

Councilmember Questions and Comments on Mayor's June 2, 2021 Budget Report

Note: These questions and comments were provided at the Council's Regular Session on June 2, 2021 (recording available at <https://catstv.net/m.php?q=9764>) as part of the Mayor's Budget Report given at that meeting. Questions included herein may have received a response during the June 2 meeting, but are provided again in case the administration would like to reiterate or expand upon any responses already provided.

Cm. Piedmont-Smith

- Would the administration consider increase staffing levels as called for in Climate Action Plan?
- A major area of concern is housing. Various housing groups may have concrete proposals, and some councilmembers have proposed using a big chunk of ARPA funding toward housing. The city needs to think carefully on how we can use those funds for capital expenditures or to kick start a self-sustaining program, keeping in mind the funding source is not renewable. The city should look at using ARPA funds to create housing for individuals with very low incomes.
- How much does the city subsidize parking?
- Cm. Piedmont-Smith suggested revisiting and taking a fresh look at how different funding sources might be used to further the goals set out in the Sustainability Action Plan, Climate Action Plan, Transportation Plan, etc.

Cm. Volan

- Would the administration extend the housing voucher program for BPD to areas that will be annexed, possibly before annexations are effective?

Cm. Sandberg

- Cm. Sandberg indicated concern about public safety and the Bloomington Police Department. She asked if the take home car program and housing voucher program have helped with staffing levels. What are the rates for staff attrition, through retirements, losing staff to other communities, etc.? How is recruiting going? She noted the topic of staffing was important in light of annexation, and wanted to make sure the department was adequately staffed for the existing community, especially if annexation occurred.

Cm. Rollo

- Cm. Rollo voiced concern about the public safety budget and BPD staffing levels, especially in light of annexation.
- Cm. Rollo asked about additional fire support for southwest Bloomington. He thought there had been a long-time need for an additional station in the area and wanted to hold more discussion on that topic.
- How does inflation affect the city and its material and personnel costs? Does the city take increasing rents and housing costs into account when considering salaries?
- Could the city look at providing free compost bins to residents? Should the city open its own landfill to better control the waste stream? Cm. Rollo suggested a study or analysis on this topic would be prudent.

Cm. Sims

Priorities that require an increase in appropriations might also necessitate a corresponding reduction in spending elsewhere.

Cm. Sims asked for more information on the administration's proposed use of ARPA funds and whether those proposals would be discussed further, as part of the budget process or as separate deliberations.

Cm. Flaherty

Cm. Flaherty asked about the reversion process and what reversion amounts are typical. Will departments be able to make use of 50% of the reverted amounts, as in past years?

Cm. Flaherty noted that some councilmembers had expressed concerns/challenges about last year's budget process. He suggested continuing to think about process and how the administration could incorporate councilmember input/collaboration.

Cm. Flaherty thought it was difficult to think about longer-term capital expenditures that might be called for in many of the city's planning documents. He asked for more detail about capital replacements and capital planning for the various city policy plans that had been adopted. He suggested that the city could review the permissible uses for various funding sources to help advance the initiatives called for in the city's policy documents.

Cm. Smith

Could the Controller discuss reversions and how those affect city services?

Cm. Smith asked if the administration was open to suggestions brought by councilmembers about new housing initiatives or pilot programs.

Cm. Rosenbarger

Cm. Rosenbarger indicated she would provide written questions/comments at a later date.

Cm. Sgambelluri

Are there big-ticket items or expenditures (such as major capital purchases in the fire department) on the horizon that will impact budgeting?

What departments and what revenue sources were hardest hit by COVID-19 pandemic and how will that inform the budget?

Additional councilmember
questions/comments provided after
June 2 Budget Report

From: Councilmember Sandberg

Date: June 30, 2021

With respect to budget priorities for the City, I tend to respect the work of department heads in looking ahead to the coming year and making their budget projections. Those doing the day to day work of the city are usually most prepared to tell us what is needed to keep services maintained. That said I do have a few priorities based on feedback I receive from constituents who I maintain contact with on a frequent basis. In this year following the crisis of a pandemic and the most recent destruction of downtown flooding, I will remain an advocate for our first responders in our police and fire departments. Their wages must be a priority in addition to other ways to retain the good officers we have had. With an eye to annexation growth ahead, we must maintain competitive salaries for our police department in order to make up for the staffing deficits we currently have. We must think ahead for replacement headquarters for both police and fire who have suffered flood damage. I have toured both facilities in the downtown thanks to Chiefs Moore and Diekhoff and I believe it is time to look at new, expanded facilities for them both as we repair the incredible damage in the short-term.

Given our many fiscal challenges, I will focus this year on basic city services to maintain what we have and be better prepared for growth in our future. Back to basics will be my mantra as we look to recruiting personnel to increase public safety services and in maintaining the physical structures and public assets we already have. Infrastructure needs attention, replacement of essential vehicles, and revenues lost during the pandemic. I would also like to see a balance in providing reasonable accommodations for car transportation as we have always been respectful of increasing safety and amenities for cyclists and pedestrians. Multi-modal was always the way forward, and that includes our many constituents who rely on their cars for personal travel, quality of home-life, and business!

This will not be a time to initiate new programs or additional staff outside of the basic service sector in public safety, public works, and parks and recreation. I will, of course, remain a strong and consistent advocate for the arts community and rebuilding the venues they need to get back in front of downtown audiences and restoring what they have lost during the pandemic. Housing for our constituents means single family homes as well as more rental options, and I will also support subsidies for increasing equity through home ownership with the additional ARPA funding. Better wage jobs must also be a priority as we look to making housing more affordable in our community, so incentives must be tied to private sector requests for public approvals.

To: Mayor John Hamilton
From: Councilmembers Flaherty, Piedmont-Smith, Rosenbarger, Volan
Date: July 1, 2021
Subject: City of Bloomington 2022 Budget and ARPA Priorities

The following recommendations represent our policy priorities for the City of Bloomington's 2022 Annual Budget and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) appropriations. They are guided and supported by the City's adopted goals and plans, with a focus on equity and sustainability. We look forward to collaborating with the Mayoral administration to incorporate these recommendations into the 2022 budget, and we plan to reach out to Council colleagues who share our interests in one or more items in this document.

This document begins with recommendations specific to the 2022 Annual Budget, followed by ARPA priorities, and concludes with a number of questions. As councilmembers are not in as good of a position as City staff to know where funds may be cut and reinvested in the following priorities, we would like to meet with Mayor Hamilton and relevant members of his administration in coming weeks to discuss how best to fund these priorities. Note that some of the items from the 2022 annual budget recommendations could possibly be funded through ARPA, or items from the ARPA priorities via the annual budget, depending on how the ARPA rules are interpreted.

2022 ANNUAL BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Not necessarily in order of importance.

(1) Develop a detailed housing strategy plan to guide the City's efforts to meet community housing needs. (Departments: Housing & Neighborhood Development, Planning & Transportation)

- The City's **Comprehensive Plan** calls for the development of a detailed housing strategy plan (p. 64). The strategy plan should be informed by the 2020 Bloomington Housing Study, community input, housing and planning experts, and guidance from other relevant City plans.

(2) Facilitate development of Accessory Dwelling Units in the community utilizing best practices from leading cities. (Departments: Planning & Transportation, Housing & Neighborhood Development)

- Given the relatively slow uptake of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in Bloomington over the last several years — and given the broad support for this housing type in the community — the City should take steps to facilitate the

development of ADUs. This could include a dedicated website and other resources to simplify for residents the process of financing, designing, securing permits for, and building an ADU. The City could employ local architects to design plans for ADUs in a variety of sizes, types, and styles that meet UDO requirements, which residents could either utilize for free or for a reduced cost and which could be pre-approved to reduce the time and administrative burden of the process. ADUs are specifically called out as a preferred residential option in the [Comprehensive Plan](#).

(3) Finance, create and approve the implementation plan for a 2023 city-wide composting pilot program. (Department: Public Works, Economic Development)

- The [Climate Action Plan](#) calls for a “Food Scraps Bag” pilot program to test food scraps composting collection across restaurant, commercial and residential customer bases. Cost-savings will come from the diversion of solid waste from the landfill. The pilot is planned to begin in 2023, and advance planning will be required. This plan should also focus on the possibilities for integrating best practices from other cities that offer city-wide composting, specifically focusing on commercial establishments and all household types including multi-family housing.

(4) Make significant progress on Phase 1 goals of the City’s Climate Action Plan with a focus on activating the private sector (Departments: Economic and Sustainable Development, Planning & Transportation)

- Examples from the [Climate Action Plan](#) include:
 - Action EB1-B-2: Expand the Solarize Bloomington program beyond residential home owners to include commercial and industrial properties
 - Action G1-A-1: Complete a land conversion opportunity study to analyze public and private property that could be converted to greenspace to serve as a carbon sink and support stormwater remediation
 - Action FA1-B-1: Conduct a detailed food security assessment and establish detailed strategies to increase food security in identified problem areas

(5) Conduct detailed corridor studies for the 3rd Street / Atwater Street and College Avenue / Walnut Street pairs. (Departments: Planning & Transportation, Engineering)

- The City’s [Transportation Plan](#), adopted in 2019, “recommends immediate corridor studies of the major E-W and N-S corridors through the center of Bloomington” (p. 61). As noted in the plan, these studies will rely on in-depth community engagement to identify the best ways to improve multimodal travel in

Bloomington in order to help meet adopted community goals (in the [Comprehensive Plan](#), [Sustainability Plan](#), and [Climate Action Plan](#)) and enhance the vitality of downtown Bloomington.

(6) Pursue a charrette to redesign Kirkwood Avenue as a shared street, as defined in the Transportation Plan. (Departments: Planning & Transportation, Engineering, Economic & Sustainable Development)

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City worked with Kirkwood Avenue businesses to open the street to dining and non-automobile use in strategic locations. This pilot helped demonstrate the many community and economic benefits to utilizing Kirkwood Avenue as an innovative and flexible public space, in line with the shared street concept outlined in the City's [Transportation Plan](#). As the community works to identify the best approach to maintain and enhance these benefits, it is the ideal time to implement the Transportation Plan's design charrette recommendation, charting a clear path forward for Kirkwood Avenue.

(7) Allocate funds for the city's High-Priority Bicycle Network, aiming to meet targeted timeframes. (Departments: Planning & Transportation, Engineering)

- The City's [Transportation Plan](#) states that “[t]he City should allocate funds in the annual budget cycle or create a bond package in order to implement the projects identified in the High-Priority Bicycle Network to build the network within the targeted timeframe” (p. 62). Relevant projects are identified in Figure 21 and Table 7 of the Plan, with the full implementation timeframe broken into Phase 1 (1-3 year) and Phase 2 (4-6 year) projects. According to the Plan, these projects represent the backbone of the City's multimodal transportation system and are anticipated to achieve the greatest positive impact. Fully implementing the network is crucial to achieving the City's long-standing [goal of achieving Platinum status](#) with the League of American Bicyclists (see Resolutions 10-10 and 11-15) as well as the goals of the City's [Climate Action Plan](#). (Related: see Questions below.)

(8) Allocate funds for both pedestrian infrastructure and bicycle infrastructure to be equivalent to funding dedicated to automobile infrastructure, at least equivalent to the City's street maintenance budget. (Departments: Public Works, Engineering, Planning & Transportation)

- According to the City's [Comprehensive Plan](#) Goal 6.4, the City must “prioritize non-automotive modes: Continue to integrate all modes into the transportation network and to prioritize bicycle, pedestrian, public transit, and other non-automotive modes to make our network equally accessible, safe, and efficient for all users” (p. 75). In order to appropriately prioritize non-automotive

modes of transportation, we must fund them greater than or equal to how we fund automobile infrastructure. The City, in its Paving and Patching budget line item, maintains 237 lane miles of streets with a budget of \$1,869,000. While maintaining infrastructure is different from building new, we would like to see \$1.9 million each to bicycle infrastructure and pedestrian infrastructure annually in order to maintain, improve, and expand our networks (see Goal 6.3 of the Comprehensive Plan, p. 74). Prioritizing funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure aims at reaching goals in our [Comprehensive Plan](#), our [Transportation Plan](#), and our [Climate Action Plan](#).

(9) Develop and implement a pilot program to clear snow from sidewalks in areas with high pedestrian traffic and in identified problem areas. (Departments: Public Works, Planning & Transportation)

- Many Bloomington residents rely on sidewalks year-round, including when it snows. This is especially true for many lower-income residents who do not have access to vehicles and who walk and utilize Bloomington Transit for transportation. However, despite tools like uReport and a requirement for property owners to clear snow from sidewalks, many barriers remain. Allocating a portion of the snow removal budget, for instance 20%, to pilot a program to remove snow from sidewalks can help to address the substantial inequities and pedestrian safety challenges posed by our current system. In addition to prioritizing areas with high pedestrian traffic, potential problem areas could include areas with limited pedestrian connectivity (e.g., crossing I-69) or where monolithic sidewalks lead to snow from streets being piled onto sidewalks. Many other cities implement programs of this kind, clearing snow from critical pedestrian infrastructure or even all sidewalks in some cases. This pilot program is supported by the goals of our [Comprehensive Plan](#), [Transportation Plan](#), and [Climate Action Plan](#).

(10) Develop and implement a parking cash-out program for City employees. (Departments: Controller, Economic & Sustainable Development, Planning & Transportation)

- Parking cash-out rewards employees who seek to reduce their carbon footprint while better utilizing reserved public parking spaces. The rate for such spaces will be raised to the market rate of public lots and garages, but the employee will receive a raise equal to the new rate; employees who choose to continue driving will see no fiscal impact, but employees who walk, bike, bus or carpool effectively get a modest bump in income. A parking cash-out program will save the City money in capital costs by reducing the demand among employees for structured parking spaces, or will put surface spaces to more valuable public use. Such a

program will also set an example for private employers. Both the City's [Climate Action Plan](#) (Action TL1-A-2) and its [Transportation Demand Management Plan](#) (page 38) call for such a program.

(11) Implement a paid family leave program for City employees. (Department: Human Resources)

- The paid family leave program should include full salary for up to 12 weeks for all employees at 75% FTE (30 hours/week) or greater. Paid family leave allows workers to meet their health and family needs without jeopardizing their economic security. Various models exist in many states and cities. Paid family leave allows workers to continue to earn their pay while they take time away from work to: care for a newborn, newly-adopted child or newly-placed foster child; care for a family member with a serious health condition; address family circumstances arising from a military service member's deployment; or address a serious health condition (including pregnancy). By way of example, see the following [summary of state approaches](#) from the National Partnership for Women & Families. This priority is noted in the [Comprehensive Plan](#) under Community Services and Economics, Programs.

(12) Install timing devices and related technology improvements in City Council chambers. (Departments: Information Technology)

- Shorter meetings that are equitable and more respectful of everyone's time, especially at the Council level, are only possible when the meetings are timed. For years, the Council Chambers have needed a timer solution that is easily visible from all angles in the room, yet unobtrusive; within line of sight of typical users of the room (i.e., whatever planes are created by human eyeballs looking at other human eyeballs); does not appear arbitrary; and is easily managed by the president or parliamentarian from the dais. Note: This recommendation is only relevant if not *already* completed in 2021, per many Councilmember requests.

(13) Finance and conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a Department of Public Safety (Departments: Office of the Mayor, Community and Family Resources, Bloomington Police Department, Bloomington Fire Department)

- A Department of Public Safety would include the Police and Fire Departments and some portion of the Community and Family Resources Department's current portfolio, with the goal of implementing a broader, more holistic model of public safety that ensures the safety and security of all residents (housed and unhoused). Such a department could implement programs and innovative approaches to public safety, which could in turn reduce stresses on BPD officers

and narrow the scope of work officers are tasked with. Additionally, a Department of Public Safety could better coordinate work among social service providers, health service providers, members of the public, and all aspects of the justice system. This request aims to improve public safety and civility for all, in line with a core vision statement goal of the [Comprehensive Plan](#).

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING PRIORITIES

(A) Provide residential rental payment assistance to help residents who face eviction and homelessness. (Department: Housing & Neighborhood Development)

- Renters facing eviction and homelessness imminently due to the pandemic are by definition a more marginal economic echelon of the city than others. In addition to any federal or state rental assistance, the city should prioritize keeping as many people in their homes as possible, especially those facing a high risk of eviction and homelessness.

(B) Allocate \$7.5 million to develop and seed a community land trust not-for-profit organization, and consider additional strategic land donations to the organization. (Department: Housing & Neighborhood Development)

- The development of a community land trust (CLT) will help the City provide home-ownership opportunities at prices lower than the market is typically able to provide. Many peer cities — including Madison, WI; State College, PA; and Ithaca, NY — have CLTs that provide meaningful examples for Bloomington to develop an inclusive and equitable model. The redevelopment of the IU Health hospital site; the potential for housing on (or above) land designated for the convention center expansion; and housing on (or above) City-owned surface parking lots provide prime opportunities for land donations to the trust. These opportunities, combined with the availability of ARPA funds to aid in pandemic recovery, make now the ideal time for the City to support the creation of a CLT.

(C) Provide public restrooms that are accessible year-round, including in winter; staff and maintain these as necessary. (Department: Public Works, Parks & Recreation)

- Year-round access to public restrooms is crucial to maintaining public health and human dignity for all Bloomington residents.

(D) Work with Monroe County and township governments, as well as other funders, to fund the highest-priority recommendations of the Housing Insecurity Working Group (Departments: Community and Family Resources)

- The HIWG’s final report is not yet complete, but the most urgent investment will be to add at least two new staff members, and to invest time and expertise to establish a new non-profit sub-structure under the United Way.

(E) Provide funds for essential building repairs, pandemic-era ventilation upgrades, and equipment replacement at the John Waldron Arts Center

(Departments: Economic & Sustainable Development, Public Works)

- The Waldron Arts Center Task Force concluded that \$177,685 is required as a minimum to be able to operate the Waldron in the short term, but this did not take into account the fact that Ivy Tech removed its lighting and sound equipment, which is essential for most performances. In addition, the estimated \$60,000 in ventilation upgrades were not included in the above figure, but these are important for public health due to the ongoing pandemic and also because Actors Equity performers will not perform in a space that does not meet COVID-safe ventilation standards.

QUESTIONS

1. Has the City conducted race and gender pay equity studies for City employees in recent years? If so, can those results be shared? If not, we recommend conducting these studies in 2022 in order to help ensure the City is a fair and equitable workplace.
2. To what extent does the City currently subsidize structured parking? In other words, on an annual basis, what are the typical (i.e., non-pandemic) revenues, as well as the typical operations, maintenance, and debt service costs?
3. Does the City expect to be able to fully implement the Transportation Plan’s High Priority Bicycle Network within the specified six-year time frame? If not, what is the expected time frame? If so, please provide a list of each project in the network with: the expected implementation year, estimated project cost, and funding source.
4. Do revenues from City trash & recycling service cover the costs (operations, maintenance, and capital costs including equipment replacement)? If not, how much is the average annual subsidy since the new sanitation system came online? Also, if not, where does the subsidy come from (i.e., funding source)?

From: Councilmember Smith
Date: July 2, 2021

Describe areas in the budget that you would like to see increase. By dollar or percentage, explain where you would like to see increases in departments and programs.

Describe areas in the budget that you would accept decreases in spending to balance the increases you outlined above. By dollar or percentage, explain where you would like to see support decrease for departments or programs.

Other comments/questions. The recommendations expressed here in dollar figures are general recommendations based on their perceived importance. ARPA funds and other state/federal should be used whenever possible.

Department

Legal	0	0	No change recommended
Controller	0	0	No change recommended
Community & Family Resources	\$125,000.00	0	Use ARPA funds to fund a consultant to identify housing needs and a create a response plan
Parks	\$25,000.00	0	Pilot program for composting program materials
Human Resources	0	0	No change recommended
Mayor	0	0	No change recommended
Public Works - General	0	0	No change recommended
Public Works - Facilities	0	0	No change recommended
Fleet	0	0	No change recommended
Street	0	0	No change recommended
Sanitation	0	0	No change recommended
Utilities	0	0	No change recommended
Police	\$200,000	0	Recommend adding 3 officers and increasing downtown foot patrols
Fire	\$0	0	No change recommended at this time
Housing & Neighborhood	0	0	No change recommended
Planning	\$250,000.00	0	Use ARPA funds to hire a consultant to develop a housing implementation plan integrating the Community Housing Study and our Comprehensive Plan; Develop a Transportation Plan to assess needs
Engineering	0	0	No change recommended
Information Technology Services	0	-\$100,000.00	Transfer money out of IT to fund private contract used to develop timer and combined Zoom and in person meeting capacity for Council Meetings.
Economic & Sustainable Development	\$20,000,000	0	Use ARPA funds to invest in the CDFI Friendly as a Community Bank to incentivize building affordable homes in the 17th street Trinitas development and assist low/middle income with down payment and closing costs.
Clerk	0	0	No change recommended
Council	0	0	No change recommended
Transit	0	0	No change recommended
Housing Authority	\$100,000.00	0	Use ARPA funds to hire 2 additional staff to assist in low income housing programs and equity in program eligibility.

ARPA regulations from Treasury:
budget goal updates:

<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRP-Fact-Sheet-FINAL1-508A.pdf>
<https://bloomington.in.gov/budgetgoals>