

# 2022 Annual Report

Bloomington Commission on Sustainability

City of Bloomington, Indiana

## **Mission**

The City of Bloomington Commission on Sustainability (BCOS) promotes economic development, environmental health, and social equity in our community for present and future generations. The commission gathers and disseminates information; promotes practical initiatives; and measures, monitors, and reports on our community's progress toward sustainability. (City Website)

Statutory Authority: [Chapter 2.12.100](#)

## **Purpose**

A sustainable community seeks to enhance the socio-environmental-economic well-being of the community while taking precautions not to compromise the quality of life of future generations. Toward that end, it reduces its use of nonrenewable natural resources and its production of wastes, while at the same time improving livability. The mission of the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability is to promote sustainable socio-environmental-economic well-being of Bloomington and all its inhabitants. (Chapter 2.12.100)

## **Who We Are**

2022-23 Members: Kristina Anderson, Matt Austin, Sarah Congress, Emma Ferguson, Matt Flaherty (Council Ex Officio), Elisha Hardy, Nolan Hendon (Monroe County Commissioners), David Maenner, Shawn Miya, Nejla Routsong (Co-Chair), Joseph Wynia (Co-Chair)

2021-22 Members: Anna Abernathy, Jerrett Alexander (Chair), Kristina Anderson, Matt Flaherty (Council Ex Officio), Samantha Ginther, Elisha Hardy, Nolan Hendon

(Monroe County Commissioners), Jana McGee, Colin Murphy, Nejla Routsong (Vice-Chair/Interim Chair), Joseph Wynia

Staff Liason: Lauren Clemens

## **Summary**

BCOS was created to improve our city's sustainability by ensuring that healthy levels of economic development, environmental health and social equity are preserved in our community for both present and future generations of Bloomington. To achieve this goal, we conduct research on issues relevant to our local community in these areas, share valuable information with both the city and the public, and make recommendations on city initiatives.

Our current areas of focus in working groups for 2022-23 are:

- 1) Waste Reduction,
- 2) Heat Preparedness, and
- 3) Just Transition.

During 2021-2022, BCOS passed the Resolution on Housing First with endorsements from a diverse group of community partners, including the Indiana Recovery Alliance, Neighbors United and the Bloomington Homeless Coalition. This Resolution helped bring the environmental sustainability and social equity impacts of our city's growing housing crisis to the attention of Common Council and the Mayor's Office. Another accomplishment was the Just Transition town hall event, which demonstrated that our BCOS can, with considerable and much appreciated help from city liason and community volunteers, empower the people of Bloomington and our community's institutional stakeholders to help shape policy on important issues.

BCOS plans to continue this forward momentum in 2022-23 in the three working group areas stated above. In all its work, BCOS hopes to make a positive contribution to implementing our city's Climate Action Plan and Sustainability Action Plan and achieving the goals stated therein.

## **Work Completed by Commission as a Whole**

### *Completed Work*

- Governance – Elected new co-chairs in March for 2022-23. Changed by-laws to reflect current operational procedures.
- Speakers to our Commission
  - Don Eggert, Member, Environmental Commission
  - John Zody, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND)
  - Marybelle Tobias and Colin Miller, EJ Solutions, Drafters of the 2020 Racial Equity Impact Assessment of City of Oakland
- Resolution on Housing First
  - Passed February 9, 2021: 7-0-0
  - Organizational sponsors: 3
  - Resolved:
    - Urged the Mayor of Bloomington, working in collaboration with the Bloomington Common Council, to conduct a feasibility study and subsequently develop a housing first plan by December 25, 2021 to ensure housing stability to all residents;
    - Further urged the Mayor of Bloomington, working in collaboration with the Bloomington Common Council, to work with all stakeholders to identify and address existing gaps and barriers to achieving housing stability for all residents; and
    - To support the long-term success of the housing first program, urged the Mayor of Bloomington, working in collaboration with the Bloomington Common Council, to identify and consider all public and private sources of funds, especially any major contributing agents to and/or beneficiaries of the rising housing costs in our city.

### *Current and Upcoming Work:*

- Adopt the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the United Nations to better organize BCOS work within a global sustainability framework.
- Attend 2022 Climate Leadership Summit by Earth Charter Indiana.

- Attend 2022 Sustainability Community Fair by Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs.

## **Work Completed in Working Groups**

### • **Just Transition Working Group**

- *Purpose:* To address rising rates of homelessness, addiction, mental illness, food insecurity and other social manifestations of local economic and climate insecurity by focusing on the underlying policy and institutional obstacles to achieving sustainable and equitable economic development
- *Current and Upcoming Work:* Conducting policy research and planning more focused public dialogues in Fall 2022, with which our working group can create well-researched, high-impact policy recommendations that reflect the chosen values and focus areas voiced by our community.
- *Completed Work:* Held a Just Transition town hall in March 2022 at Monroe County Public Library Auditorium and virtually on Zoom
  - Attendees: 53 (12 in person, 41 virtually)
  - Online surveys: 17
  - Conclusions:
    - Top three Just Transition principles ranked in surveys:
      - Well-being for all (SDG 1)
      - Regenerative systems (SDG 12)
      - Equitable distribution of resources and power (SDG 10)
    - Areas of policy reform raised by in-person attendees:
      - Safe and sustainable housing for all
      - Expanded, improved and fare-free public transit
      - Improved economic security for all

### • **Waste Reduction Working Group**

- *Current and Upcoming Work:*
  1. Put together a plan for a Neighborhood Compost project to promote the hyper-local diversion of food waste.

2. Collaborate with Monroe County Waste District to promote established compostables drop-off locations and education about compostable materials.
3. Research the feasibility of creating local collection options of TetraPak or similar layered cartons.

- **Heat Management Working Group**

- *Current and Upcoming Work:*

1. Create a Heat Management Task Force comprising of personnel from the Monroe County Health Department, Bloomington Hospital, city departments such as Utilities, Planning, Emergency Management, non-profits such as the United Way, Area 10 Agency on Aging, etc.
2. Determine based on capacity to either create a Heat Management Plan or work on only one of the following aspects of the plan:
  - Mitigation
  - Adaptation
  - Education
  - Emergency Response
  - Ordinances

- **Policy Working Group** (no longer active)

- *Purpose:* To identify opportunities and recommend actions for BCOS to make a policy impact on upcoming city initiatives and budget planning

- *Completed Work:*

- Represented BCOS at 2021 City Budget hearings, asking that the council not increase funds to police budgets until a comprehensive housing first plan is drafted and funded in full by the City to adequately address the growing housing crisis.
    - Invited John Zody, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND), to share his recommendations on addressing the impacts of the housing crisis on sustainability in keeping with the BCOS Housing First Resolution passed in February 2021.