



# community services & economics

## Overview

This chapter offers a progressive vision to continue to provide and develop critical infrastructure, services, and access as the City of Bloomington grows and changes. It also provides the foundation to build a sustainable economy that will retain, cultivate, and attract quality jobs for residents. Community Services is a broad topic that can cover an array of public and non-profit community services. The chapter's narrative introduces subtopics and their respective goals, policies, and programs for which the City of Bloomington can provide leadership and work with other agencies and organizations.

## Municipal Services

Municipal government services directly affect daily life for residents and businesses – whether it is simply going to the kitchen for a glass of water, having your street plowed during a late night snowstorm, finding a new dog or cat for your family, having a place for the kids to go swimming on a hot summer night or a fitness center for adults to stay fit, knowing that rental properties in your neighborhood are safe, or hearing a dispatcher answer your 911 call during an emergency. These services not only allow a community to function, but also impact its overall quality of life. In order to deliver these services efficiently without interruption, municipal governments must actively plan and budget for necessary infrastructure, facilities, employee training, and program delivery to the community.

## Local Government Partnerships

Across the nation, many local governments are looking to maximize efficiencies and reduce costs by exploring joint services or contract agreements with other local governmental units. The City of Bloomington currently works in close cooperation with nearby units of local government and anchor institutions. These include Monroe County, Indiana University and Ivy Tech, IU Health/Hospital, Monroe County Community School Corporation, Town of Ellettsville, township governments, and many others. Bloomington should continue to identify ways to develop new or expanded local government partnership opportunities in the future.

## Open Government and Transparency

The City continues to explore initiatives that provide efficient and forward-thinking government services that are open and accessible to the public. This is an important issue both here in Bloomington and nationwide. Through innovation and openness, restoring and sustaining public trust in local government is not only possible but essential for effective local governance.

## Annexation

Over the past generation, Bloomington has increasingly extended city services to support economic development within the City and in surrounding unincorporated areas. There has been a delay in the past decade in annexing areas where city utilities have been extended. Over time, this has created a “patchwork” of properties inside and outside the city limits that now presents confusion over jurisdiction, as



well as service inefficiencies. The City is currently considering the feasibility, advantages, and disadvantages of annexing these patchwork properties. In February 2017, the City proposed the annexation of seven urbanized areas just outside the municipal boundaries that would take effect in 2020. The annexation process must follow Indiana Code 36-4-3, but can result in enhanced services for annexed areas. Once annexed, City services are generally provided or made available in the same manner as for current residents and businesses.

### **Economic Development**

Retaining, developing, and attracting quality jobs for all is essential for the health of Bloomington's economy. The City of Bloomington will continue to promote a diverse economy to ensure Bloomington's long-term economic vitality. The City will aim to increase opportunities for its residents by focusing on innovation and entrepreneurship, retaining and supporting existing businesses, attracting and retaining human capital, supporting the growth of future-oriented jobs, encouraging arts, entertainment and culture, and creating a positive business climate through local policy. Innovation and entrepreneurship are essential qualities to promote. A robust digital infrastructure; smart city technology that integrates information and communication; the strong performance and interactivity of community services; and a vigorous sharing or access economy, will all play important roles in the City's future success.

The City of Bloomington will aim to capitalize on the talent and intelligence attracted by the City's educational institutions and its proximity to NSWC Crane by cultivating Bloomington's emerging tech and startup scene, by pursuing programs to leverage these institutions' intellectual property, and by pursuing strategies to increase wage growth, including initiatives proposed by the Mayor's 2017 Wage Growth Task Force. Bloomington needs jobs that will not only encourage its graduates to stay in Bloomington and recruit outside talent, but also enable all workers to earn a livable wage. In the next 20 years, we aim to strengthen and spread Bloomington's reputation as an excellent place to live, work, and play.

The City will continue to address issues affecting business growth, job creation, and Bloomington's long-term economic competitiveness, such as concerns related to regulation, and will pursue opportunities to more effectively use incentives to promote economic vitality. The City of Bloomington will continue working with businesses to facilitate retention and expansion of primary employers and key industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and technology services, while exploring opportunities to further diversify its economy by strengthening other sectors. This will ensure Bloomington's prosperity and its role as a regional economic leader.



## Goals & Policies

The policies in this chapter respond to the adopted 2013 Vision Statement objectives to:

*“offer a wide variety of excellent educational opportunities for our residents at every stage of life”;*

*“invest in diverse high quality economic development that provides equitable job opportunities to our residents, supports an entrepreneurial small business climate, enhances the community’s role as a regional hub, and is responsive towards larger concerns of sustainability”;*

*“enhance the community’s role as a regional economic hub”;*

*“meet basic needs and self-sufficiency for all residents”;*

*“deliver efficient, responsive, and forward-thinking local government services”;*

*“encourage healthy lifestyles by providing high quality public places, green space, and parks, and an array of recreational activities and events”;*

*“ensure all land development activity makes a positive and lasting community contribution”;* and to

*“fortify our strong commitment to equality, acceptance, openness, and public engagement.”*

### Goal 1.1 Prioritize programs and strategies that sustain the health, well-being, recreation, and safety of residents and visitors.

**Policy 1.1.1:** Promote City stewardship of its parks, facilities, programs, and services as well as partnerships with local groups for present and future generations.

**Policy 1.1.2:** Continue and enhance programs that embrace Bloomington’s diversity of cultures, languages, gender orientations, and abilities, and support populations that have traditionally been excluded.

**Policy 1.1.3:** Continue and expand the city’s commitment to public land use for the production and distribution of local food.

### Goal 1.2 Engage the community by working with regional partners, schools, businesses, and non-profits to create partnerships that provide community services and programs for all age groups.

**Policy 1.2.1:** Encourage partnerships with non-profits in Monroe County and adjacent communities to develop solutions to shared problems, serve community service needs, and leverage State and Federal Resources.

**Policy 1.2.2:** Foster partnerships among the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana University, and Ivy Tech Community College to provide shared use of facilities, programs, and services.

**Policy 1.2.3:** Collaborate with the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) and private schools to integrate the use of school services, playing fields and facilities for public benefit, particularly for young people, families, and seniors.



**Policy 1.2.4:** Publicly support the continued high standards of local schools and help schools as feasible to obtain and maintain educational excellence.

**Policy 1.2.5:** Work with property developers during the development/redevelopment process to identify means to create spaces and/or programming that enhance community services.

**Goal 1.3 Increase the intrinsic value and everyday importance of City parks, trails, and community centers/spaces, libraries, and civic buildings by investing in their maintenance and improvement.**

**Policy 1.3.1:** Increase accessibility of parks, trails, and recreation facilities for all users.

**Policy 1.3.2:** Maintain existing facilities with investments that improve their usefulness, efficiency, and appearance. Avoid deferred maintenance of City infrastructure.

**Policy 1.3.3:** Provide universal access for our residents and visitors to parks, trails, recreation programs, athletic fields, libraries, and arts and culture centers with a variety of transportation modes.

**Policy 1.3.4:** Continue and expand the city's commitment to public land use for the production and distribution of local food.

**Goal 1.4 Plan for a future in which the services we provide to our community continue to thrive and adapt to Bloomington's growth and change.**

**Policy 1.4.1:** Ensure that growth does not eclipse our ability to provide equitable community services.

**Policy 1.4.2:** Partner locally to make available quality wired and wireless connectivity throughout the City of Bloomington.

**Policy 1.4.3:** Include parks, trails, and open space in planning for preservation of the natural environment and reduction of carbon emissions.

**Policy 1.4.4:** Seek opportunities to develop new parks and recreation facilities to meet the emerging needs of residents and visitors to the City of Bloomington.

**Policy 1.4.5:** Consider the location of existing parks, trails, plazas, and other public gathering spaces when reviewing development plans.

**Policy 1.4.6:** Encourage private development proposals to include parks, trails, plazas, or other recreational and art facilities within the development to meet the needs of the community.

**Goal 1.5 Commit to, and plan for, transparency, open government, and effective, accessible and inclusive public engagement so that exemplary services are provided to our residents, businesses, and visitors to promote more participatory citizenship.**

**Policy 1.5.1:** Foster inclusive and representative engagement to steer and direct development processes toward community benefit.

**Policy 1.5.2:** Develop and operate government services that maximize transparency and public engagement.

**Policy 1.5.3:** Maintain highly motivated, professional, engaged staff and volunteers who are valued for their integrity, commitment, and contributions to the City and the community.

**Goal 1.6 Retain, develop, and attract quality jobs by fostering a healthy economic climate for area employers.**

**Policy 1.6.1:** Make full use of the human capital that Indiana University, Ivy Tech, and NSWC Crane attract and generate through programs that foster retention and expansion of key industries.

**Policy 1.6.2:** Prioritize the growth of local "traded/basic" employers through strategies that sustain a positive business climate for long term employment opportunities.



## Programs

### Municipal Services

- Survey community health and satisfaction levels regularly, identifying changing needs and quality of local services.
- Explore opportunities to partner and secure affordable wireless service packages for low-income community members.
- Use the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Master Plan to prepare coordinated area plans for open spaces, parks, and trails.
- Support higher residential densities near parks and trails to be within 1/4 of a mile of residents.
- Be mindful of opportunities to acquire land in the far eastern periphery of Bloomington and its edges and the Downtown with the potential for filling gaps in service in growing areas.
- Work with City departments to provide safe and enjoyable sidewalks, trails, or multi-use paths as routes to parks.
- Support MCCSC in an effort to develop a Safe Routes to School program, including the “Walking School Bus.”
- Provide parks and trails near elder care facilities and evaluate park and recreation opportunities for elderly residents.
- Implement the Bloomington ADA Transition Plan to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Prioritize maintenance and repair projects based upon safety, usage, and accessibility standards to parks, community centers/spaces, schools, libraries, and civic buildings.
- Support multigenerational community centers and work to provide intergenerational activities and programs that increase senior activity within the community.
- Implement an infrastructure management system to analyze the costs of City infrastructure maintenance, operation, depreciation, and replacement.
- Leverage City capital funds with statewide and regional grants and other outside funding sources.
- Develop improvement plans to maintain, restore, and enhance key community assets by attracting investments and other resources.
- Expand the city’s public garden programs to create more plots for individuals to garden, with a focus on food production.
- Assess the feasibility of adding fruit and nut trees to city parks and other public places to grow more local food.







### Local Government Partnerships

- Coordinate with Monroe County and the Town of Ellettsville on respective plans for future growth and services provided.
- Support opportunities to partner with Indiana University and utilize parks and trails near the campus.
- Assess the potential for complementary use of City, MCCSC, and non-profit facilities including libraries, playing fields, pools, gymnasiums, recreational facilities, community meeting spaces, education, health care, culture, local food production, and computer resources.
- Increase the number of older adult volunteers working and playing on a daily basis with MCCSC students.
- Work with MCCSC to identify ways that weekend, after-school, and evening use of school facilities such as gyms, pools, and fields can contribute to community programs.
- Collaborate with public and private schools to provide programs, services, and facilities that enhance the social and economic vitality of the city (e.g. Ivy Tech Community College's Center for Lifelong Learning).

### Open Government and Transparency

- Provide all public areas and meeting rooms with accessible Wi-Fi and computer devices to retrieve and transmit information available for use.
- Enhance public involvement through information technologies for public notices, road/trail projects, road closures, street cleaning, and other community announcements.

- Create opportunities for additional public access such as online document search, permit application, inspection scheduling, and a development or project online dashboard.
- Involve Housing & Neighborhood Development and the Council of Neighborhood Associations in determining how the city can be more responsive to neighborhood participation and public forums.
- Assure a knowledgeable, professional, and responsive staff by providing education, training, and skill building for employees.
- Use incentives tied to consistent assessments and feedback on overall performance and accountability.
- Experiment with and learn quickly new innovative city responses and programs.

### Annexation

- Develop an annexation strategy that provides efficient community services and maintains an equitable service to all residents of Bloomington.

### Economic Development

- Develop an affordable workforce-housing program as a means to retain and attract employees to live and work in Bloomington.
- Monitor the business and regulatory climate for traded/basic employers and identify strategies that can enable desired growth within this local employment sector.

- Support innovative and creative industries, including arts and entertainment sectors, public-private partnerships, and initiatives aimed at local entrepreneurship.
- Assess the affordability and availability of childcare and employer programs that include family leave and other incentives supporting long-term employment.
- Leverage marketing strategies that highlight local assets, programs, and other attributes to attract and retain human capital.
- Utilize incentive programs consistent with the mission of the City of Bloomington's Department of Economic and Sustainable Development to enhance the quality of life for residents.
- Promote partnerships with higher education institutions that aim to enhance entrepreneurship and competitiveness.

## Outcomes & Indicators

**Outcome:** Public safety is enhanced.

- Annual composite index score of crimes against persons and property
- Annual indices of crimes against persons or property by age, ability, gender, and ethnicity
- Community survey of perceptions on public safety

**Outcome:** Engagement processes are inclusive and representative.

- Percent of population engaged in public consultation processes (e.g. attendance rates, social media, subscribers)
- Demographic makeup of engagement participants

**Outcome:** Civic engagement is strong.

- Number of hours per capita volunteered annually by residents and business employees
- Percent of eligible residents voting in local elections

**Outcome:** Quality wired and wireless connectivity is available throughout the City.

- Percent of residential and nonresidential users with access to Internet download speeds of at least 100 megabyte and one gigabyte per second
- Number of free Wi-Fi hot spots per square mile
- Percent of public spaces with Wi-Fi capabilities
- Number of individuals participating in computer literacy training and support programs





**Outcome:** Income inequality is reduced across and between all ages, races, and genders.

- Household income and education levels
- Percent of population living below the poverty line of non-student/adult-led households
- Percent of 65+ population living below the poverty line, as compared to similar Midwestern college towns

**Outcome:** Overall community wellbeing is good for the eight dimensions of wellness.

- Evaluate emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual choices available to residents.

**Outcome:** Career pathways and training are engaging residents and businesses.

- Number of training programs matched to community job opportunities
- Percent of eligible residents, by age, enrolled in training programs
- Employment/unemployment rates by sector
- Workforce retention, recruitment, and growth by sector

**Outcome:** Respond to the results from Community Survey.

- Identify needed services
- Prioritize service needs

**Outcome:** Entrepreneurial activity has increased and a culture of entrepreneurialism is being sustained.

- Annual self-employment rates by age group
- Number of “local sourcing” agreements and programs in operation
- Number of locally owned business formations annually
- Total square footage and enrollment numbers of local incubators, accelerators, maker spaces, and co-working spaces
- Number of programs and enrollment levels to cultivate business innovation

**Outcome:** Wages, jobs, and GDP are outpacing population growth.

- Real per capita personal income
- Payroll employment
- Per capita GDP
- Trends in sector employment

