

# 11. FUTURE GROWTH & LAND USE PLAN

---



The land use plan directs the implementation of the goals and objectives in the comprehensive plan. Specifically, the plan takes the goals expressed for many aspects of the City's future (Chapters 4 through 10) and assigns them a physical place in the community and a place in time as anticipated growth occurs. The land use plan includes the uses represented in built areas or established neighborhoods, and indicates areas that require renewed attention, revitalization and new investment. It also illustrates uses and development types in the current developed area that will evolve over the life of the plan. Considering land surrounding Bloomington which might in future become part of the City, the land use plan indicates uses and development scenarios that best implement the preferred future composition of the City as described in the comprehensive plan goals and objectives.

As is true of the comprehensive plan itself, the land use plan is advisory in nature, but provides guidelines for City staff, the Bloomington Planning Commission and the City Council in considering and approving development proposals, as well as changes to the

City's infrastructure and facilities which the City itself initiates. The comprehensive plan is not intended to give detailed instructions for the specific use of every parcel of land in or added to Bloomington over the next twenty years. That function is fulfilled by the City ordinances and policies, aligned with the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan, administered by City staff and decided by the Planning Commission, Zoning Board and the Council.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the plan forecasts a slower rate of population growth over the next five to ten years. In the Existing Conditions Report it was shown that a majority of the projected population growth could be housed within the current City limits. However, the land use plan illustrates the allocation of far more land for development than expected population and employment growth will demand. This is done to provide a range of options to satisfy future needs and retain some flexibility in uncertain future conditions. This approach also provides broader location choices for specific proposals that are consistent with the comprehensive plan, while reducing the potential for land

speculation.

### HISTORY OF LAND USE AND STREET PATTERNS

Bloomington's historical growth and development created patterns of land use that are still with us. Examining the evolution of the City's land use not only shows how the City grew but how we can plan for future neighborhoods and anticipate the effect of new land uses not yet present in Bloomington.

Bloomington's development began with 60 acres of land used to create the core of the new city, including a site for the McLean County courthouse, which established Bloomington as the county seat. In its early growth, Bloomington maintained a traditional city plan common to many towns and cities throughout the Midwest. Streets were arranged in a rectilinear grid oriented to the compass using the surveying standards established in the 18th century for the Northwest Territories. This urban design was (and remains) efficient for its users and simple to construct and navigate for any type of travel. Pedestrians, riders or users of wheeled vehicles could find their way easily. The arrival of the rail-

roads introduced a new component to the city's pattern, altering it by drawing a diagonal line through the street grid.

As Bloomington moved into the twentieth century, variations in the pattern of development were introduced, shifting from the typical grid to include wide boulevards and occasional curved streets. The development of Whites Place and Clinton Boulevard were examples of this new style of neighborhood. The rectilinear street pattern and

the more expansive style were both in evidence well into the twentieth century. Longer block lengths and less regular access made travel less direct.

In the optimistic postwar boom period and through to the opening decade of the 21st century, Bloomington experienced sustained growth in population and area, most notably in the closing decades of the period. Houses built during these years grew larger. In the 1940s the typical single-family house had

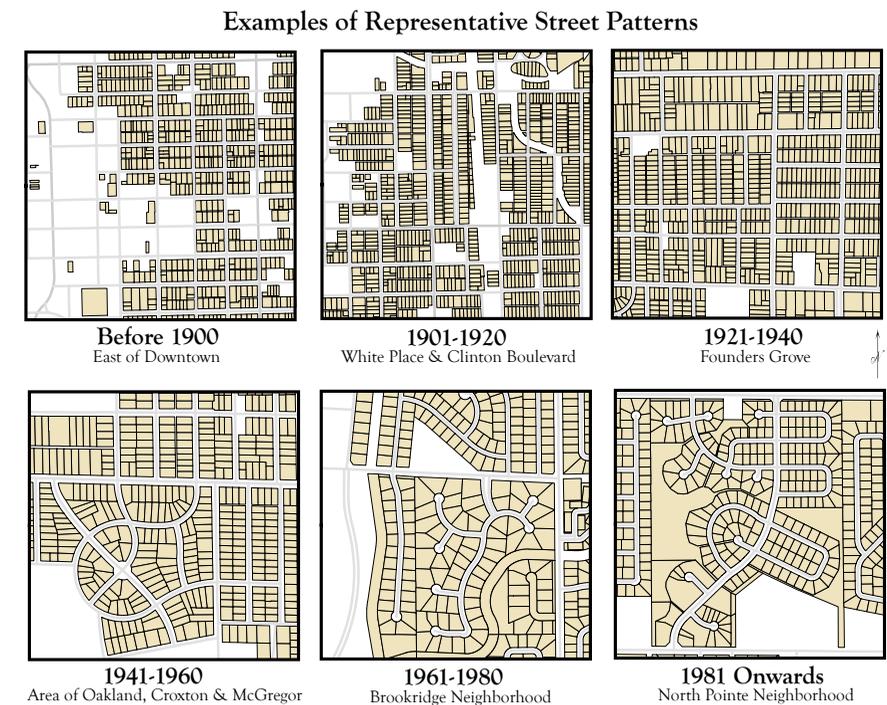


Figure 11-1. Examples of Representative Street Patterns

less than 2,000 square feet of space. Often the standard was 1,500-1,750 square feet. In the building boom from 1960 to 2005, the size of single-family homes steadily increased, with houses well over 2,000 square feet being routine. In newer neighborhoods, square footage of 3,000 square feet or more became the norm.

Lot size did not expand at the rate of house size, but neighborhood design did change. Neighborhoods were accessed by a central collector street with smaller streets connected only to that collector, many cul-de-sacs, and few connections to the larger street network. Residents thus have longer trips to and from home. Recently the City has required that subdivision design allow for better connectivity. This style of subdivision for residential use remains the primary form of housing development in Bloomington and the most commonly available style of housing.

### CORE VALUES

The Bring It On, Bloomington! outreach that received over 2,000 responses formed the critical framework and helped set clear priorities for Bloomington's future growth and development. These

include valuing the following with respect to land use:

#### **Bloomington's small town feel with big city amenities:**

- Supporting preservation of established neighborhoods, prioritized over development of new areas, to keep Bloomington's neighborhoods vital, connected and affordable.

#### **Dynamic neighborhoods:**

- Supporting development carried out equitably throughout Bloomington and providing a range of housing choices for people of all ages and income levels;
- Development centered on the educational, cultural and historic resources contributing to a high quality of life;
- Dissolving the physical, economic and social divide between the East and West Sides.

#### **Solid infrastructure:**

- Supporting compact development patterns and development contiguous to Bloomington's existing developed area, reducing infrastructure burdens;
- Redevelopment in areas with available infrastructure;

- Use of existing resources and infrastructure over building new;
- Immediate investment in the upkeep of current assets;
- Careful and thoughtful consideration of expansion;
- Evaluation of ongoing costs and benefits.

#### **Healthy Community:**

- Supporting policies promoting use of existing City resources and infrastructure over new development to fully leverage municipal investments already made;
- A small footprint that will foster multi-modal transportation and protect the natural environment to maximize connectivity between neighborhoods.

These core values and preferences inform the land use plan.

### LAND USE MAPS

This section presents the future land use categories and the existing and future land use maps. The Future Land Use Map for the existing built areas is defined slightly differently than the emerging or future areas.

The land use map is a graphical representation of the pri-

orities and policies expressed in the comprehensive plan. Like all maps, it is inherently symbolic. The map is not intended as a prediction regarding individual properties but should instead be read at the block or neighborhood scale. Also, it is important to remember the map shows land use designations across a span of time. A specific land use category may not be implemented until well into the twenty-year span of the plan horizon. As the comprehensive plan is updated at regular intervals, changing conditions or events may prompt reconsideration of some land use designations.

Land use categories shown in the current developed area of the City generally reflect either existing use in established areas likely to retain that use through the plan horizon, or evolving uses in areas where revitalization or redevelopment is anticipated, or where adjacent infill development may prompt use changes. Land has been allocated for development or redevelopment as shown in the land use map.

#### *Managing the Existing Built Environment*

The use of Bloomington's existing development resources, of compact development patterns, and

expansion only in areas contiguous to the City are clear mandates of the comprehensive plan. The land use plan implements this core guidance by focusing on developing infill and redevelopment within the City's current boundaries. Infill and redevelopment opportunities should be the highest priority for development activity, along with the build-out of areas already platted but not yet completed. These include underutilized land or properties, undeveloped areas, and areas that require redevelopment to satisfy existing or planned uses. Some of these designated areas should be further studied. Smaller target area plans should be prepared and adopted before development proposals are approved to ensure the proposals are consistent with the goals of comprehensive plan and integrate well with their surrounding neighborhoods.

A new feature in this plan is the designation of certain existing development as **mixed use areas**. In some instances this designation reflects facts on the ground, as sections of the City already boast a combination of residential, commercial and corporate uses. The principal example of this designation is the Downtown Bloomington

District. Extensive evaluation of its future as a complete neighborhood with a wide array of attractive amenities, it is considered as an important area for economic development. Other areas designated for mixed use result from shifts in neighborhood character over time, or locations near employment centers or major transportation corridors.

The land use plan map illustrates development corridors along major streets that offer strong potential for mixed use and commercial development or redevelopment. These include the mixed use Downtown District, West Market Street to Avalon Way, Towanda Avenue, East Empire from Towanda Avenue to Towanda-Barnes Road and Veterans' Parkway.

As with redevelopment projects, proposals along these corridors should be carefully evaluated to ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan. Since corridor development takes advantage of transportation facilities, proposals should be reviewed to identify any transportation conflicts they may trigger, and to facilitate access through alternative transportation, particularly public transit.

#### *Land Use Designation in Existing Urban Areas*

The generalized land use patterns and their locations throughout the city show appropriate land uses for the future, not necessarily the uses in place today. However, in most cases, the current land use is often identified as the appropriate future land use in the existing urban areas.

**Residential land uses** include all residence types, except those located in the Mixed Use designation. Residential use includes any household or designated group, residing in single-family, multifamily or manufactured housing. Established residential neighborhoods have generally been categorized by their current density. It should be noted that density in older residential neighborhoods is generally greater than in suburban-style subdivisions. This category does not include dormitory residences, which are included in the Institutional/Infrastructure designation.

- **Low Densities** (under 8 units per acre) represented with light yellow

- **Medium Densities** (8 to 20 units per acre) represented with tan
- **High Densities** (>20 units per acre) represented with bright yellow
- **Special Residential Activities** (retirement communities, assisted living and similar residential uses) represented with pebbled tan

**Mixed land use**, represented with brown, designates areas where multiple uses share spaces, including individual buildings, blocks or districts. These areas can include residential, institutional and commercial uses, the latter including retail, services, offices and other businesses. Not all mixed use areas will include all the possible uses. Because different uses often generate activity at different time of day, multiple land use types located together in mixed use areas to allow shared use of resources, such as parking.

**Commercial land uses** include business-related uses targeting both small- and large-scale market areas, and includes health care providers of all types at scales smaller than regional health institutions.

- **Neighborhood Commercial** - Businesses expected to draw customers from their immediate surrounding area are located in Neighborhood Commercial areas. These may include small office uses and is represented with red.
- **Regional Commercial** - House businesses attracting customers or employees from throughout the community, or from elsewhere in the region. Regional Commercial is represented with medium red.

An important aspect of identifying these areas is the level of transportation and service access required. Neighborhood scale business should be able to operate without creating congestion or hazards on the streets and parking locations within the neighborhood. Regional Commercial locations require sufficient access for the volume of employees and customers expected to visit in the regular course of business. Given the concentration of people using these locations, they must be accessible to utilities and public services including emergency response services.

**Employment Center land use** includes large offices or office complexes or industrial or manufacturing uses that are destinations for many employees. These areas are represented in purple. Employment Centers serve larger corporate and industrial operations. This category describes corporate campuses or industrial complexes that have substantial land area and service access at the highest levels. Large employment centers are oriented to access for employees rather than the general public.

Industrial and manufacturing land use encompasses facilities which either transport, warehouse or dispose of raw materials, components, finished products or solid waste. Industrial operations may involve raw and manufactured materials processing, including agricultural materials, as well as management, transportation or storage. Manufacturing may include the management of raw materials or components, product assembly and product distribution, transportation and warehousing. This category also includes solid waste management, processing, recycling, transportation and disposal. It may include management of solid waste sourced from other municipalities.

These activities require substantial infrastructure support to function. Operation of these facilities generally involves local impacts including noise, potential exposure to potentially injurious materials or by-products and transportation congestion. Consequently, industrial and manufacturing areas should be located away from residential areas and other land uses vulnerable to the anticipated impacts.

**Institutional land use**, represented with blue, includes both public and private institutional entities. The City of Bloomington itself is the primary public institution, and its facilities are given this designation. This includes City facilities such as fire and emergency response not in mixed use areas. It also includes City facilities used to provide utility services such as sanitary and storm sewers and water. Public institutions not necessarily connected to the City include school properties, County and BNWRD properties and public utilities such as telecommunications, gas, and electric and other power generation and distribution facilities. Certain entertainment or sports venues not in mixed use areas may also be regarded as institutional uses. Private institu-

tions include non-public schools and higher education institutions, hospitals and large regional medical centers, cultural institutions, museums and cemeteries and associated facilities.

**Travel/Movement land use**, represented in gray, encompasses all land uses associated with transportation in any form or mode, for the movement of people as well as goods and materials. This area includes the Central Illinois Regional Airport, railroad and street or highway right-of-way, as well as facilities for public transportation, public and private bus services and other transportation facilities. Also included are on-street facilities oriented towards person-powered transportation modes, for pedestrian or bicycling use, including bike lanes, sharrows and similar installations.

**Recreational land use**, represented with light green, includes areas used for participatory sports and recreational activities open to people, such as parks, playgrounds, outdoor and indoor facilities for specific sports and seasonal recreational areas. This category includes the Constitution Trail and

similar facilities. Although the trail is a transportation facility and link between transportation modes, this designation recognizes its function as a multipurpose recreational venue. Venues designed primarily for spectators of sports are included in the institutional land use category.

**Conservation land use**, represented with dark green, is characterized by areas set aside for environmental preservation or restricted from development due to land characteristics. This includes land within designated flood zones, riparian buffers, areas designed for environmental mitigation, nature preserves, conservation easements, wet bottom detention ponds and other protected areas. Conservation areas designated for the protection of endangered species may also be included in this category. These areas may provide incidental access for people.

### **Land Use Designations and Guidance for Emerging Areas**

While infill should be the City's first priority, there will be development pressure in the new growth areas. The land use map defines new development areas based on their proximity to the

incorporated area, level of access to City services and other service connections and transportation access. For these areas, the map illustrates six types of new or potential development:

- *New Neighborhoods*
- *Conservation Neighborhoods*
- *Commercial Activity Centers*
- *Employment Centers*
- *Civic*
- *Future Development Areas*

The land use plan designates more land for development than is expected to be needed during the time span of the plan. This includes land at the margins of the growth area that currently does not have any urban uses and does not have access to core City services or sufficient transportation access to support development. While these areas offer potential for development, they are unlikely to be ripe for development activity or supported by municipal services in the near term.

### **Neighborhoods**

New neighborhoods should be complete with safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life. This includes a

variety of housing options, grocery stores and other commercial services, quality public schools, public open spaces and recreational facilities, affordable active transportation options and civic amenities. An important element of a complete neighborhood is that it is built at a walkable and bikeable human scale, and meets the needs of people of all ages and abilities.

Residential neighborhoods may be designated as conservation development where the neighborhood is designed to function within areas with environmentally sensitive features without triggering damage to those features. Other residential neighborhoods may employ traditional neighborhood design or transit-oriented development patterns reminiscent of the older neighborhoods in the City core. In rare instances, the City may annex pre-existing residential development that is currently located outside the current incorporated area but is surrounded by the City.

Specific neighborhood design approaches, chosen through consideration of their location and the features of the land are characterized by:

**Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)** – This choice uses the features of residential neighborhoods developed before 1940. TND neighborhoods are built on a well-connected street network. TND features walkable dimensions, neighborhood centers and public spaces. Housing types, sizes and styles may vary within the neighborhood. Bloomington has enacted a Traditional Neighborhood District ordinance establishing requirements and design standards for this type of development in the City. Older neighborhoods adjoining Downtown demonstrate these characteristics.

**Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** – TOD neighborhoods share the characteristics of traditional neighborhoods but focus on neighborhood access to transit services. Transit Oriented Development in Bloomington will require close coordination with Connect Transit to ensure the location is suited to this development type, that the neighborhood is configured to allow transit access, and provides the level of transit service needed.

**Conservation Neighborhoods** - Conservation neighborhoods are used in areas with environmentally sensitive features. The conservation subdivision is designed to fit structures within portions of the site less susceptible to damage while protecting environmentally sensitive site features and areas. The protected areas become an open space amenity for the subdivision. Current examples in Bloomington include Tipton Trails and The Grove subdivisions.

Though the characteristics of each neighborhood vary, there are common elements that make every neighborhood complete. The following neighborhood principles will guide the neighborhood development in emerging areas to achieve the high-quality urban environments.

- **Excellence in Design:** Pursue innovative and progressive design. Design should balance competing priorities and meet multiple needs without compromising quality.
- **Context:** Respect and respond to an area's immediate context. Responsive, place-based design helps create distinctive places

that are compatible with surroundings, ecologically sustainable and inclusive of all people.

- **Identity:** Develop and maintain inviting and engaging public spaces that encourage social interaction between different types of people. Create a welcoming civic atmosphere.
- **Choice:** Offer a range of housing choices with varying sizes, densities, style and age. Housing types, though different, should be designed to relate to each other to create vibrant and cohesive streetscapes.
- **Definition:** Define the neighborhoods with a center and an edge to keep them from sprawling. Civic gathering spaces such as parks and schools, transit stops and higher density housing are typically located at the center forming a neighborhood activity center, while commercial land uses, major thoroughfares and bodies of water like lakes and streams form the edge.
- **Size:** Can vary by design. Size ranges between 250 to 400 acres and should be no more than ¼-mile radius from the center.
- **Connectivity:** Have a walkable layout with streets that connect

in a logical manner throughout the neighborhood, to adjacent developments and other key destinations for seamless transitions. Maintain a connected street network that accommodates the needs of users of all modes of transportation and connects to all land uses.

- **Sustainability:** Use best practices in sustainability to reduce impacts on the environment. Facilitate naturalized storm water management. Recreational areas could be co-located with natural features while respecting and enhancing natural features such as topography, creeks, wetlands and native plant species.
- **Commercial Activity Centers:** Locations where commercial, entertainment, service and other activities come together. They are major commercial areas with a variety of large format retailers, restaurants, offices and services. They are located along arterial streets near interstate interchanges and draw local residents as well as users from surrounding communities. They are primarily commercial in nature, though they may include a mix of employment and residential uses as well. Though

they are auto oriented, these centers should be designed to accommodate transit, bicycles and pedestrians with integrated transit and pedestrian facilities. The principles listed below will guide the development of these centers.

### **New Commercial Activity Centers**

Commercial activity centers use strategic locations between residential neighborhoods or other uses. Commercial activity centers feature good transportation access and neighborhood scale commercial hubs for grocery stores, drug stores, retail, and service business to serve the surroundings areas. Activity centers located on or at intersections of high-volume streets may include businesses expected to draw from larger areas or from regional traffic. Larger activity centers may serve large sections of the city as well as a regional customer base.

- **Parking:** Shared between businesses and should adhere to a maximum number of parking spaces, not the minimum. Parking will be located to the side or rear of the building where possible. Expansive parking lots

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGNS

### Typical Suburban Development Pattern

Significant features of suburban style development area are

- Major thoroughfares bound the residential neighborhood area and residential lots are not allowed to front directly onto these roadways.
- Residential lots back to the major thoroughfares, and cul-de-sacs are used to provide access to residences from interior streets rather than directly from the major roadways.
- Collector streets collect traffic from the cul-de-sac's and are not continuous, which discourages cut-through traffic.
- Elementary schools often do not serve just one but several neighborhoods, as well as some neighborhoods from surrounding communities, and hence, can produce higher volumes of traffic within the neighborhood. This creates the need to place schools closer to the major thoroughfares surrounding the neighborhood.

Illustration above shows a typical example of this type of development in Bloomington. Though this design allows for safe subdivisions with proper setbacks and desired density levels for single-family development in the City, given the distance traveled, it is challenging for multimodal access in this arrangement.



*A Local Example: Northpointe Subdivision*

### Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND)

The main characteristics of a traditional neighborhood design (TND) are

- Grid street layout, tree-lined streets and alleys.
- Approximately 1/4th or 1/3rd of a mile from the center to the edge, a size that is considered to be optimal for a neighborhood that can be walked within 5 to 10 minutes at an easy pace.
- Pedestrian-oriented environment with landscape elements.
- Higher densities than suburban



*A Local Example: Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood*

developments with structures that have lesser street setbacks so as to create a more distinctive street edge and a more definitive border between public and private spaces.

- A variety of housing types, jobs, shopping, services, public squares, mixed-use neighborhood centers and public facilities inter-mixed within the neighborhood, all within close proximity.
- A network of interconnecting streets and alleys that are smaller than conventional streets.
- A neighborhood center area that serves as a focal point of the neighborhood and contains retail, commercial, civic and public services that are arranged around a central element (i.e. public square).

### Cluster Design or Conservation Oriented Development

The most important aspect of cluster design in subdivisions is the conservation of open space. This concept is used to provide open space or to preserve environmentally sensitive areas. It helps to create rural character in neighborhoods. A cluster design creates large pockets of planned open space by requiring mandatory clustering of development in certain areas. This method of neighborhood development utilizes increased development densities in some areas of the subdivision by decreasing development densities in other areas. Permanent open space is thereby set aside, and the overall density of the subdivision remains the same. Tools such as conservation easements, transfer of development rights (TDR); purchase of development rights (PDR) and density bonuses may be used to help create a clustered type neighborhood. This design can be used in conjunction with traditional neighborhood design or suburban style street pattern. While there are no conservation oriented developments in Bloomington, Tipton Trails and The Grove subdivisions are close examples that incorporate some environmental features such as prairie patches and bio swales (see aerial imagery of Tipton Trail above).



*There are no true conservation developments in Bloomington. The examples that come close are Tipton Trails and The Grove subdivisions that incorporate some environmental features*

*While there are no conservation oriented developments in Bloomington, Tipton Trails and The Grove subdivisions are close examples that incorporate some environmental features such as prairie patches and bio swales (see aerial imagery of Tipton Trail above).*

should be divided into smaller parking areas with landscaped islands and buildings. These islands are designed to absorb storm water and sized to accommodate mature shade trees and provide bicycle parking.

- **Plaza:** Building should be organized around a public plaza or open space to foster civic interaction.
- **Connectivity:** Internal circulation routes should be public streets. Logical sidewalk connections should be located between buildings and through parking lots. Layout should encourage walking between businesses.
- **Multimodal access:** Include transit facilities and a transit hub where demand shows that it is needed. Ensure sidewalk/bike path connections between buildings on campus and through parking lots to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas. Ensure a variety of housing options within a mile.
- **Sustainability:** Use best practices to reduce impacts on environmentally sensitive areas. Facilitate naturalized stormwater management.
- **Mixed Use:** Accommodate a

mix of uses within buildings to utilize the existing infrastructure efficiently. Retail and residential uses can share parking facilities as peak hours do not substantially overlap.

**Employment Centers:** Employment centers are concentrated areas of office or industrial uses that are a destination for residents and employees from the community and the surrounding area. Employment centers should include outdoor relaxation space for employees as well as transit and pedestrian connections to nearby neighborhoods and commercial areas. Buildings should be sited and designed to be compatible with each other. Because many residents also work in these areas, residential uses are an important component used to balance the location of jobs and housing.

Employment centers are larger parcels of land intended for office or corporate campus uses and intended to address concerns that economic development efforts for Bloomington-Normal are hampered by a lack of such sites ready for development by in-migrating companies expected to employ a significant number of workers. As

Bloomington’s historical experience has shown, accommodating the access needed for such facilities requires that they be located on major transportation corridors, but also with alternative transportation facilities, transit access and nearby residential districts, to reduce the need to commute by car.

Large-scale employment sites are also economic development tools expected to aid in recruitment of new businesses bringing substantial new employment opportunity to Bloomington. The following principles will guide the development of the employment centers:

- **Context:** Respect and respond to an area’s immediate context. When they are surrounded by neighborhoods, special consideration should be given to lighting, parking and traffic flow concerns.
- **Parking:** Divide expansive parking lots into smaller parking areas with landscaped islands and buildings. These islands will be designed to absorb storm water and sized to accommodate mature shade trees and provide bicycle parking.
- **Multimodal access:** Include

transit facilities and a transit hub where demand shows that it is needed. Ensure sidewalk/bike path connections between buildings on campus and through parking lots to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas. Ensure variety of housing options within a mile.

- **Healthy Living:** Provide active open spaces including pedestrian and bike paths on campus to promote healthy lifestyle for the employees.
- **Sustainability:** Use best prac-

tices to reduce impacts on the environmentally sensitive areas. Facilitate naturalized storm water management and make it as an amenity.

**Future Use Development Areas:**

Land areas not adjacent to Bloomington’s incorporated area or which do not have access to critical City services. Given the projections for growth in population and housing demand discussed in Chapter 2, it is unlikely these areas will be needed for development within the time horizon of this comprehensive plan.

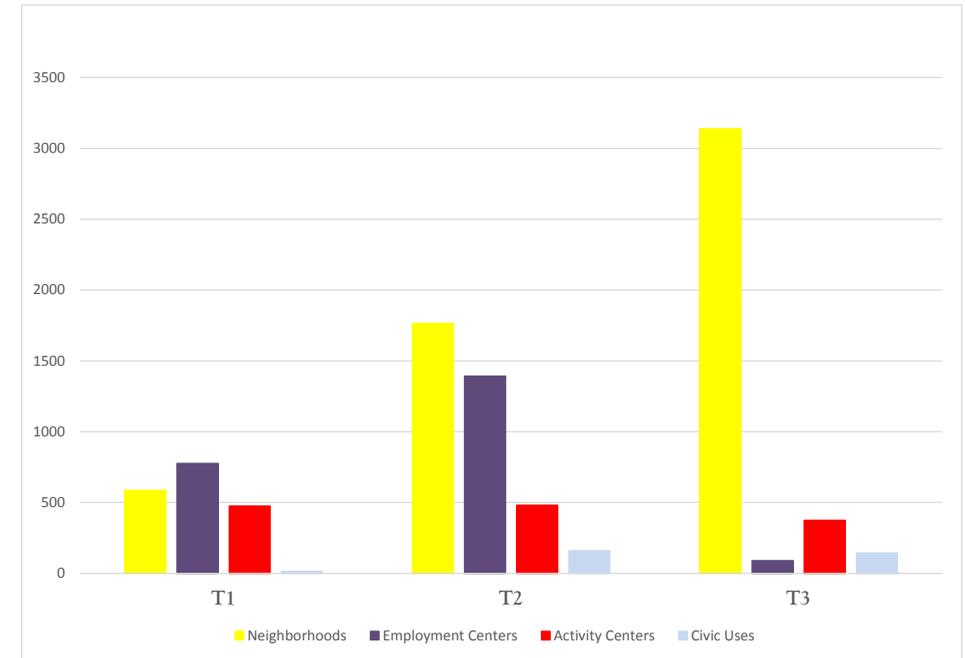
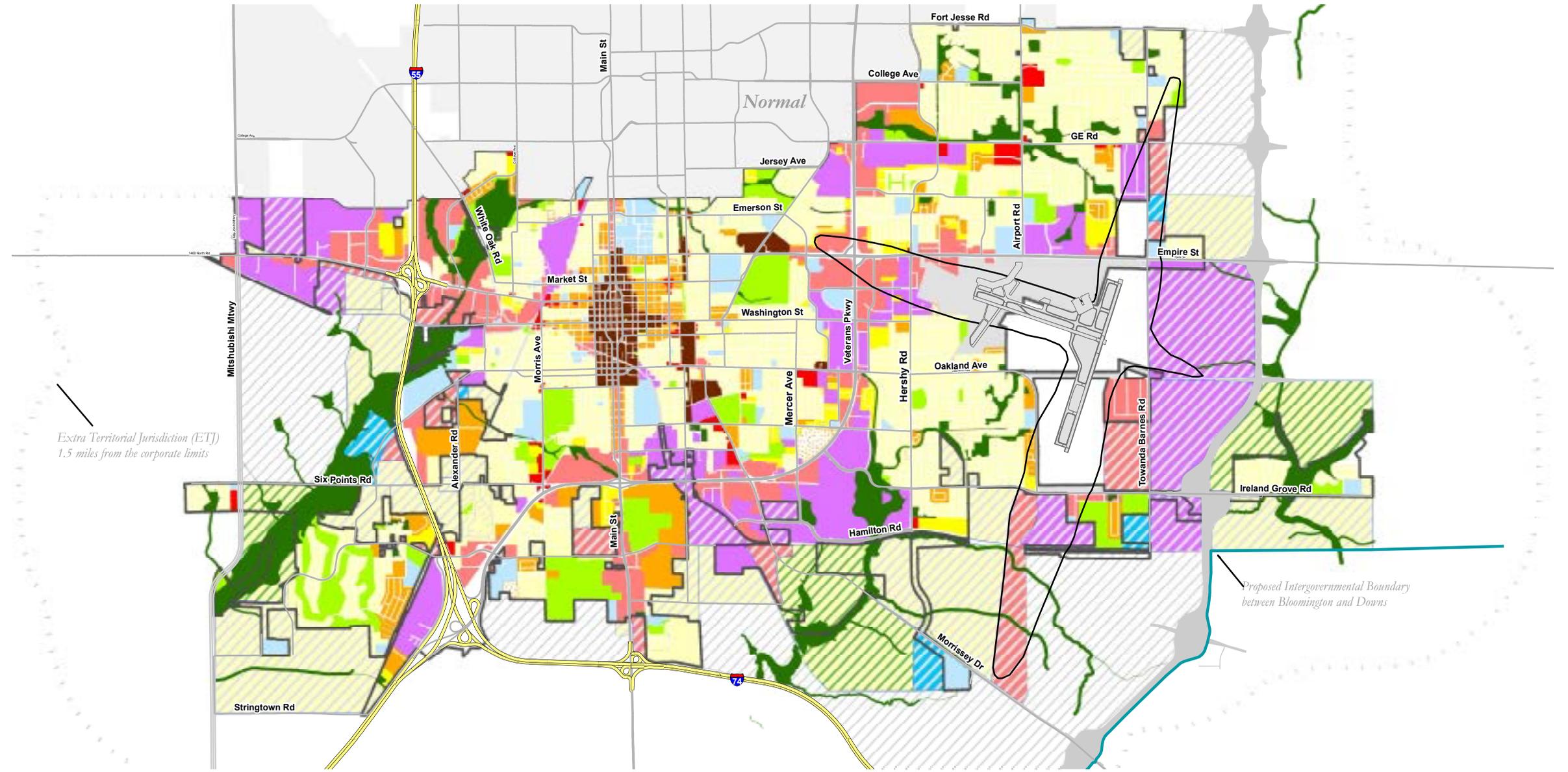


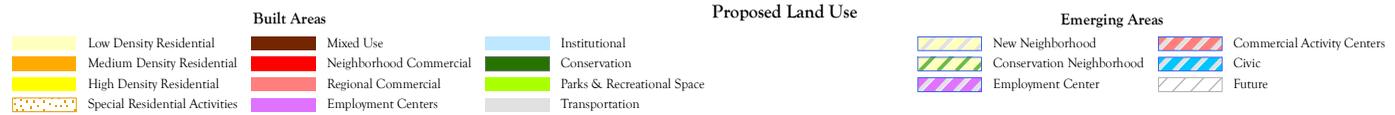
Figure 11-2. Land Use Acreage by Tiers



Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)  
1.5 miles from the corporate limits

Proposed Intergovernmental Boundary  
between Bloomington and Downs

Figure 11-3  
Future Land Use



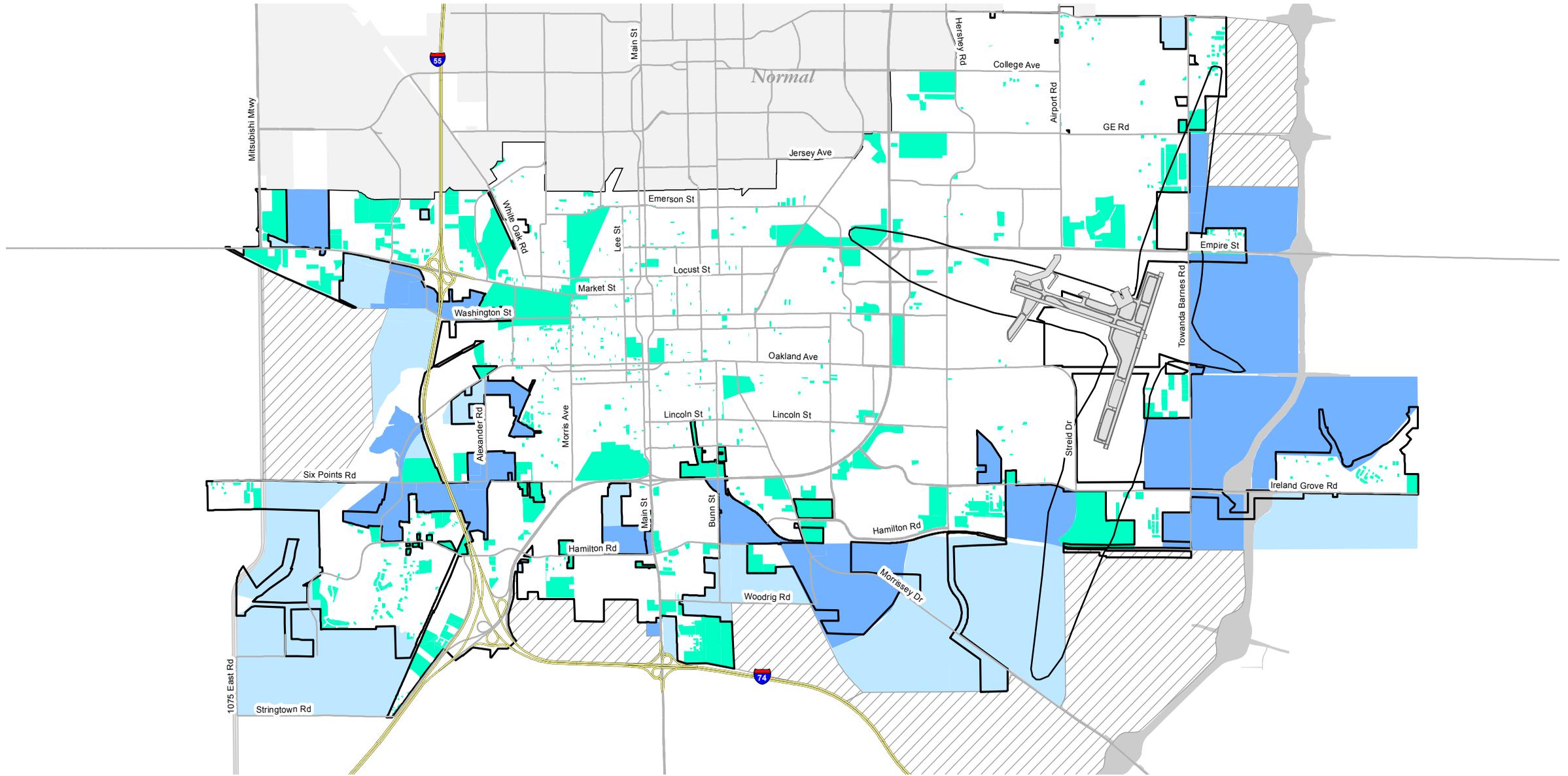
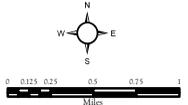


Figure 11.4  
Land Use Priorities

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p> Tier 1<br/>Vacant and under-utilized land for infill development or redevelopment within the City. Unincorporated land surrounded by incorporated areas. Platted areas for future development of existing subdivisions but not built out to completion.</p> | <p> Tier 2<br/>Land immediately adjacent to the City's incorporated area, and with access to all City services.</p> | <p> Tier 3<br/>Land adjacent to incorporated area but with limited access City services.</p> | <p> Future Use<br/>Land not contiguous to incorporated area and without access to City services.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|



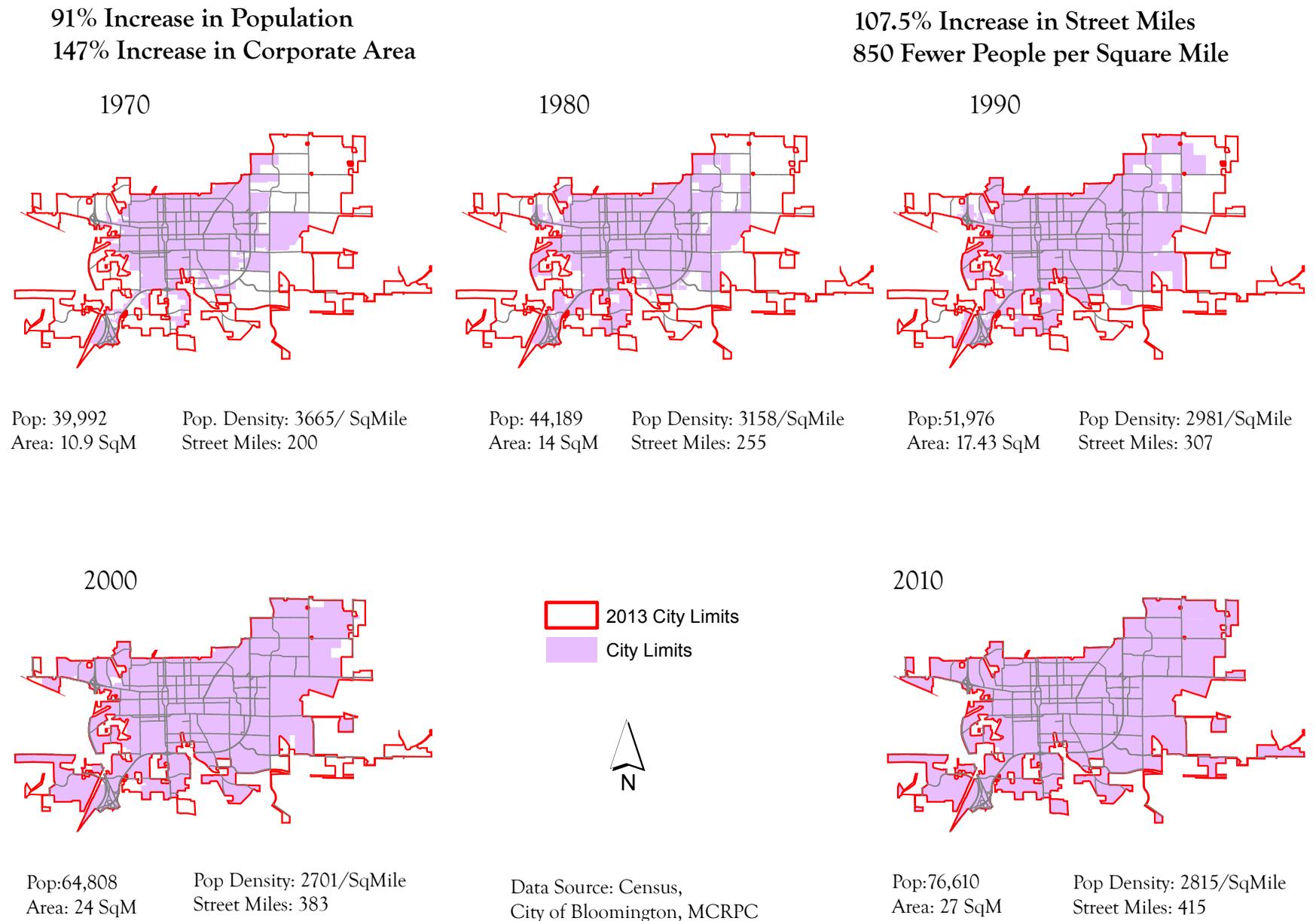
These areas should be revisited in the next 5-year plan update.

### DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The land use plan prioritizes development in tiers, to achieve the core values. These include

- Tier 1: Includes vacant and underutilized land for infill development or redevelopment within the City, unincorporated land surrounded by incorporated areas, and areas platted for future development of existing subdivisions but not yet built out to completion. Tier 1 totals approximately three square miles, which is roughly equivalent to the City's annexations during the period from 2000 to 2010. This area total does not include redevelopment areas designated as Tier 1, as these areas may currently be occupied. Currently vacant land not identified on Figure 11-4 or land that might become vacant within the incorporated limits of Bloomington also falls under Tier 1.
- Tier 2: Land immediately adjacent to the City's

Figure 11-5 Corporate Boundary Changes, 1970-2010



incorporated area, and with access to all City services. Land designated as Tier 2 totals approximately six square miles, similar to the amount of land annexed in Bloomington between 1990 and 2000, a period of rapid growth and development in the City.

- Tier 3: Land adjacent to incorporated area but with limited City services. Tier 3 provides approximately six additional square miles of land for development, should it be needed if growth accelerates beyond currently anticipated levels. Development in these areas would require additional infrastructure investment.
- Future Use: Land not contiguous to incorporated area and/or without access to critical City services.

Overall, and without considering the land designated for future growth, the priority development tiers provide more available land over the next twenty years than was annexed for development from 1990 through 2010, a twenty-year period which saw substantial

growth in Bloomington.

The process of defining and applying priorities considers the long-range nature of the comprehensive plan and the extensive City resources required to seek out and support appropriate new development activity. This approach helps achieve compact development, leverage Bloomington’s investment in city services and keep growth contiguous to the City.

It is important to note that a major development proposal, such as the location of a large employer that represents a substantial change in circumstances for the City with respect to employment growth, would be likely to trigger a re-examination of development priorities and a possible amendment of the comprehensive plan.

Figure 11-4 illustrates the breakdown of land use categories by tiers. A careful observation of that chart reveals that a higher percentage of land area has been allocated for employment centers in Tiers 1 and 2. This is an acknowledgment that the City of Bloomington is well supplied with residential land use to accommodate the current population. Future residential growth will follow the employment growth.

**Site Location:** West of Interstate 74 between Market Street and Six Points Road.

**Purpose** of this study was to compare and contrast two types of development patterns

- Suburban Development pattern that is encouraged by the current regulations
- Development pattern that is a combination of Traditional Neighborhood Design and Conservation Design

**Findings**

- The Traditional Neighborhood Design coupled with Conservation design resulted in a healthy, cost effective development.
- City’s current codes and regulations do not encourage, but in fact make it very difficult or in some instances prohibit, Traditional Neighborhood and Conservation Design.
- Continue to use the intergovernmental development review process to encourage smart growth in the community.

Summary of the Development Impact Study for McLean County adopted in 2005. Complete study can be accessed at [www.mcplan.org](http://www.mcplan.org)

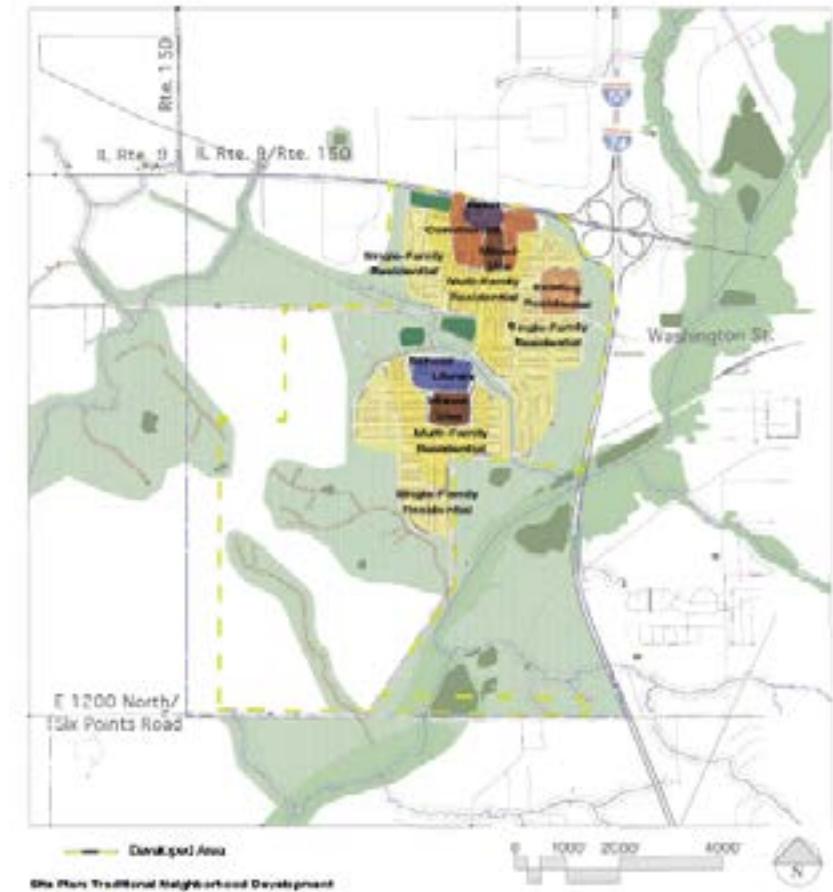


Figure 11-6. Subarea plan showing desired uses, densities, transportation connections, community facilities and the type of development.

## SUB AREA PLANNING

While the act of subdividing a piece of real estate and placing the physical features is predominantly a function of the private sector, the design can be heavily influenced by the regulations placed by the public sector. Cities have and should continue to use this power to create well-designed neighborhoods that provide a setting for residents to develop a strong sense of belonging, which is promoted by their interactions with one another.

Currently in Bloomington, residential neighborhood development is predominantly driven by the private sector. Developers are typically required to take some elements identified in long range plans such as major transportation corridors and flood plains into consideration during the subdivision design process. However, a number of other elements, as outlined in the guidance for new neighborhoods, need to be coordinated to achieve cohesive neighborhoods that provide good rate of return on public investment. This comprehensive plan encourages the City to create and adopt sub area plans in the designated emerging areas. Sub area plans are like neighborhood plans for the unincorporated

areas. They identify more precise locations for various densities of housing, commercial areas, parks, schools, regional detention ponds, fire stations, and other community facilities. The City should include all the stakeholders while creating these plans. Figure 11-6 is an example of a sub area plan on the west side of Bloomington.

## SUMMARY

Chapters 4-10 of this comprehensive plan document outline a wide array of goals for Bloomington's future, objectives to be pursued and met to secure that future, and numerous suggested actionable items to accomplish and achieve the objectives. Throughout these steps, the plan identifies departments or agencies with the primary responsibility for realizing the goals. The plan also identifies potential partners in this effort. In many instances, entities other than the City are assigned to specialized or technical objectives in the plan.

### *Responsibility and Accountability*

The responsibility for the implementation of the comprehensive plan and its land use plan rests with the City of Bloomington, its

administration and staff, led by the Community Development Department, the Bloomington Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, and ultimately with the Bloomington City Council. The policies and directives established in the plan and the tasks that flow from them are designed for orderly distribution of the work of implementation. Performance metrics are recommended to establish benchmarks for implementation and to evaluate success in achieving the goals and objectives. The evaluation process should acknowledge that re-examination of this plan should take place five years from its adoption.

Throughout the plan, reflecting the many areas of overlapping concern and initiative, goals and objectives are cross-referenced or combined as a guide for full implementation and an acknowledgment of the layered complexities of Bloomington's present day and future.

### *Staff Committees*

As noted in the goals and objectives, an initial step in carrying out the comprehensive plan is the establishment of staff committees from the relevant administration

and department positions to review the plan elements and allocate tasks and ongoing evaluation to staff best able to carry them out. This is similar to the work of existing staff committees that manage the application of City policy to management and operational issues. Some tasks described in the plan may already be performed by staff, which offers guidance as to how other tasks should be assigned. Ideally, ongoing tasks discussed in the plan should become a part of the work programs of City administrators and staff for eventual review by the Planning Commission and the City Council. A critical task is the annual or biannual compilation and publication of a progress report on the implementation of the comprehensive plan. In addition to keeping Bloomington's officials apprised and informing the public about the work in progress, these reports will provide important information for the next update of the comprehensive plan.

The Staff Committee will have the benefit of data and task tracking tools created during the planning process. The comprehensive plan goals, objectives and actionable items are compiled in a tracking spreadsheet. Each identi-

fied actionable item also includes, to the extent possible:

- Designation of lead departments or agencies for the action;
- Identification of partner agencies;
- Anticipated timeline for action;
- Metrics to measure completion, and;
- Identification of possible funding sources for the task.

The Staff Committee may use this tool as the basis for allocating tasks among City departments, tracking progress and any revisions needed for action items, establishing databases to support the creation of periodic progress reports and incorporating information received from the public, and facilitating analysis of outcomes of implementation. This compilation also supports the work of revamping City ordinances and regulations to align with the comprehensive plan discussed below.

### *Alignment of City Code with Comprehensive Plan*

One category of implementation tasks noted throughout the plan is the revamping of Bloomington codes, ordinances, regulations and policies to reflect the content

of the comprehensive plan. Completing this task will satisfy some goals and objectives and clarify the City's intent with respect to development policy and its administration. It will also streamline the work of the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board and the City Council in evaluating and deciding development matters through the lens of the comprehensive plan. During the revision of the regulatory tools, which may take some time to complete, the City's consideration of development can continue with elements of the existing codes and ordinances. Examples of existing tools are listed below.

- The Gridley, Allin & Prickett form-based code, which provides for neighborhood-scale objectives in the plan; this code also reflects the understanding that these regulations can and should be constructed for adaptations in specific neighborhood conditions and circumstances;
- The Traditional Neighborhood District ordinance, which provides specific guidance for the implementation of the traditional and transit oriented neighborhood development

proposed in the plan;

- The Planned Unit Development code, which provides flexibility for implementation for eligible projects, facilitating plan objectives;
- The B3 Central Business District zoning as applied mixed use development in Downtown Bloomington, which may be amended to explicitly accommodate residential uses in the district, and;
- The Historic Preservation Commission and Code, which can be employed to implement the many objectives relating to Bloomington's historic central neighborhoods and resources.

These tools can be employed immediately, as the City of Bloomington begins its implementation of the comprehensive plan.