



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON COMMON COUNCIL

AGENDA AND NOTICE:
DELIBERATION SESSION
Wednesday | 6:30 PM
14 May 2025

*Council Chambers (#115), Showers Building, 401 N. Morton Street
The meeting may also be accessed at the following link:*

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/84429817803?pwd=Oz6TsuFMrYxtTlqHyEOabZ1RWyu086.1>

1. Roll Call
2. Agenda summation
3. Report from the Mayor
4. Budget 2026 Discussions
 - a. Fiscal Overview (Reedy Financial and Controller McClellan)
 - b. Initial Mayoral Budget Statement
 - c. Budget Task Force Report
 - d. Council/Administration Discussion
 - e. Public Comment
 - f. Closing Remarks
5. Council Schedule
6. Adjournment

Bloomington City Council meetings can be watched on the following websites:

- Community Action Television Services (CATS) – <https://catvstv.net>
- YouTube – <https://youtube.com/@citybloomington>

Background materials and packets are available at <https://bloomington.in.gov/council>

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Posted: May 8, 2025

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

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”)

Investments:

- Invest in a non-police community response team (4.22)

- Continue investments in specialized Central Dispatch services.

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) (consider support of any organizations working on this initiative)

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)

****Approved by council 8-0 to be sent to the mayor along with supporting documents related to the councilmember survey at the regular session on May 7, 2025.****

Budget priorities that received an average score of 4.0 or above

Note that “Cost” and “Notes” columns are for discussion purposes only. Cost estimates are broad and not vetted by relevant staff nor by CMs who made the suggestions. “Cost” is in relation to current expenditures in this area. E.g. “high” means a big increase in investment, whereas “low” means continue at the same level or small increase in investment.

PROPOSAL	SCORE	COST	NOTES
Incorporate govt transparency throughout all operations	4.78	Low	Identify priorities
Maintain govt infrastructure	4.56	High	
Increase food security	4.33	?	Need more details
Invest in non-policing community response team	4.22	Med	
Continue successful HAND support programs	4.00	?	Depends on HUD
Partner with County on strategic use of opioid settlement funds	4.00	Low	
Continue/expand Centerstone partnership	4.00	Low	
Incorporate equity as a value throughout all operations	4.00	Med	

Budget priorities that received an average score between 3.00 and 3.99

PROPOSAL	SCORE	COST	NOTES
Continue/expand direct grants & assistance that support residents	3.89	Med	Continue or expand?
\$200K for co-location of mental health services in existing agencies	3.89	Med	
\$200K Council Office investment	3.89	Med	
Invest \$6-10M on priorities in SS4A plan	3.78	High	
Bond for or otherwise fund a land bank/trust	3.78	High	
Double Jack Hopkins Fund	3.78	Med	
Housing summit with builders and funders	3.67	Low	
\$8M for sidewalks, multi-use paths, bike lanes, intersections	3.56	High	
Additional council staff	3.56	Med	
Expand investments related to transportation safety/efficiency	3.44	High	
Incentives for small developers for small multi-unit buildings	3.44	Med	Already \$ avail in HDF
Permitting process changes to increase efficiencies	3.44	Low	
Remove GF subsidy for sanitation, use to support composting	3.44	Med	
Increase salaries of council staff	3.44	Low	
Explore pay as you throw trash programs	3.33	Low	
Increase Council budget for external consultants	3.33	Med	
Competitive pay for all city staff	3.33	Med	
Improve communication between govt and residents	3.33	Low	
Limit AirBnBs	3.33	Low	More staff?
High priority corridor studies	3.22	?	
Take steps now toward form-based code before eventual UDO overhaul	3.22	Low	
\$200-400K to overhaul the UDO in line with city policy, form-based code	3.22	Med	
Double budget for paving and repair of roads	3.11	High	
\$100K for community composting program	3.11	Med	
Fund College/Walnut street redesign	3.00	High	
Downtown circulator bus	3.00	High	

Outcome Area: Public Safety

Name	Bond to fund a southwest fire station (on Summit property)	Additional incentives to recruit/retain police officers	Invest in a non-policing community response team
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	1	1	4
Hopi Stosberg	2	2	4
Sydney Zulich	3	3	5
Matt Flaherty	1	1	5
Kate	1	1	5
Dave Rollo	5	5	3
Courtney Daily	4	5	5
Isak	3	1	2
Andy Ruff	3	5	5
Average	2.56	2.67	4.22

Outcome Area: Transportation & Mobility

Name	Invest \$6-\$10 million on priorities in the Safe Streets for All action plan	Hire staff to implement Safe Streets for All goals (esp. engineering)	Restructure staff to make Transportation it's own division with planners and engineers.	Fund the College Avenue/Walnut Street redesign	Fund high-priority corridor studies (corridors indicated in the SS4A Plan)
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	3	2	1	4	3
Hopi Stosberg	4	3	3	4	4
Sydney Zulich	4	4	2	3	4
Matt Flaherty	5	5	3	5	5
Kate	5	5	5	5	5
Dave Rollo	1	1	1	1	2
Courtney Daily	5	4	3	2	4
Isak	4	1	1	2	1
Andy Ruff	3	1	1	1	1
Average	3.78	2.89	2.22	3.00	3.22

Outcome Area: Transportation & Mobility

Name	Double budget for repaving and repair of roads	\$8 million investment equally split between sidewalks, multi-use paths, protected bike lanes, and intersection improvements	Continue/expand investments related to transportation safety and efficiency including bumpouts, street redesign, bussing, leading pedestrian intervals, and more	Create a comprehensive city crosswalk plan	Implement a downtown circulator bus route
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	1	3	3	2	1
Hopi Stosberg	3	3	5	5	4
Sydney Zulich	2	4	2	3	5
Matt Flaherty	1	5	5	2	2
Kate	2	5	5	2	1
Dave Rollo	5	2	3	3	3
Courtney Daily	5	5	4	4	4
Isak	5	3	2	1	5
Andy Ruff	4	2	2	2	2
Average	3.11	3.56	3.44	2.67	3.00

Outcome Area: Housing & Homelessness

Name	\$200-\$400,000 to overhaul the UDO in line with city policy and form-based code	Host a housing summit that would include builders and funders of affordable housing	Continue successful HAND support programs (home repair, rental assistance, down-payment assistance, etc.) in light of predicted federal funding cuts	Limit Airbnb's (support for single family home owner occupancy)	Bond for or otherwise support a land bank/land trust (support for single family home owner occupancy)
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	2	5	5	4	3
Hopi Stosberg	2	5	5	4	3
Sydney Zulich	5	4	5	5	5
Matt Flaherty	4	3	2	1	3
Kate	3	2	2	4	3
Dave Rollo	2	4	4	5	5
Courtney Daily	5	5	5	4	5
Isak	5	3	3	1	3
Andy Ruff	1	2	5	2	4
Average	3.22	3.67	4.00	3.33	3.78

Outcome Area: Housing & Homelessness

Name	Eventual form-based UDO overhaul, but take steps in that direction now that are zero cost	Provide incentives to small developers who want to build smaller multi-unit residential buildings	Permitting process changes to increase efficiencies	\$200,000 for centralized homelessness data system
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	4	3	3	1
Hopi Stosberg	5	4	4	2
Sydney Zulich	1	5	5	4
Matt Flaherty	5	3	2	3
Kate	5	4	2	1
Dave Rollo	2	4	2	3
Courtney Daily	4	4	5	5
Isak	1	3	5	3
Andy Ruff	2	1	3	2
Average	3.22	3.44	3.44	2.67

Outcome Area: Economic Health & Jobs

Outcome Area: Environmental Health & Sustainability

Name	\$150,000 for small business resource center	Hire staff to focus on removal of invasive species	\$100,000 for a community composting program	Remove general fund subsidy for sanitation services and use that money to support composting	Explore "pay as you throw" trash programs
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	1	1	2	4	4
Hopi Stosberg	2	2	3	3	4
Sydney Zulich	5	2	5	5	3
Matt Flaherty	1	1	3	5	3
Kate	1	1	3	5	4
Dave Rollo	3	5	5	3	4
Courtney Daily	5	4	4	4	4
Isak	3	1	1	1	1
Andy Ruff	2	1	2	1	3
Average	2.56	2.00	3.11	3.44	3.33

Outcome Area: Neighborhood Livability & Social Health

Name	Double the Jack Hopkins Social Service funding program (to \$1,000,000)	Increase food security	Continue/expand direct grants and assistance programs that support residents.
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	3	4	4
Hopi Stosberg	2	5	5
Sydney Zulich	5	5	4
Matt Flaherty	4	3	3
Kate	1	3	1
Dave Rollo	5	5	4
Courtney Daily	5	5	5
Isak	5	5	5
Andy Ruff	4	4	4
Average	3.78	4.33	3.89

Outcome Area: Health & Human Services

Name	Partner with the county on strategic use of opioid settlement funds	Continue/expand Centerstone partnership and explore other partnership options to employ people in recovery.	\$200,000 for the co-location of mental health services within local social service agencies
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	4	5	4
Hopi Stosberg	5	5	3
Sydney Zulich	4	5	5
Matt Flaherty	3	3	3
Kate	2	2	2
Dave Rollo	4	4	5
Courtney Daily	5	5	5
Isak	5	4	3
Andy Ruff	4	3	5
Average	4.00	4.00	3.89

Outcome Area: Equity

Name	\$200-400,000 for integrating and operationalizing equity in city government	Incorporate equity as a value through all operations
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	2	5
Hopi Stosberg	3	5
Sydney Zulich	5	5
Matt Flaherty	5	5
Kate	3	3
Dave Rollo	1	2
Courtney Daily	5	5
Isak	1	2
Andy Ruff	1	4
Average	2.89	4.00

Outcome Area: High Performing Government

Name	\$200,000 Council Office Investment (including increase staff salaries, contract legal support)	Increase salaries of council staff	Increase budget for external consultants for the Council	Resume vacuum leaf pick up
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	5	4	5	1
Hopi Stosberg	5	3	5	1
Sydney Zulich	4	4	2	1
Matt Flaherty	5	5	4	1
Kate	5	5	5	1
Dave Rollo	3	2	3	3
Courtney Daily	4	4	3	4
Isak	1	1	1	1
Andy Ruff	3	3	2	5
Average	3.89	3.44	3.33	2.00

Outcome Area: High Performing Government

Name	Competitive staff pay (all city staff)	Improved communication between government and residents regarding programs and services	Maintain government infrastructure (buildings, streets, property, sewer/water lines, etc.)	Additional council staff to meet CM needs
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	2	1	5	3
Hopi Stosberg	3	5	5	3
Sydney Zulich	4	5	4	2
Matt Flaherty	5	2	3	5
Kate	3	1	4	4
Dave Rollo	3	4	5	4
Courtney Daily	4	5	5	5
Isak	1	5	5	1
Andy Ruff	5	2	5	5
Average	3.33	3.33	4.56	3.56

Outcome Area: Culture & Recreation

Outcome Area: Government Transparency

Name	There were no specific funding ideas/requests under the Culture and Recreation category. What do you think this signifies?	There were no specific funding ideas/requests under the Government Transparency category. What do you think this signifies?	Should Government Transparency be incorporated as a value through all operations?
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	We are happy with the current offerings.	We are happy with the current investments in transparency.	5
Hopi Stosberg	There are already great recreation opportunities supported by the city.	transparency should exist in government as a default.	5
Sydney Zulich	It is difficult to focus on curating culture and recreation when there is a large chunk of bloomington residents who can't afford to pay their bills because housing, transportation, and access to resources has become inaccessible.	This is a bit harder to incorporate into a budget. It would be easier to be more transparent when implementing the different budget priorities laid out in other categories.	5
Matt Flaherty	No CMs saw this as the most important outcome area in need of budget changes.	No CMs saw this as the most important outcome area in need of budget changes.	4
Kate	I think these areas are important, but I think it signifies there are areas that desperately need more funding.	That it can be done without \$\$\$. A comment about the ranking of outcome areas - My ranking is based on what I think needs the most money, not necessarily what is the most important. For example, I think increasing housing/affordable housing is wildly important, but I think the way the mayor chooses to spend money on it is not productive, and I think changing the UDO (which is zero cost), is the best bet. So my ranking is based on what I think needs the most money, not necessarily what is the most important.	5
Dave Rollo	Those topics are being handled satisfactorily.	We have taken significant steps to provide open and accessible government. Other priorities are more pressing.	5
Courtney Daily	Interesting. I think it's telling that we are focused on many "survival" issues, but hadn't calculated culture and recreation as "survival" but more of a luxury. I think it indicates that we are all trying to get in front of some national/state issues that will be having a dire impact on local communities; the "luxury" of recreation gets relegated to second tier during such emergencies. (Which really shouldn't be, as they are also critical, but it's understandable how that happens.)	Again, other "house on fire" issues; we can work to be transparent without spending money on it. (Admittedly, some funding for literature, etc, would maybe help to that goal)	5
Isak	Not having time.	That people don't care about transparency	5
Andy Ruff	Maybe that culture and recreation are seen as currently reasonably appropriately-funded	That the issues related to this won't necessarily be solved by more funding but instead require other types of changes.	4
Average			4.78

Ranking Outcome Areas

Name	Public Safety	Transportation & Mobility	Affordable Housing	Homelessness
Isabel Piedmont-Smith			2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Hopi Stosberg		4th Choice	3rd Choice	
Sydney Zulich		3rd Choice	1st Choice	
Matt Flaherty	2nd Choice	1st Choice	3rd Choice	
Kate	4th Choice	1st Choice		2nd Choice
Dave Rollo	2nd Choice		1st Choice	
Courtney Daily			2nd Choice	1st Choice
Isak				
Andy Ruff	1st Choice		3rd Choice	4th Choice
Name	Economic Health & Jobs	Environmental Health &	Cultural & Recreation	Neighborhood Livability &
Isabel Piedmont-Smith				
Hopi Stosberg				2nd Choice
Sydney Zulich	4th Choice			
Matt Flaherty				
Kate		3rd Choice		
Dave Rollo		3rd Choice		
Courtney Daily		4th Choice		
Isak	1st Choice			2nd Choice
Andy Ruff	2nd Choice			
Name	Health & Human Services	High Performing Government	Equity	Government Transparency
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	4th Choice	1st Choice		
Hopi Stosberg		1st Choice		
Sydney Zulich	2nd Choice			
Matt Flaherty			4th Choice	
Kate				
Dave Rollo	4th Choice			
Courtney Daily	3rd Choice			
Isak		3rd Choice		
Andy Ruff				