City of Bloomington Municipal Code addresses health and sanitation. HAND is charged with insuring compliance with the sections of Title 6 that deal with overgrowth of grass and weeds, as well as refuse storage and disposal. City of Bloomington Municipal Code (BMC) 6.06.010 states that, "It is unlawful for any person to throw, place or scatter any garbage, rubbish, trash or other refuse over or upon any premises, street, alley, either public or private, or to suffer or permit any garbage, rubbish,

trash or other refuse to be placed or deposited on the premises owned, occupied or controlled by such person either with or without the intent to later remove." BMC 6.06.030 states that "It is unlawful for the owner of any lot or tract of ground within the city to allow it to become overgrown with weeds, grass or noxious plants beyond the height of eight inches or to such extent that the growth is detrimental to the public health and constitutes a nuisance."

HAND assigns one Compli-

ance Officer to each neighborhood within the city of Bloomington to insure that all properties, both owner-occupied and rentals, are in compliance with these codes. HAND Compliance Officers issue citations for violations of the code, respond to citizens' complaints, and oversee the abatement of nuisance violations.

If you have a weed or trash complaint, call 349-3420.

*"Historic Districts foster homeownership. Historic District residents tend to be vested in the community and become long-term occupants."*

*Nancy Hiestand*

## Why Preserve — Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation is the best way to reinvest in our older neighborhoods. Prospect Hill, the Near West Side and McDoel are enjoying a revival of interest as family neighborhoods because of their unique architecture and proximity to downtown. The restored Courthouse Square, the University's Old Crescent and Showers City Hall are significant reminders of our city's exceptional past and form the heart of local tourism.

HAND oversees historic

preservation activities within the city of Bloomington. HAND provides forgivable loans to eligible owners for the restoration of historic homes, it assists Bloomington Restorations, Inc. in its affordable housing projects and staffs the BUEA, which provides façade grants to historic commercial buildings within the Urban Enterprise Zone.

HAND staffs the Historic Preservation Commission, which reviews design issues within local historic districts. The Commis-

sion also initiates and reviews new National Register districts, and organizes informational workshops and lectures.

In 2004, HAND published the City of Bloomington Interim Report, Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. This document is used by HAND in administering the state and federal programs for historic preservation. Copies are available at HAND for \$18.00.



Bill Sturbaum talking to the 2004 Citizens Academy about neighborhood association involvement.

## Let's Learn — HAND Education Programs

HAND offers a variety of learning opportunities for the community. These classes are taught, sponsored or facilitated by HAND staff members with expertise in those areas.

HAND's educational opportunities include:

- Citizens Academy - teaches the public about city government.

- Home Buyers Club - teaches interested potential homeowners how to buy a house.
- R101 - Renting in Bloomington - teaches interested parties how to be a good tenant and stabilize their housing.

- HAND provides speakers to teach financial management classes, how to avoid predatory lending, credit

classes, etc. HAND provides these seminars to Bloomington Housing Authority, South Central Community Action Program and Habitat for Humanity.



## Fixing It Up — Housing Rehabilitation/Repair

Ever notice the difference one house can make on a street? We have. HAND provides assistance and funding to improve existing housing and bring it up to current code through a variety of programs. These programs are paid for with funds received from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. Households that receive assistance through any of these programs must meet HUD's income guidelines. What does that mean? For example, a family with four members must have a household income of less than \$51,050 year.

HAND has two in-house

rehabilitation programs: 1) Owner-Occupied Rehab Loan Program for existing homeowners; and 2) Purchase-Rehab for those purchasing their first homes.

HAND provides funding to local non profit organizations to help them improve existing housing. For example, Bloomington Restorations, Inc. receives funds from HAND to do very extensive and wonderful historic rehabs. Those homes are then sold to income eligible buyers.

HAND makes home repairs to households with members who are experiencing ac-

cessibility difficulties. Through the Home Modification for Accessible Living Program, HAND can help build a ramp, make a bathroom handicapped accessible, or install grab bars or other necessary items.

HAND helps very low income households with emergency repairs, such as a water leak or a sewer breakdown. These health/safety repairs can be made under HAND's Emergency Home Repair Grant.



Owner-occupied rehabilitation project underway.

## Safe & Habitable Housing — The Rental Inspection Program

The City of Bloomington developed a comprehensive rental inspection program in the 1970s. This program requires that all residential rental property (except Indiana University) located within the city of Bloomington corporate limits must be registered and inspected. HAND's neighborhood compliance officers inspect nearly 22,000 rental units in Bloomington. Units are inspected for

compliance with the Property Maintenance Code, which can be viewed on the City's web site. During the inspection the HAND inspector must be accompanied by the owner or a representative of the owner. Shortly after the inspection a report will be issued. The owner then has 60 days to complete the interior repairs and one year to complete exterior safety repairs. Permits are is-

sued for three, four, or five years. HAND also will inspect a unit if a complaint has been issued. Time allowed for repairs is dependent upon the situation.

If you live in a rental property, your occupancy permit should be posted somewhere in the unit. Make sure your unit is registered and inspected — it is a matter of safe and habitable housing.

*HAND's neighborhood compliance officers inspect nearly 22,000 registered rental units in Bloomington.*

## Building Community — Neighborhood Services

HAND helps empower the residents of our community through training and support of neighborhood associations. The HAND department offers a wide array of services and programs that help strengthen the organizational and productivity skills of neighborhood associations.

- Neighborhood Organizational Support – HAND facilitates communication between neighborhoods and City departments and

provides tools and resources for planning and development.

- Neighborhood Grants – funding for neighborhoods to make capital improvements that provide community wide benefit, build community capacity, training and neighborhood cleanups.
- Neighborhood Cleanups— are one-day events where

neighborhoods apply for assistance to hold a neighborhood cleanup. HAND staff works with residents to facilitate removal of trash, tires, hazardous materials and old furniture.

- Organizes special events, training and technical support to neighborhoods.



Throwing it away at a Neighborhood Clean-up. HAND sponsors two per year.



## Fulfilling A Need — Social Services And Physical Improvements

### Social Services:

HAND works with the social service agencies of Bloomington to ensure the most complete coverage of the needs of our population. Social service agencies have two opportunities each year to apply for funds that can be directed toward improving human services. The City Council offers grants under the Jack Hopkins Social Service Grant Program and the Redevelopment Commission offers the maximum 15 percent of the Community Development Block Grant allocation to social service agencies.

HAND offers technical assistance to any agency interested in applying for a grant. Once the grant is received, HAND can guide an agency through delivery of its program and explain implementation of

the funding agreements.

HAND helps Bloomington agencies in their efforts to encourage self-sufficiency. HAND assists area agencies in developing programs, teaches classes in the development of personal skills, and offers housing counseling for the clients of Bloomington's social service agencies.

### Physical Improvements:

HAND enhances the programming of local social service agencies and even other City departments by identifying needs and funding the expansion of services to the low- and moderate-income community. In the past, social service agencies have used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for activities such as acquiring, rehabilitating and restoring property for habitation

as well as for better working environments, client support and office space. City agencies have used CDBG funding to serve low- and moderate-income areas of the City. Parks and Recreation has used these funds to make improvements at Mills Pool, Building and Trades Park, Rev. Butler Park, Banneker Community Center and Crestmont Park. Public Works and the Utilities Department have used CDBG funds to make infrastructure improvements including the installation of sidewalks, streets and sanitary sewers. The current West Kirkwood Avenue project is an example of partnership among Public Works, Utilities and HAND along with the surrounding neighborhoods to make improvements to a vital city corridor.



Walnut Woods playground which was assisted with CDBG Physical Improvement funds.

## The Big Picture

This newsletter outlines some of HAND's activities/programs/services.

### BHQA

Blooming Neighborhood Awards & Celebration

Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association

CDBG Physical Improvement Admin.

CDBG Social Service Admin.

CHDO Support

Citizens Academy

Emergency Home Repair Grant

Historic Preservation Commission

Historic Walking Tours

Home Buyers Club

Home Modification for Accessible Living

Homeownership New Construction

Housing Counseling

Housing Trust Fund

Jack Hopkins Administration

Keeping the American Dream

Lot Acquisition

Neighborhood Clean-ups

Neighborhood Improvement Grants

Neighborhood Organizational Support

Over-Occupancy Ordinance

Owner-Occupied Rehab

Pick-It-Up Program

Purchase-Rehab

R101 – Renting in Bloomington  
Redevelopment Commission

Rental Inspection Program

Rental New Construction

Rental Rehab

Section 106 Review

Small & Simple Grants

Title 6 Weeds & Trash

Unsafe Building Ordinance