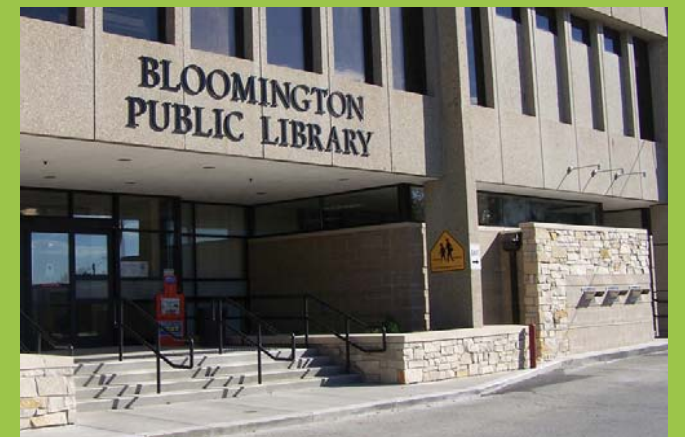


9

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This chapter provides an overview of community facilities including City offices, library and schools.



PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Public buildings addressed in this section include the City Hall, Government Center, police station, fire stations, library, Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, U.S. Cellular Coliseum, and public service facility.

City Hall

Constructed in 1963, City Hall is one of the City’s oldest public buildings. It is located on East Olive Street, well-situated on the southeast side of the downtown, just north of the police station (see Figure 9.1). It contains approximately 42,000 square feet and houses a number of municipal offices including those of the Mayor, City Manager, City Legal Department, City Finance Department and the Computer Services Department. Some City departments are located nearby in the Government Center. The Water Department is located in a facility on West Division Street.

Government Center

In 2003, the City entered into a joint venture with McLean County in the acquisition of an office building at the southwest corner of Washington and East Streets. Redeveloped as the Government Center, the building is home to several City departments including Parks and Recreation, Planning and Code Enforcement (PACE) which includes the Building Safety, City Planning, Community Development, and Facilities Management Divisions, Public Works, and

the Bloomington Board of Election Commissioners. City staff in the Government Center also have access to building facilities such as conference rooms and large meeting areas. Coordination with other local agencies, such as the County Department of Building and Zoning, the County Clerk, the County Supervisor of Assessments, and other county administrative offices, is facilitated by the shared building.

Police Department

The Bloomington Police Department is located on South East Street in downtown Bloomington, just south of City Hall and north of the Public Service Facility. First occupied in 1997, the facility encompasses 42,000 square feet on three floors. Also located on the premises is a three story parking garage. BPD is currently staffed by 123 sworn officers and 34 civil support staff.

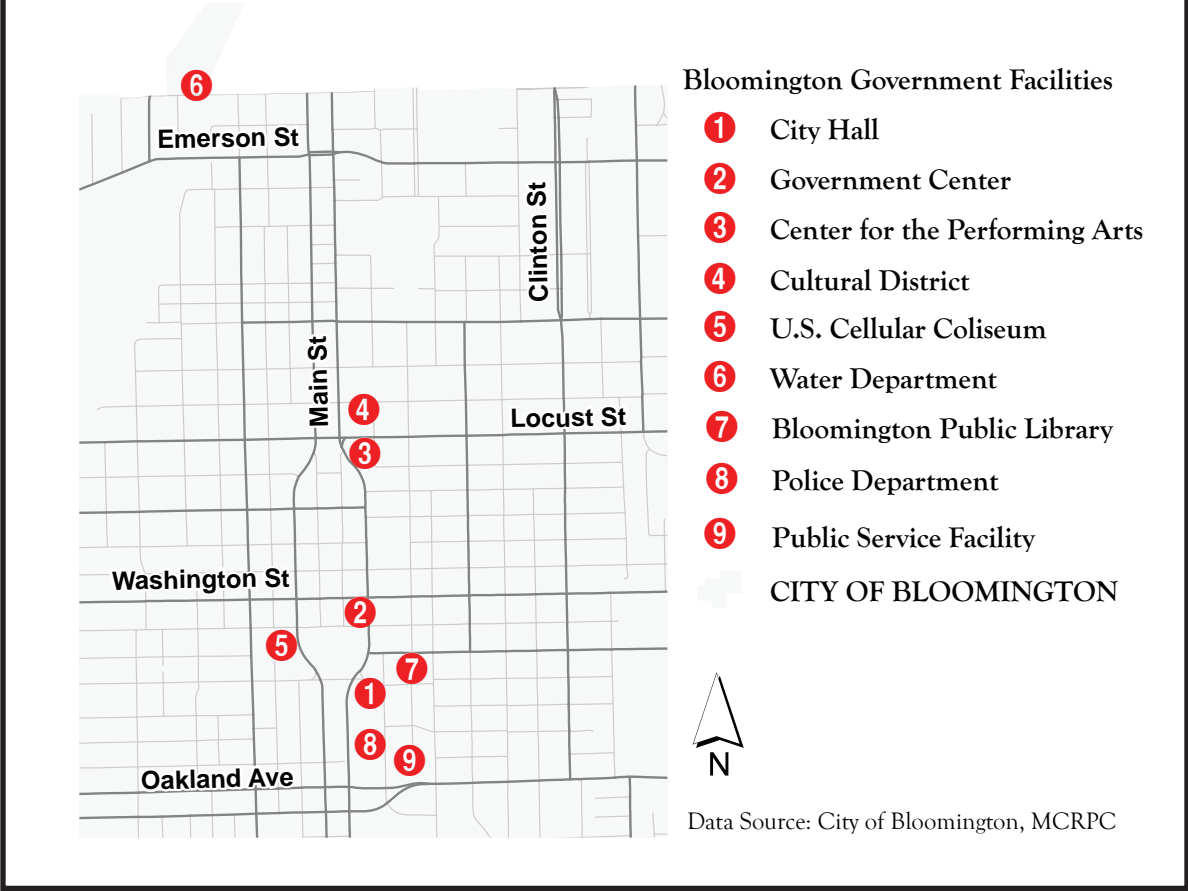
Fire Stations

Please refer to Chapter 7, Health and Safety for detailed discussion on locations of the fire stations, fire response zones and related issues.

Library

The Bloomington Public Library is located in proximity to a number of other public buildings. Built in 1977, it is located in the downtown area on Olive Street, just east of City Hall. It is a member of the Alliance Library System and has full access to all of its resources. An example of the benefits of this system is the Interlibrary Loan System

Figure 9.1 Community Facilities, City of Bloomington



that spans from county to county between the borders of Indiana and Iowa. The Bloomington Public Library currently serves a total population of the Golden Prairie Public Library Districts (GPPLD). GPPLD includes the communities of Arrowsmith, Bloomington, Dale, Dawson and Old Town townships. When compared with desired standards, it is evident that the Bloomington Public Library is currently deficient in a number of areas and that these deficiencies will intensify as

the community continues to grow unless corrective actions are taken. The library is currently exploring various options to expand its current facilities.

Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts

In July of 2001, the City acquired the Scottish Rite Temple (Consistory) located at East and Locust Streets. As the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA), and in conjunction with the McLean County

Art Center, the building anchors the Downtown Cultural District. The Cultural District was developed as a major attraction for the downtown area, including a new park and other amenities for users of the Center for the Performing Arts.

U.S. Cellular Coliseum

The U.S. Cellular Coliseum is a multi-purpose facility located on Front Street between Center and Lee Streets. The facility opened to the public in 2006, and includes a sports and entertainment venue, food services and associated concessions, and an indoor ice skating rink. The facility is home to the Bloomington Thunder minor league ice hockey team, the Bloomington Flex minor league basketball team, and the Bloomington Edge, a professional indoor football team.

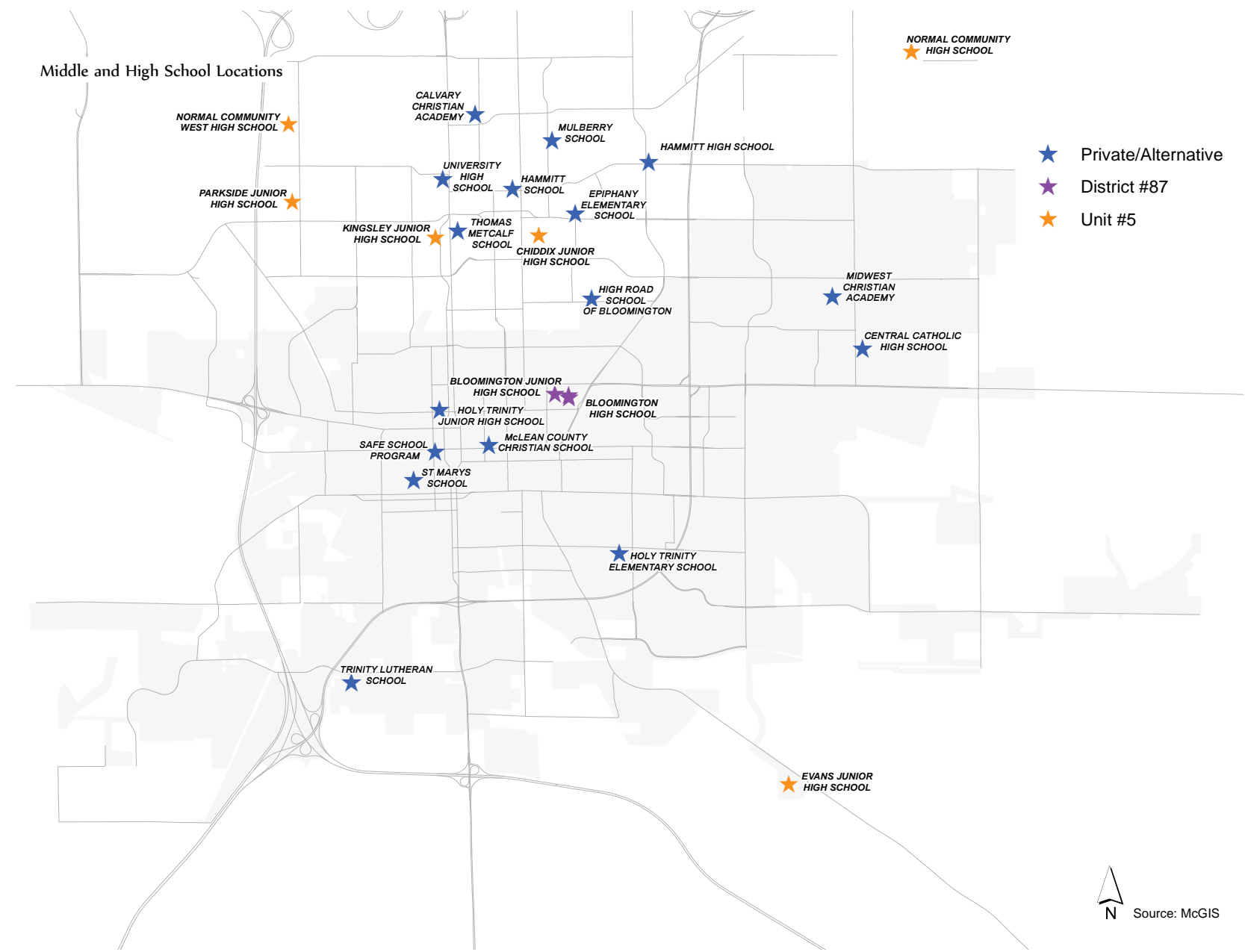
Public Service Facility

The public service facility was built in 1965 and occupies approximately 29,000 square feet on South East Street behind the Police Station. The facility is equipped to store traffic signs, equipment, some carpentry applications and public works vehicles. It serves as a meeting place for employees who pick up their vehicles in the morning. There is also an on-site solid waste transfer system that is certified by the Environmental Protection Agency. Also on the premises is a salt storage facility capable of storing 6,200 tons of salt.

Water Department Facility

A new water department facility was

Figure 9.2 Public and Private Schools Serving Bloomington Children



Data Source: McGIS

constructed in 2003 on the north side of Division Street, just west of the railroad tracks (see Map 2.7). This facility houses water department offices and water system maintenance facilities and supplies.

Parks

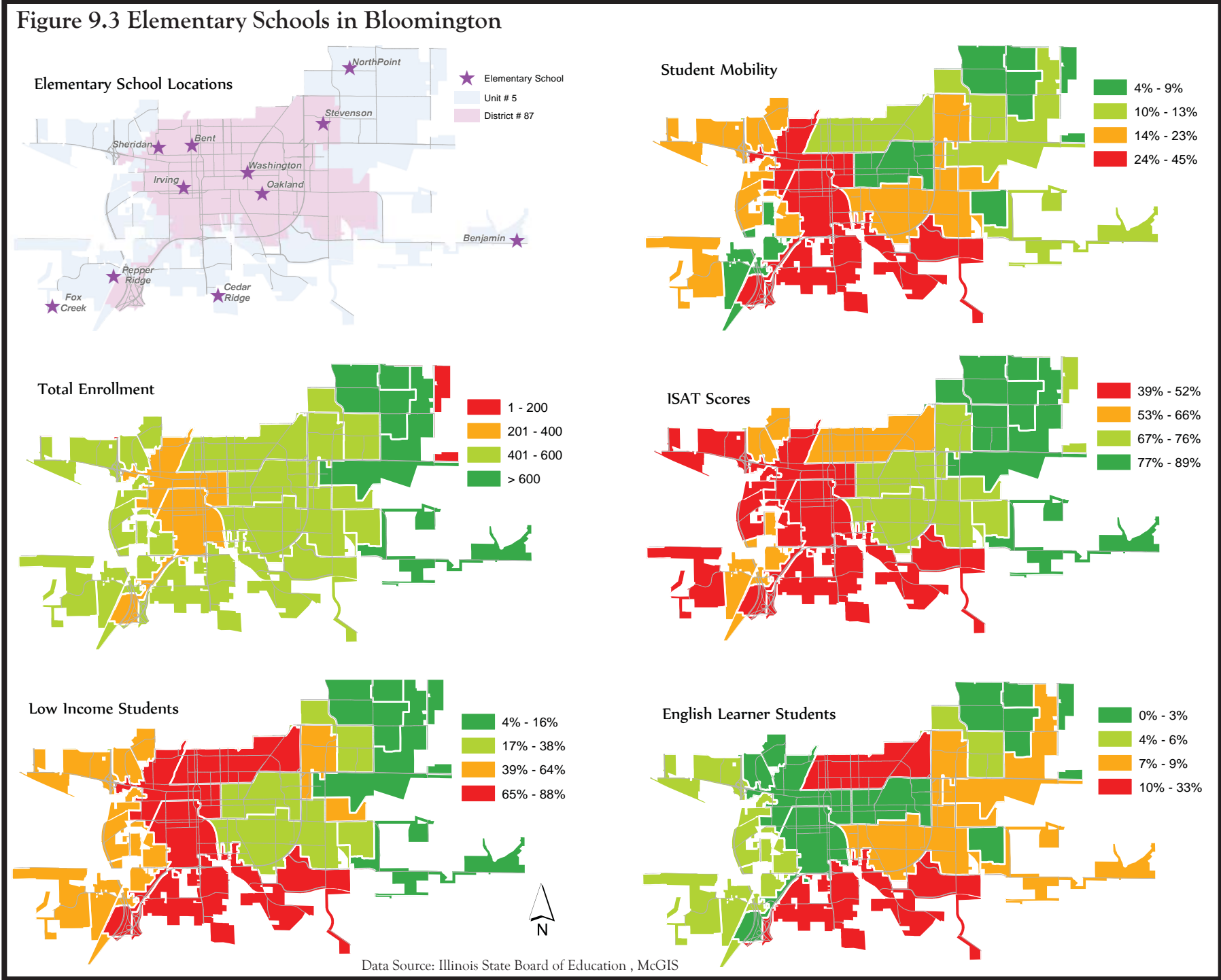
Please refer to the Health and Safety chapter for the location and description of parks and recreational activities in Bloomington.

Schools

The City of Bloomington has an abundance of excellent public school facilities. The two school districts that serve the City of Bloomington are Unit 5 and District 87.

As shown in Figure 9.3, District 87 contains six elementary schools, one elementary education center, one middle school and one high school. It serves the core areas of Bloomington. Unit 5 contains five elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools serving the outlying areas of Bloomington and has the potential of serving the City’s areas of outward expansion. Bloomington also contains parochial schools.

Under the recent School Funding Reform Act of 2014, the state funding distribution formula for school district funding was changed. The new formula places weight on student social characteristics and the availability of local funds through property taxes for the state funding distribution. Under this formula, both District 87 and Unit 5 are expected to lose 15% to 17% in state fund-



ing, partly due to levels of property revenues generated locally. While it is positive to note that the community is affluent, it does not negate the fact that these budget cuts will place severe burden on the school districts.

As illustrated in Figure 9.3, the core areas (inner city) of Bloomington, served primarily by District 87 have lower total enrollment numbers. According to District 87, the number of students enrolled in the district decreased from 5,730 in 2000 to 5,526 in 2010. A number of social factors such as low income students and English Language Learners also have an impact on academic performance, which is reflected in the ISAT scores. Figure 9.3 clearly illustrates how the social aspects within the core are having an impact on the schools.

Schools play a huge role in shaping the community. It is critical to work closely with the school districts during the comprehensive planning process to collectively address the educational issues.

Bloomington has Illinois Wesleyan University, located in north central Bloomington. Other higher educational opportunities in the area include Illinois State University, Heartland Community College and Lincoln Community College. They provide significant benefits to the Bloomington-Normal and McLean County community. Collaboration between local governments, the universities and economic development agencies, mediated through the planning process, can aid in using university resources to encourage forward-thinking economic development that focuses on emerging industries.

