

A photograph of a park playground, heavily tinted with a green color. In the foreground, a metal park bench sits on a grassy area. Behind it, a large, complex play structure with multiple slides and platforms is visible. The background is filled with trees. Overlaid on the center of the image is the text "LAND USE & IMPLEMENTATION" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

LAND USE & IMPLEMENTATION

The land use plan takes the goals expressed for many aspects of the Town's future and assigns them a physical place in the community.

The purpose of the new approach to land use planning expounded in this document is to promote growth and development that is consistent with the Vision and core values. By using an intuitive place type analysis structured around neighborhoods, centers, and corridors, and focusing as much on existing places as areas for future expansion, the Planning Framework provides a flexible model for place-based planning and encourages development that is **complete, connected, and compact**.

Other chapters in the Planning Framework section explain the Place Type classification scheme and provide policy recommendations for each place type. This chapter brings these pieces together with the goals established in the Elements and shows their implications for land use in the Town of Normal.

The land use plan directs the implementation of the goals of the *Comprehensive Plan*. Specifically, it takes the goals expressed for many aspects of the Town's future, as laid out in the Elements and assigns them a physical place in the community and a place in time as anticipated growth occurs. It provides land use guidelines for different types of places; maps the Town's neighborhoods, centers, and corridors; and defines growth prioritization criteria..

As is true of the *Comprehensive Plan* itself, the land use plan is advisory in nature, providing principles for Town staff, boards and commissions, and the Town Council to follow in considering and approving development proposals, as well as changes to the Town's infrastructure and facilities which the Town itself initiates. It is not intended to give detailed instructions for the specific use of every parcel of land in or added to Normal over the next twenty years. That function is fulfilled by the Town ordinances and policies, identified in Table FL 2.

Land Use Guidelines

Each of the Place Types identified in the Planning Framework—six Neighborhood types, four Center types, and three Corridor types—has common threads that hold it together and favor certain types of uses. Together Map FL 1 and Table FL1 shows the boundaries each Neighborhood or Center type and provides “rules of thumb” about the kinds of uses that should be considered allowed, encouraged, discouraged, and context-sensitive within that type. Corridors are excluded because a single corridor can vary widely in form and function as it passes through different locations. The scope of this planning process did not allow for detailed land use analysis along the corridors. Existing corridor plans such as the Main Street Study should be consulted for specific guidance along Main Street. The *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the need for additional corridor planning, such as along Veterans Parkway, for detailed land use guidance.

Old Neighborhoods and Early Suburban Neighborhoods: Because these neighborhoods are already established, care should be taken to only allow and encourage uses that complement existing assets. This is especially true in the Old Neighborhoods due to their historic qualities. As these low-density neighborhoods, popular with seniors and families with children, continue to be desirable due to their proximity to Uptown Normal and other core Centers, the Town should encourage careful, incremental increases in residential density in areas adjacent to Centers without disrupting these communities. Higher-density residential and innovative housing models such as cottages and mixed-use development, as well as neighborhood-oriented commercial development and community facilities such as churches, should be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they are consistent with the neighborhood character while furthering the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

New Suburban/Future Neighborhoods: For existing, New Suburban Neighborhoods, the recommendations are much the same as for the Old and Early Suburban Neighborhoods. However, many of them are still unfinished, with a great deal of vacant land that holds potential to avoid, or at least mitigate, some of the mistakes that were made in these areas.

For those areas that are still a blank canvas, Future Neighborhoods, the Town should encourage a diverse mix of residential types and densities, innovative housing models, and integration with community facilities. Where appropriate, it should also allow neighborhood-oriented commercial development to make these and the surrounding New Suburban Neighborhoods more complete.

Neighborhood Centers: Neighborhood centers can only thrive when surrounded by sufficient residential densities to support them. For that reason, the Town should encourage high-density residential development in and around neighborhood centers (or potential neighborhood centers). Because of their close proximity to residential areas, neighborhood centers should not include larger-scale commercial and office spaces, large institutional spaces, or industrial uses.

Local Centers: While local centers may include and even benefit from some residential uses (particularly apartment complexes and mixed-use developments), their primary purpose is to serve as activity hubs and destinations for the entire community. The Town should encourage the location of civic and medium-scale commercial (larger than in neighborhood centers but smaller than in regional centers) uses in local centers. Larger commercial, office, institutional, and even (in certain contexts) light industrial uses may also be appropriate, depending on the specific center.

Regional Centers: Regional centers should be dedicated for regional-scale commercial/office, institutional, and heavier industrial land uses. Some degree of high-density residential development may be permitted where appropriate.

TABLE FL1: Land Use Guidelines

	Low Residential Density	Medium Residential Density	High Residential Density	Innovative Housing Models	Community Facilities	Neighborhood Oriented Commercial	Regional Commercial & Office	Institutional	Industrial
Neighborhoods									
Old	Allow	Encourage	Discourage	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
Early Suburban (ES)	Allow	Encourage	Discourage	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
New Suburban/ Future	Allow	Encourage	Discourage	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
Future neighborhoods	Allow	Encourage	Discourage	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
UIN 1	Discourage	Allow	Encourage	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
UIN 2	Allow	Discourage	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
Centers									
Neighborhood Centers	Discourage	Allow	Encourage	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
Local Centers	Discourage	Allow	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
Regional Centers	Discourage	Allow	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
Town Center	Discourage	Encourage	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive	Context-Sensitive
<div> <div>Allow</div> <div>Encourage</div> <div>Discourage</div> <div>Context-Sensitive</div> </div>									

Definitions

Allow: Permit by right, but prioritize encouraged uses

Encourage: Permit by right, and incentivize/promote where necessary

Discourage: Do not allow barring extraordinary extenuating circumstances

Context-sensitive: Allow/encourage if complementary to surrounding uses

Low Density: Less than 6 dwelling unit dwelling units per acre (DU/acre). Typically include large single-family detached.

Medium Density: 6 to 35 DU/acre. Small single-family detached, single-family attached (duplexes, row-houses, condominiums). The upper residential density limit is as suggested by the missingmiddlehousing.com.

High Density: 20 to 80 DU/acre. Multifamily apartment complexes.

Innovative Housing Models: These include (but are not limited to) mixed-use development with residential, live/work, cottage units, supportive housing, assisted living, ADU's, or other housing models beyond standard single- and multifamily housing.

Community Facilities: Parks, plazas, schools, religious institutions, fire stations and other facilities that foster community interactions.

Neighborhood Oriented Commercial: Corner grocers, cafes, restaurants, daycare facilities, banks, dry cleaners, bakeries, small offices, etc.

Regional Commercial/Office: Large shopping centers, large retail establishments, multiplex movie theaters, office complexes, and other destinations intended to draw customers from beyond the community.

Institutional: Major institutional uses such as educational institutions, Town offices, and large medical facilities (hospitals, medical office clusters, etc.).

Industrial: Light industrial uses such as light manufacturing, food processing and distribution, intense commercial service use, and storage facilities are more appropriate for local centers. Heavy industrial such as large-scale manufacturing facilities are more appropriate for regional centers.

TABLE FL2: Tools for Implementation

Legal Tools	
Zoning Ordinance	A zoning ordinance controls the use of land and is an effective means of supplementing a community's land use plan. Zoning decisions can be more defensible if based on the plan.
Overlay Districts	Overlay districts prescribe requirements that are in addition to or supercede those of the zoning ordinance for certain areas or uses. These districts are intended to create, preserve, or enhance selected features such as architectural or historic features.
Subdivision Regulations	These regulations require coordination of new street and other physical improvements to land with an existing or planned street system and provide standards for a lot layout and street design. Subdivision regulations also require adequate street rights of way and alignment of collector streets in conformance with the transportation plan. They also require drainage facilities and easements where necessary and the installation of utilities to serve new areas of development. Also included in subdivision ordinances may be provisions for planned unit developments and for dedication for community facilities.
Codes	Codes provide sound standards for the construction, use, and occupancy of buildings.
Financial Tools	
Capital Improvement Programs	The capital improvements program includes a list of capital projects on a priority basis scheduled for a defined period of time (usually about six years). These programs usually include an estimate of the costs and funding sources for each project.
Federal/State Aid Programs	These programs provide technical and financial assistance for communities to help solve physical, economic and social problems. Competition for these monies is high.
Tax Increment Financing	Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a strategy that allows improvements to be financed by bonds to be retired from revenue-generated from the increase in property taxes that result from the improvements made within the TIF district.
Administrative Tools	
Annexation	This allows for control over outward growth and growth that should not be impeded. Annexation policies should depend on the extent to which the municipality is prepared to extend streets and utilities and other urban services. These policies should be established by what type of capital improvement program is in place. Pre-annexation agreements are standard requirements for zoning approval and utility extension in developing areas of the City.
Intergovernmental Coordination	Improvement programs and land development proposals should be reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. When possible, land development proposals should complement plans of neighboring communities and townships, government taxing bodies, as well as other governmental and non-governmental entities, including the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois Commerce Commission, Illinois State University, Heartland Community College, BroMenn Regional Medical Center, and Parklands Foundation. This helps ensure order and mutual compatibility and efficiency in resource allocations.
Programs for Public Understanding and Support	
Progress Reports	Yearly reports outlining what improvements have been made and are scheduled to be made according to the plan.
Summary Report	Preparation and community-wide distribution of summary reports outlining the important parts of the plan.
Planning Tools	
Target Area Plans	Target area plans identify areas for more detailed planning and capital improvements

Growth Priorities

One of the chief functions of a land use plan is to determine where growth should occur, using a consistent and easily understood set of criteria. Below are the growth prioritization criteria developed for this plan. Map FL2 shows the result of the application of those criteria to developable land in and around the Town of Normal.

Tier 1 (highest priority) includes (a) annexed land, with development/redevelopment potential; (b) unincorporated land surrounded by incorporated areas with access to all Town infrastructure; and (c) vacant and under-utilized sites within the corporate limits, as of plan publication.

- There are approximately 1,600 acres of vacant land (excluding ISU property on Gregory Street) and 800 acres of unincorporated land with access to Town infrastructure. Acreages for redevelopment are not computed.

Tier 2 includes land immediately adjacent to the incorporated area with access to existing Town infrastructure. Developers may still need to invest to develop these areas.

- Approximately 350 acres meet these criteria.

Tier 3 (lowest priority) consists of greenfield sites, not yet annexed but contiguous to the current corporate limits, which cannot be served until at least one major infrastructure system, owned and operated by the Town, is extended.

- Approximately 1,000 acres meet these criteria.

Future (no growth anticipated)—This category includes greenfield sites, not yet annexed nor contiguous to the current corporate limits, where several major infrastructure systems must be extended. No growth is anticipated during the horizon period of this plan.

Notes:

- Land was assigned to the tiers described below based on conditions at time of publication. These assignments are subject to change as development and redevelopment occur. A major development proposal that triggered a substantial change in the economic circumstances of the community would likely prompt a re-examination of growth priorities and possible amendment to the Growth Tiers Map (Map FL 2).
- Growth Tiers are mapped based on the information available in GIS and in consultation with Town staff at the time of this publication. Growth Tier criteria supersede the map, should there be any discrepancy.
- Analysis of historical growth patterns and population projections indicate that there is sufficient land designated for growth. See Table FL 2.

TABLE FL3: Historical Growth Patterns

	Square Miles	Growth in Square Miles	Growth in Acres
1970	7.4		
1980	9.0	1.6	1,024
1990	11.9	2.9	1,856
2000	15.2	3.3	2,112
2010	18.3	3.1	1,984

Implementation

This Plan provides a platform for moving forward. It clearly defines where we are today and where we want to go. It provides policies and actions for each Element and Place Type based on the shared vision and the core values of the community. Now, it is time for us, the Town and all of its partners, to work collaboratively to make the plan a reality. This entails the following general steps:

Prioritize and Act

This long-range plan, with a 20-year horizon period, contains a number of transformational ideas for Normal. Not all can be implemented at once. While the plan makes every effort to prioritize geographies and identify actions that can be quick wins, scarce resources and unforeseen circumstances will inevitably force some level of triage. This plan recommends that the Town staff further identify key projects that can be executed successfully within the next one to five years (prior to the next update cycle). The Town should integrate those projects into its strategic planning, budgeting, and capital improvement planning processes.

Collaborate

The vision and aspirations of this plan are far bigger and deeper than what a single department or even the Town government can accomplish alone. The Town should invite everyone—other public agencies, educational institutions, not-for-profit organizations, private sector, and citizens who participated in shaping this—to be partners in realizing the plan. The quality of place fostered by the plan will be critical to the success of regional economic development efforts like BN Advantage that are currently underway.

Align regulations and incentives

Many of the plan's goals and objectives are future-focused. Inherently, some of these goals conflict with the Town's existing regulations, which are established based on past practices and experiences. Supporting this plan with updated regulations is critical. These regulations must be paired with incentives such as grants, loans, or place-based investments to move the goals forward.

Look to peer cities

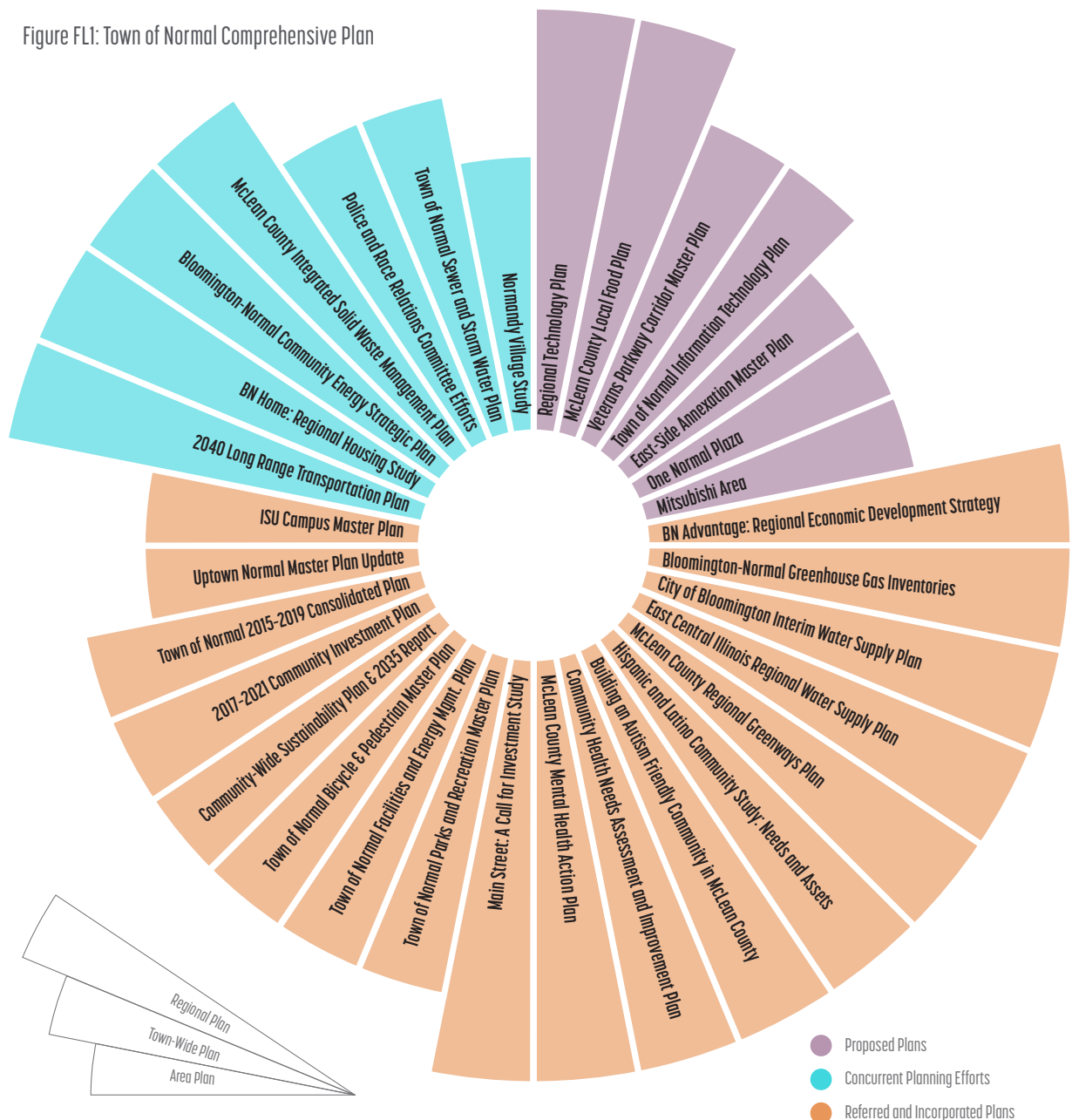
While the Town has set the pace for smart growth for cities its size, there are lessons to be learned from other communities on aspects such as urban sprawl, expanding transportation and housing choices, preserving community character, and using technology to advance as a smart city. As the Town focuses on becoming a complete, connected, and compact community, it can greatly benefit from studying and sharing best practices with peer cities around the nation.

Measure progress and adapt

This plan created a set of easily understandable metrics and tools to measure progress. The Town should use these metrics and tools to review progress on the plan annually to assess the impacts of policies, programs, and projects. The measures and reporting should be highly visible to promote accountability, ideally through an ongoing community report card.

If these tracking procedures do not show the progress intended by the plan, within five years, necessary adjustments should be made accordingly. In that case, the actions, goals, or even the vision of the plan should be revisited. This comprehensive plan was designed and published specifically as a three ring binder to allow for it to be a living, breathing document.

Figure FL1: Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan

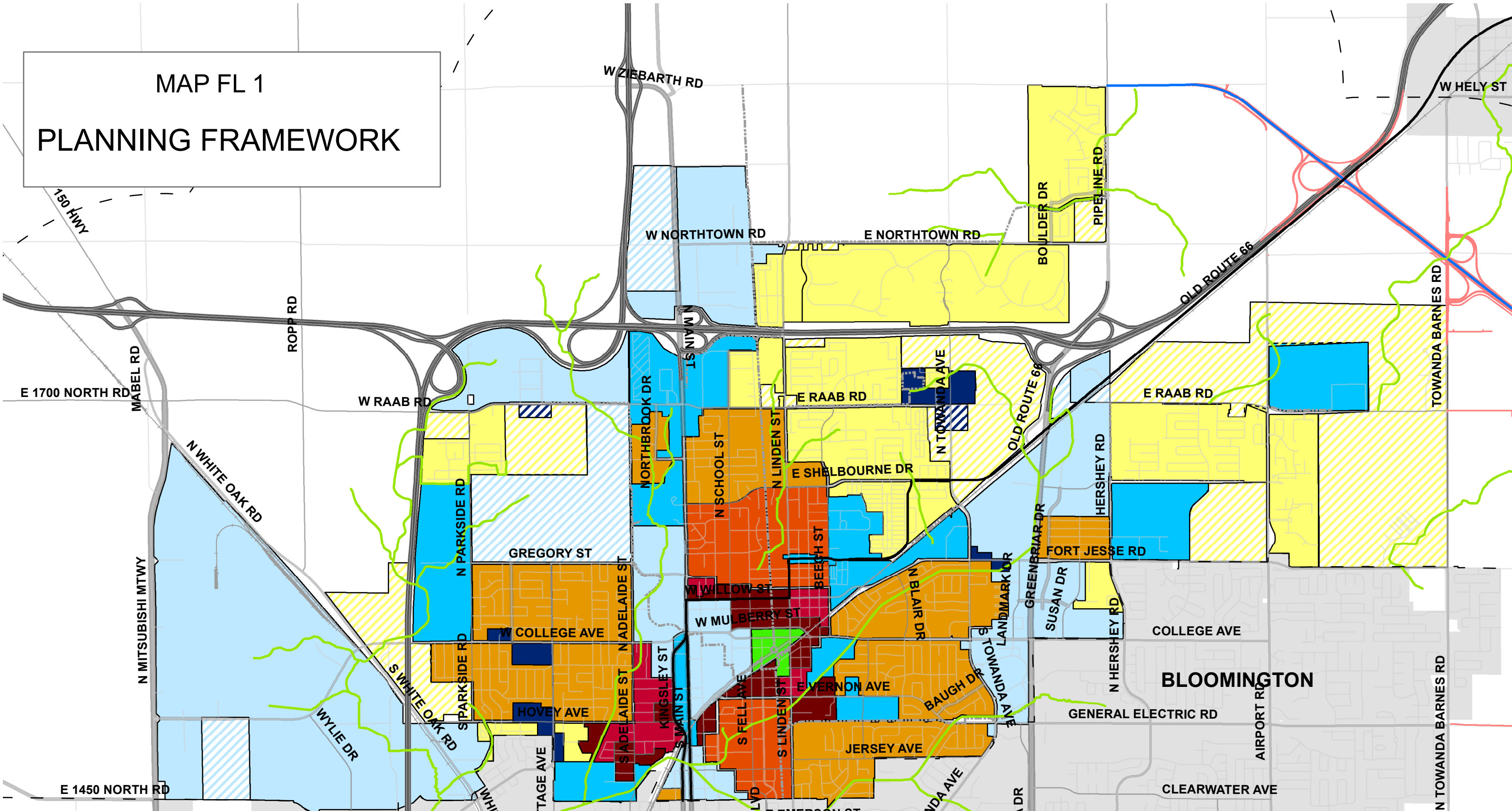


Need for further planning







In the course of developing this report, staff examined many existing plans, programs, and initiatives that have contributed to Normal's quality of place thus far. This plan builds upon those assets but recognizes the need for additional planning in certain subject areas and geographies [See Figure FL1]. The Town can undertake some on its own, like an internal IT Master Plan, or sub-area plans for Neighborhoods and Centers, but it would need to collaborate with many other partners to undertake plans with a more regional focus (e.g., a regional technology plan).

MAP FL 1

PLANNING FRAMEWORK



Neighborhoods




- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|--------------|
|  | Old |  | UIN 2 |
|  | Early Suburban |  | New Suburban |
|  | UIN 1 |  | Future |

Centers

- Neighborhood Town Center
Local Future Neighborhood Center
Regional Future Regional Center

Corridors

- Natural Corridors
— Cultural Corridors
— Transportation Corridors
— Route 66
— Constitution Trail
— Railroad
— Streets

-  Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction
 Proposed Normal/Towanda Boundary Agrmt.
 Planned East Side Highway

MAP FL 2
GROWTH PRIORITIES

