

9. PUBLIC SAFETY



VISION

Our responsive police, fire and emergency services will ensure safety and security for residents to live, learn, work and play.

A safe community provides for better neighborhoods, economic development, and an overall quality of life that benefits all of its residents. The City of Bloomington is fortunate to be served by excellent police and fire departments that help make it a safe community where people want to live and raise their families. Protecting its citizens continues to be one of the City's highest priorities. This section outlines the current capacity and highlights the future needs for the emergency response departments in preparing for the growth and expansion of the City.

POLICE

Reducing crime and the fear of crime is a top priority for the Bloomington Police Department (BPD). Crime in Bloomington has been declining for many years and was at an all-time low in 2014. The department's data-driven approaches, such as Problem Oriented Policing (POP) and public engagement, are two examples of how the BPD continually strives to achieve excellence and improve safety in the community.

The decline in crime rates can be directly attributed to a more proactive approach by the BPD

through calls for service. In 2014, there was a 10% increase in the number of calls compared to the previous year. While the declining crime rate is a positive sign for the community, increased strain on BPD resources needs to be considered for future growth. This plan calls for a periodic assessment of staffing, training, and the latest technologies that can help improve staff efficiencies to continue to provide a high level of service.

While the overall crime rate in Bloomington is low, there are certain areas of the City with higher concentrations of crime. As highlighted in Figure 9-3, the West Side, or the Regeneration Area as defined in the Neighborhoods section, shows a major concentration of the Part 1 crimes (violent crime and property crime) in the City. During the community outreach, respondents from Wards 6 and 7 in the Regeneration Area, felt more unsafe than safe. They called for increased public safety measures in the area, including more police surveillance.

The perception of crime, particularly in the Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, is something the police department should also address.

Public safety cannot be the sole responsibility of the Police Department. BPD recognizes that partnerships are crucial in crime prevention. It continues to work towards strengthening its relationship with the public through programs such as Coffee with a Cop, neighborhood watch groups, and community forums. The newest position of Youth Intervention Specialist, established in April of 2015 through a \$25,000 grant from State Farm, is yet another way BPD is trying to help young people in the community involved in activities linked to delinquency and criminal activity. A needs assessment will be conducted and a plan developed to reduce future juvenile issues in Bloomington. BPD's increased communication through social media helps provide a connection between the police and residents, building trust and a stronger relationship between them.

There are aspects of physical planning that can affect crime and the perception of crime. A nationally renowned method of preventing crime called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a proven model to fight crime. For example, creating vibrant urban centers, well-used parks and walkable neighborhoods puts more

GUIDING THEMES

- All of Bloomington's neighborhoods will be safe places to live, learn, work and play.
- The Bloomington Police Department will work closely with neighborhood residents to maintain a safe atmosphere in our community.
- The City, in partnership with community organizations and citizens, will ensure safety on the streets for all modes of travel.

“eyes on the street,” making these areas safer. This plan recognizes the importance of improving the physical conditions to fight crime and urges the police to partner with the Community Development departments to identify areas that could benefit from CPTED.

While this plan calls for a variety of safety-related improvements, it is also sensitive to the challenges involved. These include budget constraints, unfunded mandates (such as concealed carry screening, sex offender monitoring and registration, and traffic stop data collection) and legislation that cannot keep up with technological advances. The negative perception that the public, at times, has of the police is a significant challenge. This is an issue that has garnered national attention in recent years,

and the Bloomington Police Department has shown commitment to addressing that issue and working to help improve relationships between the police and the public through programs such as the Breaking Barriers community/police dialogue event.

FIRE AND EMS

The Bloomington Fire Department (BFD) provides the fire suppression and prevention service, emergency medical service (EMS) and fire education to protect the people, property and businesses of the City. In 2013, BFD hired the Illinois Fire Chief Associations Consulting Services to conduct a thorough analysis of operational staffing levels, fire station locations, and emergency response times. That report included and priori-

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Police:** The Bloomington Police Department is currently staffed with 124 officers. The BPD has one headquarter station, centrally located in Downtown Bloomington next to City Hall. The current police/population ratio is 1.61 officers per 1,000 residents. With the population of Bloomington projected to increase by nearly 20,000 residents by the horizon year of this plan, an ongoing assessment of the police to population ratio will need to be conducted to ensure that there is a sufficient police force to effectively serve the community. Maintaining the current ratio would necessitate additional 35 or so officers to the police force over the next 20 years, should the City grow at that rate. In 2014, the Bloomington Police Department received 81,662 calls for service, a nearly 10% increase from 2013. This resulted in a decrease of Part 1 crimes (violent crimes and property crimes) in the City by 13.3% from the previous year, nearly 307 fewer reported incidents.
- **Fire and EMS:** The Bloomington Fire Department has five staffed stations located throughout the community and one vacant station, #5 on the southwest side of the City. The department currently staffs 116 total personnel. Full-time firefighters with the department have Fire Fighter II and Firefighter III certifications, as well as EMT-Basic, EMT-Intermediate, or EMT-Paramedic certifications. The fire department serviced a total of 10,459 calls in 2014, a 4% increase in call volume since 2013 and a 26% increase from 2004. Of those calls, 2,509 were fire response, with the remaining 7,950 calls being EMS response.
- In 2015, the BFD's Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating was upgraded from a 3 to a 2. ISO evaluates fire departments based on response times, equipment, levels of training and other criteria when determining its rating. Departments are rated on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the best. Bloomington is among the 18% of communities in the United States with ISO ratings of 1 to 3.

tized nearly 30 recommendations, from effectively dispatching staff to improving the response times. This plan attempted to integrate those recommendations, as many will directly affect or be affected by land use and transportation decisions.

Ideally, communities want to respond to all fire and EMS calls within a six-minute response time, a national standard set by the Fire Protection Association. Given the resource constraints, it is often impossible to achieve that standard. The National Fire Protection Association set a minimum standard for meeting that requirement of 90% of the calls complying with the standard. In 2013, Bloomington Fire Department responded to 73.5% of all fire calls and 63.9% of all EMS calls within six minutes. Detailed discussion on this subject can be found in the 2013 Illinois Fire Chief's report.

Vehicle availability and staffing levels are an important factor in emergency response. A fire

company unavailable for response provides no service to the community. Availability threshold is calculated by the Unit Hour Utilization (UHU) method. The UHU method considers the number of hours a unit is committed on an emergency or other activity, divided by the number of overall hours a unit is available to respond. An acceptable UHU range for a traditional fire station is 0.25 to 0.3. As illustrated in Table 9.1, there are number of instances that this is being exceeded at various fire stations. The BFD's headquarters fire station located at 310 N. Lee Street has an average UHU of 0.36. Several factors such as road conditions, layout, traffic flow and time of the year all have an impact on UHU, along with the incidence location.

The department continues to strive to achieve the minimum standard. Given current conditions, achieving the minimum standard seems to be a lofty goal. While the BFD is working hard to

cut down on the alarm processing time and the turn out time, this plan focuses on achieving efficiencies in travel time. This includes both fixes within the existing system such as traffic preemptions and adding engine companies, as well as reinforcing vertical and horizontal collaborations. According to the County's Mental Health Action plan, nearly 11 % of the EMS call volume was related to a behavioral/psychiatric disorder. Increased coordination with the McLean County Health Department's behavioral health initiatives could lessen the burden and financial strain on the Bloomington Fire Department.

Most importantly, the type of urban growth has a significant impact on the efficiency of emergency services. In the last 50 years the City's incorporated area has increased more than 2.5 times. The majority of the growth occurred to the east and south. Most of these suburban style neighborhoods have a cul-de-sac street layout with

Response Time = Alarm Processing Time + Turn Out Time + Travel Time

Alarm processing time includes the time from the minute dispatcher received a call to the point of notification to the responding agency. Turn out time includes the time from when the call was received to when the vehicle leaves the station. Travel time is time from leaving the station to arriving at scene. The nationally acceptable standard for a response time is six minutes.

limited entrances and exits to the neighborhood. While most of the developments are contiguous, there is some sprawl, on the east and southwest sides. Many of the east-west connecting streets are curtailed by the location of the airport. All of these factors together have a major impact on the response times. Figure 9-1 shows the incorporated areas on the east, northeast, west, and southwest and around the airport that cannot be reached within four minute travel time (or six minute response time). The Fire Chief's Association conducted analysis using various parameters, including working with the Town of Normal, to identify optimal solutions for reduced response times. As with the police department, a challenge faced by the BFD is providing a sufficient level of service to the community while faced with budget constraints.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Communities always hope that a major disaster or emergency situation is not something that they will have to deal with. However, they must have a plan in place should such an event occur. Having a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan is a necessary step

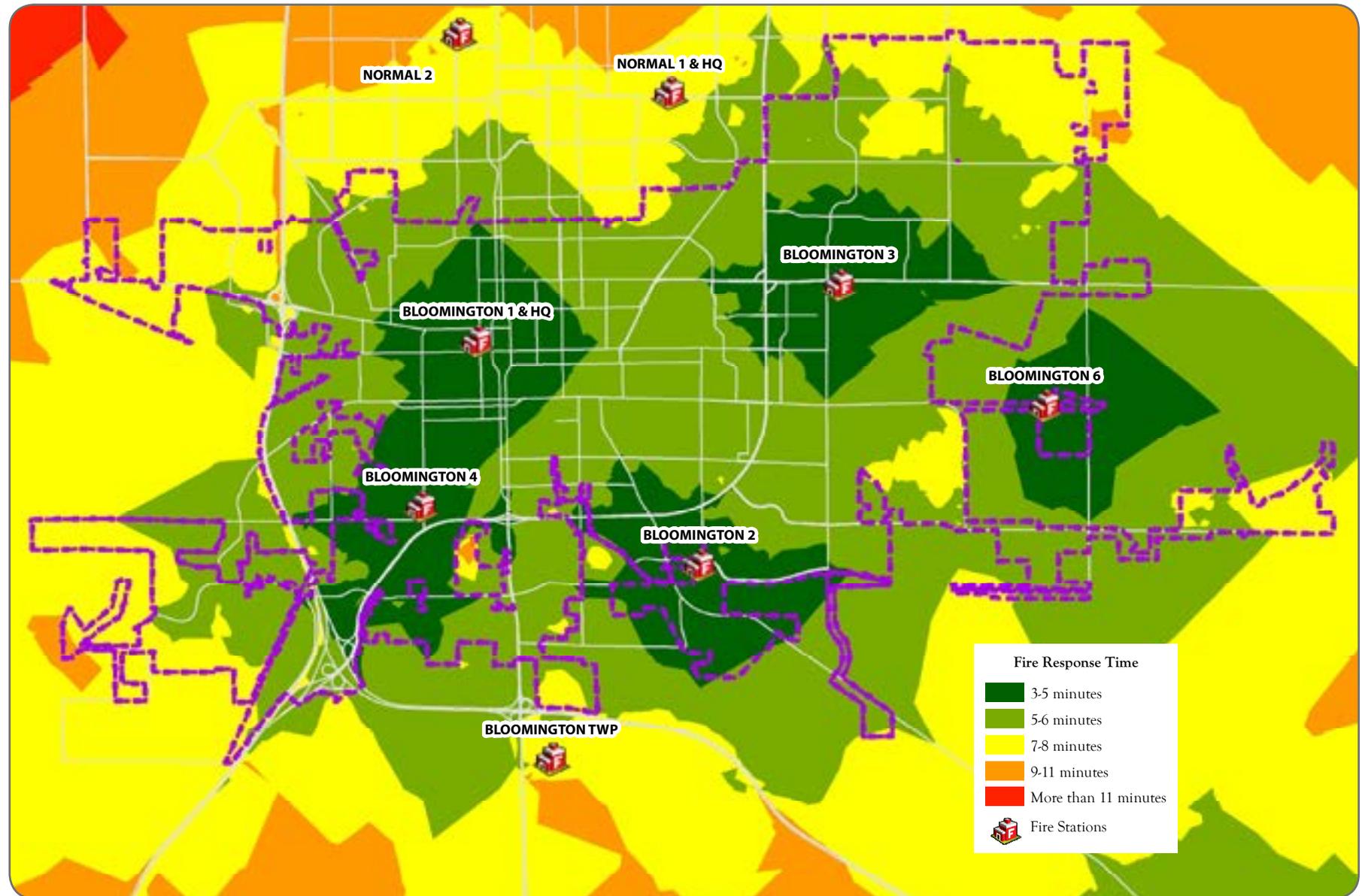


Figure 9-1. City of Bloomington Fire Response Time
 Source: Existing Conditions Report, City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan

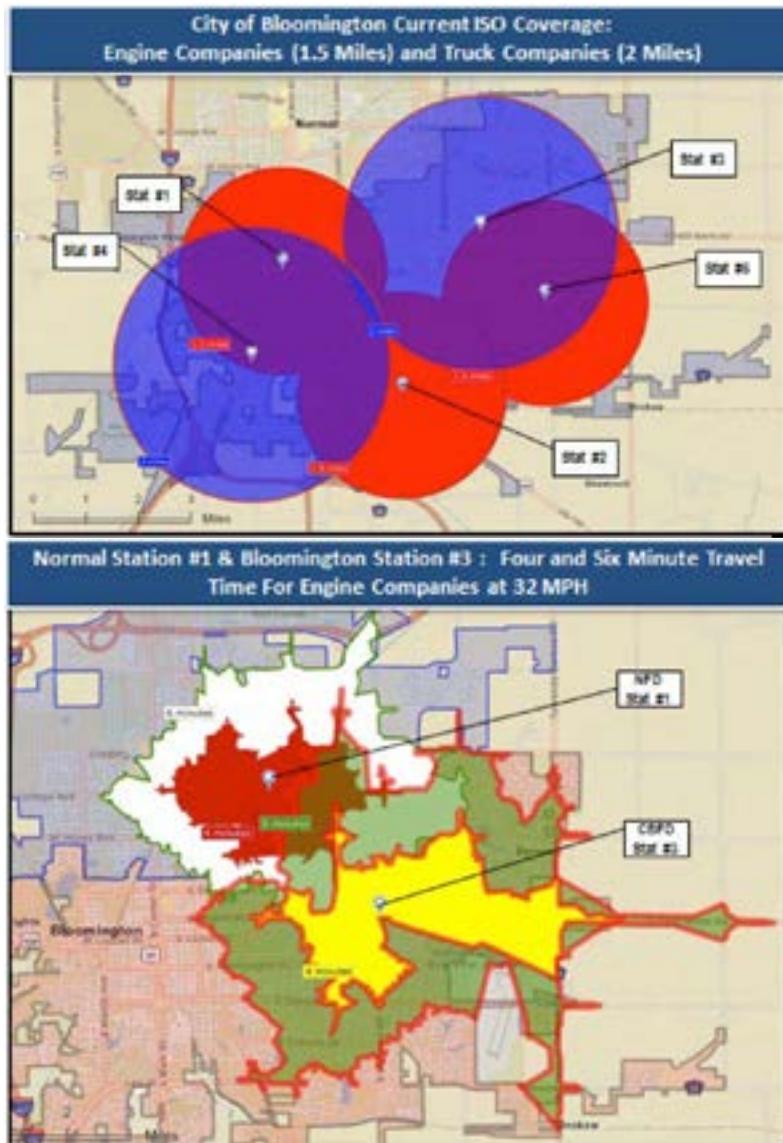


Figure 9-2. ISO coverage area analysis; four and six minute travel times on the northeast side of Bloomington using Bloomington and Normal Fire Station locations.

Source: Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Report

that all areas must take to ensure that any emergencies, disasters, natural or otherwise, are managed in the proper way.

It will be crucial for the City of Bloomington Emergency Preparedness Plan to be integrated with the McLean County Emergency Preparedness Plan as consistency between these documents is necessary to ensure coordination and collaboration among all government entities in the event of an emergency.

REGIONALISM

In emergency response, working in silos is not an option. Currently there are many inter-governmental relations amongst emergency responders in Bloomington-Normal and McLean County.

The Bloomington Fire Department (BFD) is part of the State-wide Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS). This provides mutual aid with any other agency that is a MABAS member anywhere in the State. MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) in partnership with IEMA (Illinois Emergency Management Agency) have established a statewide, non-discriminatory mutual aid response system for fire, EMS and specialized incident oper-

ational teams. Sharing the effort are representatives from the Office of the State Fire Marshal, Department of Public Health - EMS Division and Illinois Fire Chiefs Association.

BFD also has an agreement with Central Illinois Regional Airport to provide emergency Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) for the airport. Without this service there would not be any commercial flights. Aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) is a special category of firefighting that involves the response, hazard mitigation, evacuation and possible rescue of passengers and crew of an aircraft involved in (typically) an airport ground emergency.

Bloomington Police Department is part of the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS). The Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) was formed in 2002 in response to the September 11th attacks as a joint venture of the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association, and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. This was created to meet the needs of local law enforcement throughout the State of Illinois in matters of mutual aid, emergency response and the combining of resources for public

safety and terrorism prevention and response. As evidenced by this, there is good cooperation among the emergency responders. This plan acknowledges the importance of cooperation and calls for more.

This public safety chapter will outline how the City of Bloomington will ensure the safety and security of its citizens by reducing crime and the fear of crime, providing adequate fire and EMS service and protecting residents in the event of an emergency through a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan.

PS-1. Reduce crime and the fear of crime.

PS-1.1 Maintain adequate staffing to meet the policing needs of the community.

METRICS

- Officer to population ratio at or under 1.66
- Call response time ↓
- Amount of time spent on scene ↓

PS-1.1a Staffing levels researched and needs assessments conducted in preparation for future city growth and changes in crime trends. Align staffing level to calls for service. If calls for service increase over 5,000 in one year, consider an increase in the number of officers. *Bloomington Police Department, ongoing*

PS-1.2 Develop personnel and increase departmental efficiencies; review and research relevant technologies.

METRICS

- # of training hours beyond core requirement ↑
- IT department capacity ↑

PS-1.2a Provide the latest available training and technology to police officers so they may continue to provide great service to the community. Ex: Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), Traffic Preemption and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. *Bloomington Police Department, short*

Neighborhood Watch Groups

Launched in 1972, Neighborhood Watch counts on citizens to organize themselves and work with law enforcement to keep a trained eye and ear on their communities while demonstrating their presence at all times of day and night. Neighborhood Watch works because it reduces opportunities for crime to occur; it doesn't rely on altering or changing the criminal's behavior or motivation. There are currently 45 neighborhood watch groups in the City of Bloomington.



PS-1.3 Enhance community and police partnerships.

METRICS

- # of neighborhood watch groups ↑
- Crime ↓
- # of outreach meetings and events, and participation at those meetings ↑
- # dollars received in grants by Bloomington Police Department ↑

PARTNER AGENCIES

Neighborhood watch groups, Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club

PS-1.3a BPD continues to participate in community programs and committees. *Bloomington Police Department, ongoing*

PS-1.3b Chief of Police continues to host bi-monthly citizen meetings to build a dialogue and strengthen relationships within the community. *Bloomington Police Department, ongoing*

PS-1.3c Assist and support outside agencies that manage grants or initiatives aimed at reducing crime and disorder in Bloomington. *Bloomington Police Department, medium*

PS-1.3d Explore grant opportunities to advance the mission of BPD. *Bloomington Police Department, medium*

PS-1.3e Continue partnerships with the neighborhood watch groups through active communication. *Bloomington Police Department, ongoing*

Bloomington Police Department Programs

- Youth Intervention Specialist
- Recovery Court
- Coffee With a Cop
- Community Presentations (ID theft, drug prevention presentations, etc.)
- Block Parties
- Community Events (Bike Rodeos, etc.)
- Presentations/Tours for Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, School Groups
- Neighborhood Watch
- Crime Detection Network
- Staff Traffic Advisory Council (STAC) Explorers Program
- YouthBuild Partnership
- Minority and Police Partnerships (MAPP)
- Buckle Buddy
- Financial Institutions Security Administration (FISA)
- Focus Meetings
- Citizens Academy
- Community Forums: Breaking Barriers, etc.
- Not In Our Town (NIOT)
- Neighborhood Walks



Coffee with a Cop

PS-1.4 Improve the physical environment to enhance public safety.

METRICS

- Crime ↓
- Crime in public spaces ↓
- CPTED Program instituted
- BPD involvement in development review process

PS-1.4a The BPD will continue to coordinate with the City's Community Development Department (formerly PACE). Use the nuisance abatement programs as part of the Problem Oriented Policing model. Neighborhood Focus Teams will work with code enforcement officers to address property conditions at repeat calls for service locations as well as blighted neighborhoods throughout the City, as staffing levels permit. *Bloomington Police Department, medium*

PS-1.4b Work with the community development department to establish a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) program. *Bloomington Community Development, medium*

PS-1.4c The police department will continue to be involved in the development review process. *City of Bloomington, Bloomington Police Department, short*

PARTNER AGENCIES

City of Bloomington, City of Bloomington Community Development Department, neighborhood watch groups

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

is defined as a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts by affecting the built, social and administrative environment.

CPTED programs have law enforcement officers, architects, city planners, landscape and interior designers, neighborhood organizations and resident volunteers on the team to design and maintain a physical environment that positively influences human behavior.

The CPTED theory is based on four principles: natural access control, natural surveillance, territoriality, and maintenance. For example, creating vibrant urban centers, well-used parks and walkable neighborhoods puts more "eyes on the street," making these areas safer. Fostering neighborhood pride in residential areas and encouraging pedestrian activity on the streets and in public areas create a more active and cohesive community with safety benefits as well. These kinds of activities could increase the perception of safety and act as a crime deterrent.



Large windows promote casual supervision of sidewalk

Porches and sidewalk encourage interaction between neighbors

Paving and architectural treatments define public and private zones

Good pedestrian-scaled lighting on street

Low landscaping and fences define property lines without creating hiding places

PS-1.5 Develop strategies to address high crime areas.

PS-1.5a Crime Intelligence and Analysis Unit (CIAU) and Command Staff will analyze geographic regions of the City to identify locations with a high density of criminal incident reports and high priority types of crimes. Multi-point crime analysis techniques will be utilized to identify, map, and resolve community problems. *Bloomington Police Department, ongoing*

PS-1.5b Expand the use of security cameras, prioritizing high crime areas. *Bloomington Police Department, short*

PS-1.5c Continue to engage neighbors and community groups to address safety and security issues in the high crime areas. *Bloomington Police Department, medium*

PS-1.5d Expand community awareness on roles, responsibilities and limitations of Bloomington Police Department. *Bloomington Police Department, ongoing*

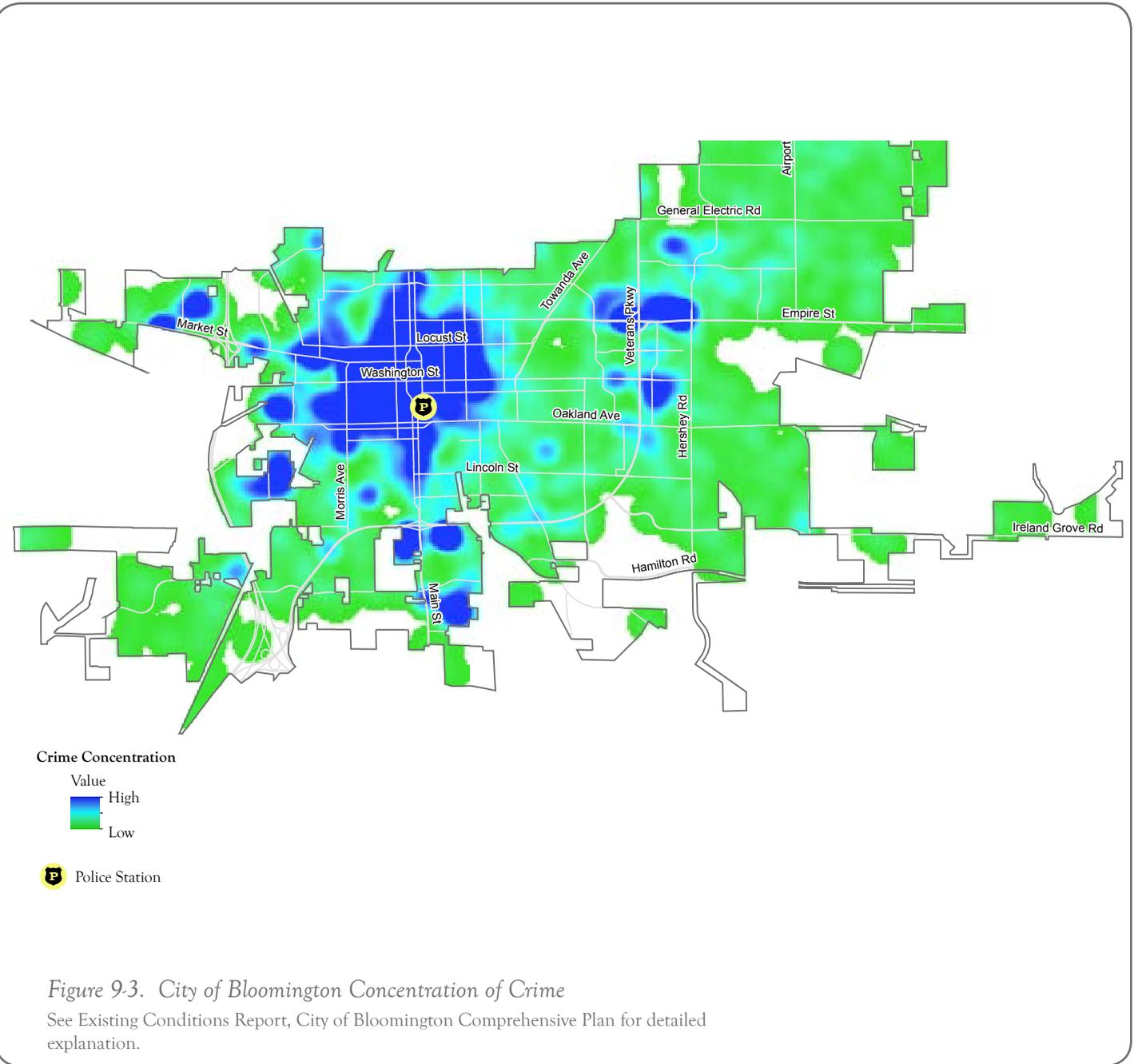
PS-1.5e Explore opportunities to offer internships/college credit to college students and use them as a resource to create education materials and campaigns consistent with BPD strategies and initiatives. *Bloomington Police Department, medium*

METRICS

- Crime ↓
- # of security cameras throughout the City ↑
- # of neighborhood watch groups ↑
- # of outreach events and programs with the public ↑

PARTNER AGENCIES

YMCA, neighborhood watch groups, neighborhood organizations, local colleges and universities



PS-2. Plan and provide for fire and emergency facilities adequate to protect health, life, safety, livelihood and property for current and future citizenry and businesses in the City.

PS-2.1 Establish a six minute response time for at least 90% of Fire and EMS calls.

PS-2.1a Continue to include the characteristics of emergency vehicles in the design and implementation of any new construction or roadway improvements. *Bloomington Fire Department, ongoing*

METRICS

- % of calls responded to within 6 minutes ↑ - Goal a minimum of 90%
- UHU of all EMS vehicles at all times - Goal 0.30 or under
- ISO Rating - stay where it is (2) or 1
- Engine company at Station 3
- # of upgraded fire engines ↑
- # of commercial occupancies that connect to the City fire alarm monitoring service ↑

PS-2.1b Installation of emergency preemption on all traffic signal devices on the major thoroughfares as identified within a valid and reliable traffic count analysis. *Bloomington Fire Department & Bloomington Police Department, medium*

PS-2.1c Add another ambulance company into service staffed with two firefighter/paramedics, and when an ambulance company is placed into service, consider the reduction of service areas for each in-service ambulance company with the objectives of reduction of travel times and an Ambulance Unit Hour Utilization that does not exceed the UHU of .30. *Bloomington Fire Department, long*

PS-2.1d Reevaluation of fire station locations. *Bloomington Fire Department, ongoing*

PS-2.1e Education to the public through community outreach and programming. *Bloomington Fire Department, short*

PS-2.1f Monitor on a monthly basis the established performance measurement criteria standards, response time standards and related performance measurement criteria for both fire and EMS response times. *Bloomington Fire Department, ongoing*

PS-2.1g Monitor on a quarterly basis company station and availability, thereby creating benchmark performance standards to support vehicle and personnel distributions for the entire response area. *Bloomington Fire Department, ongoing*

PARTNER AGENCIES

City of Bloomington, Bloomington Police Department, City of Bloomington Community Development Department

PS-2.1h Investigate placing/creating an engine company at Station Three to ensure the northeast quadrant has adequate coverage. *Bloomington Fire Department, medium*

PS-2.1i Upgrade existing ELS engines to ALS engines and truck companies to help support the growing demand for emergency and medical services, which would shorten the time between the call for assistance and patient care. *Bloomington Fire Department, medium*

PS-2.1j Conduct business case development to research cost of adding an additional fire station. Determine what other services or “nice to haves” could be reduced or eliminated to enable the “have to have” safety response time. *Bloomington Fire Department, ongoing*

PS-2.1k Adopt building code amendments that require commercial occupancies to connect with the City fire alarm monitoring service. *Bloomington Fire Department, ongoing*

Unit Hour Utilization During a 24-Hour Shift (One Week Sampling)									
Station	Unit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Average
Hdqts	Engine 1	.13	.14	.04	.06	.08	.02	.06	.08
	Engine 5	.02	.15	.06	.04	.07	.02	.03	.06
	3N16	.49	.23	.21	.33	.51	.31	.44	.36
Station #2	Engine 2	.15	.06	.00	.04	.07	.00	.03	.05
	3N53	.10	.16	.13	.30	.20	.07	.13	.16
	M3	.03	.04	.10	.00	.18	.12	.06	.08
Station #3	Truck #3	.15	.14	.02	.00	.09	.07	.13	.09
	3N102	.23	.10	.31	.00	.16	.14	.17	.16
Station #4	Truck #4	.20	.19	.03	.08	.15	.00	.02	.10
	3N51	.14	.27	.15	.12	.24	.23	.15	.19
Station #6	Engine #6	.19	.02	.00	.00	.03	.00	.02	.04

Table 9-1. Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)
Source: Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Report

Bloomington Fire Department Programs

- The Bloomington Area Career Center uses fire department facilities and firefighters to train the students in their fire science program.
- The Fire Department precepts most of the paramedic students from Heartland Community College and any other paramedic or basic EMT class.
- The Department also participates in school fire drills for schools in the City limits.
- Teaches CPR to various businesses in the community
- Provide fire extinguisher training at no cost to most of the schools and nursing homes as well as other businesses in the community.
- The Bloomington Fire Department responds with four Advanced Life Support ALS ambulances on a daily basis. These ambulances have two paramedics assigned to them; paramedics are the highest trained emergency medical responder on the Department.
- Provide fire safety training to schools and other groups.
- The Department also responds with one ALS Chase vehicle. This is a non-transport response vehicle with one paramedic onboard. This vehicle is used to supplement the ambulance medics or to provide a field upgrade when our chase vehicle responds to assist communities that have a lower level of service.
- The Department also has one Intermediate Life Support Engine Company that is assigned to the far east station #6. This unit responds to calls in their area to provide a high level of care until the transport ambulance can arrive and transport the patient. All other units are Basic Life Support, BLS response vehicles. These vehicles also provide a quick response to the patient and then provide care until the paramedics arrive.



BFD EMS 1 Non Transport Chase Vehicle



BFD Engine 2 ILS Engine



BFD Medic 4 Transport ALS Ambulance

PS-3. A comprehensive emergency preparedness plan.

PS-3.1 Ensure the safety of Bloomington’s residents in an emergency situation.

METRICS

- Updated emergency preparedness plan
- # City staff/departments trained in emergency response ↑

PS-3.1a Update the City’s emergency preparedness plan. *City of Bloomington, medium*

PS-3.1b Conduct necessary training with City staff for emergency response. *City of Bloomington, short*

PS-3.1c Explore an internship as an inexpensive way to manage the research and recommendation that could be presented to the city council. The plan would need to address different contingencies as needs will differ (for example, physical devastation from tornado versus pandemic with widespread contagion and needs for medical care). *City of Bloomington & local universities, medium*

PARTNER AGENCIES

Bloomington Fire Department, Bloomington Police Department, McLean County, Local colleges and universities

PS-3.2 Integrate the City’s emergency preparedness plan with the County’s emergency preparedness plan.

METRICS

- Integrated City/County Emergency Plan

PS-3.2a Continue to participate in the region-wide discussions. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

PS-3.2b Integrate with McLean County and State of Illinois Emergency Preparedness Plans. *City of Bloomington, medium*

PARTNER AGENCIES

McLean County, McLean County EMA

PS-4 Intergovernmental Cooperation

PS-4.1 Enhance existing intergovernmental cooperation across all public services.

METRICS

- Creation of JELC Committee

PS-4.1a Inform the protocols to all involved. *City of Bloomington, short*

PS-4.1b Review all mutual aid agreements for police and fire with neighboring emergency service organizations on a yearly basis. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

PS-4.1c Explore the possibility of creating a joint emergency liaison committee (JELC) between City of Bloomington, Town of Normal and the County for better integration of public safety services. *City of Bloomington, medium*

PARTNER AGENCIES

Town of Normal, McLean County

PS-4.1d Advocate at the state and national levels for legislations affecting public safety. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

Existing Programs and Opportunities for the Future

- **Dispatch:** Town of Normal and McLean County currently use the McLean County Emergency Telephone Communications (METCOM) for dispatch of fire, EMS and police and sheriff. Normal Fire and the Sheriff's Department operate on the Starcom 21 Radio System. Bloomington Fire Department recently transitioned into the Starcom 21 Digital Emergency Radio System for its dispatch to provide better radio coverage and improve the communications with Town of Normal fire department. Each of Bloomington's units, have MDT's as well as GPS location Devices that enable tracking of the vehicles and allow the Bloomington Dispatch Center to dispatch the nearest Fire or EMS unit. Normal Fire is adding this feature to its units as well and in the future this may allow the two agencies to provide more efficient services to both communities.
- The dispatchers currently use a priority dispatch system that standardizes the way calls are handled, such as Alpha level for lower priority calls, to Delta or Omega level for higher priority calls. A Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) interface between METCOM and the City could also enhance the dispatch of the closest units between Bloomington and Normal in the future and allow automatic aid to improve response times.
- **EMA:** The McLean County Area Emergency Management Agency serves to coordinate relief in the event of a disaster in McLean County. The agency currently has a staff of 30 which includes an executive staff, command staff, field operations division, and search and rescue division.

