



City of Bloomington Common Council

Legislative Packet – Addendum

Posted on Tuesday, 6 May 2025

Wednesday, 7 May 2025
Regular Session at 6:30pm

DRAFT for DISCUSSION ON 5/7/25

To: Mayor Kerry Thomson

From: Bloomington Common Council

Date: May 7, 2025

Subj: Priorities for the 2026 City of Bloomington Budget

In the context of Indiana SB 1 and decreasing funding from federal agencies, the City Council recognizes the challenges ahead as the City prepares a budget for 2026. We live in a time when we will need to tighten our already tight belts, and in which price increases and economic uncertainty increase the vulnerability of our constituents.

At the same time, we continue our effort to frame our funding priorities in the context of overall goals for the community, which have been heavily vetted and communicated via our long-range planning documents, including the following:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Transportation Plan
- Sustainability Action Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan

Councilmembers have agreed on a number of general objectives, listed below. We also list a number of recommended investments to attain objective(s) in each outcome area. Clearly, your administration is already working toward several of these objectives, and in those cases, this memo serves as our encouragement to continue that work.

We recognize there may be multiple ways to meet an objective, and we encourage collaborative deliberation on what actions or approaches, other than those listed here, might effectively achieve the stated objectives. We recognize that several recommendations below will take more than one year to implement, and indeed given funding uncertainties, we will need to carefully plan ahead and perhaps stretch our goals out over more years than previously predicted. Additionally we recognize that the list below does not include the breadth of city government expenses and programs that are beneficial to the life and health of Bloomington and the people who live here.

This letter should not be viewed as a list of budget demands, but instead used to facilitate collaboration and help achieve alignment on a budget proposal when you bring it forward in the coming months. We look forward to our discussion on May 14 and subsequent conversations prior to finalization of your proposal in August.

NOTE: Councilmembers rated the budget priorities below on a scale of 1 (lowest priority) to 5 (highest priority). The number in parentheses denotes the average rating of the objective or investment. If there is no number, then that particular idea was not part of the initial survey. We recognize this list includes some items with clear price tags that can be obviously represented in a budget document, while others represent how staff time is used and will not show up as clearly in the budget.

Outcome Area: Government Transparency

Objective:

- Incorporate transparency throughout all government operations (4.78)

Investments:

- Improve the city website to make things easier to find
 - Conduct first-person user experience research
 - Ensure all domains that have City information are included or incorporated, including county and non-profit partnership information
 - Increase data capacity and improve the data platform
 - Consolidate information related to various assistance and grant programs
 - Explore the development of an independent web and social media presence for City Council
- Establish metrics and benchmarks to respond to FOIA requests and other data requests

Outcome Area: High Performing Government

Objectives:

- Maintain government infrastructure (4.56)
- Improve functionality and work capacity of the City Council in order to fulfill its statutory duties (4 items ranging 3.33-3.89)
- Gain efficiency in operations by improving and expanding collaboration between city departments and with other local government partners

Investments:

- Increase funding for street repair and repaving and complete/update the Level of Service assessment of our streets (doubling the repaving budget got a score of 3.11 under "Transportation")
- Improve tracking of asset management, including sidewalks
- Invest \$200,000 in council office operations, including personnel expenditures (3.89)
 - Hire additional council staff (3.56)
 - Increase pay for council staff to be more competitive (3.44)

- Increase council budget for external consultants (3.33)
- Improve permitting process in Planning & Transportation (3.44 under “Housing”) and Economic & Sustainable Development
- Partner with the County on strategic use of opioid settlement funds (4.00 under “Health & Human Services”)

Outcome Area: Neighborhood Livability and Social Health

Objectives:

- Aid low-income residents and agencies that support them, in the face of federal and state budget cuts (2 items ranging 3.78-3.89)
- Increase food security for our residents (4.33)

Investments:

- Continue/expand direct grants and other assistance programs that support residents, for example, programs offered by Economic & Sustainable Development and Housing & Neighborhood Development (3.89)
- Double Jack Hopkins Social Service grant funding (3.78) and ensure sufficient administrative support for this program
- Find other ways to support local non-profit organizations in the face of federal and state budget cuts, including additional grants or other in-kind support or assistance.
- Improve coordination of city grant funding processes
- Identify and implement strategies, including new partnerships and the potential use of incentives, to develop grocery stores and/or other healthy food options in local food deserts
- Pursue UDO revisions that expand allowed uses related to neighborhood stores and childcare
- Study our local food system to identify gaps and opportunities, including public gardening space

Outcome Area: Public Safety

Items below in *italic font* were submitted after our last meeting via email and need to be further discussed prior to approval.

Objectives:

- Improve the safety of community members and address disparities or inequities in existing public safety outcomes through a public safety system that includes social services as well as physical and mental health provision (in addition to police, EMS and fire)

- Implement SS4A Action Plan and Vision Zero (cross-reference Outcome Area “Transportation”)
- *Ensure timely, reliable, and equitable emergency medical response across all areas of the county to protect life and health*

Investments:

- Invest in a non-police community response team (4.22)
- *EMS-fund salary offsets, certification programs, or stipends for hard to fill night/weekend shifts.*
- Continue investments in specialized Central Dispatch services.
- *Fund a city-county EMS coordinator position or interagency task force to coordinate service agreements, staffing, and mutual aid across EMS providers.*

Outcome Area: Housing & Homelessness

Objective:

- Increase and maintain safe housing options for all city residents, especially those in low-income households. (5 items ranging 3.22-4.00)

Investments:

- Continue successful HAND support programs, regardless of reductions in HUD funding (4.00)
- Provide additional funding for Summit Hill land trust or new land trust/bank (3.78)
- Continue financial support for and collaboration with Heading Home, specifically but not exclusively for a Housing Summit with builders and funders (This specific idea received a 3.78) NOTE: We understand that Heading Home is planning such a summit for Nov. 2025.
- Pursue amendments to Bloomington Municipal Code
 - Use staff time to regulate AirBnBs (3.33)
 - Invest \$200-\$400,000 in form-based code UDO overhaul (3.22)
 - Use staff time to pursue low/no-cost revisions to the UDO now with the view to an eventual form-based code UDO overhaul (3.22)

Outcome Area: Health & Human Services

Objectives:

- Collaborate with other government entities and non-profit groups to prevent and treat substance use disorders and help people in recovery (4.00)
- Support mental health services in Bloomington (3.89)

Investments:

- Use staff time to partner with the County on strategic use of opioid settlement funds (4.00)
- Continue/expand Centerstone partnership and explore other partnerships to employ people in recovery (4.00)
- Invest \$200,000 in co-location of mental health services in existing social service agencies (3.89)

Outcome Area: Equity

Objective: Incorporate equity as a value throughout all city operations (4.00)

Investments:

- Hire consultants to engage the community in defining equity and identifying desired outcomes, to train and guide city staff/electeds, to assess our current systems/processes, and to incorporate equity into city systems/processes

Outcome Area: Transportation & Mobility**Objectives:**

- Improve the safety of current transportation options available to all users of the public right-of-way in line with the Safe Streets for All Action Plan
- Expand and improve safe transportation options that fulfill the city's sustainability and equity goals, prioritizing walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized modes consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Plan, and Climate Action Plan

Investments:

- Invest \$6-10 Million on priorities in the SS4A Action Plan (estimate of local match needed) (3.78)
- Invest \$8 Million in 4 equal buckets: sidewalks, multi-use paths, bike lanes, and intersection improvements (3.56)
 - Expand investments related to transportation safety/efficiency such as street redesign, bump-outs, leading pedestrian intervals, bussing efficiencies (3.44)
- Transportation infrastructure maintenance that has been deferred
- Take steps to develop a downtown circulator bus route (3.00)

****Amendment Form****

Ordinance #: 2025-16
Amendment #: Am 01
Submitted by: Cm. Daily
Date: May 5, 2025

Proposed Amendment: (Additions shown in **bold**, deletions shown in ~~strike through~~)

1. The second “WHEREAS” clause shall read:

WHEREAS, on September ~~67~~ **6**, 2011, the City of Bloomington Redevelopment Commission purchased the real estate abutting the alley referred to herein from Indiana University and redeveloped it as part of the Trades District; and

Synopsis

This amendment corrects a typographical error in the date of the clause describing the real estate purchase.

05/07/25 Regular Session Action: Pending