

Clerk's Note: The following is a chronology regarding Ordinance 2026-12.

June 03, 2026 - In a Common Council Regular Session, the council introduced Ordinance 2026-12 by a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. A motion to continue Ordinance 2026-12 to the next Regular Session on June 10, 2026 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 1 (Ruff), Abstain: 0.

June 10, 2026 - In a Common Council Regular Session, the council amended Ordinance 2026-12 by a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. A motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-12 as amended received a roll call vote of Ayes: 5 (Asare, Daily, Flaherty, Rollo, Rosenbarger), Nays: 4 (Piedmont-Smith, Ruff, Stosberg, Zulich), Abstain: 0.

June 16, 2026 - Clerk Nicole Bolden presented the legislation to Mayor Kerry Thomson for signature.

June 23, 2026 - Mayor Thomson returned Ordinance 2026-12 to the Clerk without a signature and with a letter.

July 22, 2026 - In a Common Council Regular Session, the council introduced Ordinance 2026-12 but did not override the Mayor's veto with a roll call vote of Ayes: 4 (Asare, Daily, Flaherty, Rosenbarger), Nays: (Piedmont-Smith, Rollo, Ruff, Stosberg), Abstain: 0 (Zulich absent). The motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-12 failed.

Signed on: *July 29, 2026*

CERTIFY:

Signed by: 
31826BE6116F4B5...
Signature of Common Council President Isak Nti Asare

ATTEST:

Signed by: *Nicole Bolden*
60DF9211B070448...
Signature of Clerk Nicole Bolden



A Letter from Mayor Kerry Thomson on Kirkwood Avenue

Dear Bloomington,

I have been heartened by the deep and diverse engagement we have had on Council's proposed Kirkwood closure. Last Tuesday night, that conversation emerged as an example of civic engagement that rarely happens in today's world. Residents with differing opinions showed up to listen to one another. To express their dreams for a space we share—and indeed a space that brings about the creative collisions that have long made Bloomington a place where everyone can belong, where we each can begin imagining our futures, and tapping our potential.

Kirkwood is a place of memory, movement, commerce, and gathering—it is often the heartbeat of our civic life. Kirkwood is, in so many ways, the photo in our postcard memory of what Bloomington is—of who we are. And for that very reason, a permanent decision about Kirkwood deserves to have Bloomington's imagination and innovation captured in a plan to be executed when the community can fund it.

The kind of vibrancy that many envision for Kirkwood must be invited, planned, funded, staffed, maintained, and cultivated. It doesn't happen, and hasn't happened over the past 5 years of closure, simply by eliminating vehicles without adding accessibility, or by allowing pedestrians to walk the street without creating physical spaces sheltered from the elements.

I am grateful to the many who have brought forward the elements and extensive research on successful pedestrian malls. Bigger, more affluent communities like Boulder and Madison have gotten those spaces right—and they have learned from their mistakes as well. A significant shift in Kirkwood's daily life deserves to have the voices of our community incorporated before we take a plan created for another city's assets and needs and hope the very same plan works for us. The failure rate has been too profound in other spaces, and Bloomington is too good for that.

I also want to acknowledge Councilmembers Daily, Stosberg, and Zulich, who attended the community listening session and heard directly from residents. Additional gratitude to our staff from Economic and Sustainable Development, Engineering, Public Works, Bloomington Police Department, and Bloomington Fire Department, who have highlighted many of the concerns we are now hearing voiced publicly as my administration worked to make a decision on Kirkwood earlier this year.

The city also had not had open community input on the Kirkwood closure, but instead only reactions to the resolution, which many, including the businesses and residents most affected, did not know about in time to offer input.

To that end, I am vetoing Council's Ordinance 2026-12 to close Kirkwood, which arrived absent of a plan to ensure its success or an analysis of fiscal impact, much less identification of the funding to do so. This is particularly significant as Indiana communities adjust to Senate Enrolled Act 1, which creates substantial uncertainty for municipal revenue and long-term financial planning. In that environment, the City must be especially disciplined about adopting recurring commitments. Every public investment reflects a choice. Before committing significant resources to Kirkwood, we should be clear not only about what we hope to build, but also about what other programs, projects, services, or infrastructure improvements we may be asking the community to postpone or relinquish in order to fund it.

Additionally, a transformation of this significance should be carried out by the people whose lives and livelihoods it will shape. The voices we have heard do not yet reflect the broad community support and shared confidence that a long-term transformation of this scale requires.

Instead, it is time to engage in a process that is certainly worthy of more imagination. One where the answer, as Jeff Richardson so eloquently put it, is not simply to open or close Kirkwood, but instead to envision together what this street and its shared spaces can really offer to our community.

Such a plan requires that we listen to those who have lived experience with where the friction lies—those who actively feel excluded when the ballasts are installed, businesses who have struggled with deliveries, staffing, and returns on their extensive investments attempting to activate a space piecemeal, and City staff whose professional expertise and daily operational experience in understanding what can

responsibly be implemented and maintained. It deserves input on public safety—bike and pedestrian safety, fire and police safety, and public health safety.

Today, I met with Councilmember Daily, who has created a plan to get input from residents together with Councilmember Rosenbarger. This is a step towards leaning into the public discourse we saw happen on Tuesday evening, and a sign that Bloomington can do civic process collaboratively.

As public servants, we hope to earn public trust. That is a heavy weight for me every day—living into that trust requires deep listening and tough decisions. This decision is not a retreat from a vision—it is instead a deeper commitment to getting it right for as many of our neighbors as we can.

This veto is not a rejection of a council vote, but instead an invitation to further engagement.

VETOED

Passed 5 (Asare, Daily, Flaherty, Rollo, Rosenbarger) - 4 (Stosberg, Piedmont-Smith, Zulich, Ruff)

Bloomington Common Council Ordinance No. 2026-12 - To Amend Title 15 of the Bloomington Municipal Code Entitled "Vehicles and Traffic" to Create a Chapter for Streets and Alleys that are Closed to Vehicular Traffic

Preamble

Whereas, the City of Bloomington originally implemented the seasonal conversion of certain blocks of Kirkwood Avenue to a carless street to support local businesses, enhance pedestrian safety, and foster community vibrancy; and

Whereas, the Common Council, in Resolution 2025-05, signaled a commitment to a predictable seasonal schedule, and still seeks to provide long-term certainty to businesses, residents, and visitors regarding the summer street closure, allowing them to plan, adapt, and invest with confidence; and

Whereas, the Common Council recognizes that while daily visit rates may fluctuate due to construction or weather, the documented increase in "dwell time" suggests that a pedestrian-oriented Kirkwood Avenue creates a higher quality of engagement and a more meaningful "third space" for the community; and

Whereas, in the Common Council Budget Priorities sent by the Council on April, 1, 2026, the Council stated in Priority No. 10 its desire to create vibrant third places to activate spaces and invest in ensuring public spaces are high quality, engaging, and active; and

Whereas, the City of Bloomington's Climate Action Plan, which was unanimously adopted on April 21, 2021, includes Action TL1-A-5 for Transportation and Land Use Goal 1: the city would "[d]etermine appropriate locations for car-free pedestrian zones in high-density areas," including supporting periods of time when Kirkwood would be closed to vehicular traffic; and

Whereas, by formalizing this closure within Title 15, the City establishes a transparent framework for governance, allowing the of the City Engineer to manage emergencies while maintaining a consistent and predictable standard for the public; and

Whereas, the City Council is committed to activating Kirkwood Avenue as a premier destination for commerce, pedestrians, civic engagement, and community life, fostering economic vitality and social interaction; and

Whereas, this ordinance does not preclude the City of Bloomington from advancing additional investments in Kirkwood Avenue as outlined in the Transportation Plan and

Safe Streets for All Plan, ensuring future improvements align with the city’s vision for a vibrant, accessible, and multimodal corridor.

Be It Ordained by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, That:

Section 1.

Title 15, entitled “Vehicles and Traffic,” is amended to add the following chapter:

15.65 – STREETS AND ALLEYS CLOSED TO VEHICULAR TRAVEL.

Upon those streets and parts of streets described in Schedule X, attached hereto and made a part hereof, motor vehicular traffic shall be prohibited on such dates as are indicated therein. In case of emergency, the City Engineer may temporarily restore motor vehicle traffic as authorized in 15.08.040 - Temporary, experimental or emergency traffic regulations. If the City Engineer proposes to restore motor vehicular traffic for more than 90 days (consecutive days, or cumulative over the span of the annual closure), the restoration must be approved by the City Council.

SCHEDULE X

Restricted Streets

Street	From	To	Closure Period
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Walnut St.	S Washington St.	April 1 to November 15, annually
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Washington St.	S Lincoln St.	April 1 to November 15, annually
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Lincoln St.	S Grant St.	April 1 to November 15, annually
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Grant St.	S Dunn St.	April 1 to November 15, annually
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Dunn St.	S Indiana Ave.	April 1 to November 15, annually

Section 2. Severability

If any section, sentence or provision of this legislation, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be declared invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any of the other sections, sentences, provisions, or applications of this legislation which can

be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this legislation are declared to be severable.

Section 3. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall have an effective date of April 21, 2027.

Passed

Passed by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon the 10 day of June, 2026.



Isak Nti Asare
President, Bloomington Common Council

Attestation of Bloomington City Clerk:



Nicole Bolden
Clerk, City of Bloomington

Presentation by Bloomington City Clerk:

Presented by me to the Mayor of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 16 day of June, 2026:



Nicole Bolden
Clerk, City of Bloomington

Approval by Mayor

Signed and approved by me upon this upon the ____ day of _____, 2026:

Kerry Thomson
Mayor, City of Bloomington

Synopsis

This ordinance seeks to codify streets and alleys in Bloomington that disallow vehicular traffic. Specifically, this ordinance codifies the seasonal carless schedule of specific blocks of Kirkwood Avenue. With this ordinance, businesses and residents can expect a permanent seasonal carless Kirkwood, allowing businesses the predictability to invest in outdoor infrastructure for guests. The City Administration has provided valuable operational feedback in its 2026 memorandum, identifying important challenges regarding infrastructure, sanitation, public safety, and accessibility that naturally arise as temporary programs transition toward permanent city fixtures. With that, this ordinance aims to provide the necessary legal and budgetary certainty for the City to move beyond "incomplete solutions" and invest in more permanent infrastructure, such as more ADA-compliant features and high-quality seating, recommended by staff.

Distributed to: Clerk, Council Attorney, ESD, Engineering, Legal, and Mayor.