COMMUNITY HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY 6

DRAFT APRIL 2016

Findings

- Where people live, work, and play, how they travel, and what they eat all affect individual health and overall community well-being. To that effect, the concept of community health must be understood as the relationships between individual lifestyles, socioeconomic factors and environmental conditions.

- Obesity is one of the major health concerns in McLean County. This is driven primarily by physical inactivity and unhealthy eating habits. Despite continuous efforts to improve walkability and bikability, the BN metro area remains difficult to traverse without a car. Significant portions of the community are also designated as food deserts by the USDA, meaning access to fresh food without a car is difficult.

- Access to mental health services has become an increasingly serious issue in recent years, gaining public attention as the county jail has been overwhelmed by a growing number of inmates with untreated mental illnesses. The county's Mental Health Action Plan and the resulting increase in funding and services are positive recent steps toward addressing this crisis. However, there is more work to be done in this area. Housing and transportation issues identified in the Mental Health Action Plan must be carefully considered and addressed in the comprehensive plan.

- Normal is a well-educated and affluent community overall. However, some populations, including people with low incomes, seniors, and people with disabilities, need affordable housing options and access to amenities and facilities via alternative modes of transportation.

- The Town of Normal is a leader in sustainability. Its commitment is exemplified by Uptown Normal's environmentally friendly features and the adopted plans for Uptown 2.0 to achieve a net positive environmental impact. The Town is also an active partner in addressing regional environmental challenges. Immediate challenges include air quality, water quality and solid waste. Preservation of McLean County's richest natural resource, its farmland, is an ongoing challenge as well.

Questions

- How can health be understood and addressed more comprehensively (instead of the current piecemeal approach)? What role should the municipalities play in addressing major local health concerns? Can health become part of all policies? If so, how can we measure the effectiveness of such policies on the health outcomes?

- How can major community initiatives complement community health, and vice versa. For example, how can regional economic development efforts help further local food, farmland preservation, and social equality goals?

- How can land use, transportation, and other local government polices be inclusive and address the needs of all current and potential residents?

- How can the region grow in a manner that preserves prime farmland while not inhibiting population growth? How can we protect our finite natural resources such as clean air and water? Should we aim to do no harm or give back to the environment?

Individual lifestyles, socioeconomic factors, culture, and environmental conditions all influence health. Land use and the built environment also play a key role. An overwhelming body of literature shows that where people live, work, and play, how they travel, and what they eat all affect individual health and overall community well-being. Figure 1.6.1 illustrates the complex interrelationships between different determinants of health.

In the past, topics such as alternative transportation, parks, and other factors that influence health were addressed individually or as sections of comprehensive plans. However, as the links between these factors and physical, social, and environmental health have become more clear, it has also become clear that health needs to be understood and addressed more comprehensively. This chapter discusses the three major aspects of health—physical, social and environmental—and their relation with land use and policies.

The chapter relies on a mix of national, state, and county health data (solid data are generally unavailable at the municipal level) and relevant special area plans such as the Town of Normal's Parks Master Plan, the county's Mental Health Action Plan, and the Uptown 2.0 plan.

MAJOR HEALTH CONCERNS IN MCLEAN COUNTY

The McLean County Health Department (MCHD) is the lead entity in health planning efforts in Normal, Bloomington and McLean County. As part of the Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Need (IPLAN), the MCHD creates a five-year work plan that identifies local health priorities. The last iteration of this plan, for 2012-2017, identified obesity and mental health as two of its top three health priorities for McLean County. (The third was oral health, which is not discussed here, as it is largely not a planning issue.)

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), enacted in 2010, requires all tax-exempt hospitals to conduct community health needs assessments. The two major hospitals in McLean County, OSF and Advocate Bromenn, completed their individual assessments in 2013. Obesity and mental health were among the top concerns identified by those assessments as well.

OBESITY
Obesity is frequently defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) equal to or greater than
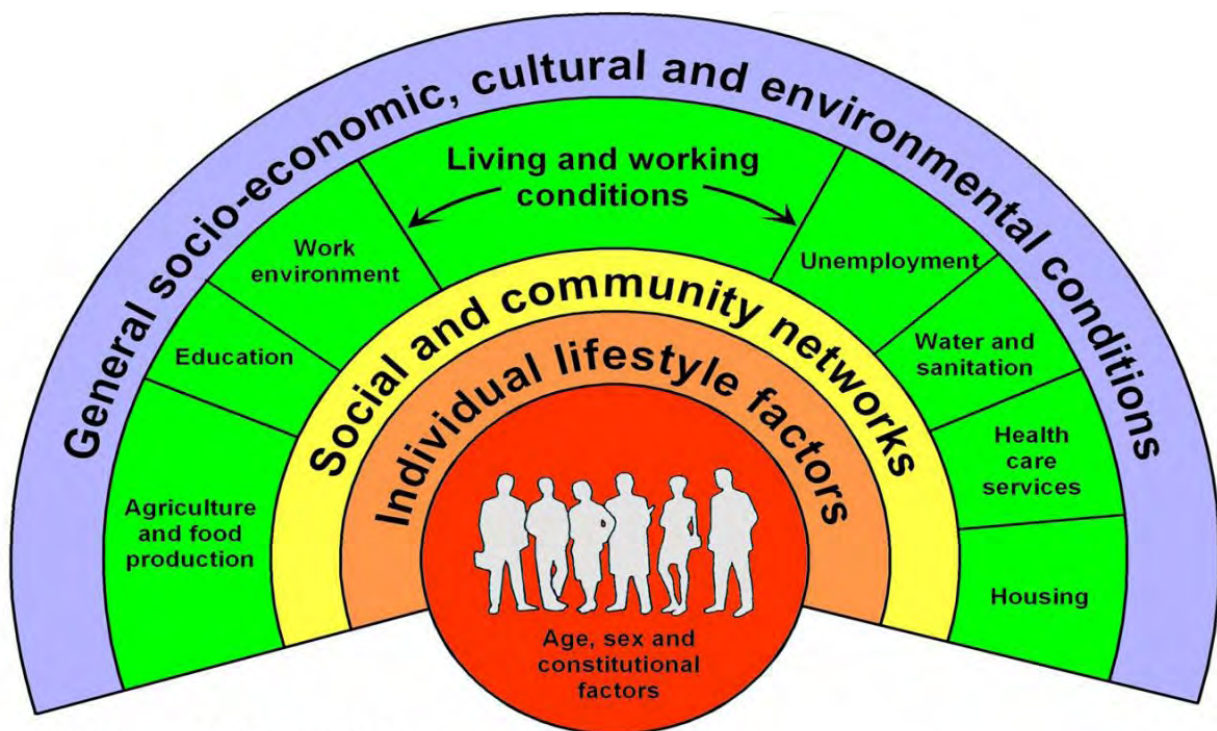
Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991

Figure 1.6.1. Factors influencing health. Note that "environmental conditions" is a general term referring to all aspects of the environments in which people live, including the natural, built, and social environments.

30; an "overweight" BMI is between 25 and 30. Obesity puts individuals at increased risk for more than 20 chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating habits contribute to obesity and overweight.

As illustrated in Figure 1.6.2 and Table 1.6.1, over 32% of all adults in McLean County are obese, surpassing state and national numbers. An additional 33% of county adults are overweight. Together, nearly two-thirds of McLean County adults are either overweight or obese, and that percentage has risen steadily over the past decade.

While the built environment and land use are not the leading causes of obesity, they contribute to the problem. The Town of Normal has made great strides in the last couple of decades to make the built environment more conducive to health, but there is more work to be done.

One of the key precepts of "smart growth," discussed elsewhere in this document, is that amenities located within an accessible distance help promote physical activity. Attributes of the BN metro area's built environment such as decreasing population density per square mile and street patterns that are not conducive to alternative modes of transportation are deficits from a health planning perspective. The Town of Normal's Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan ("Parks Master Plan"), updated in 2015, pointed out that over 70% of residents do not have access to a neighborhood or a community park within half a mile of their home. (Beyond that distance, most people are unlikely to walk to and from the park.) Walk Score, which rates neighborhoods and communities based on the ease of performing errands and accessing amenities without a car, notes that certain neighborhoods (e.g., Uptown and Pleasant Hills) are fairly walkable but assigns the Town as a whole a rating of 35 out of 100, indicating that this is a "car-dependent community" (see Figure 1.6.3). Building more compact, walkable communities; allowing a mix of land uses; providing transportation options other than automobiles; balancing jobs and housing to reduce commute times and reduce reliance on cars; and achieving densities that support amenities within certain geographies should be important considerations during the comprehensive planning process.
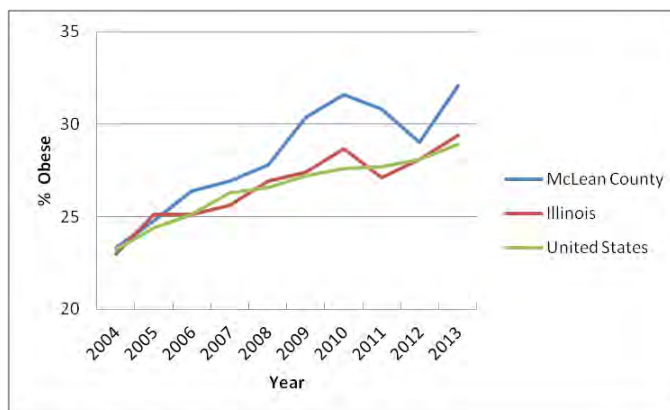
Figure 1.6.2. McLean County's obesity rate, compared to that of the state and the nation, 2004-13.
Note that the figure for each year is actually a three-year average including the year itself, the year prior, and the year after. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

	MCLEAN	ILLINOIS	US
Underweight/ Normal	35.20%	35.20%	35.20%
Overweight	32.70%	35.30%	35.40%
Obese	32.10%	29.40%	29.40%

Table 1.6.1. McLean County's obesity and overweight rates, compared to those of the state and the nation, 2013.
Source: CDC

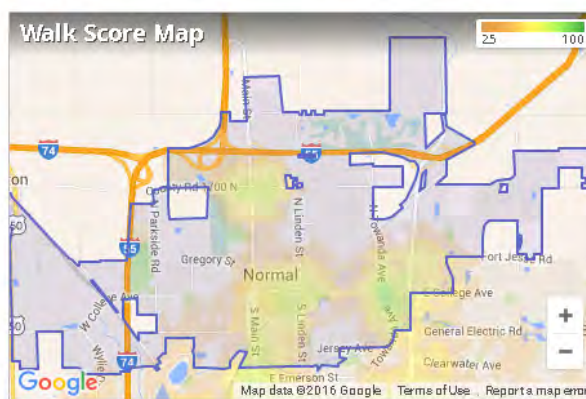

Figure 1.6.3. Town of Normal Walk Score
Source: www.walkscore.com

	2007 (per 1,000)	2012 (per 1,000)	% change (per 1,000)
McLean County	109 (0.665)	129 (0.749)	+18.4% (+12.6%)

Table 1.6.2. Fast food restaurants in McLean County, 2007 and 2012. Source: USDA Food Atlas.

- There are 5.72 acres of neighborhood and community park space per 1,000 people, or 14.2 acres per 1,000 people when natural areas, special uses, and linear parks (i.e., Constitution Trail) are included. According to National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards, communities should have at least 10 acres of park or open space per 1,000 residents. The study also identified a deficiency of over 50,000 sq. ft. in indoor recreational space.
- The Town was divided into planning areas for further analysis. Some areas were classified as well-served and others as underserved based on proximity and access to parks and recreational areas. This analysis concluded that over 70% of residents in Normal are underserved by neighborhood park space, meaning they are not located within half a mile of the park. See Figures 1.6.4 and 1.6.5.
- Planning areas 17, 3 and 5, in that order, were further prioritized based on population density.
- With over 15 miles of Constitution Trail in the Town of Normal and nearly 28 miles in the BN metro area, the community is well-served by this linear park. The trail links several parks and schools within the Town of Normal, as well as Illinois Wesleyan and amenities within the City of Bloomington.
- Currently over 65% of Town residents live within half a mile of the trail. Planned improvements would improve access for nearly 90% of Town residents. Figure 1.6.6 illustrates trail development priorities in three areas based on population served.
- Based on the community input, the following were identified as future recreational needs, along with a centralized maintenance facility and fiscal responsibility:
    - Indoor recreation and aquatic center
    - Soccer/sports complex
    - Constitution Trail linkages and extensions
    - Passive recreation/nature areas
    - Diversity in program offerings
- The plan outlined several strategies and actionable steps, prioritized based on their potential impacts to help address the aforementioned deficiencies.
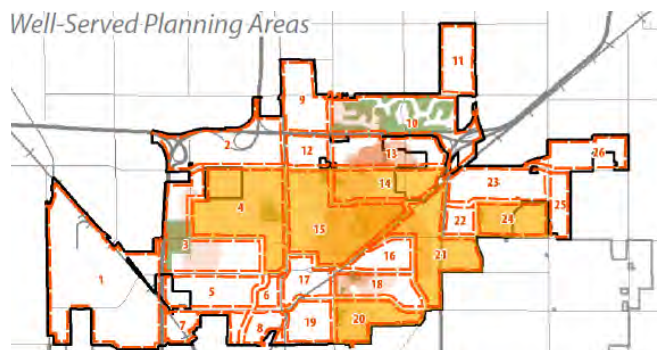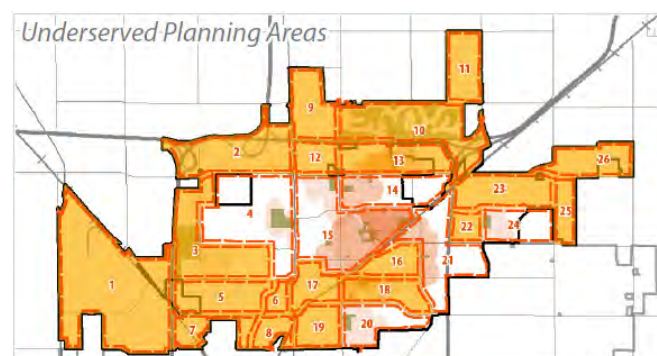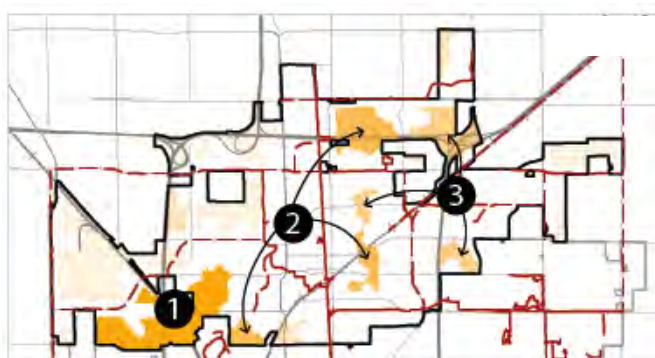

Figure 1.6.4. Well-served planning areas (over 50% of the planning area population has walkable access to outdoor recreational space)

Map 1.6.5. Underserved planning areas (less than half of the planning area population has walkable access to outdoor recreational space)

Map 1.6.6. Trail development priorities based on population served

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Access to healthy food is another major contributor to obesity. Normal and the BN metro area have many grocery stores, but most of them are located along Veterans Parkway. Figure 1.6.4 shows areas within the Town (and some of the metro area) that are designated as "food deserts" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Food deserts are census tracts with high concentrations of low-income residents and low access to fresh food, meaning grocery stores are located far enough away to require access to an automobile—a potentially serious problem for low-income individuals.

Another barrier to healthy eating in McLean County is the strong fast food culture. McLean County has the 15th-most fast food restaurants per capita in Illinois, and that ratio is trending upward (see Table 1.6.2). The prevalence of fast food restaurants has been linked to obesity rates in national research.

Some efforts have been made, in both the public and private spheres, to try to make healthy food more accessible. The McLean County Wellness Coalition (MCWC), an alliance of several local government and private organizations, is actively promoting healthy eating, active living, and workplace wellness throughout the community. Efforts to build Green Top Grocery (GTG), a cooperative grocery store in Bloomington, are currently underway. GTG's mission to source local, organic foods and operate under democratically defined "social responsibility" principles should make it a key player in improving access to fresh and healthy foods.

While these initiatives are encouraging first steps, local government can do more to strengthen and enhance access to fresh, healthy, local food and improve food justice. The Town's Community-Wide Sustainability Plan and 2035 Report ("the 2035 Report"), adopted in 2010, recognized the importance of local food systems and their positive impact on economic vibrancy, fairness and justice, accessibility, health, and social responsibility. The 2035 Report identified many gaps in the local food system and identified strategies to
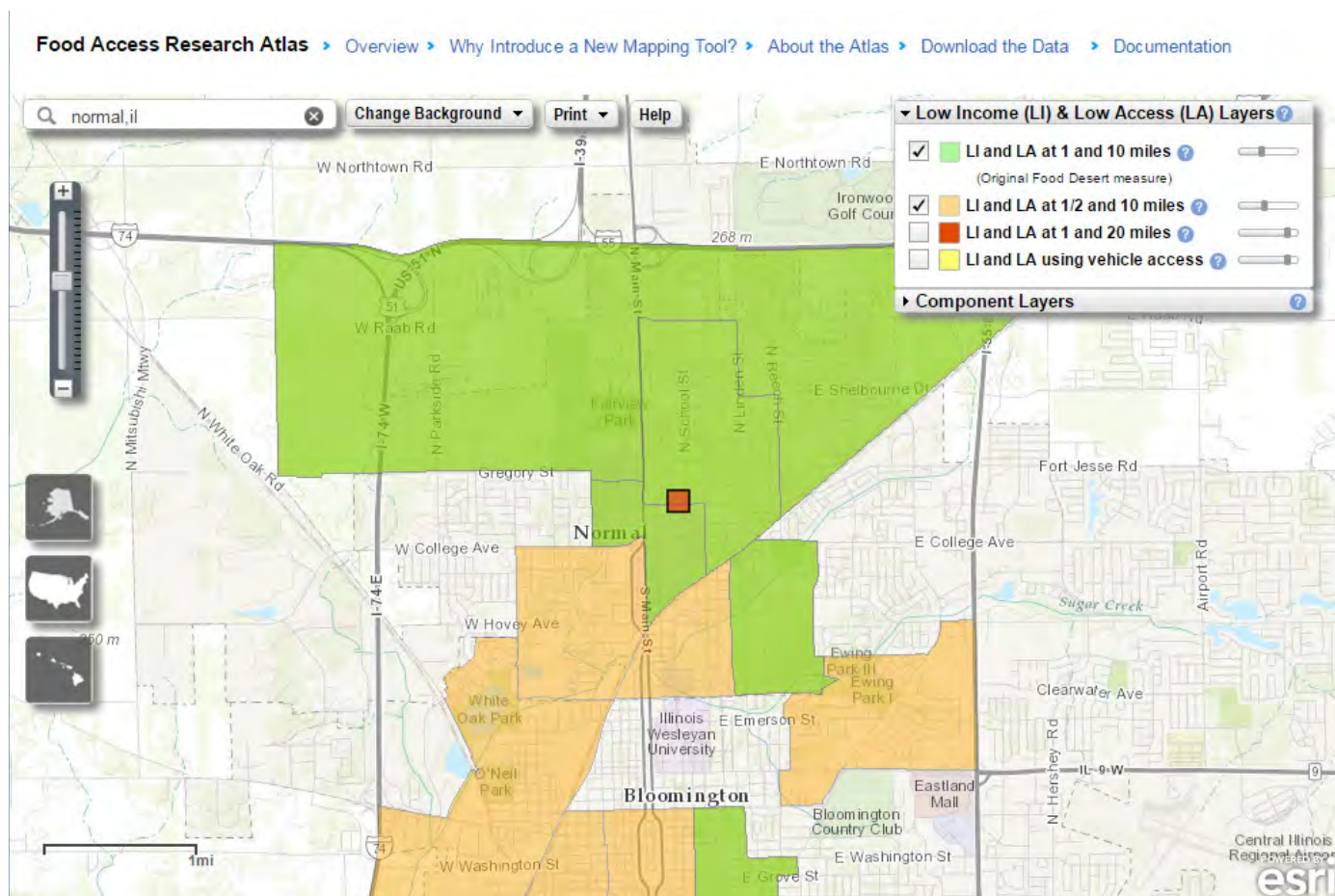

Figure 1.6.4. Food Desert in Normal
Source: US Department of Agriculture

address them. The Town has implemented some of its recommendations already, such as urban garden plots and the Refuge Food Forest. Other recommendations, such as strategies to address the production and processing gaps within the local food system, have not yet been acted on. Some of these very important steps require commitment of governmental units above and beyond just the local governments. This visioning and comprehensive planning process is a great time to revisit such strategies and clearly articulate how the Town can play an active role in or lead such efforts to improve community health.

MENTAL HEALTH

In McLean County, mental health has been recognized in recent years as a major and growing concern. An estimated 20% of the population is at risk for having a significant mental health episode in their life. Suicide calls to the local social service support line maintained by Providing Access to Health (PATH) increased from 410 in 2007 to 920 in 2010.

In May 2015, the McLean County Board adopted a Mental Health Action Plan in response to the serious mental illness issues in the county jail. While conditions in the jail triggered that action plan, the plan highlighted the importance and complexity of mental illness as a community concern and identified a range of related issues, including homelessness, public safety concerns, and access to services. It criticized the current siloed approach to providing services and called for increasing collaboration among stakeholders and community leaders, including the local governments, hospitals, and service providers.

The Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington joined forces with the county in the implementation of that plan. Both municipalities recently passed a one-cent-per-dollar sales tax increase that will generate about $3.8-$4 million annually for mental health services. The county was also instrumental in securing state and federal grants to forward the plan's objectives. While much progress has been made since its adoption, including establishing a crisis stabilization unit and a "mental health first aid kit" to train individuals to help family and friends with mental illness, many gaps

6.2. MCLEAN COUNTY'S MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN

The McLean County Mental Health Action Plan initially grew from an analysis of mental health conditions within the McLean County jail. This assessment provided recommendations to improve the jail environment for inmates with mental health issues and to provide greater access to services for those individuals once they have served their sentences and are back in the community. In 2014, the McLean County Board Executive Committee formed two working groups, one of which was tasked with assessing mental health needs in McLean County and the other with identifying best practices to resolve these issues.

The resulting action plan sets out short- and long-term goals and establishes timelines and lead agencies for each of the next steps. The action plan further outlines five areas of focus for improving the overall mental health of residents in McLean County, each containing several short- and long-term objectives to guide implementation. The areas of focus are:

1. **Collaboration and Coordination:** This section encourages all sectors to work together and advocates the "no wrong door" model for addressing mental health. Residents should, according to this philosophy, use any number of avenues in order to get the assistance that they need.

2. **Access to Medical Services and Medical Management:** This chapter focuses on improving access to medication and medical services for those suffering from mental illness and on the need to recruit additional behavioral health professionals to the community to address the behavioral health needs of children, adolescents, and adults.

3. **Juvenile Services (21 and Under):** This chapter highlights a wellness recovery action plan (WRAP) for different youth age groups, with action plans from birth to five years, five to 12 years, 11 to 15 years, 14 to 21 years, and post-high school. The WRAPs identify a number of measures to help youth with mental health issues, including prevention and identification, intervention, and possible institutionalization for someone experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

4. **Housing:** The plan identifies two main housing concerns for those suffering from mental illness: (a) access to clean, safe, and sanitary housing on a transitional/temporary, seasonal, or permanent basis, and (b) the availability of supportive housing.

5. **Crisis Services:** The County Board Mental Health Advisory Committee identified enhanced crisis services as a major need. For example, it highlights the need for a crisis response team with the necessary knowledge and skills required to effectively respond to crisis situations and calls for a 10-14 bed crisis stabilization program for adults.

6.3 HOMELESSNESS IN MCLEAN COUNTY

The Continuum of Care Program (CoC) is an initiative from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide aid to state and local governments as well as nonprofits, with the goal of ending homelessness. in McLean and 10 other Central Illinois counties, the Central Illinois Continuum of Care (CICoC) is coordinated by Providing Access to Help (PATH) and consists of a number of regional social service providers. The Town is an active member in the CICoC.

The CICoC provides and coordinates housing options, programs and services for veterans, families, youth and individuals facing homelessness who are dealing with issues like disabilities, health challenges, domestic violence, and unemployment. The number of homeless people who received assistance through the McLean County CICoC has grown from 806 in 2003 to 1,813 in 2014. As the homeless population continues to grow, there remains a significant unmet need. Homelessness was discussed in the Mental Health Action Plan under the umbrella of housing, which was identified as one of the five major areas of concern that need to be addressed.

Homelessness comes in many forms and under many circumstances. The three broad categories listed below attempt to encompass these different forms concisely. Understanding these is critical to developing a plan to solve homelessness in McLean County.

1. *Chronic*: The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development defines chronic homelessness as: either "(1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, or (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years."

2. *Transitional*: Individuals generally enter the shelter system for only one short-term stay. Such persons are likely to be younger, and they are often recent members of the precariously housed population who have become homeless because of some catastrophic event and have been forced to spend a short time in a homeless shelter before making a transition into more stable housing. Transitionally homeless individuals account for the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness due to their high rate of turnover.

3. *Episodic*: Individuals who frequently shuttle in and out of homelessness are referred to as episodically homeless. They are most likely to be young, but unlike the transitionally homeless, episodically homeless individuals often are chronically unemployed and experience medical, mental health, and substance abuse problems.

In order to respond to these different forms of homelessness, it is necessary to provide different types of temporary housing. The CICoC provides the following in McLean County:

* *Permanent Supportive Housing*: This program works to provide housing and supportive services to those experiencing issues such as chronic homelessness, substance abuse issues, mental illness, or chronic health challenges. Permanent supportive housing programs work with tenants to assess their housing needs and allow them to stay in the housing unit for as long as they choose, provided they pay their rent, which is usually not more than 30 percent of their income. In McLean County, this type of housing is provided through Mayor's Manor, located just west of Downtown Bloomington. Mayor's Manor has 26 efficiency units available to residents who are 18 years or older and meet the income requirements. Fifteen units are set aside for people meeting the HUD definition of "homeless" or "disabled."

* *Transitional Housing*: Transitional housing aims to provide homeless individuals with temporary housing and stability as they work their way up to having their own housing. Individuals in this type of program could be those who have experienced sudden, unexpected homelessness, or are victims of domestic violence. Mid-Central Community Action in West Bloomington offers a transitional housing program that provides homeless families housing for up to 24 months, along with case management. Adult applicants must work full-time, or attend school and work at least part time.

* *Emergency Shelter*: An emergency shelter provides a temporary place for individuals to reside while experiencing homelessness. These facilities typically offer beds to homeless individuals on a first-come, first-served basis. Home Sweet Home Ministries (HSHM) and the Salvation Army in Bloomington provide these services. The HSHM shelter has over 90 beds and provides services such as a case worker to assist with employment, day care, and housing, among others. The Salvation Army, through its Safe Harbor Program, allows individuals to stay for 8 weeks. This program requires that individuals work toward overcoming their homelessness in that time and provides services including drug and alcohol treatment, mental health referrals, and training for job counseling.

* *Recovery Housing*: Recovery housing is geared toward individuals who are recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, or are experiencing mental illness, providing them a positive environment from which they can work towards bettering their lives. Chestnut Health Systems offers a variety of services such as Adolescent Addiction Treatment Services; case management for those dealing with mental illness; family therapy; domestic violence counseling; and community support services.

* *Seasonal Housing*: The McLean County Department of Human Services offers a warming shelter at its facility during the winter months. Seasonal housing is a program that could be further investigated to provide housing to homeless residents during the summer and winter months.

remain.

Many issues intersecting mental health can be addressed effectively through planning. One such issue is access to social services, which can be enhanced through transportation improvements, siting and colocation, and interagency and intergovernmental cooperation.

Another key planning consideration is the capacity of emergency, transitional, and affordable permanent housing to meet community needs. Housing may not seem intuitively related to mental health, but serious mental illness can disrupt the ability to carry out essential aspects of one's daily life, including basic self-care and household management. Mental illnesses may also prevent people from forming and maintaining stable relationships or cause them to push away the caregivers, family, and friends who would otherwise prevent the problem from becoming more serious. As a result of these factors and the stresses of living with a mental disorder, people with mental illnesses are much more likely to become homeless than the general population.

Accordingly, the Mental Health Action Plan named housing as one of its five focus areas[6.2]. The plan proposed to increase the availability of supportive housing for behavioral health clients and construct a mix of permanent and transitional housing to help people with severe mental illness avoid homelessness[6.3].

SOCIAL HEALTH

"Social health" can mean many different things. For the purposes of this project, it refers primarily to the extent to which social conditions support individual health. The way society supports (or does not support) all of its populations—especially less privileged ones such as people without homes, people with low incomes, people of minority racial and ethnic groups, and people with disabilities—is not always understood as a health issue, but social status affects individual health in numerous and complex ways. It also refers to the strength of the social fabric—whether people feel connected to their neighbors and fellow residents and feel they are part of a single community. These two definitions of social health are mutually reinforcing. People who feel connected to their neighbors may be more willing to take social action to support them, and vice versa. The PlanIt Normal Survey revealed that this sense of community is one of Normal's strengths (see Chapter 2.1, Survey Analysis).

As discussed in Chapter 1.2 Demographics and Projections, Normal is a well-educated and affluent community. Based on the community outreach efforts detailed in Section 2, it is clear that Normal and the metro area have work to do in understanding and addressing the needs of an aging population, those with less education, low-income families, and people with disabilities.

With regard to how land use and the built environment can be used to address social issues, two predominant themes, affordability and accessibility, asserted themselves during interviews with social service agencies (see Chapter 2.2, Stakeholder Interviews, for a more detailed discussion):

- *Affordability*: Many social service agencies commented that there is insufficient affordable housing for their clients, typically lower income individuals and families. Access to more Section 8 vouchers and an increase in the number of apartments that accept them were both identified as challenges. Many interviewees also pointed out that some families who do not meet the federal guidelines for Section 8 vouchers are also in need of affordable housing. This segment of population typically goes un- or underserved.
- *Accessibility*: Many of the interviewees expressed concern about the availability of public transportation and other mobility options. Door-to-door and door-through-door transportation options; extended hours and weekend service for public transportation; pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; and universal design standards in the built environment were all recognized as key to accommodating seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income, transit-dependent riders.

Other concerns voiced by the social service agencies were not directly related to the built environment but have a huge impact on the quality of life in the community:

- A lack of community awareness on the needs of underserved populations such as seniors and people with disabilities.
- Limited lack of employment opportunities for people with lower skill levels or with certain disabilities.
- A lack of funding for social service agencies,

threatening their operations and in some cases their existence.

There is some perception among the interviewed social service agencies that Normal is slightly more expensive than Bloomington for their clients (most of whom live in West Bloomington). While it is not uncommon for certain neighborhoods within a metro area to attract lower-income families, this claim has not been factually evaluated in the BN metro area.

Most of Bloomington-Normal's inclusion and diversity concerns voiced during the outreach

Map 1.6.1. Section 8 Vouchers in Normal
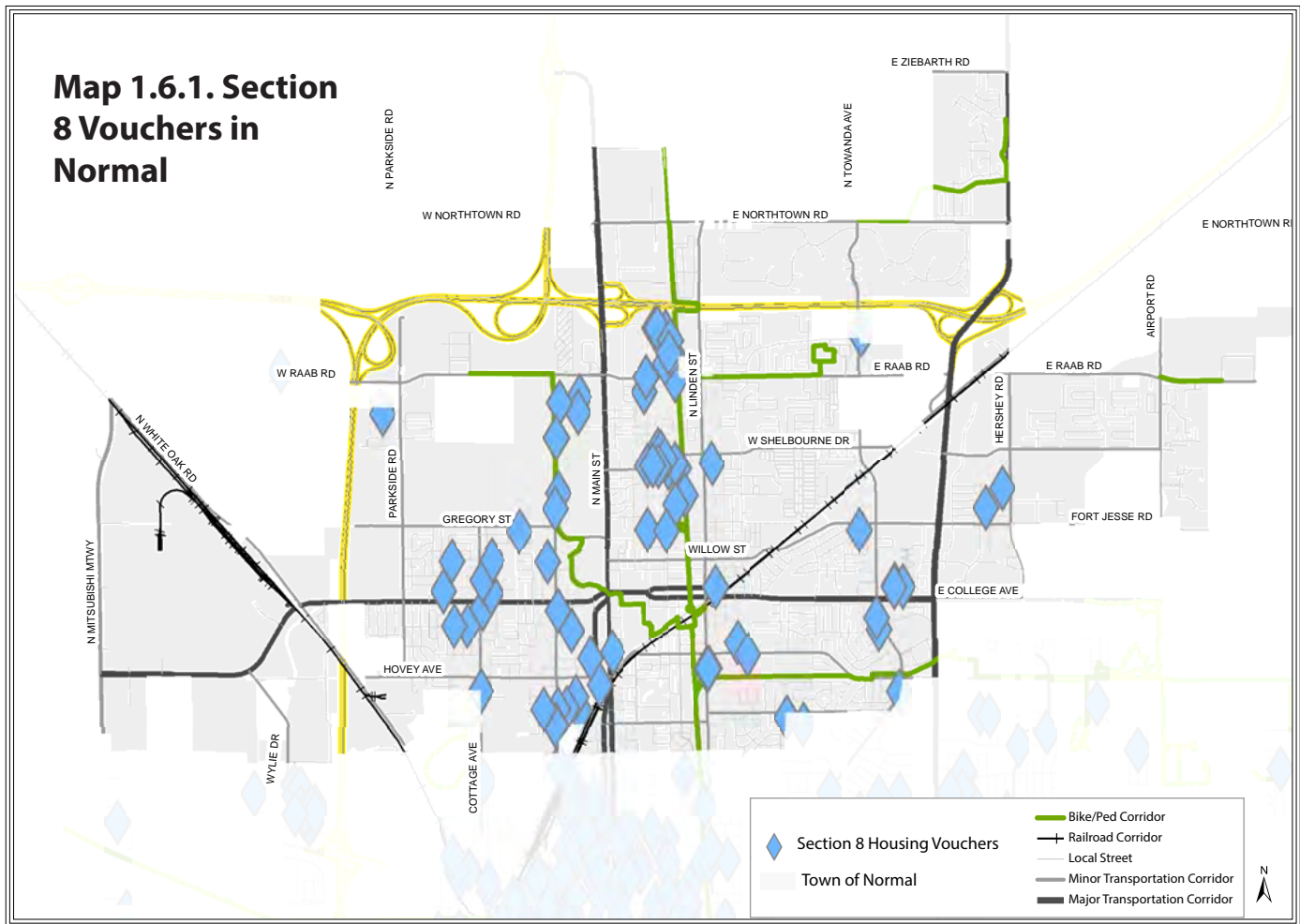
The Bloomington Housing Authority (BHA) provides housing for the low- to moderate-income populations in Bloomington-Normal and McLean County. It is primarily funded by the federal Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) and is responsible for managing both public housing and the Section 8 voucher program. Both public housing and the Section 8 program serve very low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Public housing is rental housing owned and managed by the BHA, whereas the Section 8 program provides vouchers that can be put toward the cost

of rent at participating apartment complexes throughout the community. There is currently no public housing in Normal; all of the BHA's public housing units are in Bloomington. There are some rental units in Normal for which renters can use Section 8 vouchers—as of February 2016, 247 of the 771 vouchers issued in McLean County (about 32%) were used in Normal. It is important to note that the number of Section 8 vouchers do not fully reflect the need in our community. The BHA has over 2,000 members on its waiting list.

process revolved around age, physical abilities, income, and education. Issues surrounding race and ethnicity did not come up as a major concern during that process. This is not to suggest that such issues do not exist. It may be that they were not mentioned more due to the relatively small presence of racial minorities in the community or the failure of the outreach process to reach those groups. As discussed in Chapter 1.2, Demographics and Projections, the trend nationwide (including in Normal) is toward greater racial and ethnic diversity, as the Millennial generation and Generation Z are the most diverse in American history. It is clear that additional data analysis and outreach efforts are required to better understand how issues of race and ethnicity will shape Normal through 2040.

As the community plans for its next 20 to 25 years, it is important to understand and address the needs of all people, not just those with the most representation. This will be an ongoing challenge for Normal, among many other communities, as local governments continue to grapple with tight budgets and feel compelled to prioritize projects based on the rate of return. It is critical to keep in mind that tomorrow's communities are those in which all segments of the population feel supported and have a decent quality of life.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The natural environment is composed of vegetation, soils, water, plants, wind, energy, and air. Also included as part of the natural environment are all living things that interact within this sphere. The quality of life in any community is dependent on the quality of its natural environment. It is upon us to protect and preserve it.

McLean County has a rich natural environment, including farmland, water bodies, wetlands, riparian ecosystems, and rare plant sites that enhance and maintain the biodiversity and water quality of the region. McLean County's largest natural asset continues to be its rich soil. For better or worse, our farmland is generally flat and presents only moderate limitations to development and growth of the community. This requires the communities to be more deliberate about growing responsibly to preserve and protect this valuable resource.

The importance of protecting our natural resources at the regional level has been well recognized in McLean County. This is evidenced by the many longstanding intergovernmental agreements between Normal, Bloomington, and the county to solve environmental issues related to solid waste, greenways, and regional and urban watersheds. The Ecology Action Center (EAC), a nonprofit focusing on environmental issues, is supported by the Town, the City, and the County to act as a central resource within the community for environmental education, information, advocacy, and technical assistance. The Town has also been recognized nationally for its sustainable development efforts in Uptown Normal.

The Town's leadership on regional environmental issues is commendable, but Town officials would be the first to say that there is always more to be done to protect the health of the natural environment. Urban sprawl and farmland preservation, air quality and carbon emissions, the long-term water supply and water quality, and solid waste are some of the current regional environmental concerns.

Air quality has become an important issue due to changes in the USEPA's standards for ground-level ozone concentrations. Ozone is an important element of the upper atmosphere, but at ground level it is a product and a component of greenhouse gas emissions and a threat to human health. According to the USEPA: "Breathing ozone can trigger a variety of health problems including chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, and airway inflammation. It also can reduce lung function and harm lung tissue. Ozone can worsen bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma, leading to increased medical care."

In October 2015, the standard for ground-level ozone was reduced from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb, based on a three-year average of air sampling results. Areas not in compliance with this standard will be designated by the USEPA in October 2017 as non-attainment areas. The 2012-2014 average level in Bloomington-Normal was 71 ppb, slightly exceeding the new standard. Fortunately, the 2013-2015 ozone average fell to 66 ppb, within the standard by a small margin. Compliance with the new standard will be determined by the three-year ground-level ozone

average for 2014-2016, so it is still possible that Bloomington-Normal will cross the non-attainment threshold. Aside from the public health considerations, should Bloomington-Normal be designated a non-attainment area, a series of regulations and programs will be required until ground-level ozone concentrations meet the standard, affecting the community's ability to attract new businesses (see Chapter 1.5, Infrastructure and Public Safety). A forthcoming regional energy plan, to be developed by MCRPC and the EAC, will address this and other air quality issues as they relate to energy production and use.

With regard to water quality, Sugar Creek has been placed on the IEPA's Impaired Waters list due to elevated levels of phosphorous. "Impaired waters" are defined by Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act as rivers, lakes, or streams that fail to meet one or more water quality standards and are thus too polluted or degraded to provide sufficient support for aquatic life. The IEPA is concerned that the excess phosphorous in Sugar Creek will harm fish and macroinvertebrates (insects, crustaceans, and worms) living in the creek. The EPA is also concerned with downstream effects. The phosphorous in Sugar Creek eventually ends up in the Gulf of Mexico, which is already substantially polluted by phosphorous. Work must be done to identify the sources of this impairment and solve the problem.

One necessary step may be the development of a Sugar Creek watershed plan. Currently our region has two watershed plans, one for Lake Evergreen and one for Lake Bloomington, both completed in 2008. (There is also a Mackinaw River watershed plan, but it was completed in 1998.) Whether or not a Sugar Creek watershed plan is required by regulators, it would be beneficial to develop a unified plan for all of the community's 17 watersheds.

Finally, solid waste is of principal concern given the anticipated closure of the McLean County Landfill #2. The EAC, which serves as the regional solid waste planning agency for the Town, City, and the County, is currently updating the county-wide Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan. The landfill closure, alternate plans for waste management, and household hazardous waste solutions will be throughly addressed in that plan.

NORMAL'S LEADERSHIP IN SUSTAINABILITY

The Town of Normal has long been a leader in sustainability. In 2001, when the Town Council adopted the Downtown Redevelopment Plan, it made an unprecedented commitment to urban redevelopment and environmental sustainability. Implementation of that plan resulted in today's Uptown Normal, a community destination and an icon for smart growth and sustainability.

In 2007, Uptown Normal was among the first projects to register for the LEED Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) Pilot Program. LEED ND, administered by the US Green Building Council, was engineered to inspire and help create better, more sustainable, well-connected neighborhoods. It looks beyond the scale of buildings to consider entire communities.

At the heart of Uptown Normal is Uptown Circle. In addition to conveying traffic in a safe and efficient manner, the Circle provides a beautiful public gathering space and acts as a sustainable stormwater treatment area. The Circle received the EPA's National Award For Smart Growth Achievement in 2011. This highest honor is bestowed by the EPA on communities for their smart growth achievement and policies that protect human and environmental health while strengthening local economies.

Building on this momentum, in 2010 the Town adopted its first Community-Wide Sustainability Plan. The plan was developed in consultation with nearly 150 members of the community, representing a wide cross-section of community's demographics in terms of race, age, gender, class, ethnicity, vocation, avocation, political persuasion, personal and professional expertise, and more. Its findings and recommendations covered 14 topic areas: Arts & Culture; Continuous Learning & Community Building; Economic Development; Educational Institutions; Energy in the Built Environment/Energy Generation; Food System; Government: Planning, Public Safety, Public Services; Health & Wellness; Human Services & Spirituality; Resource & Carbon Management: Air; Resource & Carbon Management: Land; Resource & Carbon Management: Water; Transportation & Mobility; and Technology.

Several of the 2035 Report's recommendations have already been implemented[6.4],

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illustrating the Town's commitment to sustainability. Strategies yet to be acted on should be revisited during the upcoming visioning and comprehensive planning process to (1) evaluate any challenges faced in its implementation and (2) effectively integrate those strategies and avoid duplication of efforts.

In 2015, Town of Normal Council adopted the Uptown 2.0 Plan to redevelop the city-owned area across the tracks from Uptown Station (referred to in the plan as "Uptown South"). This robust plan challenges the Town to push the envelope on sustainability. It urges the Town to go beyond mitigating negative environmental impacts and aim to give back to the environment.

Uptown 2.0 proposes using the International Living Futures Institute (ILFI) Standard in pursuit of that goal. ILFI describes itself as an agency "committed to catalyzing the transformation toward communities that are socially just, culturally rich

and ecologically restorative." The Town of Normal was the second community in the world to register a development project—Uptown 2.0—in the pilot program for ILFI's Living Communities Challenge (LCC). Launched in 2014, the LCC pushes communities to not only limit harm to the environment, but to strive to achieve self-sufficiency. The LCC has seven program areas, or Petals: Water, Energy, Beauty, Place, Materials, Health, and Happiness and Equity. These petals are further subdivided into 20 Imperatives. As shown in Figure 1.6.5, Uptown 2.0 will be pursuing Petal Certification, with a focus on the Water, Energy, and Beauty Petals. In accordance with the program's requirements, the Town will also devote resources to educating the public about the environmental benefits of their LCC development, with the aim of inspiring others in the community to pursue similarly innovative efforts.

Achieving certification is no small task. The fact that the Town has volunteered for such a

Figure 1.6.5. LCC's certification process, from the Uptown 2.0 plan.

6.4 TOWN OF NORMAL COMMUNITY-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN: PROGRESS

Arts & Culture
- Restoration of the annual Harmon Arts Grant in 2012
- Over 90 pieces of local artists' work displayed in Uptown Station
- Illinois State University Galleries in Uptown Station (opened in 2014)
- Continued support for the annual Sugar Creek Arts Festival (began 1984)

Energy in the Built Environment/Energy Generation
- LEED ND designation for Uptown Normal; five other buildings in Uptown also have LEED certifications
- Participation in energy aggregation, with power to be supplied from 100% renewable sources
- Portion of Uptown Station's 3rd floor roof covered in vegetation (green roof)
- Solar Electric Demonstration System on Children's Discovery Museum roof
- Upgraded the Normal Public Library HVAC system
- Lighting upgrades throughout the Town in many buildings: more efficient fixtures and occupancy controls
- Greenhouse Gas Baseline Emissions Inventory
- Energy Education
- Continued participation in Earth Hour (began 2008)

Economic Development
- Continued development efforts in Uptown, with a focus on green development.
- Town's Local Preference Purchasing Policy, adopted in 2011

Food Systems
- Two organic community gardens with 70 total plots in a variety of sizes, with water on-site and nearby parking.
- The Refuge Food Forest: The first food forest located in a public park in Illinois, located at One Normal Plaza, consisting of a diverse planting of fruit, nuts, and perennial vegetables. The fruits and nuts produced in the food forest will be free and available for anyone to pick for themselves.

Government
- Systems planning focused on redevelopment rather than new development
- Continued support of alternate modes of transportation (see Transportation and Mobility)

Resource and Carbon Management: Air
- 6 Mitsubishi "i" fully electric cars in the Town of Normal fleet
- Over 50 free Level 2 chargers; Only Level 3, "Quick Charge", charging station in Illinois outside of Chicago
- 4 Tesla Motors Super Chargers
- Over 300 electric vehicles on the streets of the community

Resource and Carbon Management: Land
- Curbside recycling program (began July 2012); 58% resident participation
- Support Household Hazardous Waste events

Resource and Carbon Management: Water
- Leadership in the protection of the Mahomet Aquifer from hazardous waste

Transportation and Mobility
- Uptown Station connects several modes of transportation: rail, bus, auto, bicycle, and pedestrian
- High Speed Rail (planned for 2016)
- Infrastructure improvements
- Street markings including sharrows, bike boulevards and bike lanes
- Main Street Feasibility Study, including bike/ped components
- Winter Constitution Trail clearing (began winter 2011-12)
- Bicycle/pedestrian trail counts 3x per year (began February 2011)
- Bicycle parking and repair stations
- Updated Constitution Trail map
- Annual Bike Rodeo (began September 2011)
- Annual Bike Movie (began February 2012)
- Annual Bike Summit: "founded" in Normal in 2012, Normal hosted 2012 and 2013
- Annual Light the Night event, in cooperation with Connect Transit (began September 2013)
- Constitution Trail 25th Anniversary Celebration (2014)
- Constitution Trail promotional video (fall 2015)
- Bronze Level Bike Friendly Community (designated November 2014)

SOCIAL PROGRESS — **ECONOMIC VITALITY** — **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**
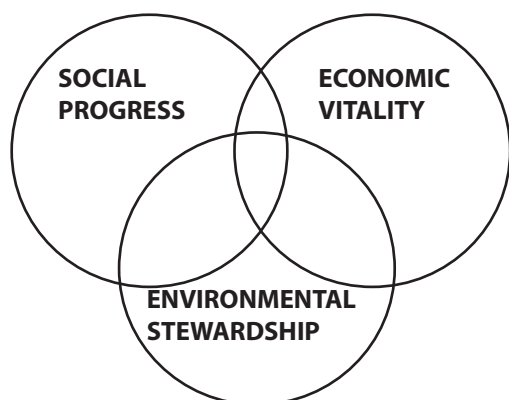
The Sustainability Plan used the widely accepted United Nations Bruntland Commission's definition (1983) of sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

rigorous program reinforces this community's commitment to leading environmental change and achieving the highest standards in sustainability.