



# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

PLANNING AND  
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT  
BLOOMINGTON, IN



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# DEPARTMENT STAFF

The Planning and Transportation Department has a total of 24 staff positions. Staff members include engineers, planners, and support staff that strive to provide the best service to the public. Our staff members hold certifications such as: Professional Planners with certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), Professional Engineers (PE) licensed by the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency.

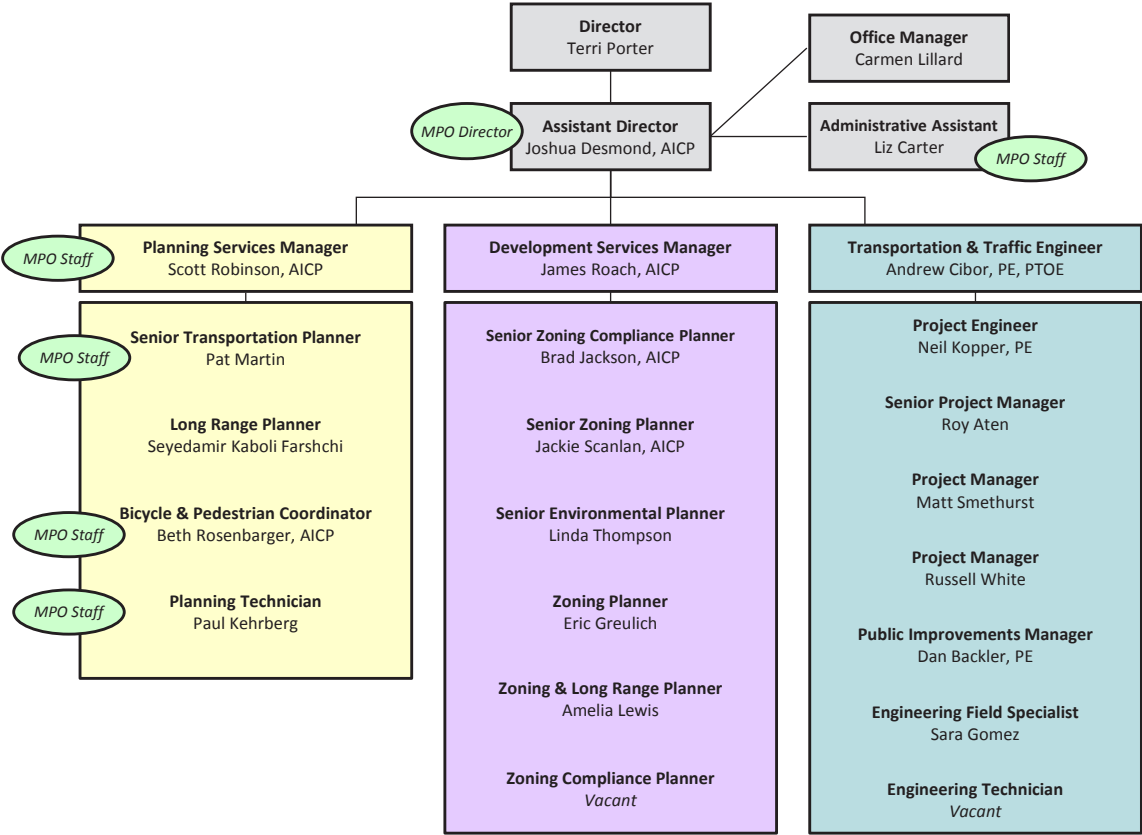
The Planning and Transportation Department staff provides direct support to the following boards, commissions, and organizations:

- Plan Commission
- Board of Zoning Appeals
- Plat Committee
- Hearing Officer
- Environmental Commission
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Commission
- MPO Policy Committee
- MPO Technical Advisory Committee
- MPO Citizens Advisory Committee
- Traffic Commission
- Parking Commission (New 2017)
- Board of Public Works

The staff also provides support to the following boards, commissions, and organizations:

- Downtown Bloomington Incorporated
- Utilities Service Board
- City of Bloomington Common Council
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Land Use Committee (New in 2018)
- Community Development Block Grant Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

City of Bloomington Planning & Transportation Department



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# DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Development Services Devsion reviews all development petitions for the City to ensure their compliance with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). This includes all building, signage, occupancy, and grading permits. Staff also reviews development petitions and presents them to the Plan Commission, Plat Committee, Board of Zoning Appeals, Hearing Officer, and Common Council. These petitions include subdivisions, rezoning requests, site plans, conditional uses and variances. Staff serves customers daily at the office’s front counter and over the phone by answering zoning and land use questions.

## PLAN COMMISSION AND PLAT COMMITTEE

The Plan Commission hears petitions for site plans, Planned Unit Developments, variances and forwards recommendations to several other bodies, including the Board of Zoning Appeals. A petition can include multiple cases combined into one petition. The Plat Committee hears petitions related to subdividing property or alterations to existing plats.

Of the 48 petitions filed with the Plan Commission or Plat Committee in 2017, the greatest number were for site plan review or use variance recommendations. As shown in Table 1 below, this is a fairly common distribution. However, this past year saw slightly more development activity than previous years. Table 2 on the following page breaks out the types of petition for the year.

Figure 1 on the following page shows the types of cases filed by year. This year saw a decrease in the number of site plans and use variance recommendations, while the number of changes to the UDO and plans associated with Planned Unit Developments (PUD) increased. The least common type of case, amendments and updates to the Growth Policies Plan saw activity as the 2018 Comprehensive Plan was filed for approval.

Table 1: Action Taken on Petitions (2013 - 2017)

Action Taken on Petitions	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Petitions Approved by Plan Commission	29	23	23	39	38
Petitions Denied by Plan Commission	0	1	0	0	2
Petitions Continued/ Withdrawn in Plan Commission	3	2	3	1	2
Petitions With No Recommendation	0	1	1	1	0
Petitions Approved by Plat Committee	5	4	3	3	6
Petitions Denied by Plat Committee	0	0	0	0	0
Petitions Continued/ Withdrawn in Plat Committee	0	1	0	0	0
Total Petitions Filed to Plan Commission & Plat Committee	37	32	30	44	48

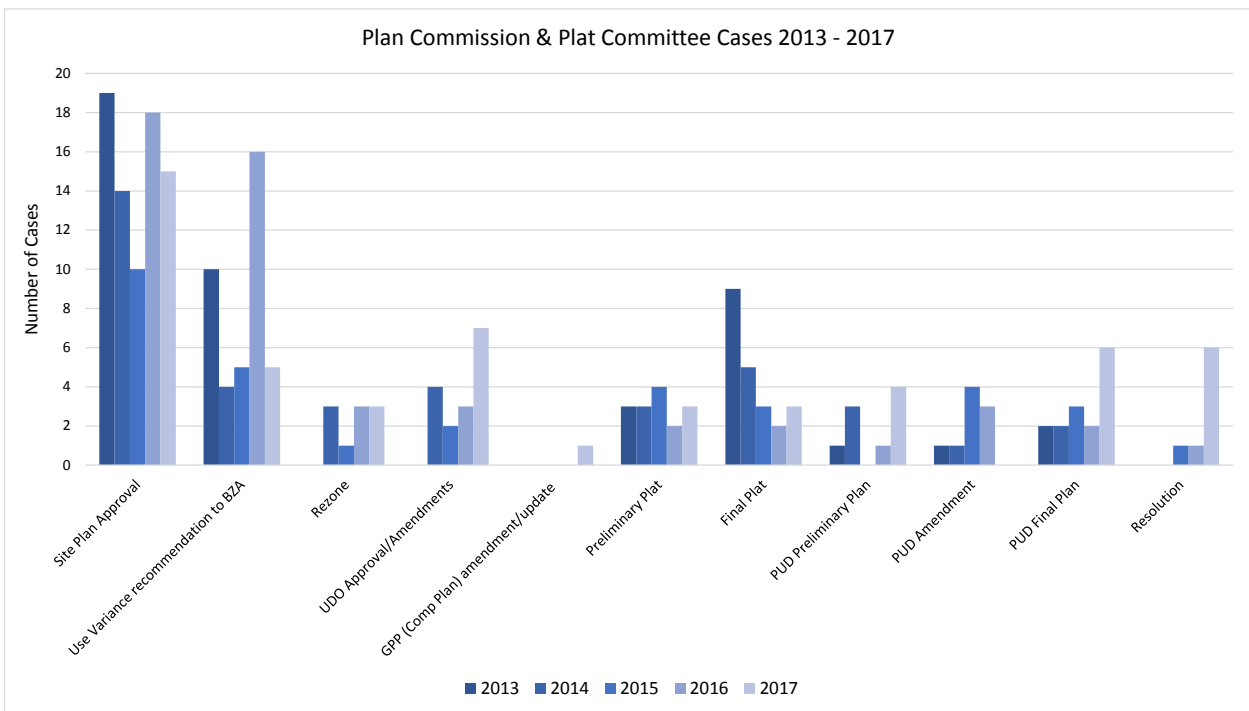
Table 2: Action Taken on Petitions by Types (2013 - 2017)

Types of Petitions Filed to the Plan Commission and Plat Committee (2017)	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn/Continued	Total
Site Plan Approval	12	2	1	15
Use variance recommendation to BZA	5	0	0	5
Rezone	3	0	0	3
UDO approval/amendments	4	0	3	7
Growth Policies Plan (Comprehensive Plan) amendment/update	1	0	0	1
Preliminary Plat	3	0	0	3
Final plat	3	0	0	3
PUD Preliminary Plan	3	0	1	4
PUD Amendment	0	0	0	0
PUD Final Plan	5	0	1	6
Resolution	6	0	0	6
Final Plan Staff Level Review*	1	0	0	1
<b>Total Number of Cases**</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Total Number of Petitions Filed</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>48</b>

\* In certain instances, staff is given the ability to approve final level site plans.

\*\* The number of cases reflects the total number from each category. The number of petitions is less than the number of total cases as many petitions filed involved multiple requests and are combined.

Figure One 1: Type of Petitions by Year (2013 - 2017)



**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS AND THE HEARING OFFICER**

The Board of Zoning Appeals and the Hearing Officer hear and decide cases regarding variances, conditional use requests, and administrative appeals. These cases are usually requests to vary the requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) due to peculiar conditions found on a property. The most common type of petition is a development standards variance. These are requests to vary the development standards such as required setbacks, minimum lot size, maximum impervious surface coverage, and so forth.

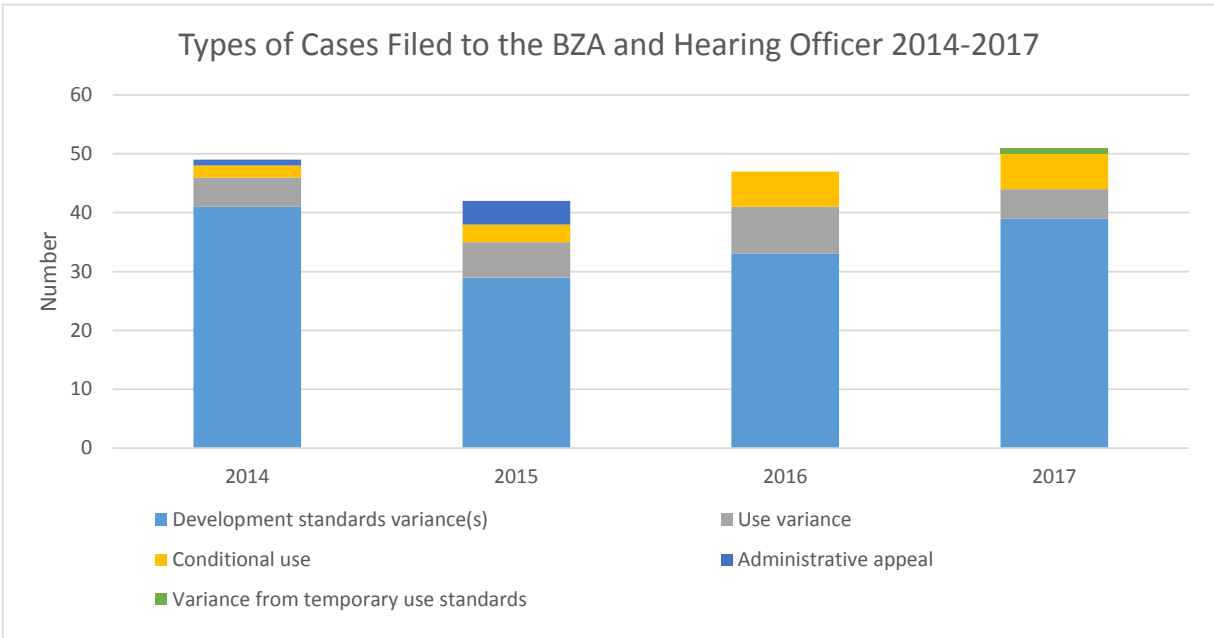
In most recent years, development standards variances have remained the most common request. The 2017 numbers were higher than the previous two years. This past year saw 7 requests denied and 41 approved while 2016 saw 2 denied at 44 approved.

Table 3: Action Taken on Petitions by Types

Types of Petitions Filed to the BZA and Hearing Officer in 2017	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn/ Continued	Total
Development standards variance(s)	29	7	3	39
Use Variance	5	0	0	5
Conditional Use	5	0	1	6
Administrative Appeal	0	0	0	0
Variance from temporary use standards	1	0	0	1
Resolution	1	0	0	1
Total number of cases*	41	7	4	52
Total number of petitions filed	-	-	-	37

\* The number of cases reflects the total number from each category. The number of petitions is less than the number of total cases as many petitions filed involved multiple requests and are combined.

Figure 2: Petitions by Types (2014 - 2017)



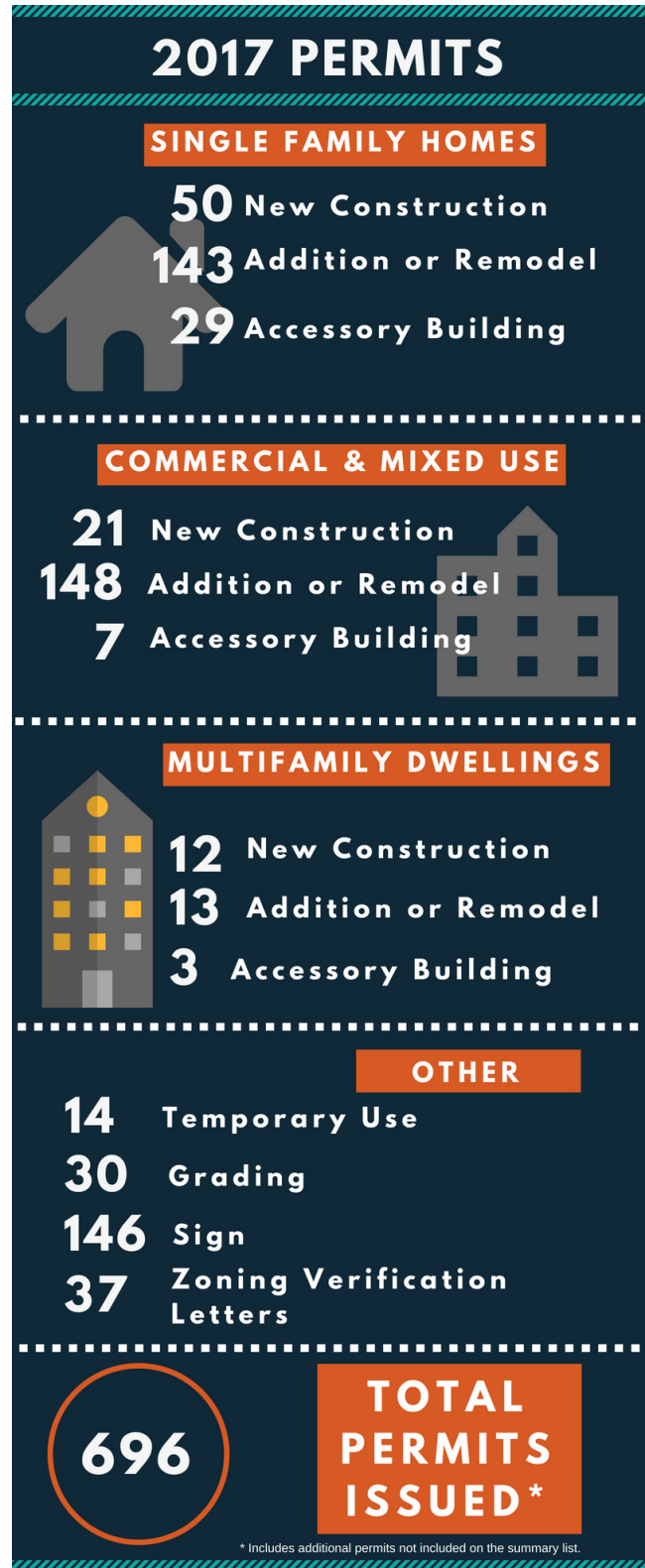


## PERMITS

Development Services reviews a wide variety of permit applications, ranging in type from building permits for new residential or commercial structures to temporary signage permits. Each permit application is reviewed for compliance with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The applicant is issued a Certificate of Zoning Compliance (CZC) if the application meets UDO standards. The department issued a total of 696 CZCs in 2017.\*

Figure 3 summarizes the main categories of permits issued in 2017, but it is not a complete list. Additional permits included in the 696 include lot line adjustments, demolition permits, change in use, and several others. The numbers of permits for Multifamily Dwellings are fewer than those of Commercial & Mixed Use, any mixed-use building is categorized as “commercial,” meaning many of the projects include apartments.

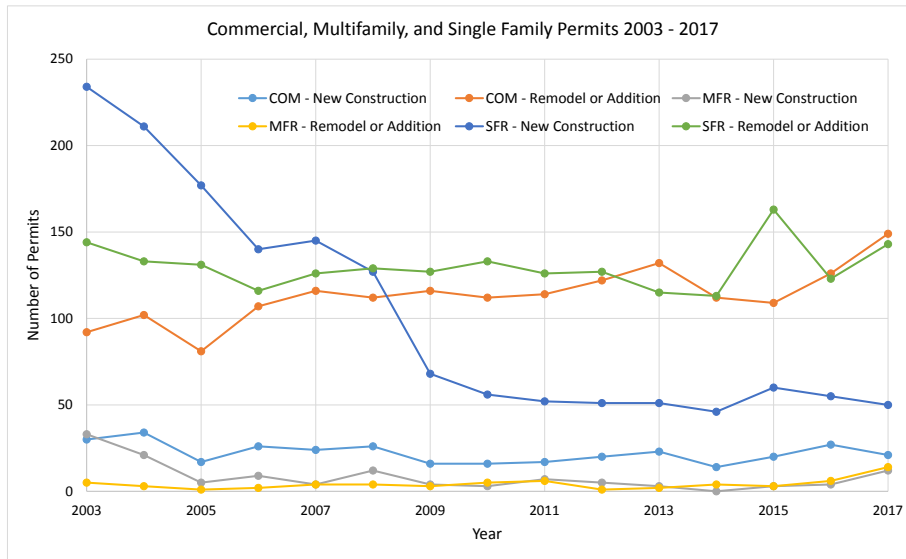
Figure 3: Development Service Permits (2017)



Examining the number and type of permits issued can provide insight into current development trends.

Figure 4 focuses on the number of permits issued since 2003. This includes all the permits for Single Family Residential Housing, Multifamily Residential Housing, and Commercial building permits. In the permitting systems, remodels and additions are considered separate categories of permits; however, they both represent reinvestment in existing property compared with “New Construction.” For that reason, remodel and addition permits have been combined in order to compare reinvestment with new construction across these categories.

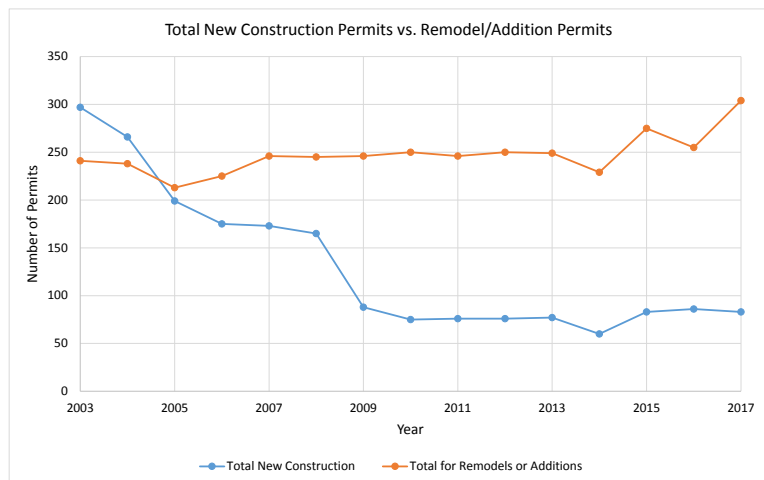
Figure 4: Permit Types Issued Annually (2003- 2017)



For single-family residential permits, 2008 was clearly a significant year: the first year of the recession and the first year where remodel permits surpassed new construction. Since then, reinvestment has continued to outpace new construction. Similarly, in 2017 we saw slight decreases in new commercial buildings and significant growth in commercial remodels and additions. For commercial construction, since 2003 reinvestment has consistently exceeded new construction. The number of permits for multifamily residential, new construction and reinvestment have had mostly similar volumes of permits since 2008.

Figure 5: New Construction and Remodel/Addition Permits (2003- 2017)

In 2017, there were over 50 additional permits issued for remodels and additions (Figure 5), whereas there was a slight decline in the number of new permits issued, when compared to permits from 2009 to 2016. This may indicate reinvestment in existing structures and is likely an indicator of land for development becoming a more scarce resource, limiting options for new construction in the city.



# ZONING ENFORCEMENT

The Zoning Enforcement staff is charged with ensuring that properties throughout Bloomington are in compliance with the rules set forth in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The zoning enforcement staff inspects development sites to address signage, landscaping, erosion control, occupancy of sites, and conditions of development approvals. They also respond to citizens' inquiries, and administer enforcement actions with written warnings, violations, or, as a final option, legal action.

## ZONING VIOLATION NOTIFICATIONS

Zoning Enforcement staff responded to numerous inquiries and complaints from the public concerning zoning violations. The types of violations are shown below in Table 4. In 2017 staff sent 98 notice of violation letters to tenants and property owners. Enforcement staff work to identify, notify, and work with property owners and tenants to resolve violations.

Table 4: Violations by Type (2017)

UDO Violation	Issued/Resolved	Fines Issued/ Collected (2017)
Temporary Signage without a Permit	20/20	\$500/\$500
Parking on Unimproved Surface Tickets	26/26	--
Permanent Signage without a Permit	2/2	--
Temporary Use without a Permit	0/0	--
Change in Use without a Permit	0/0	--
Illegal Land Use	6/5	\$5250/\$0
Home Occupation without a Permit	2/2	--
Failure to Obtain a Permit	1/1	--
Failure to Comply with Permit Conditions	5/5	--
Failure to Comply with Development Standards	34/33	\$100/\$100
Violation of Environmental Standards	2/2	--
<b>Total UDO Violations</b>	<b>98/96</b>	<b>\$5850/\$600</b>

# ENVIRONMENTAL

The Senior Environmental Planner (SEP)/Liaison to the Environmental Commission reviews development proposals and administers City zoning and development ordinances to ensure environmental protection; reviews landscaping and grading plans; reviews development proposals for compliance with environmental standards and best practices; coordinates the efforts of the Environmental Commission (EC); prepares oral and written reports addressing development petitions on behalf of the EC; supervises environmental interns and Service Corps Fellows; and provides project management on the City’s environmentally-significant projects. Additionally, the SEP facilitates special EC projects and events, manages the EC budget, and organizes and meets with EC committees.

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

The Environmental Commission (EC) was established in 1971 by municipal ordinance to be an advisory body composed of Bloomington citizens appointed by the Mayor and Common Council. The mission of the Environmental Commission is to advise the City of Bloomington on how its actions and policies may preserve and enhance the quality of Bloomington’s environment, including the life-supporting processes that natural ecological systems provide to humans and other organisms.

The EC actively participates in the city planning process; researches and reports on environmental topics; develops educational outreach activities and materials; responds to inquiries from residents; and coordinates with other municipal boards and commissions and other organizations on issues of mutual interest.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the annual projects organized by the EC. These projects arrange from detailed plans regarding future sustainability goals for the City as well as the Eco Heroes Art Competition to engage the community in art and environmentalism.

The EC has several subcommittees they organize to advance local environmental considerations including:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Eco Heroes Competition
- Steering
- Budget
- Environmental Land Planning
- Natural Resources & Biodiversity
- Waste & Hazards
- Water
- Public outreach
- Food & Agriculture

Figure 6: Environmental Commission Highlights



## ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN

The Bloomington Environmental Action Plan (BEAP) was adopted in November of 2017. This plan was created by the City of Bloomington's Environmental Commission to help shape and strategize policies and programs for Bloomington decision-makers, as related to mitigating and remediating environmental degradation and enhancement of natural resources.

The focus of the BEAP is on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction through better city planning, programs, and policies, and presents GHG emission trends in Bloomington to promote informed decision-making. Additionally the BEAP seeks to promote collaboration across city agencies, local businesses, industry, and community members.

The BEAP presses the city government to lead by example in implementing practices that reduce emissions from its own operations. This is done through outlining a series of 2020 objectives separated out into the following seven broad categories: Buildings and Energy, Transportation, Air Quality, Urban Ecology, Water, Food and Agriculture, and Waste. Specific action items are highlighted to be undertaken by a variety of departments, such as City of Bloomington Utilities, Parks and Recreation, and Housing and Neighborhood Development, which help to address the preset objectives of the plan. Since the release of this plan, a few of the action items have been started or are in the process of completion, and many of these action items were implemented into the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

The BEAP can be found at <https://bloomington.in.gov/boards/environment>

Figure 7: Bloomington energy consumption emissions in CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents



Source: Figure 2, BEAP (pg. 12)

# TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC SERVICES

The Transportation and Traffic Services Division oversees the planning, design, construction, and operation of projects in the public right of way. The Division has been a part of the Planning Department since it transitioned from the Public Works Department in 2014 to facilitate closer coordination between planning and engineering efforts.

Typical projects include street improvements, intersection safety enhancements, and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Staff ensure that all work is consistent with applicable engineering principles, safety standards, and accessibility requirements in order to provide projects that enhance the quality of life for all of Bloomington's residents. This division also performs a wide range of other services including responding to transportation-related requests from citizens, reviewing and issuing right of way permits, and providing technical assistance to other divisions within the Planning and Transportation Department as well as other Departments.

Figure 8: Division Permits and Projects (2017)



Note: All project cost values are taken from the Annual 2017 Work in Project Profit Report.



## 2017 DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

### BUDGET PERFORMANCE

The Division manages capital project budget accounts in three different budget funds (Cum Cap Development, Alternative Transportation, and General Fund). In 2017 the Division's capital project budget amount was just over \$1.75 million (this is the amount in the City's Annual Budget) and 99.7% of it was spent or encumbered on project contracts. The only funding that wasn't expended was due to the City Council Sidewalk Committee's rules. This high utilization rate highlights the Division's productivity and success in putting tax payer dollars to work by improving the City's transportation infrastructure.

### PROJECT STATISTICS

In total, the Division expended approximately \$2.45 million on 32 capital projects in 2017 by leveraging state, federal, and local funding sources. This number is a cumulative amount of City funds and additional funding sources. Nine capital projects were completed during the year bringing approximately \$4.7 million (total cost of all nine projects) of project investments into the City's inventory. Since 2009, the Division has completed \$31.4 million in capital projects. As of the end of 2017, 25 projects were ongoing with a total of \$7.6 million invested in them thus far, excluding including right of way acquisition expenses. Over the year, the Division was steward to 67 contracts including contracts for design, property acquisition, construction, and construction management.

### CONSTRUCTION COST DELIVERY

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) set a key performance indicator (KPI) for construction projects keeping 90% of final construction costs under 105% of the original bid amount. This is a measure for ensuring good cost control and keeping change orders to a minimum. In 2017, the Transportation & Traffic Services Division obtained a cumulative 98.7% delivery for its completed construction contracts, meaning the construction cost were brought in at less than the original bid amount in total. The Division delivered seven of its nine completed construction contracts at under 105%, with the highest KPI being recorded at 105.87%. This metric highlights the Division's extremely high cost and quality control in delivering projects compared to industry standards.

The following pages highlight some of the projects the Division worked on last year.

Signal Projects

Estimated Total Project Costs \$995,920

These two projects made improvements to the intersections of 2nd Street and College Avenue intersection and the 3rd Street and Woodcrest Drive intersection. The existing traffic signal infrastructure was replaced with modern equipment (e.g. signal backplates, flashing yellow arrow left-turn indications, green mast arms and poles, etc.) and supplemented with enhanced pedestrian and accessibility features including curb ramps, push buttons, and countdown signal indications. The project at 3rd Street and Woodcrest Drive also redesigned the intersection to improve the north-south alignment thereby improving traffic operations without adding vehicular travel lanes.

2nd Street & College Avenue



3rd Street & Woodcrest Drive



Intersection Crossing Projects

Estimated Total Project Costs \$320,118

This project enhanced intersection safety for people walking and biking across the two intersections by installing rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB), accessible curb ramps, and lighting improvements. The bicycle push buttons installed with these projects are likely the first of their kind in the State of Indiana.

4th Street & Rogers Street





Allen Street & Walnut Street



17th Street Sidewalk

Estimated Total Project Costs \$944,228

These two projects are vital pieces of a city initiative to construct a continuous pedestrian pathway along the entire 17th Street corridor. Two segments of sidewalks were constructed on the south side of 17th Street from near Willis Drive to Madison Street. One of these segments leveraged federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding helping the City's local funding go further.

Maple Street to Madison Street



Willis Drive to Maple Street



# PLANNING SERVICES

The Planning Services Division is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive planning activities for the City of Bloomington. The comprehensive plan, known in Bloomington as the Growth Policies Plan (GPP), provides the overall framework for these planning activities. This framework also provides for the development of additional plans and studies to aid in achieving long-range goals and strategies of the community. These planning activities help to further coordinate responsibilities of the Division, which are necessary for related City ordinances, resolutions, and capital improvement projects and for interagency coordination (e.g. Indiana University, Monroe County, other public agencies). Staff also provides support to, or serves on several boards, commissions, and committees including: the Traffic Commission, Parking Commission (new in 2017), Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission, and the MPO (page 20). In 2018, the outdoor seating permits, addressing, and data collection and analysis will be transferred to the Transportation and Traffic Services Division. The Planning Services Division is also responsible for maintaining the social media accounts for the Department.

## THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

At the end of 2017, Toole Design Group was retained to assist with the development and drafting of a new Transportation Plan. Starting in 2018 the process will begin for the Transportation Plan. This process will update and combine the existing Master Thoroughfare Plan (2002) and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation & Greenways System Plan (2008). As a requirement of Indiana code IC-36-7-4-502, the comprehensive plan must contain a “statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.” The Transportation Plan will be adopted to fulfill this requirement by establishing general policy guidance for public ways including roadways, sidewalks and bike paths. This plan is expected to be adopted at the end of 2018.

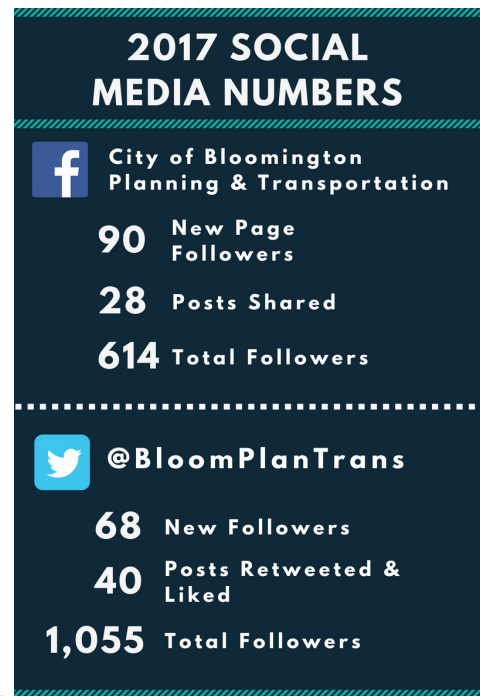
## BICYCLE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The Department’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator organizes several events throughout the year to engage and expand the existing bicycling community. For Bikes



Month in May, the Department organized several community rides including a Women’s Bicycle Ride and Family Biking 101. Like the Facebook page to stay up to date on scheduled group rides throughout the year!

Figure 9: Social Media Highlights





## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The Comprehensive Plan is the city’s long range plan for land use and development. It is a set of goals, policies, maps, and implementation strategies that state how the City of Bloomington should address development and growth based on the Vision Statement created by the community, steering committee and elected representatives. This plan will replace the 2002 Growth Policies Plan.

In 2013 when the planning process began, a Vision Statement to outline the “big picture” was adopted by resolution. The plan has 7 chapters covering Community Services & Economics, Culture & Identity, Environment, Downtown, Housing & Neighborhoods, Transportation, and Land Use. The first six chapters provide background information on each topic, relevant data, and goals, policies, and programs. The goals are priorities that directly support the collective efforts and ideals of the community reflected in the Vision Statement. Policies provide a course of principle or action that can outline avenues or opportunities to achieve the intent of a goal. Programs provide examples of more specific implementation strategies taken by city officials, business leaders, community organizations, labor organizations, and residents to help accomplish the goals. The Plan has a total of 36 goals, 129 policies, and 205 programs.



Throughout 2017, P&T Staff presented the Comprehensive Plan to the Plan Commission and City Council to prepare for the document for adoption. The public, Plan Commission and City Council had several opportunities to submit amendments to drafts of the document throughout the year. The Plan is slated for adoption in early 2018.

## DOWNTOWN AREA PARKING STUDY

Bloomington’s downtown is a hot spot for visitors, home to many residents and contains many businesses and restaurants. It is essential that the Downtown has the infrastructure to accomodate both visitors, residents, and businesses. At the end of 2017 the Department began an updated Parking Study with DESMAN Design Management to evaluate the existing parking system.

The Downtown Area Parking Study focuses on the management, regulatory, and fiscal aspects of the public parking system, including all City-owned parking assets. In addition, private development parking standards, adjacent neighborhood parking controls and inventory, as well as private and other public agency parking assets were also examined. These analyses were then used as the basis for developing recommended management strategies for parking, tailored to the needs and character of downtown Bloomington. The public, various downtown stakeholders, including business owners, tourism industry, government, retail, restaurants, developers, and nonprofit organizations were invited to give input about the City’s existing parking infrastructure as part of the Parking Study. The city will continue to work with a consultant to finalize the study in 2018.

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# METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

The Bloomington/Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMCMPPO) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that serves the City of Bloomington, the Town of Ellettsville and parts of Monroe County. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs is channeled through this organization to fund local transportation infrastructure projects. The MPO is guided by three separate committees made up of volunteer citizens, elected and public officials. The MPO also works with the Long Range Planning and Transportation and Traffic Services Divisions.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) signed into law on December 4, 2015, currently guides Federal transportation policy and programs related to Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organizations (MPOs). The FAST Act provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment.

Eight (8) planning factors guiding the programs and policies of all MPOs under current Federal legislation include:

- **Economic Vitality:** Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- **Safety:** Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- **Security:** Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- **Mobility:** Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- **Environment:** Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- **System Integration:** Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight;
- **System Management:** Promote efficient system management and operation; and
- **System Preservation:** Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Core functions of the BMCMPPO include the establishment of a fair and impartial setting for the evaluation of transportation alternatives, the maintenance of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the development of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and full public participation.

## METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)



The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) serves primarily as a means to predict future transportation needs and to illustrate a plan of action to meet those needs. Specifically, it provides a menu of transportation projects to be implemented over the next 25 years that will alleviate projected congestion points, safety hazards, and connectivity limitations.

Federal requirements mandate that the MTP maintain at least a 20-year planning horizon. The Transform 2040 Plan was adopted by the MPO Policy Committee on December 15, 2017. Overall the whole plan development process took several years. Generally speaking, the BMCMPPO updates the MTP every five years in order to maintain a minimum 20-year time horizon. The MPO staff regularly initiate the update process for the next forthcoming MTP every few years.

For a copy of the plan, please visit: <https://bloomington.in.gov/mpo/metropolitan-transportation-plan>