



**AGENDA  
BLOOMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
109 EAST OLIVE STREET  
BLOOMINGTON, IL  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2018 4:00 P.M.**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 4. MINUTES** Review the minutes of the June 27, 2018, regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission.
- 5. REGULAR AGENDA**
  - A.** Presentation by Vasudha Gadhiraaju, Executive Director McLean County Regional Planning Commission on the **Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Plan**, prepared July 2016.
- 6. OLD BUSINESS**
- 7. NEW BUSINESS**
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**

**MINUTES  
BLOOMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2018 4:00 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL  
109 EAST OLIVE STREET  
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. David Stanczak, Ms. Megan Headean, Mr. John Protzman, Mr. Mark Muehleck, Mr. Thomas Kreiger, Ms. Megan McCann, Mr. Tyson Mohr, Mr. Eric Penn, Chairman Justin Boyd

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Kevin Suess

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mr. George Boyle, City Attorney; Ms. Katie Simpson, City Planner; Ms. Izzy Rivera, Assistant City Planner; Mr. Bob Mahrt, Community Development Director; Mr. John Houseal, Houseal Lavigne Associates, Ms. Jackie Wells, Houseal Lavigne Associates.

**CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Boyd called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Ms. Simpson called roll, and a quorum was established with nine members present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Patty Koranda, Treasurer for the Illinois Beekeepers Association, provided comment on the draft beekeeper language in the proposed zoning ordinance. She asked what the goal of the ordinance was and questioned the proposed regulations.

Louis Littell, a beekeeper and member of the Central Illinois Beekeepers Association, stated that he has concerns about the specific regulations proposed for beekeeping. He asked staff to work with his organization to address the proposed concerns.

Bobby Lewis, University of Illinois Extensions Director, offered research and information on beekeeping. She stated her office is a resource. She stressed the importance of pollination.

Robin Vandermay, a Bloomington resident and beekeeper, stated she is concerned about placing restrictions on beekeeping. She stated she has kept bees for five years and has never had a problem with stinging or having bees in the neighborhood. She would like the City to not make it difficult to have bees.

Molly Ward, beekeeper on Bloomington's west side, asked staff to reach out to the beekeepers and address misconceptions about beekeeping.

Karla Lane, E Oakland Ave, spoke in favor of amendments to allow chickens. She stated she has been working to get chickens legalized and she petitioned her neighbors to allow her to raise chickens. She stated her neighbors were supportive and excited. She suggested the proposed ordinance be amended to prohibit roosters because roosters can be noisy and aggressive. She

expressed concerns about only allowing four chickens per lot; she asked about allowances for larger lots. She also spoke in favor of beekeeping.

**MINUTES:** The Commission reviewed the minutes from the May 23, 2018 regular meeting. Mr. Mohr corrected a few scrivener's errors. Mr. Protzman motioned to approve the minutes as corrected; seconded by Ms. Headean, and approved by voice vote, 9-0.

**REGULAR AGENDA:** None.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**City of Bloomington Zoning Ordinance Update:** Chairman Boyd introduced the agenda item and stated this is a continued discussion. Ms. Simpson said that staff appreciated the feedback presented during public comment and that staff will work to address those comments as the board desires. Chairman Boyd introduced Mr. John Houseal.

Mr. Houseal provided a brief background on the process. He stated that the Planning Commission would look at three divisions during this meeting. He started presenting division 10—use provisions. He explained the use provisions are created to provide certainty for uses that are uncommon in a proposed district or uses that require certain treatment, because of the nature of their operations, to help mitigate negative impacts on adjacent uses. Mr. Houseal spoke specifically to the use provisions addressing beekeeping and chickens. He clarified that the proposed ordinance is not designed to prohibit beekeeping and allows apiaries in every district with up to two hives per residential lot. Ms. Simpson added that the apiary and chicken regulations are not currently addressed in the ordinance and that proposed text aims to achieve a few goals identified in the comprehensive plan and related to alternative food production methods and sustainability. Mr. Houseal stated the proposed language is more bee-friendly than the existing code. The proposed language provides standards and requires registration with the state of Illinois. Mr. Houseal proposed that two hives are allowed as of right for residential properties less than one acre in size, and for residential properties an acre or greater, one additional hive would be allowed for each additional half acre with a special use permit. He explains this would create a means for someone to make their case if they desired more than two hives and give the city an opportunity to determine if more hives were appropriate at that location. Mr. Houseal shared his openness to working with the university and beekeeping advocates, but reinforced that Houseal Lavigne Associates have to balance the impact of the zoning ordinance for the people who keep bees as well as the people who do not keep bees, and safeguarding residential uses and homeowners, the principal use of a residential district, from other accessory uses, such as apiaries or chicken coups. Mr. Houseal stated the challenge to a zoning ordinance is making sure that it works for everyone while being consistent everywhere within the city.

Ms. Headean asked the risk of not requiring a special use for additional hives. Mr. Houseal responded that the special use is important for registration, enforcement, determining the amount of hives appropriate for the neighborhood, and making sure that the home retains a residential use rather than an agricultural use because of an abundance of hives. He stated the agricultural districts has less restrictions but the primary function of a residential district is residence—a neighborhood, so other uses that are not that must be balanced against the primary use. A

minimum standard allows the city to determine if anything above the minimum standard is appropriate. Mr. Stanczak asked if a special use is necessary on top of the standards or would the standard be sufficient. Mr. Houseal stated that as a planner, he would say no, he does not feel it is over burdensome to ask the owner to show that the additional hives are appropriate. He reinforced that the onus to prove appropriateness is always applicant and the city must give all deference to the primary use in the district. He stated this is the direction the city is headed.

Mr. Boyd asked if the dangerous warning sign could attract more children rather than deter them. Mr. Houseal stated that they will look at this again at with other codes, but in general, signs may be necessary to raise awareness about something that a person introduces into a neighborhood at a level of intensity that might not exist naturally. Mr. Houseal provided the example of a neighbor who's child may be allergic to bees. He stated the sign informs residents of the presence of hives even when it is not visible. Ms. Simpson added that some neighborhoods could have multiple homes with hives, and the sign would serve to provide awareness to homeowners. Mr. Houseal stated the intent is to raise awareness when and where concentrations may exist that otherwise would not. He reinforced bees are crucial to biodiversity but the city is tasked with providing. Mr. Boyd asked if the twenty feet language was taken from other municipalities. Mr. Houseal stated that twenty feet was the common setback across other municipalities; he does not recommend allowing hives too close to the property line. Ms. Simpson asked if the property owner could apply for a variation to afford relief. Mr. Houseal agreed that in theory they could but explained that it could be difficult to support a variance request like this. He stated the onus of proving hardship required for a variance is with the petitioner, and that mere inconvenience is not hardship. The petitioner could still make reasonable use of their property. Mr. Boyd asked why the reference for 20 feet, since bees can travel further than that. Mr. Houseal stated that they will look at the code again and seek out other codes of other communities. Mr. Boyd asked if he would be able to meet with the Central Illinois Beekeeping Association and get feedback from them since they are the people who work with bees. Ms. Simpson stated staff would reach out to them. Mr. Houseal added the intent of the code is to be equitable for the city not just the interest of one group or persons.

Mr. Boyd suggested discussing chickens. Mr. Houseal stated the code suggests being able to keep chickens. There are requirements that outline where and how they are kept on the lot with enclosures. Communities have had issues with noise, attraction of wild animals, pests and bugs. The code as proposed will allow 2 chickens on a property that has less than an acre, and more than 2 on a property greater than an acre. If someone would like more than 2 chickens they would have to request a variation from the standard. With more size there is more distance from neighbors and larger areas to accommodate a greater amount of chickens. Mr. Houseal stated no roosters will be allowed. Mr. Moore asked to clarify how someone interested in having more chickens would obtain a variance or special use. Ms. Simpson stated a special use would go before the Zoning Board and then before City Council. She added that section B in regards to chickens will read that neither roosters nor chickens for the purpose of slaughter will be permitted by the code. Mr. Moore expressed the variance will be in place to allow those who know how to care for a larger amounts of chickens to be able to do so. Mr. Houseal stated it all depends on the specific of the application to see whether it is appropriate or not to obtain approval. Mr. Boyd asked why chickens are allowed 10 feet from the property line. Mr.

Houseal stated that was an average that was found, however they will review other codes as well. There are more codes that speak to keeping of fowl versus apiaries.

Mr. Houseal began to review the use provision tables. Anything in redline was changed but there are sections that will stay the same including: airports, detention facilities for animals, asphalt plants, bed and breakfast establishments. Mr. Boyd asked why the code references prior to 1950 in the bed and breakfast section. Ms. Simpson stated the date was placed in because of Historic Preservation. Mr. Houseal stated they wanted to avoid the new construction of homes for the use of that type of establishment. Mr. Boyd suggested adding the age of the structure instead of a date of construction. Mr. Houseal stated he would consider that, and the Historic Preservation Commission can decide what language they would like to see in this section as well. Mr. Moore asked what a Community Reception Establishment was and if there were any in town. Mr. Simpson stated that there were, and they were created to compliment bed and breakfast establishments. These establishments include wedding receptions locations such as The Vrooman Mansion. Mr. Moore asked for clarification on the foot candle requirement. Mr. Houseal stated the foot candles determines the intensity of light and illumination. Many of these sections were created for specific situations in Bloomington and were not changed. Mr. Houseal stated if there were additional questions on the Home Occupation section, he added an appropriate home occupation is one that no one knows exists. Regulations are place for employees coming and going or if there are many deliveries coming into the home, or if there are large signs. The primary function of a residential area is residential. There should be no disruption to the character of the residential area. There are some changes but they will not stray away too much from the intent of the original code. Alternative energy sources are solar, wind and geothermal. Geothermal is subgrade and will not impact zoning. The technology can be integrated into residential districts. The language is standard and accommodates a residential, personal or commercial application. Sections in the code that were not changed are those that are working well now. Mr. Houseal stated zoning for wind energy is more complicated for residential areas because there has to be at a certain height to gather the energy needed and even small applications will generate noise. He reviewed various code to extract the most standard language for wind energy. This is a big step forward for the City of Bloomington since the current code is silent on these types of technologies.

Mr. Houseal stated the zoning districts are broken down by sections and each section will now have uses that are permitted and not permitted. Mr. Moore asked if there was a section in the code that outlines the criteria for each use. Mr. Simpson stated the definition section, which the Commission does not have yet, will define the parameters for each uses. Mr. Houseal added that is one of the last chapters and will define everything specifically. Ms. Headean pointed out that the home occupation has a permitted accessory use of roadside stand, however roadside stand is defined differently. Mr. Houseal stated they will review the language again, and make sure that the uses are all defined. Ms. Headean asked about the wireless communications. Mr. Houseal stated they are looking at it and updating the code. The section is governed by the Federal Telecommunication law. Cell tower communication is a necessary infrastructure for the country and cities cannot deny the use. The code can regulate where the cell towers can be placed and how they get permitted. The use provisions is still a draft, if there are more questions or comments they can be submitted to staff.

Chapter 11 is non-conforming uses, these are typically seen as grandfathered into specific areas. This means the structure is legal nonconforming for the use or the structure. The use or the structure was established prior to the zoning being in place. It is legal until it goes away or it is no longer used for a period of 6 months. The structure cannot be changed or expanded. When a structure is illegal, the structure or use was established against the code. This chapter outlines how nonconformities are handled. Every city has nonconforming uses and structures. The zoning districts are being changed in order to bring hundreds of parcels into conformance for the City of Bloomington.

The off street parking and loading chapter outlines general parking standards and amount of parking necessary for specific uses. Parking maximums are now being added to this chapter. Mr. Houseal discussed minimum restrictions and how this will ensure that parking standards are being met. This will also restrict the amount of asphalt that is installed and have more opportunity to install green space or setbacks. Ms. Simpson added addressing storm water is in the Comprehensive Plan. Different ways should be considered for detention such as pavers or different type of landscaping. This is another goal trying to be addressed with the updated section. Shared parking is also addressed in this sections and allows for two business to have the ability to share parking especially in an instance with various types of business and hours. Mr. Houseal stated there is also a revised table that identifies the number of parking spaces required for the different type of uses throughout the city. Mr. Moore added the environmental impacts added to the section are important such as incentivizing bike parking. He asked about the table and asked if the table could be simplified or reduced from the 5 pages. Mr. Houseal stated they did reduce what they could but they would be happy to look at that again. Mr. Boyd mentioned there are no minimum parking in the downtown because of space and walkability, he asked why the university district doesn't have the same restrictions. Mr. Houseal stated the restrictions usually applies only to the downtown, an outcome of history. The downtown buildings can take up to 100 per cent of the lot. There is no space for parking to be able to require it. He stated there have been some restriction imposed in the downtown for loading in other communities. Mr. Boyd asked if a business can make their own judgment on loading why not for parking. Mr. Houseal stated to look at the worst case scenario, if a development takes off and they only plan for 12 spots but in reality needed 80 there will be more burden to the neighborhood. In the downtown the case is different, the destination is the downtown not one specific business. Mr. Boyd added in the spirit of simplification, the University district could come up with their own number of parking based on their use. Mr. Houseal stated he would be hesitant to remove the standards, but will be revisiting the issue. Mr. Simpson stated there are some districts in Bloomington that are only accessible by vehicle, there is no parking on Veteran parkway for example. There are areas where parking is necessary, if there is a need for relief there is the option for a variance. Mr. Boyd asked if the no parking will apply to all of the new downtown districts. Ms. Simpson stated the current code does not require parking for uses in the B-3 district, which is the entire downtown. There will be some areas that will require parking with the new downtown districts. Ms. Simpson stated there are some adaptive reuse situations in the downtown that do not require parking but tenants who live there have vehicles and they will need a place to park. Mr. Houseal stated they will go back and look at the code to try and simplify the table. Mr. Moore stated rather than use a variance as suggested could a special use be requested instead. Mr. Houseal stated a special use would be more difficult because the use is not unique

but the application on the site is. Hardship could be argued for a variance to reduce parking with these structures especially for adaptive reuse and historic properties.

The ordinance is written for the 95 per cent of the community but the other 5 per cent will seek a variance. The code cannot be written for the 5 per cent.

Mr. Boyd asked for clarification on section 12-12 C 7. There is no incentivizing of bike racks if the developer would then need to go back and provide a shelter for the racks if more are added. Mr. Houseal stated the bike racks could be used not only for patrons but for employees who bike to work. He will take a look at the section again. Mr. Boyd asked for clarification on the table for bike racks. Mr. Boyd is understanding the code as saying for every 4 bike racks, a parking stall can be eliminated. Mr. Simpson stated the table outlines that 5 per cent of parking should be bike parking and there will be incentives for that, but parking should still be met.

Mr. Moore asked what the distinction between dwelling unit, dwelling and unit was. Mr., Houseal stated they should all be the same definition but they will go back and tighten up the wording.

Division 13 for landscaping and screening is next. There are some regulations for that now however there could be more improvements in the code. Mr. Houseal stated his firm has landscape architects on staff and they are able to look at this code as well as other codes and give input. Mr. Houseal stated these landscaping standards are not there to burden developers but to assist in the beautification and eliminate the stretches of cement. There is no justification for no green spaces or landscaping. Mr. Houseal took a look at perimeter landscaping requirements as well as internal perimeter, landscaping islands and transition zones. Transition zones are landscaping, fencing or buffering requirements that may be needed between adjacent uses that may be somewhat incompatible. These include industrial to residential or commercial to residential. Screening methods are identified. Ms. Simpson stated there will be visuals to go along the methods outlined in this section. Mr. Houseal pulled up and reviewed some examples of visuals, graphics and imagery that will complement the landscaping and screening section. This will eliminate ambiguities for developers. He also pulled up images for signs, even though the sign code will not be discussed yet. Mr. Houseal stated the landscaping section will break down landscaping into definitive areas and the standards of design for each areas to be landscaped. Mr. Moore asked if the landscaping section is for residential areas as well. Mr. Houseal stated this would be only for commercial development. While developers may complain, this is a legitimate standard to meet. Ms. Simpson added some of these standards came out of the Comprehensive Plan and look to improve parking lots in the commercial areas and add sustainable types of green spaces. Mr. Houseal stated they are trying to codify best practices.

Mr. Houseal asked if the Commission had any questions on the Administrative section. Mr. Boyd stated that in section 17-2 it states the Commission should have an elected secretary. He asked if that can be taken out since they are not going to elect one and staff will be completing the duties. Staff will be speaking to legal about the possibilities to remove that, however it may be a State statutory regulation.

The draft for the planned developments will attempt to clarify the process for which development can be done and eliminate any questions or doubts from developers. The section will establish a more creative and flexible approach to development.

Mr. Houseal stated the Planned Development ordinance will be drafted and given to staff in the coming weeks and begin the discussion on signs and how that will be approached. He stated the sign code is very accommodating for signs and the sizes of signs allowable are sometimes 3 times larger than in other communities. More research will be done and communities looked at to find the best outcome for the City of Bloomington. The intent of the sign code is a code that works for businesses. It also needs to be in scale with the property, streets and community. Murals are another type of sign that will be looked at, since the City of Bloomington has shown interest in seeing more. The Supreme Court stated that sign content can no longer be regulated.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 5:35 by unanimous voice vote; motioned by Mr. Muehleck. Seconded by Mr. Protzman.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Simpson,  
City Planner  
& Izzy Rivera  
Assistant City Planner



# Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Plan

# **Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Plan**

prepared by

**McLean County Regional Planning Commission  
115 E Washington St M103  
Bloomington, Illinois 61701**

In cooperation with the



**July, 2016**

**DRAFT**

The preparation of this neighborhood plan was sponsored by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission. The Dimmitt's Grove neighborhood plan was prepared by the staff of MCRPC concurrently with the City of Bloomington comprehensive planning process. Assistance was provided by the Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood association.

# Credits

**Thanks to all the neighbors who filled out a survey and/or attended a planning meeting. This plan would not have been possible without you. A special thanks to the following neighborhood association members who actively participated in this planning process:**

Brad Williams, President  
Jerica Etheridge, Vice-President  
Terri Clemens, Secretary  
Melanie Hunter, Treasurer  
Herb Eaton  
Pam Eaton  
Sarah Hanzel  
Carlo Robustelli  
Karen Schmidt

## Neighborhood Association Mission

**The Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association Was Established in June of 1987 to:**

- Help Neighbors Meet Each Other*
- Protect Each Other Through Neighborhood Watch*
- Help Residents and Others Learn About its History*
- Improve the Physical Appearance of the Neighborhood*
- Preserve What Makes it Beautiful*

**Everyone Living in Dimmitt's Grove is a Member and is Invited to All Functions**

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# Introduction & Executive Summary

Neighborhoods are the basic geographic units of a community. Neighborhoods are where people live, raise their families, and spend most of their free time. A neighborhood's physical characteristics, aesthetics, level of security, and sense of community all have a major influence on its residents' quality of life.

Proper planning is critical to support strong neighborhoods. Neighborhood plans allow neighbors to shape their immediate surroundings; provide guidance to the City about issues relevant to the neighborhood; and, over time, as new neighbors move in and new leaders emerge, provide a framework to keep moving forward. They address both the physical aspects of the neighborhood—land use, infrastructure, zoning, and housing—and the human aspects—how partnerships among neighbors, neighborhood organizations, nonprofits, and businesses can come together to make a neighborhood a great place to live, work, and play.

Despite its benefits, neighborhood planning is lacking in Bloomington. Planning processes have generally been focused on municipal and regional issues and have devoted little attention to individual neighborhoods. Bloomington's new Comprehensive Plan, *Bring it on Bloomington* (adopted in 2015), recommended a dramatic increase in neighborhood-level planning, including the creation of a "tool kit" that would allow neighborhood organizations to take the lead in planning efforts (see the Relation to the Comprehensive Plan section following this introduction).

In response to that call, MCRPC and the neighborhood association for Dimmitt's Grove agreed to collaborate to develop a new neighborhood plan in line with the Comprehensive Plan. The result is a truly community-driven plan that grounds the high-level goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan in the specific context of one of Bloomington's oldest and most distinctive neighborhoods. While every neighborhood is different, this plan should provide a basic framework of processes and best practices for other neighborhoods and further the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

### STUDY AREA

Dimmitt's Grove covers 26 city blocks east of Downtown in Bloomington's historic core. It is bounded on the west by S Gridley St., on the north by E Washington St., on the east by S Clinton St., and on the south by E Oakland Ave (see Map 1 in Appendix A).

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process can be divided roughly into four phases: Phase 1, the Existing Conditions Analysis; Phase 2, Neighborhood Outreach; Phase 3, Visioning and Goal-setting; and Phase 4, the Neighborhood Plan and Implementation Strategy (see Fig. . All four phases included significant input from neighbors, both directly and through the Neighborhood Association.

#### *Phase 1: Existing Conditions Analysis*

- Maps and statistics concerning demographics, land use, housing, infrastructure, transportation, education, health and safety
- Neighborhood history

#### *Phase 2: Neighborhood Outreach*

- Brainstorming sessions
  - Identification of need
  - Inventory of key issues

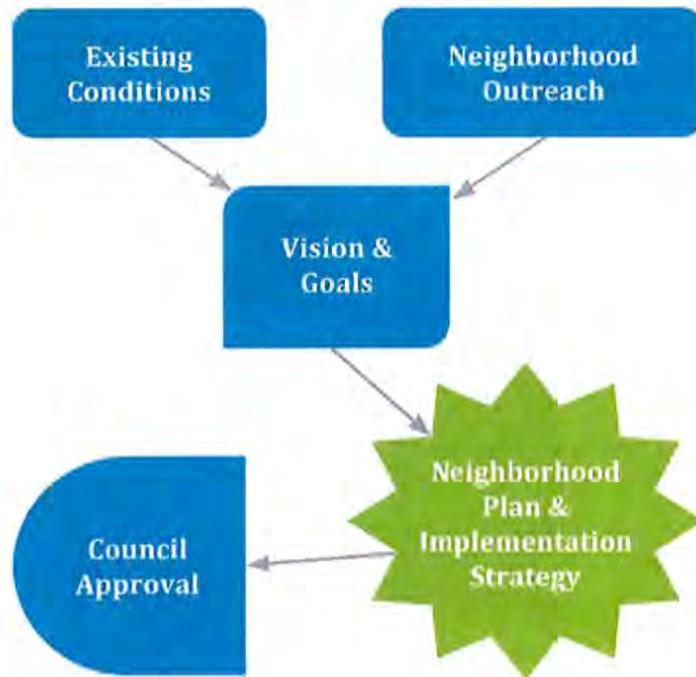
- SWOT survey of residents

*Phase 3: Visioning and Goal-setting*

- Crafting of vision statement and related goals
- Cataloging of assets, challenges, ways to measure success, and actions for implementation

*Phase 4: Neighborhood Plan and Implementation Strategy*

- Creation of a unified report including the vision, goals, metrics, assets, challenges, and actions
- Identification of best practices



**IN THIS REPORT**

This report is structured as follows:

**1. Neighborhood Profile**

**1.1. Neighborhood History:** A

brief timeline of important events in the neighborhood’s history, with a focus on the historically significant years of the 19th century.

**1.2. Existing Conditions:** An overview of current conditions in Dimmitt’s Grove, including demographics, housing, infrastructure, transportation, education, and health and safety.

**2. Neighborhood Assessment**

**2.1. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis,** based on a nearly 60-question neighborhood survey.

**2.2. Physical issues and assets mapping,** based on information gathered through neighborhood outreach events, the SWOT survey, and the Existing Conditions Analysis.

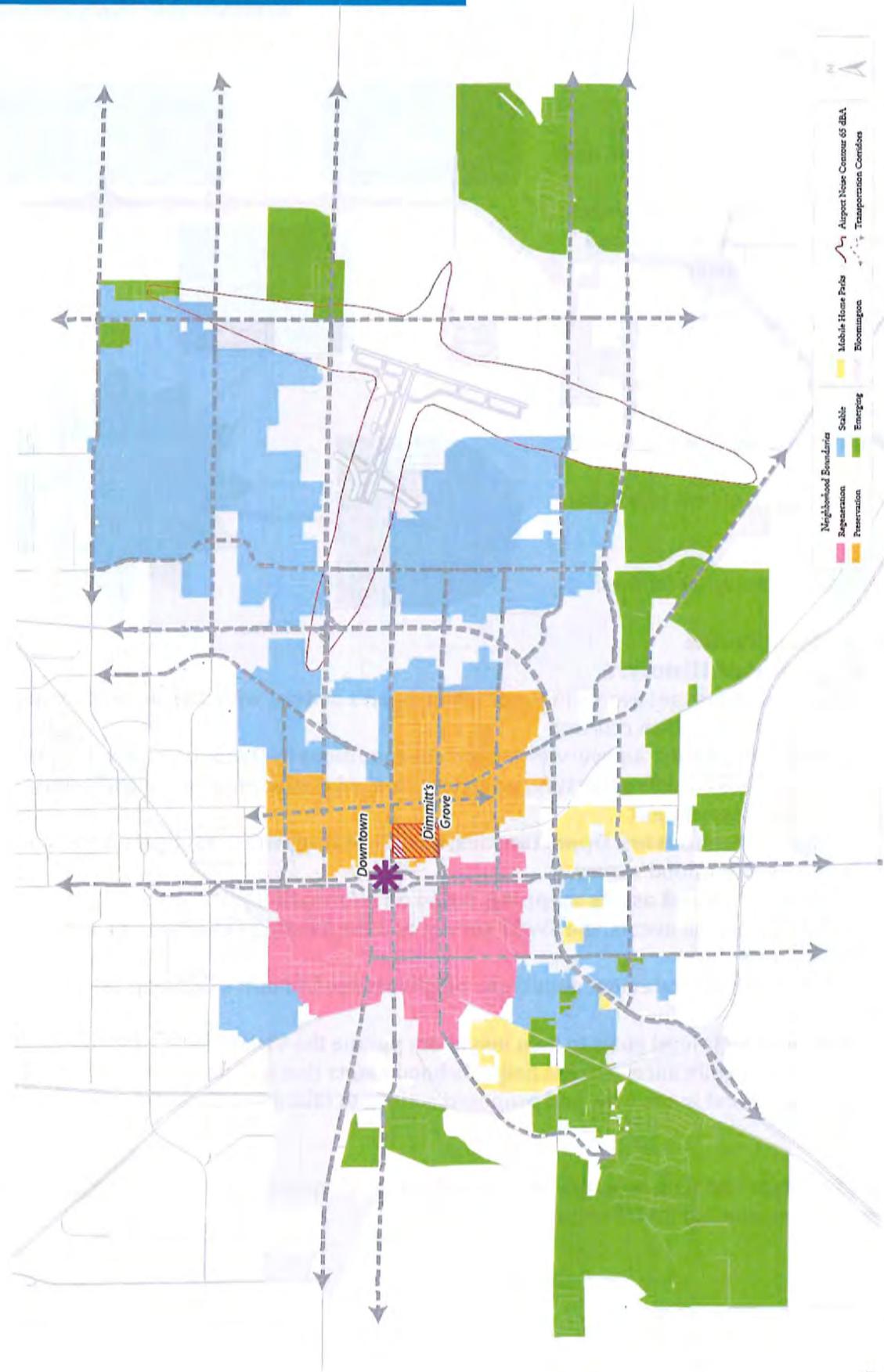
**3. Vision and Goals**

**3.1. Vision:** A holistic statement about how neighbors see Dimmitt’s Grove in its present and future.

**3.2. Goals:** Five high-level goals to help neighbors pursue the Vision. Each goal includes a brief discussion of its significance; current neighborhood assets that will help in achieving the goal; challenges that stand in the way; and proposed actions to take advantage of assets and address challenges.

**Appendix:** Maps and data to supplement the foregoing chapters, concerning land use; zoning; transportation; and full SWOT responses.

# RELATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Dimmitt's Grove lies within the Preservation Area of the neighborhood classification boundaries as identified in the Bloomington Comprehensive Plan.

### **General Characteristics of the Preservation Area**

- This area housed the elite members of the community during the 19th and early 20th centuries. At that time, these upper-income neighborhoods expanded eastward with the expansion of the trolley system. This was the start of the east-west social divide in the community.
- Today, this area houses several locally and nationally designated historic districts including the Franklin Square District, East Grove Street Historic District, Whites Place Historic District, and Davis Jefferson Historic District (see Figure 4-2). Many individual properties are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Mature, tree-lined streets, arranged in a grid pattern, are very conducive to multimodal transportation.
- This area houses many fashionable and attractive houses, many of which are designed by local architects George Miller and Arthur Pillsbury. Dominant architectural styles of homes here include Queen Anne, Italianate, Colonial, Tudor, Mission, and Spanish Revival.
- Neighborhoods closer to Downtown have smaller blocks than other parts of the City, approximately 1.5 acres, and accommodate a variety of densities, tenancies and uses. Lot frontages here range from 40' to 60', and depths vary from 80' to 140'. Assessed values of homes in these neighborhoods range from \$35,000 to \$75,000. Example: Dimmitt's Grove.
- Neighborhoods further east have larger blocks, approximately four acres, and are predominantly single-family, owner-occupied housing units. Residential lot sizes are fairly standard. Lot frontages vary between 50' to 65' and depths between 115' to 130'. Assessed values of homes range from \$35,000 to over \$100,000. Example: Founders Grove.
- Larger homes originally built for single-family use are now converted into multi-family units, resulting in inadequate off-street parking. This is a major challenge for this area.
- These once elite neighborhoods today house a mix of income levels with a higher concentration of moderate-income households.

### **Challenges and Opportunities for the Neighborhoods in the Preservation Area**

- The Illinois Central Railroad, which once traversed a north-south path through Bloomington, passed through this area. While the rail line itself is long gone, it left industrial remnants along its path adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Today, many of these properties are vacant or underutilized. The abandoned rail corridor itself was converted into the Constitutional Trail in the last 25 years. This alteration in the nature of this corridor presents a tremendous opportunity to transform the land uses incompatible with residential uses into those that complement the trail and the surrounding established historic neighborhoods.
- The preservation area is packed with historic resources, some of which have local historic designations. Neighborhoods not currently part of historic districts are generally hesitant to seek that status out, due to an incomplete understanding of the requirements and limited resources available for their rehabilitation. The primary threat to these historic structures is conversion to multi-family units. When not planned properly, densities can have a negative impact on the surrounding property values and the neighborhood itself. The City should work

## RELATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

closely with these neighborhoods to prepare neighborhood-level plans to help protect these valuable historic and cultural assets.

- This area is also served by District 87. Some elementary schools in this area are more desirable than others. This again can be associated with the complex and multi-layered relationship between neighborhood demographics and school performance. Education is a key component to keeping this area desirable.
- Downtown revitalization efforts can greatly benefit from revitalization efforts in the Preservation Area, and vice-versa.
- The infrastructure in this area, both above- and underground, is at least 100 years old and in severe disrepair. Improving this could be a key factor in stabilizing declining property values and attracting additional private investment to the area.
- There are many active neighborhood associations committed to improving property values and quality of life in this area. The City should work with them to create neighborhood-level plans to address needs specific to each neighborhood within this area.

### **Snapshot of recommendations from the comprehensive plan applicable to Dimmitt's Grove**

- Work closely with neighborhood organizations to create neighborhood-level plans that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan but address issues specific to that neighborhood.
- Prioritize preservation of historic and cultural resources; update the Historic Preservation Plan and keep it current; allocate more resources towards historic preservation; foster preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures; continue to protect historic and cultural resources through regulation (ex: S4 Zoning); create and maintain a database of historic and cultural resources.
- Ensure reinvestment in established older neighborhoods and the compact development of the City. Increase homeownership in the already walkable Regeneration and Preservation areas.
- Prioritize the Preservation Area (after the Regeneration Area) for investment of limited public dollars and resources; actively pursue funding for preservation and provide financial incentives for restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic structures; create incentives for de-conversion of multi-family structures back to single family homes.
- Enhance the public realm within the neighborhoods with micro parks/play streets, public art, and neighborhood cleaning and greening efforts.
- Identify the unique qualities of each neighborhood and promote them individually; Councils, Boards, and Commissions should understand and consider the uniqueness of each neighborhood while approving development proposals.
- Use public art and cultural programs to help support neighborhood identity and foster neighborhood pride.
- Create Neighborhood Conservation Districts where necessary to protect the unique character of the neighborhoods.
- Update regulations and ordinances to reflect the unique needs of Regeneration, Preservation and Stable neighborhoods.
- Redevelop underutilized areas to enhance the surrounding neighborhoods; identify opportunities for mixed-use development and encourage such development to enhance neighborhood; Coordinate land use and transportation planning to ensure that new housing is easily accessible through multiple transportation options, including walking, bicycling and public transit.

## RELATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Facilitate and enhance pedestrian-friendly neighborhood centers to support mixed-use developments; allow mixed use as a buffer between low-density residential uses and higher-intensity industrial uses. Ex: Along the Constitution Trail corridor in the Preservation Area.
- The fortunes of District 87 and the neighborhoods within the Regeneration and Preservation areas are intertwined. Unlike in the past, City should take an active approach to address education-related issues.
- Prioritize Downtown Redevelopment; reinforce the connections between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods; form an organizational alliance between the Downtown Bloomington Association and neighborhood organizations active in the surrounding neighborhoods; work with major employers in Downtown to establish employer-assisted housing zones in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Improve walkability to destinations such as schools, parks, and neighborhood commercial centers to make neighborhoods walkable; eliminate barriers to such facilities by addressing crime, safety, and traffic issues.
- Much of the Regeneration Area and some of the Preservation Area is a food desert. Expand community gardens; encourage a food co-op or a grocery store in the food desert; identify and remove barriers to mobile food markets.
- Reduce crime and fear of crime; enhance community and police partnerships; work with the Community Development Department to establish a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) program.
- Expand the City's infrastructure, as needed, while supporting the overall goal of compact growth and a vibrant urban core; ensure that all areas of the City are equitably served by the City's infrastructure. Implement cost-sharing programs/up-sizing assistance for infill development. Investigate a sliding tap-on fee based on the distance from the existing system (the farther the distance, the more they pay).



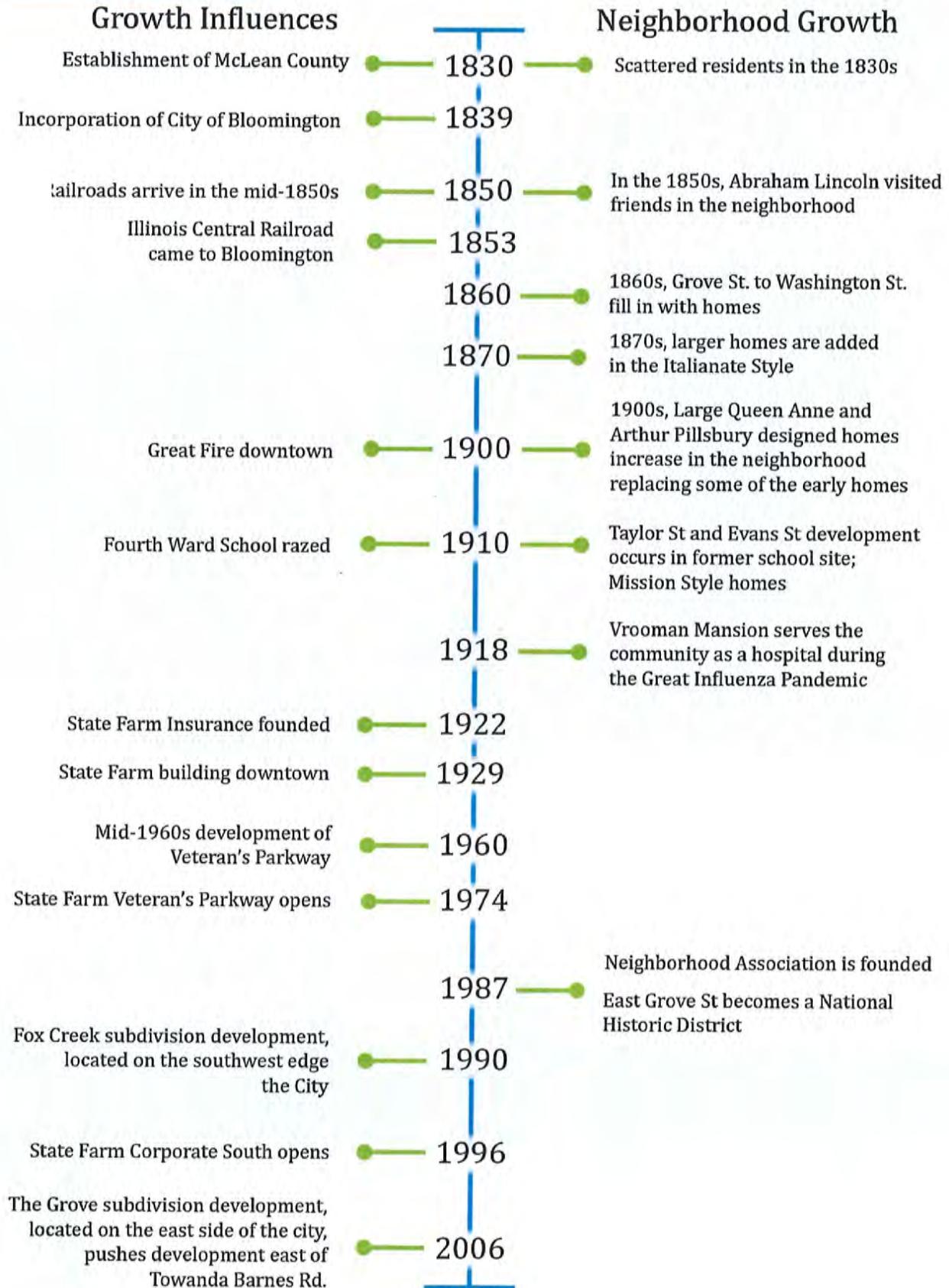
# Neighborhood Profile

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Draft July 2016

# NEIGHBORHOOD

## HISTORY



Dimmitt's Grove is one of Bloomington's oldest neighborhoods. It had scattered residents in the 1830s, but was quickly populated when the railroads came in the mid-1850s. By 1900, some of the early houses had been replaced with more modern homes, as the neighborhood was developed. The name Dimmitt's Grove came in 1987 when the neighborhood organization was founded.



701 E. Grove St. Queen Anne designed by George Miller; 1886

The earliest houses here were probably log houses that belonged to farmers. Among them were William Dimmett (whose family used the spelling Dimmitt by the twentieth century) and William Evans. Their homes would now be on Taylor and Grove Streets. The old Dimmett house may be part of the structure that is now at 611 E. Taylor.

The Illinois Central Railroad came to Bloomington in the spring of 1853, bringing building materials and entrepreneurs to town. By 1860, Grove to Washington, the streets with higher elevation in the neighborhood, were filling in. There was a lumberyard, owned by George Bruner on the south side of Grove St. in the 500 block, along with Conover Female Academy. Several 1850s houses still stand in their original form on Grove

St. Among them are 418, 506, 510 and 603. Some were later enlarged, including 707 E. Grove. The Barber brothers, who owned a nearby mill, built 709 E. Taylor and 407 S. Clinton, a Gothic Revival.

In the 1870s, some of the larger houses were added to the neighborhood. Eliel Barber, who lived at 709 E. Taylor, built a 17-room Italianate home next door at 701 E. Taylor, which received an 18-room Richardson Romanesque addition and remodeling in 1900. Other large 1870s Italianates are at 401, 407 and 421 E. Grove. 407 was updated in the early twentieth century with stucco and roomy porches. 507 E. Front was one of many impressive Italianates on Front St.

By 1900, large Queen Anne-style houses with plumbing and central heating had replaced some of the simpler houses along the desirable lots on Grove St. Architect George Miller added 409, 604 and 701. A George Miller from E. Washington Street moved to 402 E. Grove in November of 2004. Other impressive Queen Annes from the 1880s are at 612, 702, and 706 E. Grove. At the turn of the century, architect Arthur Pillsbury designed 702 E. Front and the Chalet-style beauty at 607 E. Front.

In the nineteenth century, lots filled in toward the southern edge of the neighborhood as the city added sewers. Along Oakland, then known as Clay St., was a slough that provided drainage for industry including foundries and a pork packing plant on its south side. When the city built sewers, the slough went underground and the streets near it filled with houses. The city's first public school, the Fourth Ward School, which originally filled two square blocks and stood at Taylor and Evans Streets, was razed c. 1910 and those lots filled, some with houses built with the recycled bricks from the school. The three similar stucco houses on Taylor St. (known today as the sherbet houses, 509-513 E. Taylor) and three similar Foursquares, 403-7 S. Evans, were part of this development. Older houses like 512 E. Taylor



605 E Grove St. Mission Style

## NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

were enlarged and received new stucco as many were updated to join the mission style houses of the 1910s. Arthur Pillsbury added 611 E. Washington, 503 E. Olive, 503 E. Grove, an addition at 609-11 E. Grove, and 701 E. Taylor, and at least one of the 3 new houses in the 400 block of Evans.

In the 1850s, Abraham Lincoln visited friends in the neighborhood, including attorney Kersey Fell, whose house at 707 E. Grove was a social gathering place. He also worked and visited with Reuben Benjamin at 510 E. Grove. Ezra Prince, who later lived at 418 E. Grove, drove Lincoln to Peoria when he was riding the circuit here. Judge Lawrence Weldon lived at 407 E. Grove and hosted President Ulysses S. Grant there.

The railroad building boom brought entrepreneur John Routt, who built 510 E. Grove and the original house at 512 E. Taylor. He would later leave Bloomington and find success as the Governor of Colorado. George Bruner, a miller, built a lumber yard in the neighborhood, and later built a grand house for himself at 612 E. Grove (This house was replaced in the 1880s by Judge Sain Welty.) Bruner's daughters married a miller and a merchant and built homes at 701 and 604 E. Grove (and an earlier one now at 403 S. Evans, which once faced Grove St.)

Matthew Scott, owner of land and coal mines, bought 701 E. Taylor in 1869. His wife Julia was the sister of Adlai Stevenson, U.S. Vice President under Grover Cleveland. Matthew and Julia's daughter Julia later married Carl Vrooman, who served as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture under Woodrow Wilson. The Vrooman mansion served the community as a hospital during the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918. Illinois' 18th governor, John M. Hamilton, lived at 502 S. Clayton before he served the state from 1883-1885.



*Marie Litta*  
Source: McLean County Museum of History

Marie Litta, who became an internationally known opera singer, lived at 512 E. Taylor. A city park at Gridley and Jackson, just across the neighborhood boundary, is named for her. Delmar Darrah, who lived at 702 E. Front, was the originator of Bloomington's Passion Play. Author Harold Sinclair, who wrote *The Horse Soldiers* (1956) and *American Years* (1938), lived at 709 E. Taylor. The Mowrer brothers, Paul Scott and Edgar Ansel, both winners of Pulitzer Prizes, lived at 418 E. Grove.

Today, 400-700 E. Grove St. is a National Historic District, and scattered houses in the neighborhood are zoned S4 and watched over by Bloomington's Historic Preservation Commission. The historic character of our neighborhood attracts many walkers enjoying the sights. 402 E. Grove won "This Old House's" Most Curb Appeal award in 2012. Every five years, the neighborhood hosts "Day in Historic Dimmitt's Grove," which attracts many visitors to see the houses and gardens, go on historic walking tours and enjoy music and attractions at the Vrooman Mansion grounds.



*510 E Grove St, New England Sidehall 1853*

*Neighborhood History provided by Terri Clemens*

# EXISTING CONDITIONS &

## FINDINGS

### DEMOGRAPHICS

#### AGE & SEX

TOTAL POPULATION **871**



#### FINDINGS

##### In comparison to the City:

- Male/female split very close to City average
- Population under 18 & Over 65 nearly 7% lower than City average

#### HOUSEHOLDS

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS **422**

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE **1.98**

#### FINDINGS

##### In comparison to the City:

- Average household is smaller than the City's average of 2.41
- Significantly higher percentage of non-family households

#### RACIAL

WHITE **86.2%**

AFRICAN AMERICAN **11.7%**

ASIAN **2.3%**

#### FINDINGS

- Neighborhood predominantly white
- Diverse in many other ways, including income and occupations

### LAND USE/ ZONING

#### RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL

**95.6%**  
RESIDENTIAL

**3.76%**  
COMMERCIAL

#### FINDINGS

- Neighborhood is predominantly residential
- Commercial areas are located along the fringes of the neighborhoods
- No parks in the neighborhood boundary, but Marie Litte Park is adjacent to it

#### ZONING

##### RESIDENTIAL ZONING

R-3B HIGH DENSITY MULTI- FAMILY RES DIST.	R-2 MIXED USE RES DIST.	R-1C HIGH DENSITY SINGLE- FAMILY RES DIST.
<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>21%</b>

#### FINDINGS

- Majority of R-3B zoning is near the west side of neighborhood
- 8 homes have S-4 historic designations; primarily located on Grove St.

#### VACANT LAND/ PARKING LOTS

**2%** VACANT LOTS

#### FINDINGS

- Vacant lots are typically less than an acre
- 1 property officially recorded as in violation in the City's preservation database
- Parking lots are found off of Washington St. and attached to the businesses and church

## EXISTING CONDITIONS &

## FINDINGS

### HOME VALUES & SIZES

HOUSING SIZES  
SQUARE FEET RANGE

**644 - 6,920**  
AVG. ~**1450**

SINGLE FAMILY  
HOME VALUES

**\$20k - \$450k**  
MEDIAN ~**\$100k**

#### FINDINGS

- Housing options for a variety of income levels
- Single-family home values are much lower than the City's median home value

### OWNERSHIP VS. RENTAL

OWNER **37.4%**

RENTER **58.7%**

BY UNITS WITH 3% UNKNOWN OWNERSHIP

#### FINDINGS

- Significantly high percent of rental compared to the City
- Nearly 40% of rental properties are owned by landlords that live outside the neighborhood
- Majority of rental property is made up of properties with 2-3 units

## HOUSING

### CODE VIOLATIONS

#### FINDINGS

- Approximately 1.5% of all reported complaints are from the Dimmitt's Grove neighborhood.

#### THE TWO MOST REPORTED CODE VIOLATIONS IN DIMMITT'S GROVE:

**59.4%** PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

**31.3%** YARD UPKEEP

## SAFETY/HEALTH/EDUCATION

### CRIME DATA

#### THE TWO MOST REPORTED TYPES OF CRIME FALL UNDER:

DRUGS **36%** RESIDENTIAL  
BURGLARY **24%**

#### FINDINGS

- Crime overall in Bloomington is seeing a decline
- The few crimes are concentrated in and around Downtown area

### HEALTH

#### FINDINGS

- Dimmitt's Grove neighborhood is located in a Food Desert
- When open, the Green Top Grocery the Food Desert status will change
- During Spring/Summer months accessibility increases to veggies & fruits due to Downtown Farmer's Market

### SCHOOL DISTRICTING

NEARLY **2** MILES TO  
ASSIGNED  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

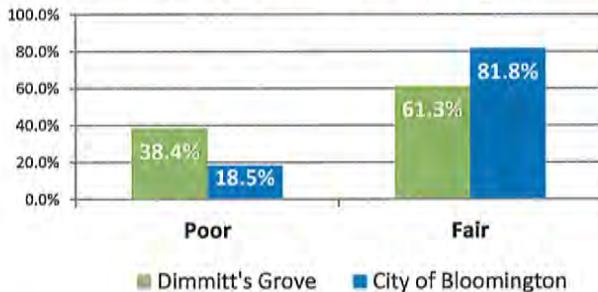
#### FINDINGS

- Assigned elementary school is Sheridan Elementary, which requires students to either be driven or bussed in
- Washington and Irving Elementary are both closer, less than a mile from the neighborhood

TRANSPORTATION

SIDEWALK CONDITIONS

Sidewalk Conditions Comparison  
Dimmitts Grove and City of Bloomington



FINDINGS

- Dimmitt's Grove has a disproportionate percentage of sidewalks in poor condition
- Even with the relatively high percentage of poor sidewalks in the neighborhood, the area sees a lot of foot traffic.
- Neighborhood is well-connected by sidewalks

TRANSIT

SERVED BY **4** TRANSIT ROUTES

FINDINGS

- Neighborhood is well-served by transit
- At time of this report, neighbors could catch a bus by only walking a quarter of a mile to transit routes
- With the revision of routes by Connect Transit, they have proposed 5 bus stops to be located in the vicinity
- Bus routes run along Washington St. and Oakland; no routes run through the neighborhood

STREET CONDITIONS

**18%** STREETS ARE RATED BELOW A 5 (OUT OF 10) ON THE PASER SYSTEM

FINDINGS

- The grid street pattern in the neighborhood allows traffic to flow easily
- City wide about 30% of streets are rated less than 5 or given a Target Score in the PASER system.
- Would cost the City 60 million dollars over five years to bring every street up to a 5 or better

AADT

BORDERED BY **3** MINOR ARTERIALS

FINDINGS

- Minor arterials bound the neighborhood to the north, east, and south
- Grove St is a major collector street for the neighborhood
- Front St sees an annual average daily traffic count of over 2,500 vehicles yet still is designated as a local street



# Outreach & Assessment

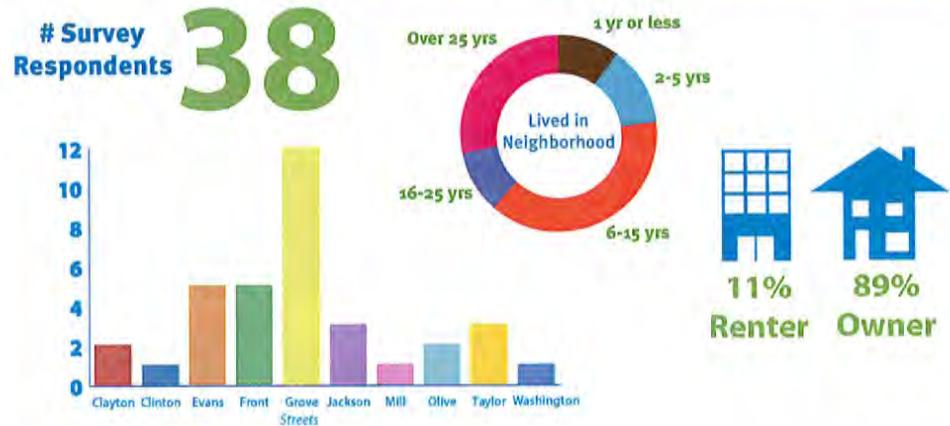
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## OUTREACH EFFORTS &

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### OUTREACH EFFORTS

To gain a better understanding of Dimmitt's Grove, a SWOT Analysis survey was provided to the neighbors. SWOT Analysis surveys help to evaluate a neighborhood by looking at its strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T). A paper copy of the survey was provided to each household, and the Neighborhood Watch Block Captains distributed the survey.



## SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longstanding history &amp; historic architecture</li> <li>Quaint with unique character</li> <li>Walkable location with many amenities close by</li> <li>Thriving with diversity of occupations, income levels, &amp; households</li> <li>Affordability of homes and lower taxes</li> <li>Strong sense of community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing issues ranging from disengaged landlords to lack of code enforcement</li> <li>Traffic and parking issues</li> <li>Public safety</li> <li>Aging infrastructure</li> <li>Upkeep &amp; maintenance of homes and the neighborhood</li> <li>No grocery store nearby</li> <li>No parks within the neighborhood</li> <li>Assigned elementary school assigned is not within easy walking distance</li> <li>Lack of community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on central location within the City and proximity to Downtown</li> <li>Historical nature and charm</li> <li>Multimodal access due to transit and dedicated bike lanes in area</li> <li>Diversity</li> <li>Affordability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sprawl developments on the east and southwest of the City</li> <li>East vs. West divide created due to Veterans Parkway</li> <li>Aging infrastructure</li> <li>Crime (both perceived and real)</li> <li>Absentee landlords</li> <li>School districting creating barriers to families with children</li> </ul>

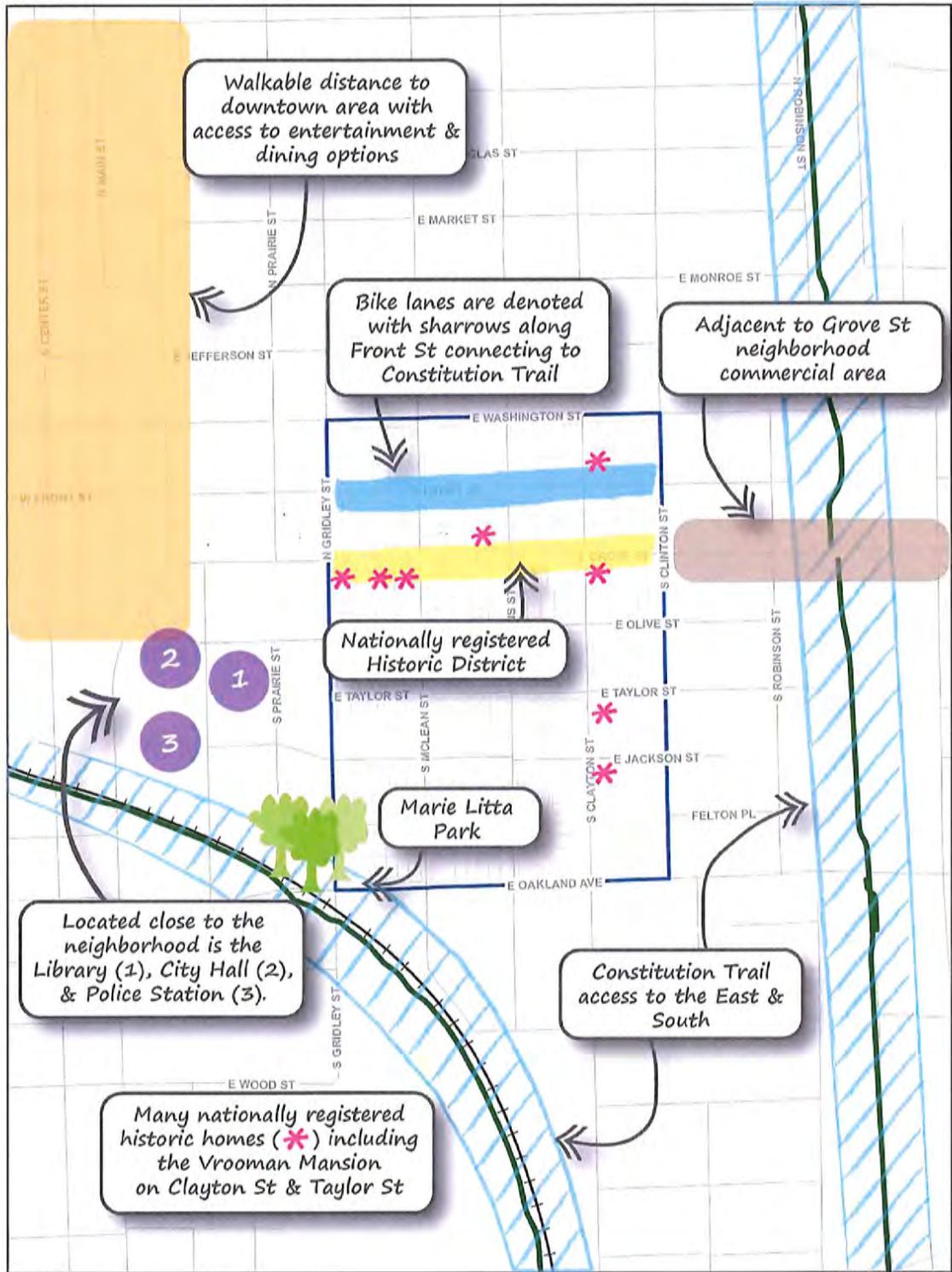
# ASSESSMENT MAPPING

## PHYSICAL ISSUES



Blocked Street Drain	Abandoned house	For Sale/Foreclosure	Sidewalk Improvements
Street Repair	Property Maintenance	Code Violations	Landscape Upkeep

PHYSICAL ASSESTS





# Vision, Goals & Implementation Strategy

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***Dimmitt's Grove is our historic neighborhood, in the heart of Bloomington, which embraces and thrives on diversity and sense of community.***

## Goal 1

### Preserve the historic integrity of our neighborhood

**Discussion:** Dimmitt's Grove is one of the City's oldest and most unique neighborhoods. The East Grove Street District (which spans the 400-700 blocks of East Grove) and several homes in the neighborhood are on the National Register of Historic Places. Neighbors overwhelmingly named this rich history the defining characteristic of Dimmitt's Grove, and preserving and protecting the historical integrity of the neighborhood is the number one priority of this plan.

**Current assets:** A few existing assets that have helped preserve the historical integrity of the neighborhood include:

1. *National Historic District:* The East Grove Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, runs through the neighborhood. While this designation does not protect the neighborhood in a regulatory sense, it focuses attention on the district's wealth of historic and cultural assets, bringing great pride to neighborhood residents and providing a geographic framework for preservation efforts.
2. *Historical and architectural survey:* McLean County historian Greg Koos's extensively researched historical and architectural survey of the East Grove Street Historic District is also an excellent resource.
3. *S4 Zoning:* S4 is an overlay zoning regulation applied to individual properties or city blocks to protect the historic and cultural assets within them. Ten properties within Dimmitt's Grove are protected by S4 zoning.
4. *Historic Preservation Program:* The City's Historic Preservation Program was established in 1983 by City Ordinance. The Historic Preservation Commission, consisting of seven Mayor-appointed volunteers, oversees the program. The Commission has review authority over exterior modifications to S4-zoned properties and administers the Eugene D. Funk grant program (see the Financial Incentives asset below).
5. *Old House Society (OHS):* With a mission to promote and preserve buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods more than 50 years old, and the communities and heritage they foster, OHS is a great resource for home owners within historic neighborhoods like Dimmitt's Grove. Resources available through OHS include
  - a. A salvage warehouse (located at 214 E Douglas St. in Bloomington, IL) that offers unique restoration items



409 E Grove St, Queen Anne style built 1886-87



601 E Taylor St

## Preserve the historic integrity of our neighborhood

- b. A library containing many helpful resources, including a list of contractors and suppliers experienced with historic preservation
  - c. Demonstration workshops, classes, informal discussions, etc., to provide answers to old house questions
  - d. Assistance restoring some older homes
  - e. Promotion of historic homes and neighborhoods through programs such as the Old House Walking tour:
  - f. Grants (see 9(b), OHS Restoration Grant, under the Financial Incentives heading below).
6. *West Bloomington Revitalization Project (WBRP) Tool Library*: WBRP's Tool Library is a free tool-lending program designed to enable residents to repair and maintain their homes without incurring prohibitive expenses for tools. It is physically located at 801 W Washington Street in Bloomington. Although it was originally conceived to improve the WBRP area, it is open to all community residents for free. It also hosts free home improvement workshops to help educate and empower residents.
7. *Neighbors' network*: Many neighbors share a passion for promoting historic preservation and have a number of important resources at their disposal. For example, several neighbors are professional builders and contractors, and some are willing to share their knowledge about how to maintain the neighborhood's historic homes.
8. *Infrastructure improvements*: Neighbors felt the City has done a fair job of prioritizing infrastructure repairs in Dimmitt's Grove. Neighbors cited the recent resurfacing of Washington Street as a project that enhanced the neighborhood.
9. *Financial Incentives*:
- a. *Eugene D. Funk Grant Program*: This local program provides the owners of the historic properties in Bloomington with financial assistance in the preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of the exterior architectural features of buildings and structures on such properties. This program is administered by the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission. The program provides funding for up to 50% of the total eligible cost, not exceeding \$2,500.
  - b. *OHS Restoration Grant*: The OHS restoration grant program is designed to help homeowners in their efforts to repair and rehabilitate their historic homes. To be considered, a project must repair or restore a building in a way that will maintain or add to the home's historic nature. Successful grant recipients will receive a grant worth \$500 (\$250 in Salvage warehouse credit and \$250 check from the OHS).
  - c. *State and federal tax credits*: While there is very little direct grant funding available for private owners of historic properties, some tax credits are available. Those include:
    - i. A federal tax credit equal to 20% of the "qualifying expenses" of the rehabilitation of an income-producing historic property in a registered historic district (consult the National Park Service for further details).
    - ii. The State of Illinois's Property Tax Assessment Freeze program provides an incentive for owners to rehabilitate their historic homes. The program allows the owner-occupant of a registered historic building to freeze the assessed value of the property (and thus their property tax payments) for eight years while making preservation-oriented improvements. The eight-year freeze is followed by a four-year period in which the assessed value is allowed to increase incrementally until it reaches an amount reflecting the property's current market value. (Consult the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) for further details.)

## Goal 1

### Preserve the historic integrity of our neighborhood

#### Challenges:

1. *Education and awareness:* A lack of understanding about Dimmitt's Grove's historical significance to the city, especially beyond the boundaries of the neighborhood, is a major issue. Many residents within the neighborhood are unaware of existing resources such as those provided by the Old House Society or the Tool Library.
2. *Lack of emphasis on historic preservation:*
  - a. While there are many historically significant buildings in the neighborhood, only a few are protected by S4 zoning. Although a local historic district designation can assist with protecting the cultural assets of the neighborhood, most neighbors are skeptical of such a designation. Many fear that it will add more layers of inhibitive regulation.
  - b. The City's Historic Preservation Plan has not been updated comprehensively in over two decades. A historic preservation plan is not a document merely arguing that preservation is a good idea and listing the sites to be preserved. It typically has an up-to-date physical survey backed by contextual historical research to provide a knowledge base about the resources to preserve, and includes a range of preservation planning and policy options with regard to historic designation, design guidelines, and financial incentives for rehabilitation. It helps connect historic preservation with other community priorities such as economic development, environmental sensitivities, zoning, and other aspects. An updated plan would be a great asset to Dimmitt's Grove and other historic neighborhoods.
  - c. Upkeep and maintenance of a historic home or property can be expensive. Local or state financial incentives for historic preservation are minimal; that places the burden of historic preservation on the individual homeowner, who may lack the knowledge, resources, or inclination to perform the necessary upkeep.
3. *Zoning:* Neighbors were concerned that the zoning within the neighborhood allows for high-density housing options that potentially threaten the historical integrity of the neighborhood. Dimmitt's Grove's proximity to Downtown makes it attractive for higher density residential development.
4. *Infrastructure:*
  - a. Neighbors highlighted a need for improvement of sewer and water lines. Many of the sewer and water lines are among the oldest in the area, making it costly for homeowners to replace them or connect to the sewer if their historic homes were not connected correctly.
  - b. There are sidewalks throughout the neighborhood, but many sections need repair or replacement.
  - c. Neighbors pointed out that carriage walks (walkways between the city sidewalk and the curb within the public right-of-way) are torn out by City vehicles while upgrading the infrastructure and the need to protect these historically significant elements within older neighborhoods.
  - d. Electric utility lines are frequently above ground. They are aesthetically displeasing and frequently conflict with mature trees in the area. However, Ameren Illinois, which owns the overhead electric utility lines, currently has no plans to switch this area to underground lines due to the expense involved.

<sup>4</sup> The following change occurred after the public outreach process: Carriage walks were a point of great contention during the City's Sidewalk Master Plan development. The Public Works department initially favored removing the carriage walks due to structural issues and safety concerns. This generated a number of citizen complaints to the Council. In response to citizen complaints and in recognition of the historical contributions carriage walks make to older neighborhoods, City Council advised staff to leave them in place, and the department changed its operational policies accordingly. However, the upkeep and maintenance of these are the homeowner's responsibility.

## Preserve the historic integrity of our neighborhood

### Proposed Actions:

1. *Support a comprehensive update to the City's Historic Preservation Plan:* The City currently has a limited budget and resources to create such a plan and implement it. Historic neighborhoods such as Dimmitt's Grove should strongly advocate for additional resource allocations to update and implement it as identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan.
2. *Zoning:* The recently adopted City's future land use plan identifies majority of residential in Dimmitt's Grove as Low or Medium Density Residential. However, the City's current Zoning Ordinance designates a major portion of the neighborhood as R3-High Density Multiple Family Residential District. City is currently looking into comprehensively revising its Zoning Ordinance. Neighbors should work closely with the City staff to ensure that the new Zoning designation reflects residential densities as identified in the City's future land use map.
3. *Promote existing resources:* There are a number of resources available to owners of historic home to help them with their renovations. Some of those are offered through established agencies or organizations such as OHS or WBRP, as identified in the Current Assets section. Others are informal sources such as individuals willing to assist their neighbors. Inventories of both formal and informal resources should be kept current and up-to-date on the neighborhood website for the benefit of all.
4. *Infrastructure Improvements:* Many of the infrastructure issues identified by Dimmitt's Grove residents, including crumbling sidewalks, street repairs, and aging underground utilities, are not unique to this neighborhood. These infrastructure issues are prevalent throughout the City and have been topics of numerous discussions at City Council meetings for a number of years. While these capital improvement issues have been well-documented by City staff and well-recognized by the Council, resolving them is limited by the availability of funding. What can neighbors do?
  - a. Show continued support for increase in infrastructure funding.
  - b. Keep an updated list of contact information for City departments that deal with infrastructure issues, such as the Public Works and Water departments. Publish that as a resource for neigh-



*These photos display good examples of historic preservation in the neighborhood.*

## Goal 1

### Preserve the historic integrity of our neighborhood

- bors to contact these departments with any infrastructure issues.
- c. Use the City's myBloomington app to report on infrastructure issues.
  - d. Take advantage of existing programs such as the 50/50 sidewalk replacement program, in which the City pays for half the cost of replacing the sidewalk and homeowners pay the other half. This program can also be used to improve the accessibility of existing sidewalks per ADA guidelines. If some homeowners are not in a position to share the costs or are not interested (in the case of absentee landlords), the Neighborhood Association can help by:
    - i. Partnering with local businesses that have vested interests in improving the area.
    - ii. Winning grants from organizations such as State Farm (through its Community Grants program) and NeighborWorks America.
5. *Support city-wide projects geared toward infill and redevelopment:* Infill and redevelopment efforts within Downtown Bloomington, the Preservation Area, and the Regeneration Area, aimed at improving the appeal of the inner city of Bloomington, will also enhance the desirability of Dimmitt's Grove. Dimmitt's Grove neighbors must support such efforts.
- a. Review Council agendas regularly and keep abreast of relevant City initiatives.
  - b. Assign a neighborhood liaison to attend City Council meetings addressing these aspects and show support
6. *Historic property database:* Encourage the City to maintain a database of historic properties. Integrate that information with the City's building permits program to ensure their protection.

<sup>2</sup> NextDoor is a versatile, private social media platform organized around neighborhoods. It provides an easy way for neighbors to chat, share items and information, organize neighborhood watch activities, etc. According to NextDoor itself, over 99,000 neighborhoods are using the platform as of June 2016. Dimmitt's Grove has a presence on NextDoor.

## Goal 2

### Increase homeownership rates in the neighborhood

**Discussion:** There are close to 500 housing units<sup>1</sup> on approximately 300 residential parcels<sup>2</sup> in Dimmitt's Grove. Over 58% of housing units (on 35% of parcels) are currently rental units, many of them apartments. A walk through the neighborhood gives the impression that it is predominantly an ownership neighborhood because the rental units are concentrated on a smaller number of parcels, but the issues of a predominantly rental neighborhood—absentee landlords, code violations, and other nuisances—are nonetheless present. Many neighbors noted an increase in rental units and the conversion of single-family units to multifamily as significant problems. While neighbors understand the importance of mixed housing tenancies, particularly in a neighborhood so close to Downtown, they seek a balance that is more in line with the City average.

#### **Metric:**

**Current assets:** Several existing neighborhood features can be counted as assets in attracting and retaining new homeowners:

1. *Unique architecture:* Dimmitt's Grove has a mix of housing styles, including Craftsman, Shingle, Italianate, Queen Anne, Foursquare, and many more. Some of the homes were designed by Arthur Pillsbury, a well-regarded Bloomington architect. This mix of housing styles gives a unique character to the neighborhood, which is frequently missing in the newer subdivisions. This unique character enhances its appeal to certain demographics.
2. *Affordability:* The median home value in Bloomington is a little over \$150,000. Dimmitt's Grove offers a great choice of quality homes priced at or below the City's median home values, making it a very affordable neighborhood.
3. *Curb appeal:* Residents, particularly owners, take good care of their homes and gardens. There are many beautifully landscaped yards, kept well throughout the year, and mature trees lining the streets. These features add to the pleasantness, cleanliness, and overall sense of neighborhood.
4. *Walkability:* Dimmitt's Grove's proximity to Downtown; its grid street layout and availability of sidewalks; and its residential density per acre make it a very walkable neighborhood. Walk Score, which rates neighborhoods and communities based on the ease of performing errands and accessing amenities without a car, gives Dimmitt's Grove a score of 75 out of 100—quite impressive given that Bloomington as a whole has a score of 35, indicating that it is a "car-dependent community." This makes Dimmitt's Grove the fourth-most walkable neighborhood in Bloomington.
5. *Streamlined nuisance reporting:* Neighbors praised myBloomington, an app created by the City that allows residents to instantly report issues such as sidewalks in need of a repair or vacant lots with tall grass in need of cutting. Residents who have used the app describe it as easy to use and often faster than finding the correct number to call and report a nuisance. Some, however, expressed a desire for the City to fix these problems more quickly (see challenges).

**Challenges:** Achieving this goal will require overcoming certain challenges, including:

1. *Code compliance and enforcement:*

<sup>1</sup> Housing unit: The US Census Bureau defines a housing unit as "a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied, or, if vacant, is intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other persons in the building and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall."

<sup>2</sup> Parcel: A piece of real estate created for assessment and taxation purposes. It should not be confused with a lot or any other division of land created to define ownership or other legal uses.

<sup>3</sup> Rental housing inspection program: The City of Bloomington requires rental property owners to register their properties once per year and submit to inspections by City staff. Until recently, the program was radically underfunded, with only one inspector to oversee roughly 3,100 rental properties and respond to complaints. This resulted in infrequent inspections and slow responses to concerned citizens. The City Council voted in January 2016 to hire a second inspector, raising registration fees for rental owners to pay for it.

## Increase homeownership rates in the neighborhood

- a. Neighbors expressed a general hopelessness with regard to code enforcement. Many noted that code violations reported are seldom resolved, in some instances even after multiple reports. The few cases that are resolved have lengthy timelines for resolution. Neighbors worry that a lack of ramifications for code violations is breeding more violations, particularly on properties owned by absentee landlords. In some instances, neighbors have attempted to make direct contact with a non-complying owner. This is not always easy, and it is often difficult to even find out who owns the property, especially if the property owner is not local.
  - b. In addition to these compliance and enforcement issues, a lack of awareness among neighbors of the relevant codes, regulations, and reporting procedures, was also noted.
2. *Absentee landlords and dilapidation:*
- a. Neighbors expressed a deep concern about absentee landlords owning property in the neighborhood. Many of the properties owned by absentee landlords have code enforcement issues and general property upkeep and maintenance issues. While this is a problem in any neighborhood, it has a particularly profound negative impact on a historic neighborhood that needs additional care. Neighbors are particularly frustrated with the City's inability to take action on these issues. They expressed a deep dissatisfaction with the City's rental housing inspections program<sup>3</sup>.
  - b. Landlords who own rental properties in the neighborhood but do not live in the neighborhood do not pay sufficient attention to who is renting their units or the general upkeep of the property. In instances of issues with renters, neighbors face difficulty in reaching the right person and end up contacting the police on nuisance related issues.
  - c. Other issues with absentee landlords include dilapidation of housing stock in the neighborhood and improper maintenance of vacant lots, both of which contribute negatively to overall appearance, perception of safety, and property values in the neighborhood.
3. *Care of historic homes:* Though many residents are well-informed about the unique challenges of caring for historic home, some are not. Others have the necessary knowledge base but have financial or other constraints that prevent them from following through. These difficulties are leading to disrepair of some historic homes in the neighborhood.
4. *Multi-family units and parking issues:* Neighbors expressed great concern about the conversion of homes originally built for single-family use into multifamily rental units. Often these conversions are



*Well maintained homes and yards, such as these located on S Evan St., add to the pleasantness of the neighborhood.*

## Goal 2

### Increase homeownership rates in the neighborhood

done with no respect for the character of the original home or the surrounding properties. Such conversions degrade the quality not only of the house but of the entire neighborhood. They also place a huge burden on on-street parking (also see Zoning and design controls below).

5. *Zoning and design controls:*
  - a. Residents noted that the neighborhood's R3 (Multiple-Family Residence District) zoning designation makes it easy for absentee landlords and developers to convert single-family homes to multi-family apartments and build higher-density housing with minimal consideration of the impact on the neighborhood. These higher densities, coupled with a lack of parking provisions, are severely restricting the availability of on-street parking. In an older neighborhood like Dimmitt's Grove, where many single-family homes have a single-car garage or no garage at all, on-street parking is very important.
  - b. Due to the absence of design standards in the neighborhood, new developments look out of character compared to the rest of the neighborhood—a significant problem given that the neighborhood's historic aesthetic is a key part of its appeal.
6. *Elementary school district issues:* Dimmitt's Grove is home to a diverse array of families of different ages and compositions. However, family households with children under 18 are somewhat under-represented relative to the city as a whole. Neighbors suggested that the assigned elementary school, Sheridan Elementary, may partly explain this. Some of their concerns revolved around the distance from and obstacles to walking and biking to Sheridan; others were concerned with school rankings and perceptions about the school's quality.
7. *Crime*
  - a. Generally speaking, neighbors found Dimmitt's Grove to be a safe neighborhood. However, residents were aware of the perception of crime in the neighborhood resulting from its proximity to Downtown.
  - b. One challenge the neighbors mentioned as a byproduct of being close to Downtown was the pass-through foot traffic. Neighbors felt that many people walk through the neighborhood to get to various points of interest and are sometimes not conscious of its residential nature, resulting in nuisances such as loud noises, littering, and vandalism.

#### Proposed Actions:

1. *Elementary school district issues:* While neighbors would like to see District 87 redistricted so their children can attend Washington School, there has not been a redistricting process in over two decades.



*Unkept homes and yards are a distraction from an otherwise well maintained and safe neighborhood.*

## Increase homeownership rates in the neighborhood

According to Dr. Barry Reilly, Superintendent for District 87, the relatively slow population growth within the District as a whole reduces the likelihood of redistricting in the near future. Following are a few strategies that neighbors can deploy to help address this issue. While these are not the ultimate solutions, they may help to some degree.

- a. Promote District 87's In-District/Zone transfers. Students whose parents live in a given district can apply to be transferred to a different school in that district. Transfers are allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis to students who meet certain eligibility criteria and demonstrate that they have a strong reason for transferring.
  - b. Neighbors can also help alleviate some of the perception issues surrounding Sheridan. Dr. Reilly encourages neighbors, both parents and interested non-parents, to set up an appointment with the principal to tour the facility and learn about the school firsthand.
  - c. A list of private schools in the area may also be a good resource to provide.
  - d. The fate of District 87 is intertwined with the fates of the neighborhoods within the City's Regeneration and Preservation Areas. The Comprehensive Plan discusses this and other education issues at greater length. Agencies and entities across the community, including the City, must recognize this connection and work to strengthen both the neighborhoods and the school district. Residents of Dimmitt's Grove and other neighborhoods in the Regeneration and Preservation Areas can help instigate these conversations.
2. *Work closely with area realtors:* Realtors have a vested interest in increasing homeownership in a given neighborhood. Engaging realtors who have listings in the area as well as the Bloomington-Normal Association of Realtors may help draw new owners to Dimmitt's Grove. Possible actions include:
    - a. Assign a neighborhood liaison to establish contacts with the realtors and get appropriate information to them. Equip them with information that would allow them to speak authentically about the neighborhood.
    - b. Inquire about the common concerns expressed by people who walked through the homes in the neighborhood but ended up not buying. Prepare and distribute informational pamphlets that help address those and other likely concerns. For example, if people are anxious about owning a historic home, provide a list of helpful resources and support networks.
    - c. With the assistance of the realtors, establish an "old meets new" series showcasing homes within the neighborhood that have been renovated tastefully to fit 21st century needs. This will help buyers see the potential of a home even if it is not yet renovated.
  3. *For Sale by Owner listings:* Realtors typically do not engage in For Sale by Owner listings. The neighborhood association can help compile and market them on the neighborhood website and social media sites.
  4. *Do more to attract first-time homebuyers:* Neighbors expressed a great desire to attract first-time homebuyers. Many first-time homebuyers are renters within the community or new hires. Marketing efforts should be targeted to reach them—e.g., posting flyers about the neighborhood and available homes in apartment complexes or rental websites. Work with local HR managers to see what kinds of information about the neighborhood can be included in their new hire orientations.
  5. *Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH):* EAH is a great way to increase homeownership in targeted areas within close proximity of employment centers. Dimmitt's Grove's proximity to Downtown Bloomington, a vibrant employment center that employs nearly 2,500 people, makes it a great target for such a program.
    - a. Reach Illinois is a not-for-profit agency that facilitates EAH programs in Illinois communities. Currently no employers in Bloomington or Normal participate in this program. With the concentration of institutional employment in and around Downtown and major employers like

## Goal 2

### Increase homeownership rates in the neighborhood

State Farm, however, conversations about starting an EAH program in Bloomington must happen at the city or regional level. The Downtown Bloomington Association can also play a key role in that process.

6. *Code Enforcement:* Neighbors are frustrated with code enforcement, or the lack thereof. The City's recent decision to bolster its rental housing inspection program<sup>3</sup> is a welcome change; however, more efforts are needed to protect the health, safety, and property values of renters and neighbors in older areas. Below are a few additional ways in which the neighbors can help:
  - a. *Rental Housing Inspection Program:* This program has great potential to ensure quality rental properties in the neighborhood. Neighbors should continue to follow up with the City on the progress of its renewed funding.
  - b. Promote the use of the myBloomington app to record any issues that need to be resolved.
  - c. Currently the City does not make code enforcement issues public. Numerous cities that make such information public have seen positive results. The City of Decatur, IL, for example, publishes code violations in an interactive map. When a user clicks on a violation on the map, associated data such as the type of violation, when it was recorded, the results of the last inspection, and so on, will appear. Neighbors should encourage the City to implement a similar program. This should be a low-cost/no-cost program, as most of the data are already gathered and tracked.
  - d. *Code awareness campaign:* Work closely with the City to create a pamphlet of common codes, violations and maintenance tips and resources to prevent code violations. Distribute those pamphlets using promotion tools and techniques identified in Goal 5.
  - e. Help residents avoid code violations. Promote information about the Tool Library and availability of home maintenance workshops for neighbors.
7. *Parking:* The parking issues identified by the neighbors are not unique to Dimmitt's Grove. Many older neighborhoods, including other neighborhoods in Bloomington's Preservation Area and throughout the United States, face similar challenges. Parking issues in the neighborhoods are one of the common negative side effects of unplanned residential densities. Communities use a variety of techniques to address these challenges.
  - a. A residential parking permit program that regulates parking within a neighborhood is the most common option. These programs are typically implemented after the City can back residents' claims with some empirical evidence gathered through parking studies. Some municipalities charge a fee to recover the costs of administration and enforcement; others do not. The success of such programs depends on their costs and complexity. Since there is no such program in Bloomington, Dimmitt's Grove neighbors can partner with other neighborhoods in Bloomington's Preservation area and the City to establish such a program.
  - b. Zoning regulations greatly influence parking. Work closely with the City to address the parking issues during the upcoming zoning ordinance revision.
8. *Re-conversion/De-conversion programs:* Many communities have de-conversion programs that provide incentives for home owners or developers to convert multi-family rental houses that were originally built for single-family use back to single-family homes. Ex: The City of Elgin, IL reimburses property owners for the construction expenses of converting non-conforming multifamily residents back to their original uses, up to \$25,000 for a two-unit building, \$30,000 for a three-unit building, and an additional \$3,000 per unit removed for buildings located within certain census tracts. Such programs can help improve the quality of the housing stock, increase homeownership rates, and alleviate on-street parking in neighborhoods like Dimmitt's Grove.

## Increase homeownership rates in the neighborhood

Some communities lack formal programs of this sort, but do make some effort informally to preserve neighborhoods in this way. Ex: The Town of Normal has on a few occasions acquired rooming houses in single-family neighborhoods, fixed them up, and sold them back to private owners with the intent to preserve neighborhood integrity.

The City of Bloomington has no formal or informal program along these lines. Increases in resources devoted to historic preservation efforts could be used to create one. Many communities also use some of their Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies for such programs. Such programs not only help enhance the neighborhood character, but also improve assessed values, thus increasing tax revenue.

9. *Neighborhood beautification:* While some may view neighborhood beautification efforts as cosmetic, they are crucial for ensuring the overall appeal and vibrancy of the neighborhood. Currently, some blocks in the neighborhood are very clean and aesthetically pleasing, while others are less so. Neighbors should coordinate an annual, neighborhood-wide “cleaning and greening” to enhance the overall appeal of the neighborhood.
10. *Neighborhood Blitz:* A Neighborhood Blitz is a program in which a city concentrates all of its efforts within a small geography to solve issues in that area. Cities use such initiatives for a variety of purposes, from code enforcement to crime reduction and neighborhood rehabilitation. Partnerships with neighborhood associations and other volunteer groups help achieve the maximum impact. Work with the City to conduct a three-month blitz in Dimmitt’s Grove to address code and law enforcement along with redevelopment and beautification programs.
11. *Investigate rental density caps:* Some communities institute caps on the permissible number of rental properties per block. The City of Winona, Minnesota, for instance, restricts the number of rental licenses to no more than 30% of lots per block. Such ordinances are generally designed to protect neighborhood integrity but can be very controversial. While it is important to be aware of this tool, it should be the community’s last resort.



508 E Taylor St



505 E Grove St

Home renovations are a sign of a healthy neighborhood.

## Goal 3

### Continue to enhance neighborhood safety and engagement

**Discussion:** Crime in Bloomington is decreasing overall. Although Dimmitt's Grove is located near Downtown, where the concentration of crime is higher than in other parts of the City, Dimmitt's Grove itself is a safe neighborhood. Nevertheless, given its proximity to Downtown, the neighborhood battles negative perceptions of safety. Neighbors want to proactively dispel myths and ensure that the rest of the community has an accurate picture of public safety in their neighborhood.

Neighbors also want to continue to address what crime does exist in Dimmitt's Grove. Reported crimes within the neighborhood generally include drugs, residential burglary, aggravated assault, and theft. Law enforcement is the job of the police, but residents can play a key role in fostering a strong sense of community and a safe, neighborly environment that prevents crime from happening in the first place. The basic framework for this is already in place in Dimmitt's Grove. The activities of the Neighborhood Watch program and the Neighborhood Association create opportunities for neighbors get to know and look out for each other. Neighbors can work through these existing structures and continue to find other ways to promote safety and engagement.

**Current assets:** Dimmitt's Grove neighbors have already taken some steps to increase safety and engagement:

1. *Neighborhood Watch program:* Dimmitt's Grove has an active Neighborhood Watch group with members who regularly attend the Bloomington Police Department's (BPD's) bimonthly Chief's Focus Meetings. Every block in the neighborhood has a Block Captain who coordinates the communication and other activities with residents on their block. The Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association keeps current names and contact information for nearly 25 blocks in the neighborhood. Signage throughout the neighborhood indicates the presence of the watch group.
2. *Neighborhood Association:* The Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association, founded in 1987, is one of the oldest and most active neighborhood associations in the City. Any person living in the neighborhood is considered to be part of the association. The association meets on a bimonthly schedule at neighbors' homes, Marie Litta Park, or the city library. The neighborhood association also maintains a website and has a social media presence on Facebook and NextDoor. The website is a one-stop shop for information about the history of the neighborhood, notes from previous meetings, and other helpful information. The association coordinates several annual and one-time events throughout the year to encourage interactions among the neighbors, an important aspect of combating crime and enhancing neighborhood safety.

#### Challenges:

1. *Crime/perception of crime and nuisances:*
  - a. Code violations and the increase in residential density, both discussed in Goal 2, likely affect crime rates and perceived safety. Proximity to Downtown also adds to the perception of crime, though not necessarily to actual crime rates.
  - b. Another concern that neighbors noted was inefficiency in reporting crimes and nuisances. Many neighbors are either unaware of the procedures or are choosing not to report safety concerns due to fear of retaliation. This is a problem.
2. *Traffic issues:*
  - a. Evans Street: Evans Street is a one-way street, and many neighbors have said that it is poorly marked and that they have seen many drivers going the wrong way. They have also noted that the part of Evans between Oakland Avenue and Taylor Street is a steep hill and reported that it is often not plowed and salted before ice forms on it. Residents described this as a bigger

## Continue to enhance neighborhood safety and engagement

problem than the City may realize, as it is a seemingly minor residential street, but within the neighborhood it actually sees fairly heavy traffic. UPDATE: The City Engineer, responded to these concerns (paraphrased):

- According to a crash data report for Evans Street for the period between 2013 and the first part of 2016, Evans does not appear to have an abnormal number of crashes.
  - Regarding wrong-way traffic, he said he was familiar with complaints on that score but characterized Evans as “properly signed,” meaning that it has a near right side and far left side one-way sign at each intersecting street. With regard to snow and ice removal, he advised neighbors to call specific complaints in to the Public Works office as needed. He did note that the City maintains many miles of streets, and arterials and collectors have to take priority over residential streets with respect to plowing and salting.
  - Neighbors noted that police vehicles sometimes drive through the neighborhood at high speeds on their way to other locations. While neighbors understand officers’ need to be prompt in responding to situations, their driving speeds are often too high for this neighborhood.
3. *Engaging renters:* Many neighbors noted that engaging renters is a challenge. As a result, the neighbors end up calling police on nuisance cases when such conflicts could be resolved in a civil manner if a more open communication were maintained.

### Proposed Actions:

1. *Know your neighbors:* Although the Dimmitt’s Grove Neighborhood Association provides many opportunities for neighbors to interact, there is room for improvement. Below are a few frameworks other neighborhoods are using to get to know their neighbors in informal settings. These can be adapted to Dimmitt’s Grove’s needs, or inspire neighbors to create their own new tools.
  - a. Neighbor Circles is an organizing principle started by Lawrence CommunityWorks, in which groups of 8-10 families meet a few times a month to have dinner, get to know each other, and have conversations about their neighborhood. In this way, neighbors grow friendlier with each other and form networks that can work collaboratively to address community issues.
  - b. Streetbank is an online sharing/borrowing/lending website that allows neighbors to comfortably interact with each other while sharing their skills or tools.
  - c. Casserole: Leftovers are common in most homes. Casserole’s online platform allows people to share extra portions of home-cooked food with others in their area who cannot cook for themselves.
2. *Know the tools available to fight crime:* The BPD has put together various informational resources to empower residents to fight crime. These resources should be published on the neighborhood website and widely distributed within the neighborhood through all means. They include:
  - a. Gang and Drug Activity Suppression: This information sheet, available both in English and Spanish, outlines:
    - What individual citizens can do to help police fight gangs and drugs
    - What citizens are not expected to do
    - Signs that gang or drug activity are taking place
    - What is helpful to police
    - How to contact police
  - b. Personal Safety: This brochure advises citizens on how to avoid dangerous situations and what actions to take when such situations are unavoidable.

## Goal 3

### Continue to enhance neighborhood safety and engagement

- c. Domestic Violence: This brochure provides information about the BPD's Domestic Violence Unit and the array of police and community resources open to citizens involved in domestic violence situations.
  - d. The BPD publishes all of its crime data biweekly via the crime-mapping system RAIDS Online. The department has put together a detailed brochure on how to use RAIDS Online to get information.
3. *Increase Neighborhood Watch efforts:* The Neighborhood Watch program in Dimmitt's Grove is well-coordinated through Block Captains. Following are a few additional strategies to increase the efficiency of this program:
- a. Distribute information about the crime-fighting tools noted above to the Block Captains. Have them share that information with residents within their respective blocks.
  - b. There is now a Neighborhood Watch app, produced by the National Neighborhood Watch Program for both iPhone and Android, which the Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Watch should consider using to communicate and interact with neighbors. The app has a number of reporting capabilities, including the ability for residents to submit anonymous reports and the ability to add photos and text to Block Captains' reports. NextDoor can also be used to coordinate neighborhood watch activities, and many neighborhoods around the country use it in that way. Whether neighbors use a tailored app like Neighborhood Watch or a general-purpose social media platform like NextDoor, the Neighborhood Watch should keep abreast of technological improvements that make reporting and coordination easy and accessible.
  - c. Request that the BPD make a presentation at one of the neighborhood meetings to showcase RAIDS Online, to help neighbors become familiar with how to use the tool. Ask BPD to discuss options to report crimes anonymously. This might help ease some of the residents' concerns in reporting.
  - d. Encourage all residents within the neighborhood to sign up to receive e-mail reports of criminal incidents occurring within the neighborhood through RAIDS Online. At minimum, make sure that all the Block Captains and neighborhood leaders are signed up to receive those alerts.
  - e. Create monthly Dimmitt's Grove's crime reports and dedicate a few minutes to discuss them at neighborhood meetings. Identify types of crimes that could be avoided through neighborhood action in the future. See strategies to address crime in the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) section below.
  - f. Invite the area patrol officer and code enforcement officer to attend neighborhood gatherings. This will help neighbors and officers establish mutually beneficial connections.
4. *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED):* Physical design, layout, lighting, buildings, and maintenance (or lack thereof) can affect the prevalence and fear of crime in your neighborhood. A quick response to the small problems of broken windows, graffiti, trash, etc., can stop the escalation toward bigger crime problems occurring. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, or CPTED, takes this one step further. It looks at what is it about a given location that places people at risk, or results in opportunities for crime. In other words, why here?

The City of Bloomington currently does not have a CPTED program (such a program is, however, in line with the City's Comprehensive Plan). However, there is a wealth of information about CPTED principles and implementation online. Below are some strategies derived from programs run by the City of Owatonna, MN, and the City of Palmdale, CA. Neighbors can use many of these strategies to address crime in Dimmitt's Grove.

## Continue to enhance neighborhood safety and engagement

- a. **Natural Surveillance:** CPTED does not promote the “fortressing” of properties; quite the contrary. The ability to see what is going on in and around a property should be your first priority. Perpetrators of crime are attracted to areas and residences with low visibility. Following are some ways to combat this problem:
- Front porches and apartment balconies add to street surveillance, and the views they provide should not be blocked by landscaping.
  - Street lights should be well-spaced and in working order, and alleys and parking areas should also be adequately lit. Lighting should also reflect the intended hours of operation; i.e., lighting of playfields or structures in local parks may actually encourage after-hour criminal activities. Motion-sensing lights perform the double duty of providing light when needed and letting trespassers know that they are visible.
  - Generally speaking, uniformly-shaped sites are safer than irregularly-shaped sites because there are fewer hiding places. Plants should follow the 3-8 rule of thumb; that is, hedges no higher than 3 feet, and tree canopies starting no lower than 8 feet. This is especially important around entryways and windows.
  - Fences should allow people to see in. Even if the fences are built for privacy, they should be of a design that is not too tall and has some visibility.
  - Windows that look out on streets and alleys are good for natural surveillance, especially bay windows. These should not be blocked. Retirees, stay-at-home parents, and people working from home offices can provide good surveillance for the neighborhood during



*CPTED Model*

## Goal 3

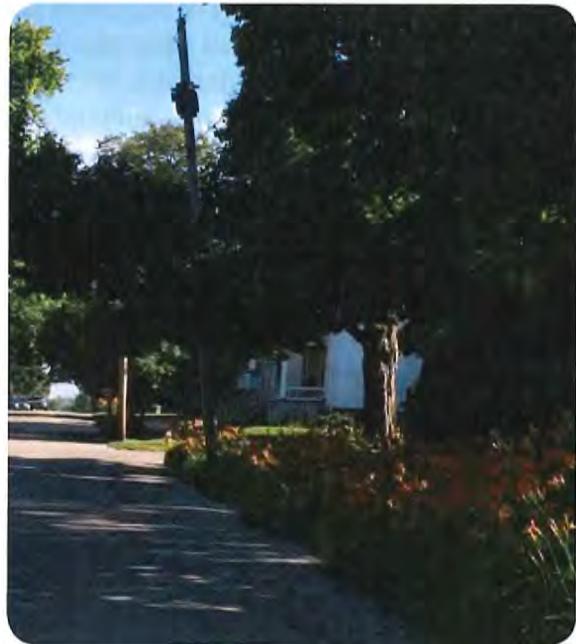
### Continue to enhance neighborhood safety and engagement

the day.

- b. **Natural Access Control:** “Access Control” refers to homes, businesses, parks and other public areas having distinct and legitimate points for entry and exits. However, this should also be balanced to avoid “user entrapment,” or not allowing for easy escape or police response to an area. Perpetrators of crime will generally avoid areas that only allow them one way to enter and exit, have high visibility, and/or have a high volume of user traffic. This can be assured by:
- Restricting the number of entry/exits to a property for better supervision;
  - Using landscaping such as low hedges and flowerbeds to identify points of entry and



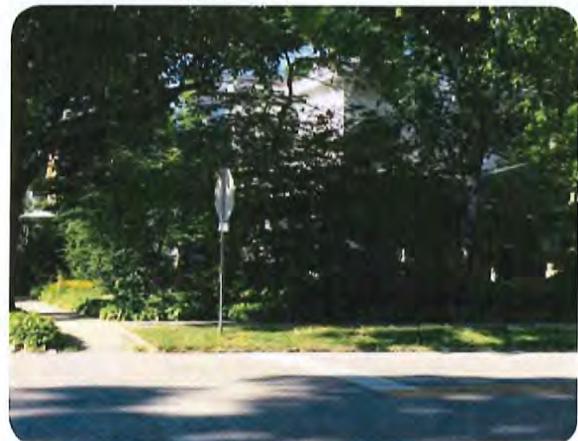
*CPTED DO's: Well maintained house with clearly demarcated boundaries and plenty of natural surveillance options,*



*CPTED DO's: Well maintained landscape along the street clearly demarcating the boundaries and sending a strong message that neighbors here care about their neighborhood.*



*CPTED DONT's: Trash piled up in the front yard along with chipping paint on the walls and a wobbly deck indicates negligence.*



*CPTED DONT's: Landscape, while defining the boundaries, is covering up natural surveillance options and providing hiding spots*

## Continue to enhance neighborhood safety and engagement

movement on property;

- Using signage and symbolic barriers to direct vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

c. **Territoriality/Defensible space:** Territoriality means showing that your community “owns” your neighborhood. While this includes removing graffiti and keeping buildings and yards maintained, it also refers to small personal touches. Creating flower gardens or boxes, putting out seasonal decorations, or maintaining the plants in traffic circles seems simple, but sends a clear message that people in your neighborhood care and won’t tolerate crime in their area. These are some measures that should be considered when planning for future growth:

- Use thorny or thick plant materials in perimeter landscape areas to discourage cutting through parking areas, trampling vegetation, approaching ground floor windows or climbing fences and walls.
- Use appropriate signage to discourage trespassers, loitering, or consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- Use public art, sculpture, flags, and banners where allowed.
- Use physical and symbolic barriers.
- Use crime prevention programs such as Neighborhood Watch along with appropriate signage.
- Use landscape lighting to mark territory.
- Ensure clear transitions between private, semi-private, and public areas.

Dimmitt’s Grove should combine forces with the West Bloomington Revitalization Project (WBRP) and other surrounding neighborhoods to encourage the City Police and Community Development Departments to create a CPTED program as a strategy for crime prevention and community development. Many communities use CDBG funds to implement such programs. Neighbors should also consider making CPTED part of a Neighborhood Blitz or any beautification efforts (see Goal 2).

5. *Other public/private initiatives to fight crime:*

- a. **Neighborhood Foot Patrol:** A Foot Patrol is a trained group of volunteers organized to increase the safety and livability of their neighborhood. They walk their neighborhood streets, parks, or schools to deter crime and report incidents and problems, rather than sit back and hope that someone else will take care of any crime or livability problems. Make this part of the job description for the Block Captains and have them do this at least once a month.
- b. **The power of “Hello”:** When you see your neighbors, it’s a good idea to wave and say “Hi.” Acknowledge each other. When you see people you don’t know on your block, wave and say “Hi” to them as well. Send the message that you are engaged in your neighborhood and that you are attentive to what is going on and who is around. People who want to commit crimes don’t want to be noticed. If they are noticed, they can be identified; that in itself is a deterrent.
- c. **Council Walks:** In many cities, City Council members, along with the heads of various city departments such as the City Manager, Police, Public Works, and Community Development, walk through a given neighborhood to see the issues first hand. Depending on the size and seriousness of issues city-wide, sometimes these are initiated by the Council or city staff. Some communities also dedicate grant funds to fix issues as a follow up to such walks. For example, Decatur, IL has Council-led neighborhood walks. Seattle, Washington has a similar program called “Find It, Fix It Community Walks.” Seattle’s program includes grant funding to fix some immediate issues observed during such walks.

## Goal 4

### Ensure development is consistent with our neighborhood character

**Discussion:** Dimmitt's Grove's unique character is one of its greatest strengths. Neighbors believe this is being threatened by some newer developments that are inconsistent with the core of the neighborhood in terms of design, scale, or other aspects. They want to see regulations that protect Dimmitt's Grove's distinctive qualities while promoting complementary development. Neighbors are aware that striking this balance is crucial to ensure the long-term vitality of the neighborhood.

**Current assets:** Dimmitt's Grove's history, curb appeal, sense of community, proximity to Downtown, walkability, affordability, and many other assets outlined in Goals 1, 2, and 3 greatly contribute to the neighborhood's appeal and unique character.

**Challenges:** Some of the challenges facing Dimmitt's Grove neighborhood are serious and threaten its historic integrity. These include the deterioration of the housing stock, rehabilitation of housing with no regard for the property's history or the character of the surrounding neighborhood, and an increase in residential density without proper planning. These are exacerbated by a lack of code enforcement and improper zoning tools (also see Goal 2).

#### Proposed Actions:

1. *Work with the City to establish a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD):* Many communities use local historic districts as tools to address housing issues similar to those in Dimmitt's Grove. However, neighbors are not in favor of establishing a local historic district in Dimmitt's Grove. Many feel that such a designation would impose undue regulations on individual homeowners with no incentives to encourage and ease the burden of compliance. Hence, this plan proposes establishing an NCD as an alternative to help protect what makes Dimmitt's Grove unique without imposing the rigidity of a typical local historic district. NCDs protect broad neighborhood characteristics, such as tree-lined streets, buildings of appropriate scale, and general design patterns, rather than the specific details of individual structures, like exterior colors or windows. They also allow for a more tailored, bottom-up



*Homes in Dimmitt's Grove with carriage walks, porches and lots of charm and unique characteristics.*

## Ensure development is consistent with our neighborhood character

approach by relying on residents within a district to identify neighborhood characteristics that they feel are important to preserve.

NCDs can take a number of forms. Before creating their own district, Brookline, Massachusetts conducted an extensive study in 2005 on NCDs across the nation to identify best practices. According to that study, NCDs generally fall into three categories: advisory, mandatory (often requiring formal review and approval), and incentive-based. Some communities have used a combination of these three types. Incentive-based approaches fall into two main categories: financial benefits and relief from zoning restrictions. Financial incentives include outright grants, tax credits for rehabilitation work that meets local requirements, and in some cases freezing property tax assessments for a period of time. Zoning relief may, for example, allow for a reduction of required setbacks. NCDs also vary in terms of how they are administered. Some NCDs include a review authority comprised of district residents, city staff, and other stakeholders, while others use an approach that relies on compliance with quantifiable design standards (defined by overlay zoning or other regulatory framework), with reviews being conducted by city staff.

The City of Bloomington does not currently have NCD-enabling legislation. Dimmitt's Grove will be the first neighborhood seeking such a designation and must work closely with City staff to develop legislation that is scalable for other neighborhoods in the City. Dimmitt's Grove neighbors should determine which neighborhood characteristics are most important to include in the design review. Concerns about zoning, parking, and the quality of new development can all be addressed in that process. Care should be taken to strike a balance between protecting the character of the neighborhood and inhibiting growth through over regulation.

Brookline's study (<http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3500>) would be an excellent resource to refer to during the process of establishing NCD-enabling legislation.

2. *Make Dimmitt's Grove an EcoDistrict:* Showcase the neighborhood in a new light. Dimmitt's Grove has a number of pedestrian-friendly features, including a walkable urban density; human-scale and historic architecture with a diversity of building sizes and types, well-connected streets, and sidewalks; mature trees providing shade along the streets; a central and convenient location close to Downtown; good transit service; many shops and restaurants; the proposed Green Top Grocery; and many other civic amenities within an easy walk from the neighborhood's homes. These characteristics are terrific



609-611 E Grove St



512-518 E Grove St

*Tastefully done medium density housing with front porches and well maintained landscapes in Dimmitt's Grove enhance the overall neighborhood character.*

## Goal 4

### Ensure development is consistent with our neighborhood character

for the environment and for public health. They reduce transportation emissions by obviating many driving trips and shortening others; they save land by keeping development compact, avoiding additional increments of sprawl; and they promote physical fitness and health by making walking safe, easy, and pleasant. These attributes are at the heart of smart growth principles that many communities aspire to build around.

This smart growth framework positions Dimmitt's Grove well to build a much greener (environmentally sustainable) neighborhood that can become a building block for a greener Bloomington. An EcoDistrict™ is one framework that can help neighborhoods or districts become greener. EcoDistricts bring together neighborhood stakeholders, property developers, utilities, and municipalities, accelerating sustainable development at the neighborhood scale by integrating building and infrastructure projects with community and individual action. A neighborhood or district is small enough to allow rapid innovation but big enough that changes can have a meaningful impact. Desired outcomes at the district level include improved environmental performance; deployment of emerging technologies; improved community participation and pride; new patterns of behavior; economic development for local businesses; and job creation. For individual homeowners, EcoDistricts bring a number of tangible financial benefits, including reduced energy costs, increased property values, and long-term economic viability.

Depending on the specific needs of the target area and the community opportunities available, EcoDistricts may include features such as district energy; community solar and water management; green buildings; bike sharing and carpooling programs; rainwater harvesting; green streets (streets



*House in Dimmitt's Grove neighborhood with a vegetable garden in the front yard.*



*Environmentally conscious landscape in Dimmitt's Grove neighborhood*

## Ensure development is consistent with our neighborhood character

with sustainable infrastructure improvements); zero-waste programs; district composting; native planting campaigns; urban agriculture; and multimodal transportation improvements. These features are considered not in a vacuum, but with regard for how they contribute to an overall sense of place. Projects meeting the EcoDistricts protocol typically include attractive, welcoming design, public art, and other placemaking enhancements.

Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association leaders should seriously consider taking the EcoDistrict protocol challenge. The protocol is structured around three core areas:

- a. Three Imperatives placing social, economic, and environmental sustainability at the center of neighborhood initiatives. These include:
  - Equity
  - Resilience
  - Climate Protection
- b. Six Priorities consisting of six rigorous goals, 49 objectives, and 95 indicators used to scope and define a districts sustainability agenda. These include:
  - Place
  - Prosperity
  - Health + Wellness
  - Connectivity
  - Living Infrastructure
  - Resource Protection
- c. Three Implementation Phases that set the conditions for sustained, scalable outcomes that address the Protocol's Imperatives and Priorities and meet the specific needs of the district over time. These phases include:
  - Formation
  - Roadmap
  - Performance

The EcoDistricts website (<https://ecodistricts.org/>) provides the necessary knowledge base and assistance for implementation. The City of Bloomington, Ecology Action Center, the University of Illinois Master Naturalist program, the Illinois Prairie Wild Ones, Mid Central Community Action, NeighborWorks America, and the Old House Society are a few local and regional partners that can partner with the neighborhood in becoming an Eco District.

## Goal 5

### Promote our neighborhood through community education and awareness

**Discussion:** Dimmitt's Grove is one of the best-kept secrets in Bloomington-Normal. This neighborhood's many great features—its history, unique architecture, tree-lined streets, walkability, access to multimodal transportation—should be the envy of every neighborhood. However, most residents in the broader community are unaware of Dimmitt's Grove and what it has to offer. Increasing awareness of the neighborhood through marketing and promotion is key to achieving the first four goals outlined in this plan.

#### Metric:

#### Current assets:

1. *The Neighborhood Association:* The Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association is among the oldest and most active in the City. The association and its efforts to increase awareness of Dimmitt's Grove have served the neighborhood well. Below are some attempts the association has made to promote the neighborhood and create opportunities for neighbors to get to know each other:
  - a. A website with information on neighborhood's history, events, and the notes from its bi-monthly meetings. The website is also a great resource for new residents to the area with some information about whom to call for various services. The association also has a social media presence through Facebook and NextDoor.
  - b. Chili cook-off, bake sales during the Farmer's Markets, and traveling socials in which many neighbors open their homes to neighbors. The neighborhood also participates in the Old House Society's annual Old House Tour.
  - c. One-time or discontinued activities include:
    - i. Self-guided tours;
    - ii. The production of a brochure with information about the neighborhood's history;
    - iii. The "Day in Historic Dimmitt's Grove" event, which included guided walking tours of historic homes and many of the neighborhood's well-kept gardens and lawns, as well as music, food, children's activities, and more.Neighbors noted that while these activities were once done annually, dwindling attendance at these events resulted in their termination.
2. *Neighborhood Block Captains:* As part of the Neighborhood Watch program, every block within the neighborhood is represented by a Block Captain. These Block Captains are a great conduit through which to distribute information. (Refer to Goal 3 for more on the Neighborhood Watch.)

#### Challenges:

1. *Neighborhood asset marketing:* Currently the neighborhood's geographic definition does not include some of the locations most frequently referenced as assets. These include the Grove Street commercial district, Marie Litta Park, and the Library, all just outside the neighborhood boundary.
2. *Human resources and time:* While all Dimmitt's Grove residents are part of the neighborhood association, there are only a few neighbors active in association duties. These active participants are already overwhelmed with voluntary duties and noted the difficulty of committing more time.
3. *Perceptions regarding public safety:* While neighbors feel safe in Dimmitt's Grove, its proximity to Downtown gives rise to some negative perceptions about safety.

#### Proposed Actions:

1. *Define a more inclusive brand:* Every neighborhood has a brand—put simply, what people outside of the neighborhood think of it, good or bad. Dimmitt's Grove has a strong identity as a historic neighbor-

## Promote our neighborhood through community education and awareness

hood, which is and should be a key part of that brand. However, it has many other unique, appealing, and defining attributes which may not be widely known outside the neighborhood, such as walkability, bikability, access to amenities, proximity to Downtown, and a great sense of community. Neighbors feel very safe, but people living outside the neighborhood might have a different impression. Dimmitt's Grove should establish a new verbal and visual identity to reintroduce the neighborhood and help the rest of the community see it as neighbors do.

NeighborWorks America has put together a toolkit to assist neighbors in marketing and redefining their neighborhood image. This toolkit includes a Neighborhood Branding and Marketing Guide as well as grant funding to put together promotional videos and other marketing materials. Locally, Mid Central Community Action (MCCA) is a NeighborWorks partner. Dimmitt's Grove can work closely with MCCA to establish a neighborhood marketing and branding program and tap into the resources offered through NeighborWorks.

2. *Targeted marketing:* As discussed in Goal 2, neighbors have noted difficulty in attracting families with young children and also wanted to focus on first-time homebuyers who may not have children yet. Many Millennials fall in this category. According to a study conducted by the National Association of Realtors, Millennials are entering the housing market at a decent rate (contrary to popular belief), and they made up the largest group of homebuyers in 2015. The study noted that while Millennials are interested in living in walkable urban neighborhoods, they are gravitating towards suburbs due to affordability issues. It also highlighted that they are not building new homes but are buying older ones: "the younger the buyer, the older the home they purchased." These facts work in favor of Dimmitt's Grove, with its relatively affordable older homes and location in the heart of the city. Some strategies to reach first-time homebuyers are identified in the proposed actions section of Goal 2. Additional strategies may be identified with the assistance of a NeighborWorks marketing project.
3. *Take advantage of the location and make the neighborhood more visible:* There is a lot of pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the areas surrounding Dimmitt's Grove neighborhood, near Downtown along Front Street, the Grove Street Commercial district, Bloomington Public Library, and other civic buildings. Neighborhood signage and public art in these areas could greatly enhance the neighborhood's visibility and aesthetics. Use the talent of Dimmitt's Grove's resident artists or university students to design signs that do more than simply demarcate boundaries. Use resources such as State Farm or



*Example of a gateway sign that effectively integrates public art.*



*Example of signage that can be placed throughout the neighborhood*

## Goal 5

### Promote our neighborhood through community education and awareness

NeighborWorks grants to implement these ideas. Such efforts can greatly benefit from and complement the City's efforts to position Downtown as an arts district (see Chapter 7 of the Comprehensive Plan).

4. *Flood communication channels:* Many great things are happening in the neighborhood. Make sure that information gets out to the rest of the community.
  - a. Negative stories are much more likely to catch the media's attention. Be intentional and work closely with the media to share your positive stories.
  - b. Identify Neighborhood Ambassadors who can be positive spokespeople for the neighborhood. Promote the neighborhood at civic clubs, particularly those that attract young professionals.
  - c. Partner with Bloomington Public Library during the National Historic Preservation week to spread information about Dimmitt's Grove.
5. *Help outsiders see inside the neighborhood:* Many people outside the neighborhood are not aware of Dimmitt's Grove, and those who have heard of it may not see it in the same light as the neighbors themselves. People will not get to know Dimmitt's Grove better because of statistics like median housing value or median income. Numbers have their place, but the best way to tell Dimmitt's Grove's story is to show, rather than tell, what it is really like. Visual marketing tools such as videos can help in that regard, and opportunities for outsiders to interact with neighbors and experience the neighborhood firsthand are even more powerful. Neighbors are already doing good work in this area. These efforts



*Electric boxes such as the one at the intersection of Clinton and Grove present an opportunity for neighborhood signage. These examples here showcases how electric boxes can become canvases of art.*



## Promote our neighborhood through community education and awareness

should be continued and enhanced where possible, and new initiatives should be pursued.

- a. Build on the self-guided walking tours to help people get familiar with the neighborhood. For example:
  - i. Coordinate the walking tours with the Downtown and Looking for Lincoln walking tours. Install plaques in front of historical properties with information about their significance. Such efforts would improve any walking tour effort, but particularly the self-guided tours.
  - ii. Partner with health groups to showcase the neighborhood while participants get their steps in.
  - iii. Partner with environmental groups to showcase gardens featuring native/prairie plants. Ex: participating in Yard Smart week led by Ecology Action Center.
  - iv. Bloomington-Normal's bike advocacy groups are very active in community events. Partner with them to conduct bike tours in the neighborhood .
- b. Continue to invite the broader community to events like the Chili Cook-off and the Old House Tour.
- c. Establish additional venues and opportunities to tell the neighborhood's story. Using these tools to market the neighborhood to a broader audience is key.
  - i. Offer realtors the assistance of neighborhood ambassadors during the showing of single-family homes in the neighborhood.
  - ii. Reestablish some of the previous traditions such as the newsletter, brochure or the Day in Dimmitt's Grove. The newsletter can be electronic instead of printed. Promote the newsletter outside of Dimmitt's Grove and allow the entire community to subscribe to this electronic newsletter. Distribute the brochures within apartments, civic clubs and other avenues discussed to reach potential new neighbors.
  - iii. Every neighbor who made this neighborhood their permanent home has a positive story to tell. Use those stories to showcase the neighborhood. These stories can be integrated into other marketing material like videos, brochures or the website.
  - iv. Work with the City to link the neighborhood's website to the City's website. This recommendation is consistent with the goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan, as outlined in the Neighborhoods chapter (Chapter 4).
- d. Based on the items on the agenda, invite City staff and aldermen, District 87 administration, County Board members, and other representatives of local governments and utilities, to attend neighborhood events and meetings. Firsthand exposure to the neighborhood will help them understand the neighborhood as a real, living entity rather than an abstract collection of numbers.
- e. Engage the business community, especially those located along the periphery of the neighborhood, in neighborhood activities. Many businesses choose to invest in neighborhoods when they feel connected and believe in them. Neighbors tend to support businesses that are invested in their neighborhoods. This can be a mutually beneficial relationship for neighbors and businesses, while also increasing Dimmitt's Grove's visibility outside the neighborhood.
- f. Engage faith-based organizations. Faith-based organizations sometimes "adopt" neighborhoods to provide centers for social activity and help people in need. Wesley United Methodist Church, Central Point Church of Christ, and New Hope Missionary Baptist Church are the three churches in and around Dimmitt's Grove. All three of these churches may have congregations composed of people from both inside and outside the neighborhood. Neighbors can approach

## Goal 5

### Promote our neighborhood through community education and awareness

them to gauge their interest in being a part of neighborhood activities and serving as community spaces. Again, this would be beneficial for the neighborhood while taking advantage of the churches' connections to the broader community.

6. Increase participation in the association: It will take many man-hours and resources to help advance the goals and actions outlined in this plan. Neighbors actively involved in the organization are already overwhelmed by the amount of work involved. Relying on a small pool of neighbors to do all the work is not feasible. New people should be recruited to help with neighborhood activities. This is, of course, easier said than done. Below are some strategies that could be pursued to increase participation:
  - a. Engage with new neighbors early and often: Create and distribute a "Welcome to the neighborhood" packet to the new neighbors. This packet can include information about the neighborhood, its website and social media channels, how to get involved in the neighborhood organization, contact information for key people in the neighborhood, resources for historic home owners, neighborhood events, the neighborhood watch group, and any other information they might need. Designate a "New Neighbor Liaison" and task them with all things related to new neighbors. These gestures will help break the ice and engage new residents in the association's activities.
  - b. Engage neighborhood youth: Identify projects that kids can work on. Kids are particularly good with technology and attuned to environmental issues, and bring fresh and different perspectives to marketing. Identify neighborhood youth aged 11 to 17 years old. Have them audit the website and task them to improve it, or invite them to identify pieces of the plan they can assist with. Let them lead, with some guidance. This helps them gain ownership not only of the project but of the neighborhood more broadly.
  - c. IWU and ISU can also be a tremendous resource. Students are always looking for community service projects. Some professors' research or class projects may also align with the neighborhood goals.
    - i. Identify projects that can use some assistance but are not time constrained. Engage professors from different disciplines such as Art, Marketing, History, Environmental Studies, and social science programs, to gauge interest in helping with implementation.
    - ii. Identify a contact person from the neighborhood to be the liaison between the neighborhood and the universities.
  - d. Make an increased effort to identify and recruit neighbors typically not involved in association activities (e.g., first-time homebuyers, families with young children, and Millennials) to become actively engaged in the association's activities. Their perspectives will be greatly helpful to market the neighborhood to their peers.
  - e. Engage renters and landlords. Neighborhood associations often say it is not easy to engage renters in neighborhood activities. From a renter's perspective, it can be intimidating to engage in activities typically dominated by homeowners, and younger renters may be at a stage in life where they are not ready to engage. However, it is crucial to get them involved, even if it is only for specific tasks, activities, or meetings. Helping renters become more engaged creates a friendlier neighborhood, potentially making minor neighborly disputes easier to resolve. Some will even be prompted to stay long-term or become homeowners. Following are some possible ways to better engage renters:
    - i. Dedicate at least one annual meeting for renters to discuss issues. Most neighborhood issues, such as safety, are a concern for both owners and renters, however, issues

**Promote our neighborhood through community education and awareness**

such as the quality of rental housing affect renters more. Invite area landlords to the meeting as well. While this may not solve all the issues with the rental housing in the neighborhood, this inclusive approach can begin building bridges between the owners, renters, and landlords.

- ii. Recruit at least one or two long-term renters to be ambassadors for the rental community within the neighborhood.
- iii. Gather and distribute resources for renters. The City's Human Relations Commission, which aims to "eliminate unlawful discrimination within the City of Bloomington," is a good first point of contact for people who want to learn what their rights are and what resources are available to them.

## PHYSICAL OPPORTUNITIES



*The intersection of Gridley St and Front St provides an opportunity to create a neighborhood entrance. Such enhancements could include public art that draws peoples attention to the neighborhood.*

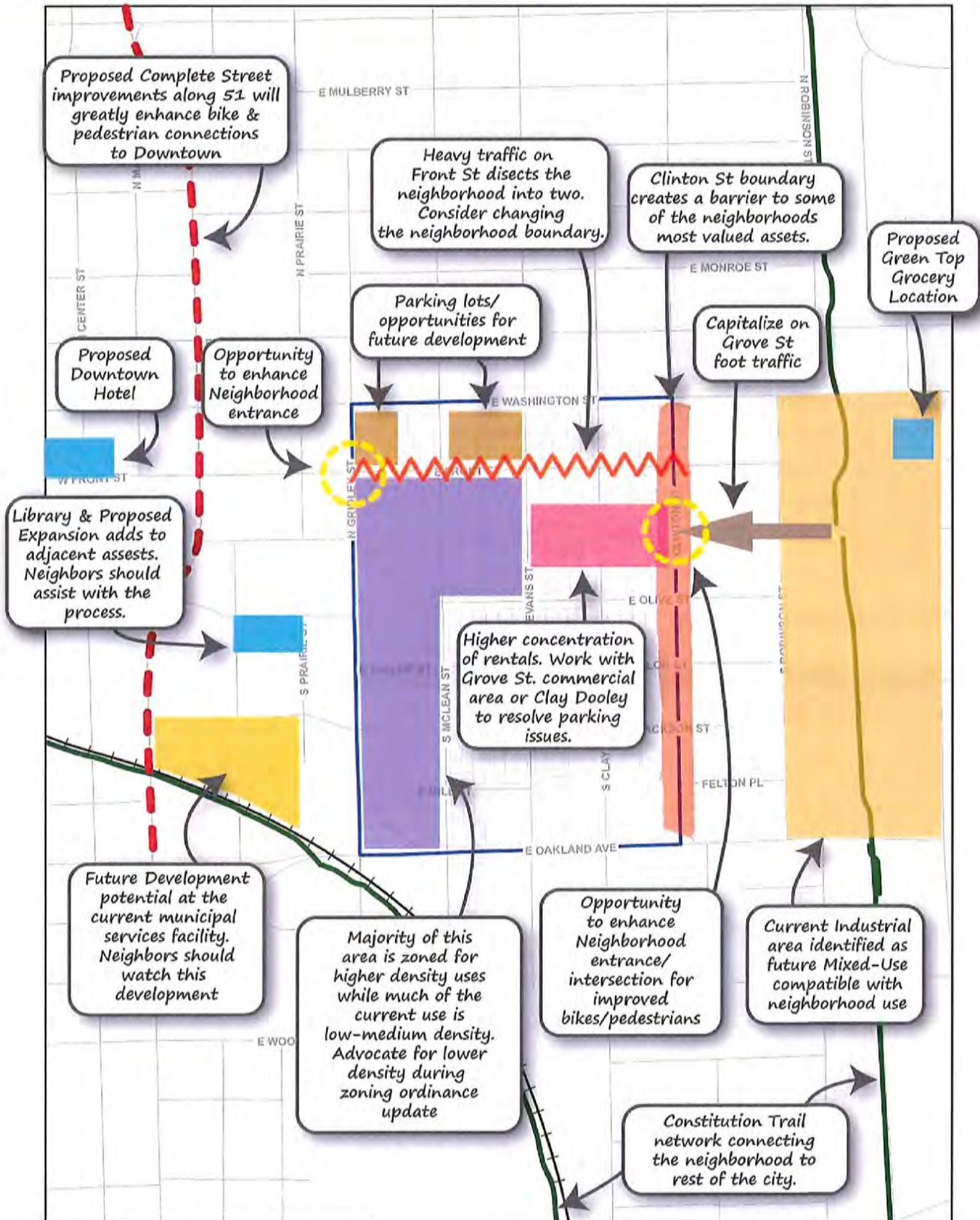
*The intersection of Clinton St and E Grove St provides a perfect gateway into the neighborhood from an already frequented E Grove St commercial area. Neighbors should work with the City to make this intersection more accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists and create a unique neighborhood entrance.*



*Clay Dooley located on E Grove St and Gridley St is an example of a commercial parking lot that can accommodate over flow parking in their off peak hours.*



# PHYSICAL OPPORTUNITIES



# IMPLEMENTATION

## STRATEGY

GOAL/ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	FUNDING/FINANCING/IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS
<i>Note: This is a summary of the Goals and Proposed Actions discussed in greater detail in the Goals section.</i>				
<b>GOAL 1: PRESERVE THE HISTORIC INTEGRITY OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD</b>				
<b>1. Update the City's Historic Preservation Plan</b>	City	DGNA; Other Preservation area neighborhood organizations	Short-Medium	City funding; IHPA
<b>2. Ensure appropriate zoning for Dimmitt's Grove</b>	City	DGNA; Other Preservation area neighborhood organizations	Short	No new funding necessary
<b>3. Promote existing resources</b>	DGNA	OHS; WBRP; others	Ongoing	No new funding necessary
<b>4. Infrastructure Improvements</b>				
a. Increase infrastructure funding	City	Regeneration and Preservation area neighborhood organizations, businesses, nonprofits, and other stakeholders	Ongoing	Multiple local, state, and federal funding sources
b. Publish and maintain a list of City dept. contacts	DGNA		Short	No new funding necessary
c. Promote and use the myBloomington reporting app	DGNA	City	Short	No new funding necessary
d. Seek alternative funding sources	DGNA	City; Local businesses; MCCA	Ongoing	City; SFCE; NWA; IPCF
<b>5. Support infill and redevelopment</b>				
a. Keep abreast of City agendas and initiatives	DGNA	City	Ongoing	No new funding necessary
b. Assign a neighborhood liaison to City Council	DGNA	City	Short	No new funding necessary
<b>6. Track and protect historic properties</b>	City	DGNA; McLean County Museum of History; OHS; other Preservation area neighborhood organizations	Short	IHPA
<b>GOAL 2: INCREASE HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD</b>				
<b>1. Elementary school district issues</b>				
a. Promote In-District/In-Zone transfers	DGNA		Ongoing	No new funding necessary
b. Help alleviate perception issues	DGNA	District 87; Sheridan Elementary School	Ongoing	No new funding necessary
c. Provide a list of area private schools	DGNA		Short	No new funding necessary
d. Strengthen neighborhoods in the Regeneration and Preservation areas	City; District 87	WBRP; EDC; McLean County Health Department; Illinois Wesleyan Action Research Center; other Preservation and Regeneration area neighborhood organizations, nonprofits, and businesses	Ongoing	United Way; BN Advantage; IPCF; Promise Neighborhood grants; Safe Routes to School grants; Promise Councils; City and District 87 capital improvement programs; other major local businesses and foundations
<b>2. Work closely with area realtors</b>				
a. Assign a neighborhood liaison to share information with realtors	DGNA	Realtors Association	Short	No new funding necessary
b. Address concerns expressed by prospective buyers	DGNA	Realtors Association	Ongoing	

### TIMELINE

Short: 1-2 years Medium: 3-5 years Long: More than 5 years

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### ACRONYMS

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# IMPLEMENTATION

## STRATEGY

GOAL/ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	FUNDING/FINANCING/IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS
c. Showcase tasteful renovations of historic homes	DGNA	Realtors Association; MCCA	Short	Realtors Association; NWA
<b>3. Compile For Sale by Owner listings and publish on website</b>	DGNA		Ongoing	No new funding necessary
<b>4. Do more to attract first-time homebuyers</b>	DGNA	HR managers; Apartment associations; Realtors Association; MCCA	Short-Medium	NWA
<b>5. Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH)</b>	City	Reach Illinois; DBA; area employers	Medium-Long	City; Participating employers
<b>6. Code Enforcement</b>				
a. Increase funding for the Rental Housing Inspection Program	City	DGNA	Short-Medium	City
b. Promote the myBloomington app	DGNA	City	Short	No new funding necessary
c. Publish a public code violation database	City	DGNA; Other neighborhood organizations	Short	No new funding necessary
d. Increase code awareness	DGNA	City; MCCA	Short	NWA
e. Help residents avoid code violations	DGNA	City; WBRP; MCCA	Ongoing	NWA
<b>7. Parking</b>				
a. Investigate establishing a residential parking permit program	City	DGNA; Other neighborhoods in the Preservation area	Medium-Long	New fees
b. Address parking issues during zoning revision	City	DGNA	Short-Medium	No new funding necessary
<b>8. Re-conversion/De-conversion programs</b>	City	DGNA	Short-Medium	City; CDBG and other grants
<b>9. Neighborhood beautification</b>	DGNA	City (Citizens' Beautification Committee); IMG	Ongoing	IMG; SFCF; IPCF
<b>10. Neighborhood Blitz</b>	City; DGNA	Several	Short	City; NWA; IMG; SFCF; IPCF
<b>11. Investigate rental density caps</b>	City	DGNA	Long	
<b>GOAL 3: CONTINUE TO ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT</b>				
<b>1. Know your neighbors</b>	DGNA		Ongoing	No new funding necessary
<b>2. Know the tools available to fight crime</b>	DGNA	BPD	Ongoing	No new funding necessary
<b>3. Increase Neighborhood Watch efforts</b>				
a. Distribute information about crime-fighting tools through Block Captains.	DGNA Neighborhood Watch		Short	No new funding necessary
b. Keep up-to-date on neighborhood watch technology	DGNA Neighborhood Watch		Short	No new funding necessary
c. Increase neighbors' awareness of RAIDS Online and anonymous crime reporting tools.	DGNA	BPD	Short	No new funding necessary
d. Encourage residents to sign up for crime alerts through RAIDS Online	DGNA	BPD	Short	No new funding necessary
e. Create monthly neighborhood crime reports and discuss them at neighborhood meetings.	DGNA	BPD	Ongoing	No new funding necessary
f. Establish relationships with patrol and code enforcement officers	DGNA	BPD	Short	No new funding necessary

### TIMELINE

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# IMPLEMENTATION

## STRATEGY

GOAL/ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	FUNDING/FINANCING/IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS
<b>4. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)</b>	City	DGNA, WBRP, other neighborhood groups	Short-Medium	CDBG; SFCE; NWA; other grants
<b>5. Other public/private initiatives to fight crime</b>				
a. Establish a Neighborhood Foot Patrol	DGNA	Neighborhood Watch	Short	No new funding necessary
b. Be neighborly	Neighbors		Ongoing	No new funding necessary
c. Set up "Council Walks" to bring neighborhood issues to the City's attention	DGNA	City Council; City staff	Short	No new funding necessary
<b>GOAL 4: ENSURE DEVELOPMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER</b>				
<b>1. Establish a Neighborhood Conservation District</b>	City	DGNA; Other Regeneration and Preservation area neighborhood organizations	Short-Medium	City
<b>2. Make Dimmitt's Grove an EcoDistrict</b>	DGNA	City (incl. Parks and Recreation); EAC; IMG; Illinois Prairie Wild Ones	Medium	EPA grants; City; EAC; IMG
<b>GOAL 5: PROMOTE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS</b>				
<b>1. Define a more inclusive brand</b>	DGNA	MCCA; Universities; City HR managers; MCCA;	Short	SFCF; NWA; other grants
<b>2. Targeted marketing</b>	DGNA	Apartment managers; media outlets	Short	NWA
<b>3. Take advantage of the location and make the neighborhood more visible</b>	DGNA	Local artists; university students; DBA; MCCA	Short	SFCF; NWA
<b>4. Flood communication channels</b>				
a. Work with the media to promote positive stories	DGNA	Media outlets	Short	Neighborhood association dues, bake sales, etc.
b. Choose Neighborhood Ambassadors	DGNA	Clubs/civic groups	Short	No new funding necessary
c. Partner with the Bloomington Public Library during National Historic Preservation Week	DGNA	Bloomington Public Library	Short	No new funding necessary
<b>5. Help outsiders see inside the neighborhood</b>				
a. Expand the self-guided walking tours				
i. Coordinate the tours with the Downtown and Looking for Lincoln walking tours	DGNA	DBA; Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition	Short	No new funding necessary
ii. Partner with health groups to showcase the neighborhood's walkability				
iii. Partner with environmental groups to showcase native prairie plantings				
iv. Partner with bike advocacy groups to conduct neighborhood bike tours				
b. Continue to invite the broader community to neighborhood events				

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# IMPLEMENTATION

## STRATEGY

GOAL/ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	FUNDING/FINANCING/IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS
c. Establish additional venues and opportunities to tell the neighborhood's story				
i. Have neighborhood ambassadors partner with realtors				
ii. Reestablish some of the previous traditions such as the newsletter, brochure, or the Day in Dimmitt's Grove	DGNA		Short	No new funding necessary
iii. Showcase neighbors' stories	DGNA		Short	No new funding necessary
iv. Link the neighborhood's website to the City's website	City	DGNA	Short	No new funding necessary
d. Invite public officials to attend neighborhood events and meetings				
e. Engage the business community in neighborhood activities				
f. Engage faith-based organizations				
<b>6. Increase participation in the association</b>	DGNA		Short	
a. Engage new neighbors	DGNA		Short	No new funding necessary
b. Engage neighborhood youth	DGNA		Short	No new funding necessary
c. Engage university professors and students				
i. Identify projects and gauge interest in collaboration	DGNA	Professors and students	Short	No new funding necessary
ii. Assign a liaison to the universities	DGNA	Universities	Short	No new funding necessary
d. Engage first-time homebuyers, families with children, and Millennials	DGNA		Short	No new funding necessary
e. Engage renters and landlords	DGNA		Short	No new funding necessary
i. Dedicate at least one annual meeting to renters' issues	DGNA	Renters, landlords	Short	No new funding necessary
ii. Recruit ambassadors from the rental community	DGNA	Renters, landlords		No new funding necessary
iii. Gather and distribute resources for renters	DGNA	City; MCCA		No new funding necessary

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Note: Most items that are listed as short-, medium-, or long-term priorities will require some ongoing maintenance or follow-up.

### ACRONYMS

BFD: Bloomington Police Department  
 DBA: Downtown Bloomington Association  
 DGNA: Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association  
 EDC: Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council  
 IHPA: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

IMG: (Uoff) Illinois Master Gardeners Program  
 IPCF: Illinois Prairie Community Foundation  
 MCCA: Mid-Central Community Action  
 NWA: NeighborWorks America  
 SFCF: State Farm Companies Foundation  
 OHS: Old House Society  
 WBRP: West Bloomington Revitalization Project



# APPENDICES

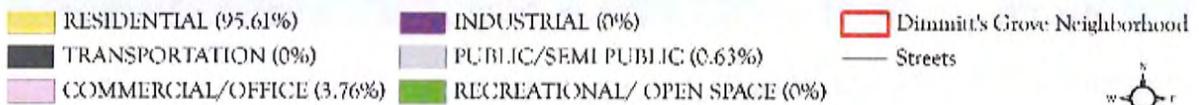
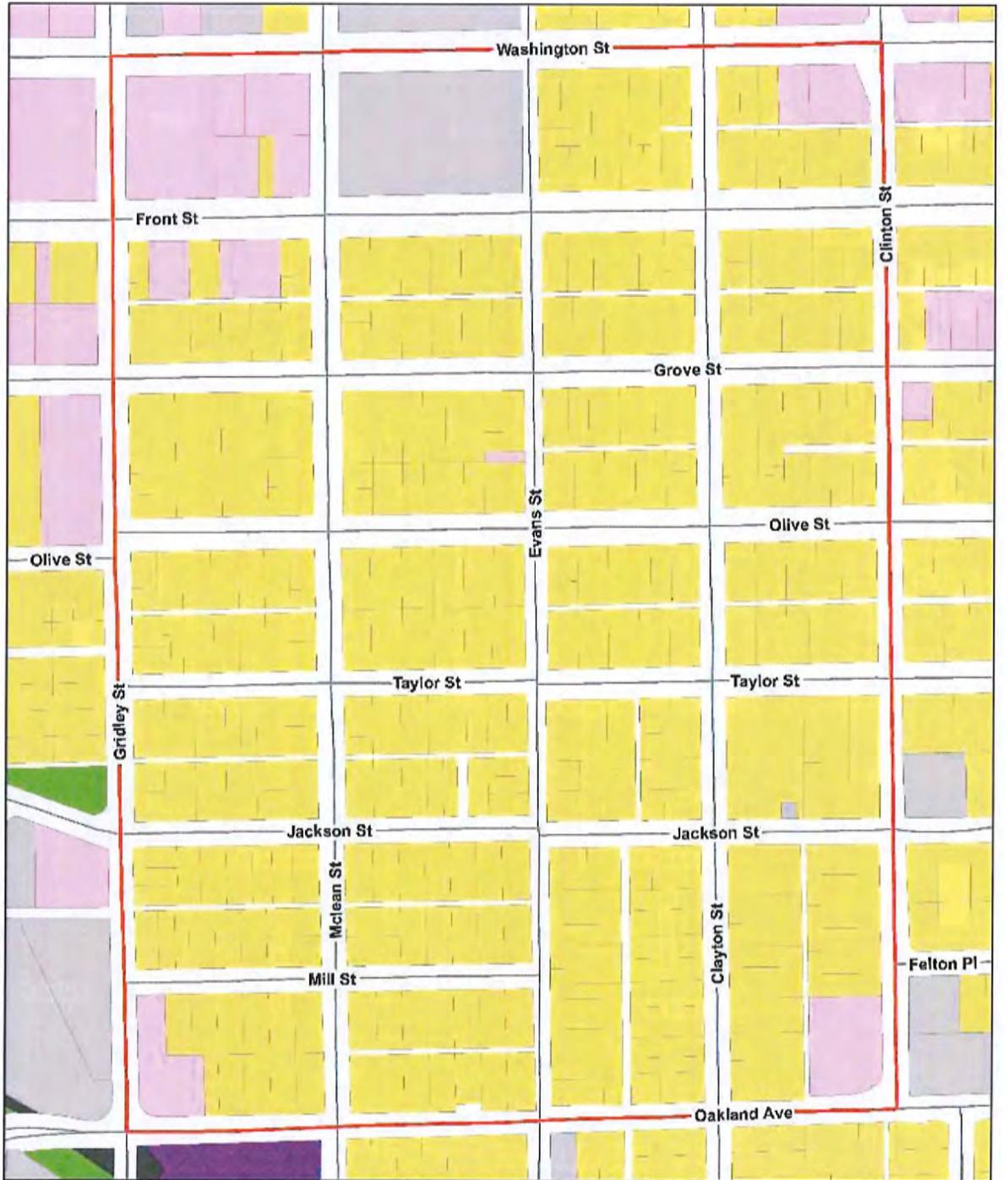
Map 1. Neighborhood Boundary



 Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood  
 Streets



## Map 2. Actual Land Use



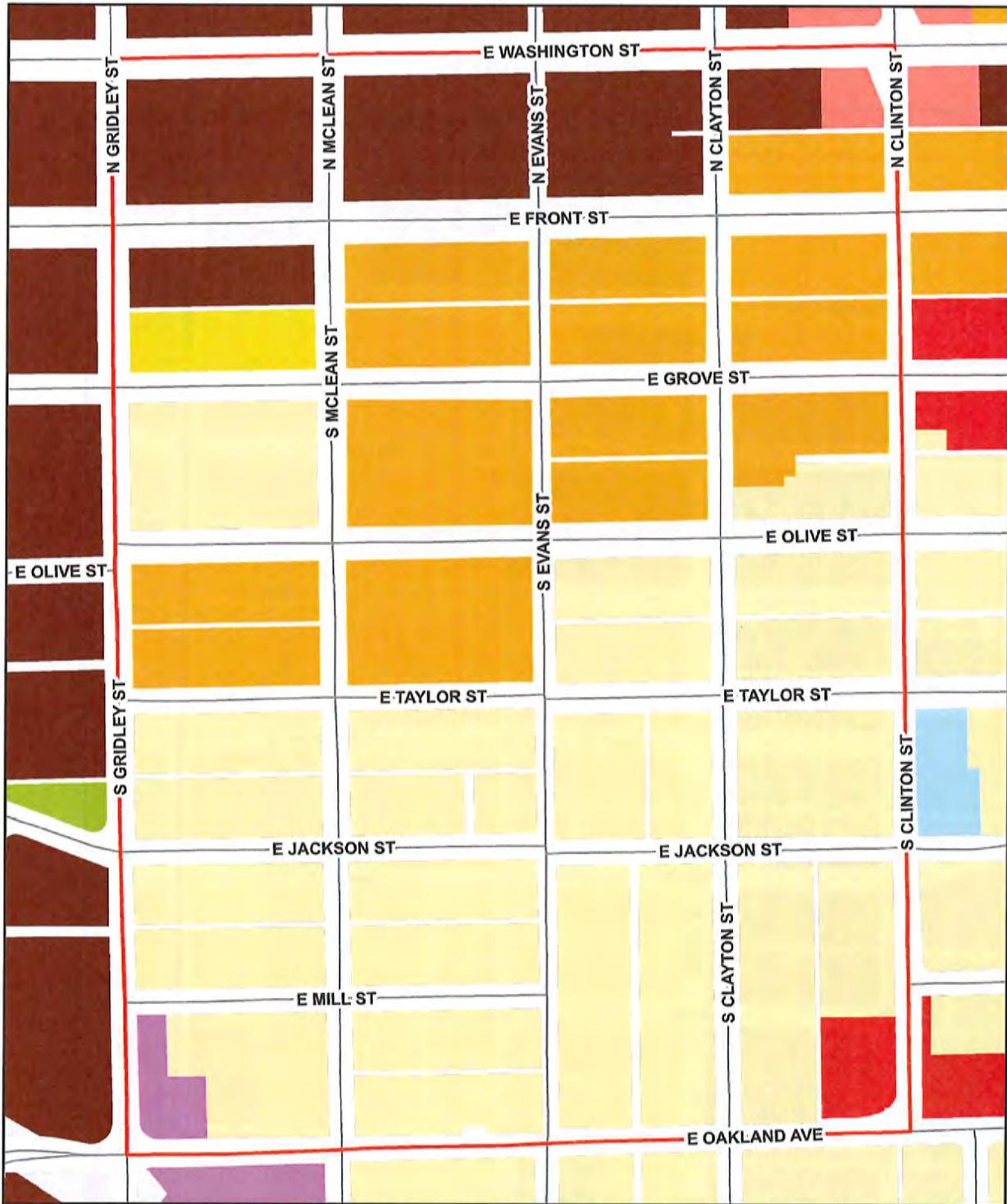
# Map 3. Zoning



- B-1 Highway Business District (0.94%)
    - B-3 Central Business District (3.45%)
    - C-1 Office District (0.31%)
    - S-2 Public Lands and institutions District (0.31%)
  - R-1C High Density Single-Family Residence District (20.69%)
    - R-3B High Density Multiple-Family Residence District (38.24%)
    - R-2 Mixed Residence District (36.05%)
    - S-4 (3.45%)
- Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood
  Streets



# Map 4. Adopted Land Use



- |                                |                         |                |                              |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Low Density Residential        | Mixed Use               | Institutional  | Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood |
| Medium Density Residential     | Neighborhood Commercial | Conservation   | Streets                      |
| High Density Residential       | Regional Commercial     | Parks          |                              |
| Special Residential Activities | Employment Centers      | Transportation |                              |



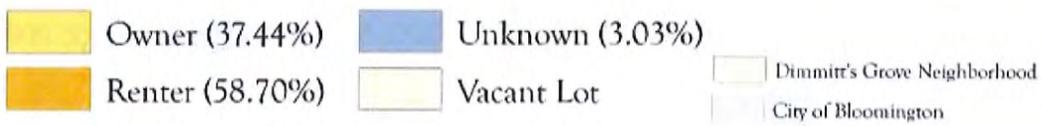
# Map 5. Assessed Market Values



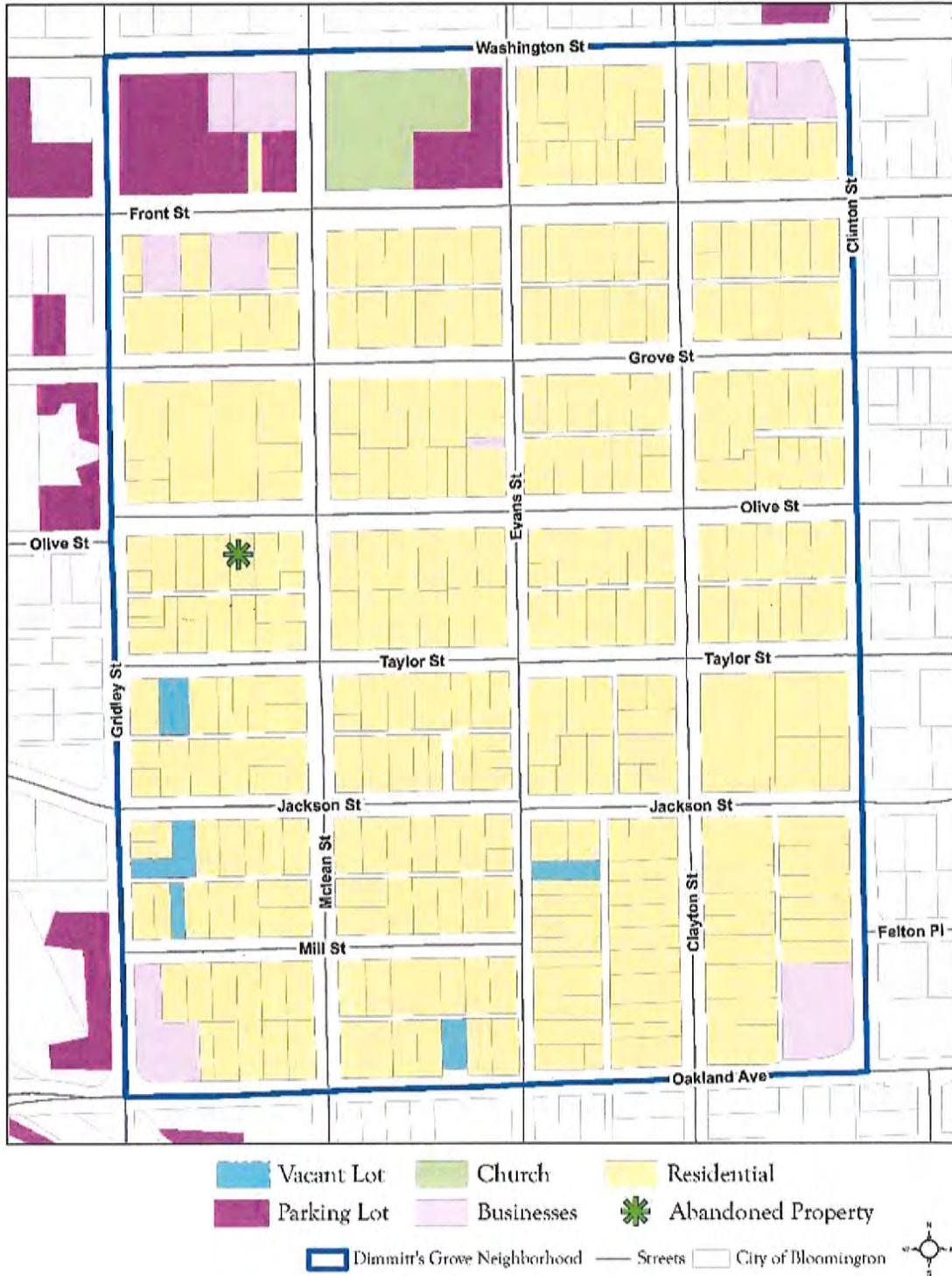
■ Less than \$50,000   
 ■ \$50,001-\$100,000   
 ■ \$100,001-\$155,000   
 ■ Over \$155,000

Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood   
 — Streets   
 □ City of Bloomington

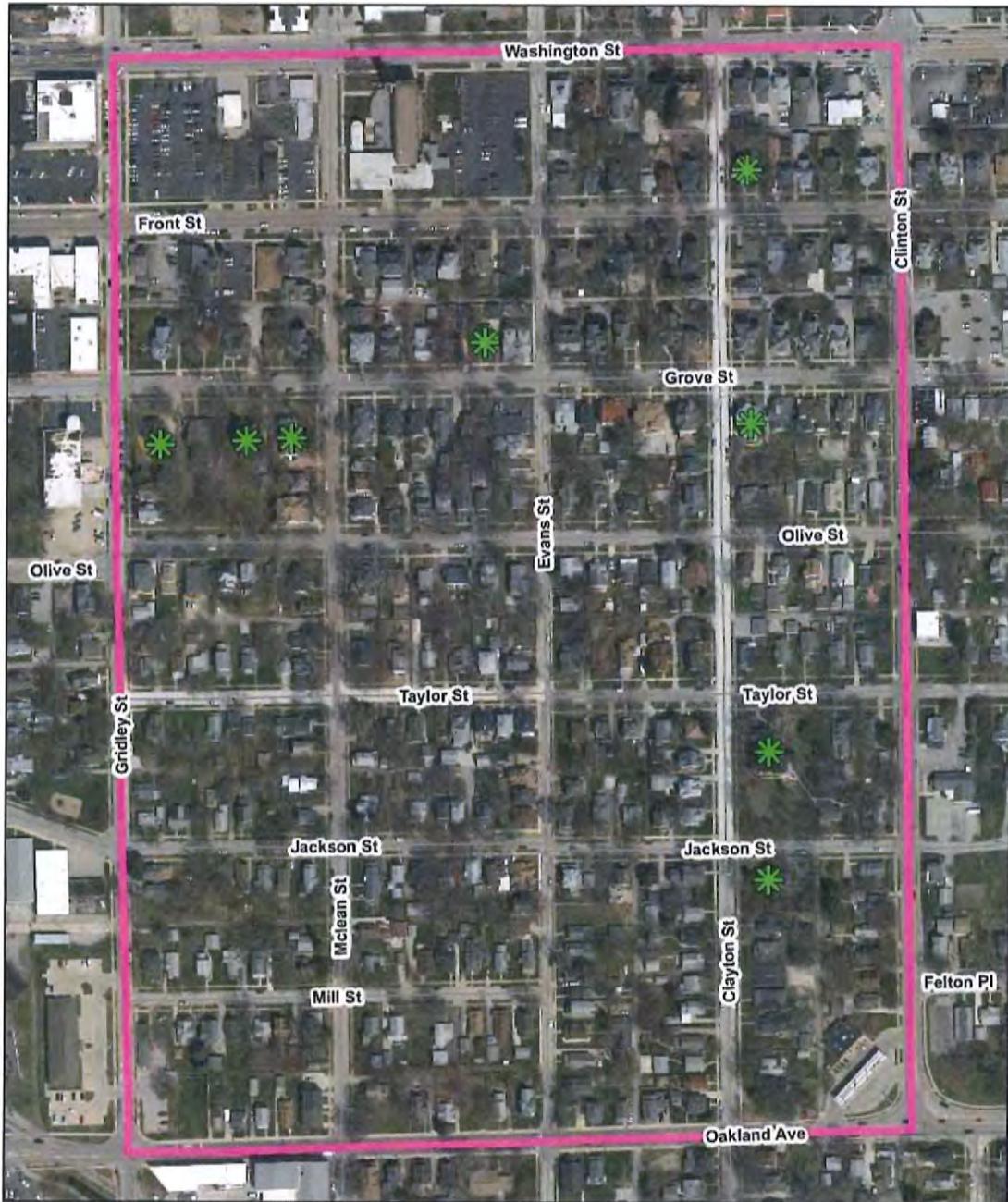
## Map 6. Home Ownership



# Map 7. Vacant Lots and Parking



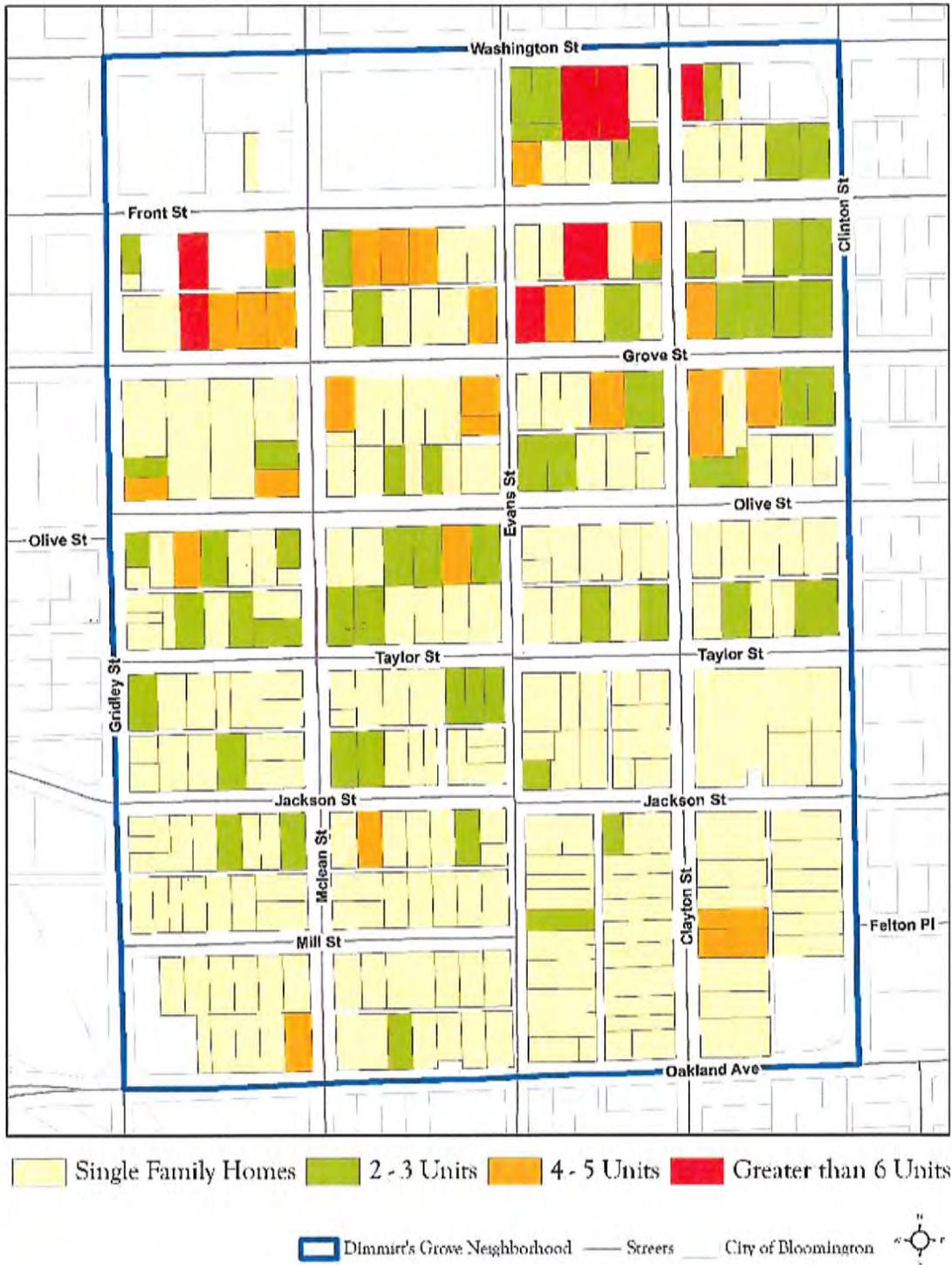
## Map 8. Nationally Registered Historic Homes



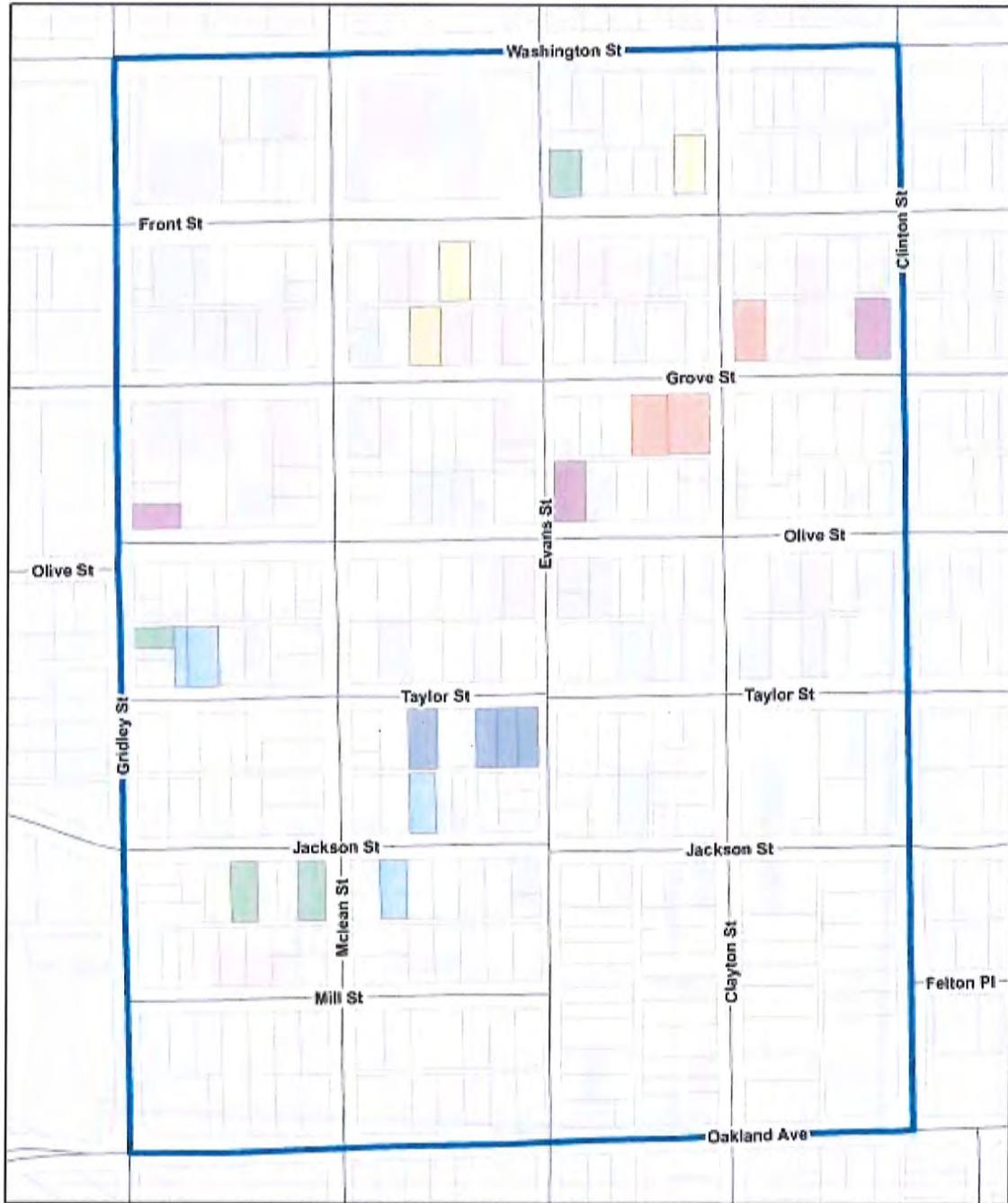
 Historic Homes  Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood  
— Streets



## Map 9. Multifamily Units



## Map 10. Properties Owned by the Same Landlord



### Landlords which own 3 or More Properties

A B C D E F

Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood — Streets City of Bloomington



# Map 11. Code Enforcement Complaints



- Property Maintenance
- Yard Upkeep
- Other

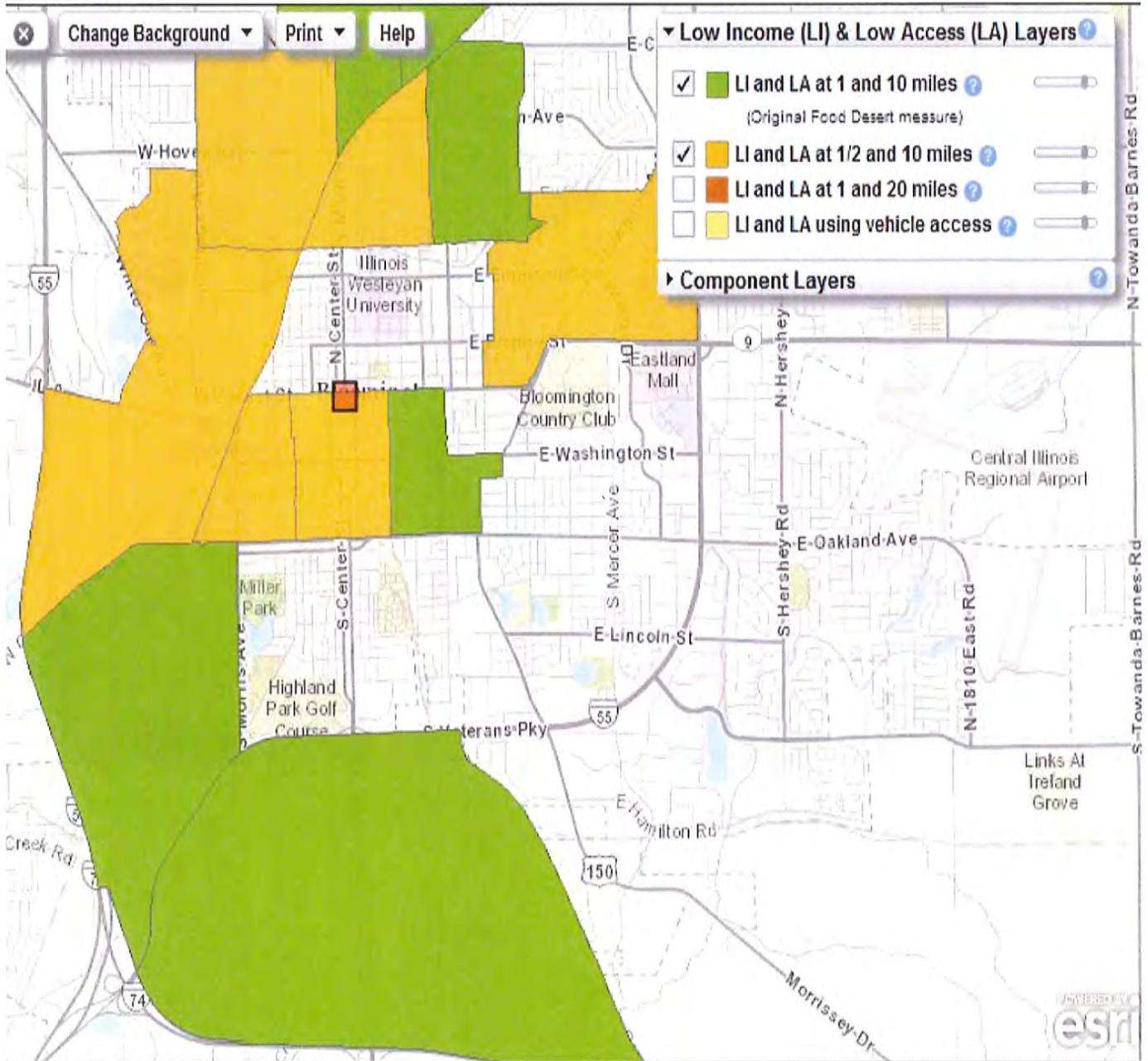
- Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood
- City of Bloomington



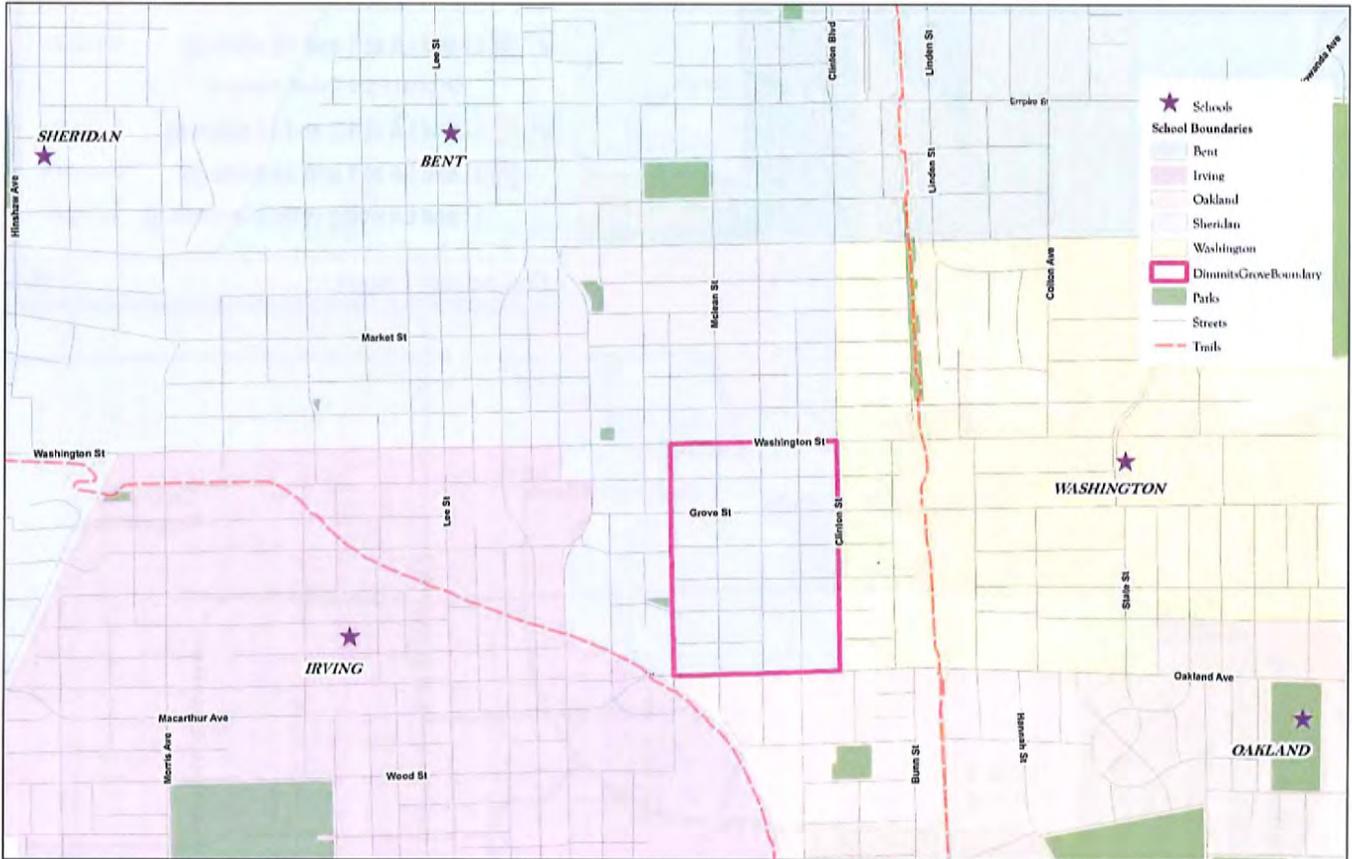
## Map 12. Crime Locations



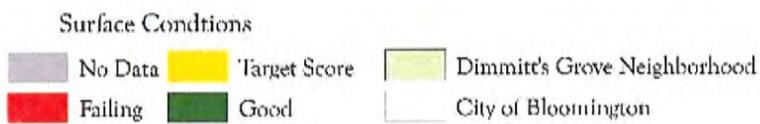
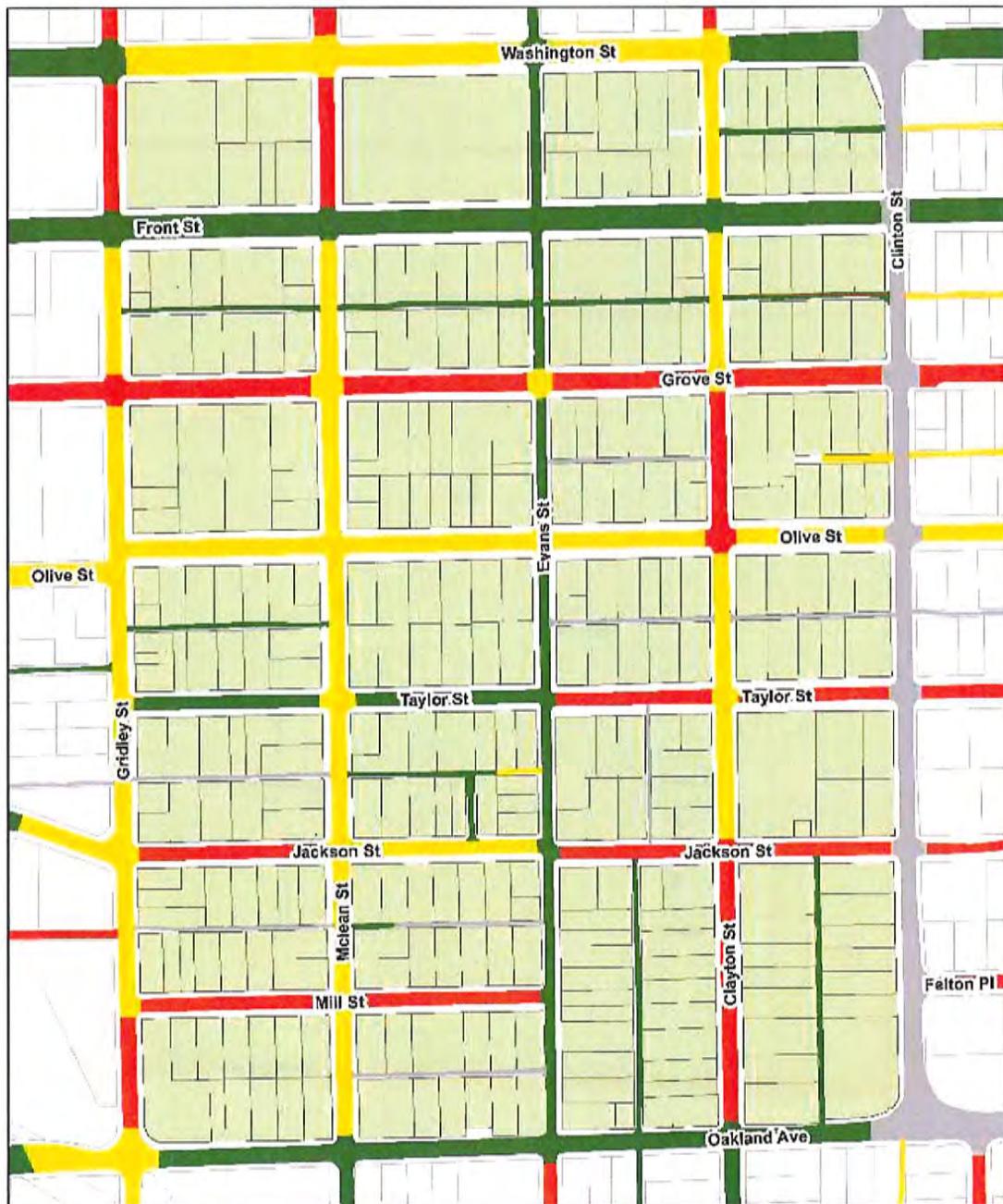
## Map 13. Bloomington Food Deserts



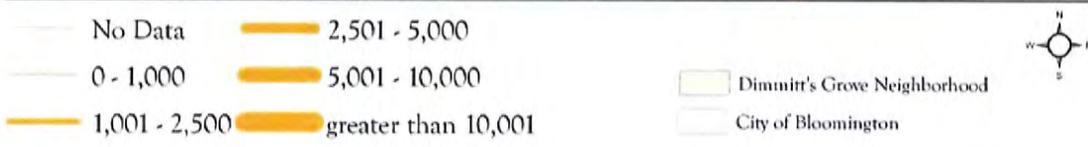
# Map 14. Elementary Schools in Relation To Dimmitt's Grove



## Map 15. Street Conditions



# Map 16. Average Daily Traffic



# Map 17. Street Network



- |                 |                   |                              |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Road Types      | Minor Collector   | Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood |
| Minor Arterial  | Local Street/Road | City of Bloomington          |
| Major Collector |                   |                              |

## Map 18. Sidewalk Conditions



		PASER		
Percentage of Sidewalk Conditions Dimmitt's Grove	38.4%	<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Poor	<span style="background-color: #d9ead3;">■</span> Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood
	61.6%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Fair	<span style="background-color: #f2f2f2;">■</span> City of Bloomington



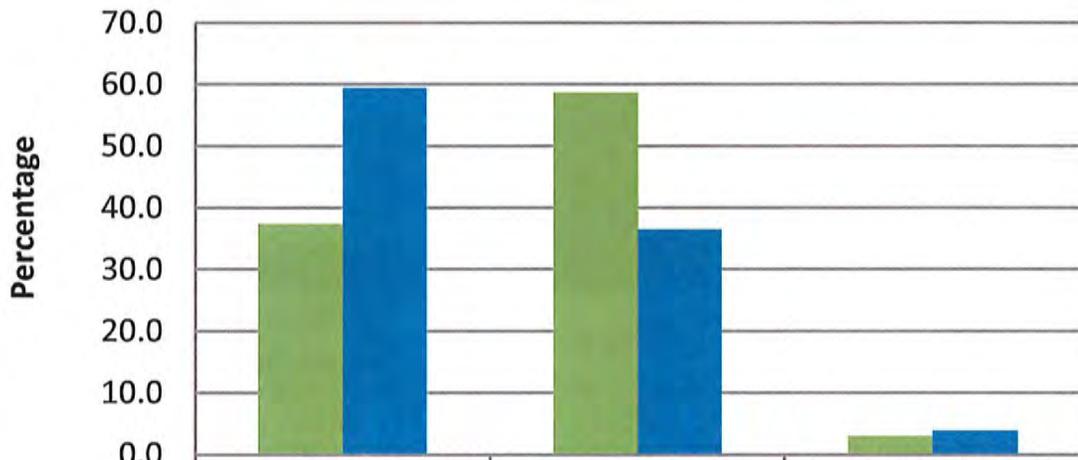
# Map 19. Transit Routes



\* Proposed Bus Stops

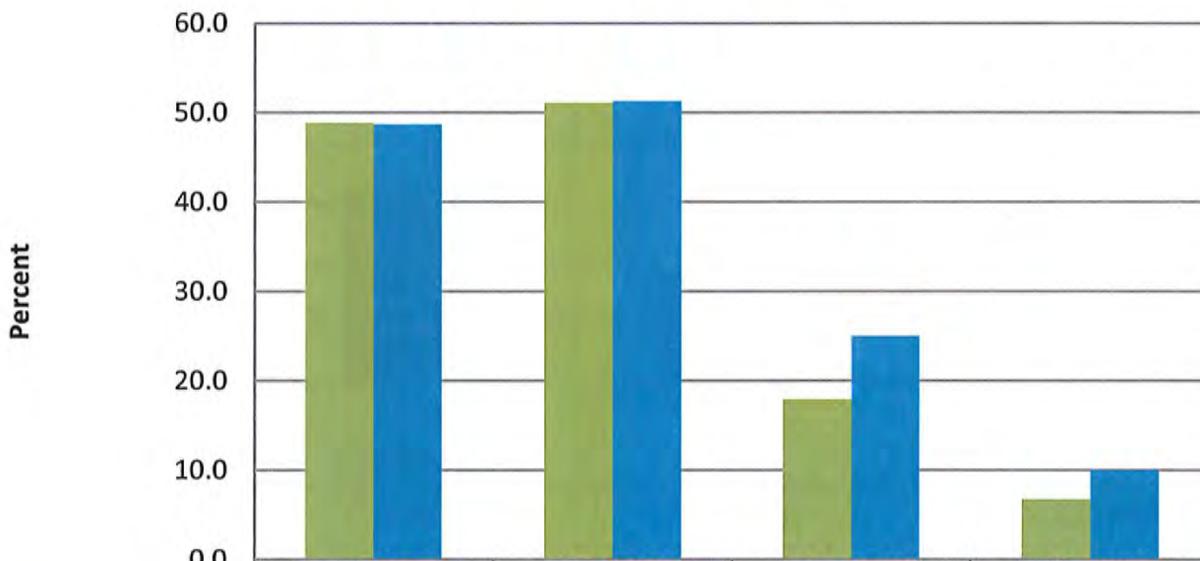
<span style="color: blue;">—</span> Blue E	<span style="color: purple;">—</span> Purple C	<span style="border: 1px solid gray; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood
<span style="color: orange;">—</span> Orange H	<span style="color: yellow;">—</span> Yellow G	<span style="border: 1px solid gray; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> City of Bloomington

Figure B.1. Owner vs. Renter



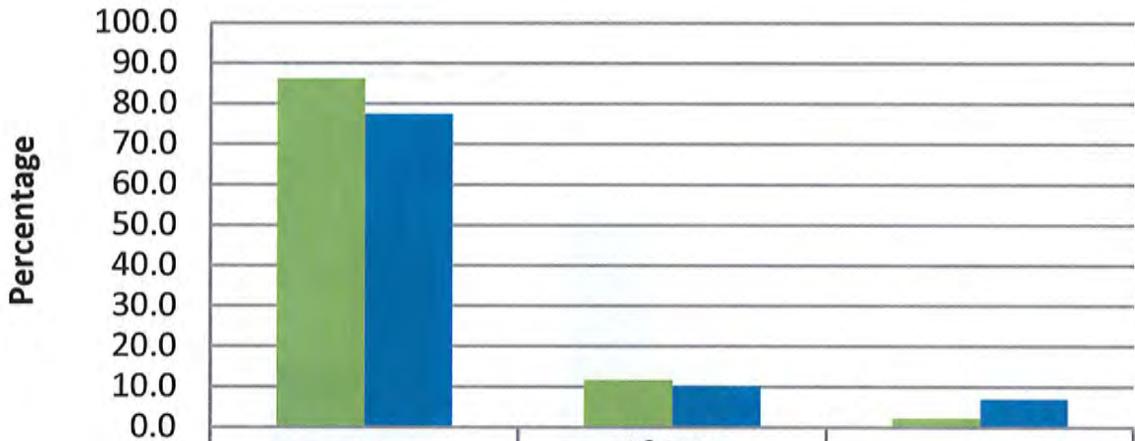
	Owner	Renter	Unknown
Dimmitt's Grove	37.44	58.7	3.03
Bloomington	59.48	36.55	3.98

Figure B.2. Demographics



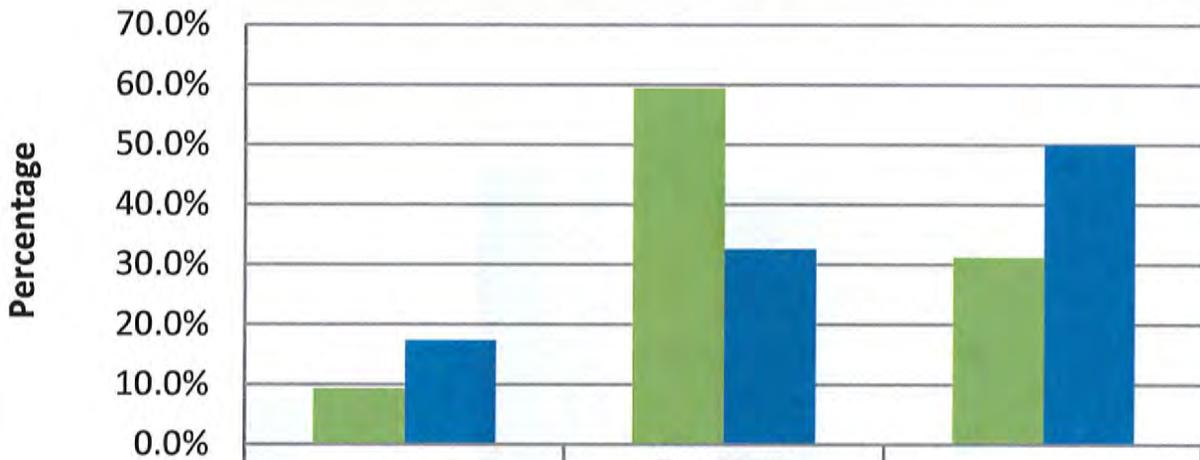
	Male	Female	Under 18	Over 65
Dimmitt's Grove	48.8	51.1	17.9	6.7
Bloomington	48.7	51.3	25	10

**Figure B.3. Race**



	White	African American	Asian
■ Dimmitt's Grove	86.2	11.7	2.3
■ Bloomington	77.5	10.1	7

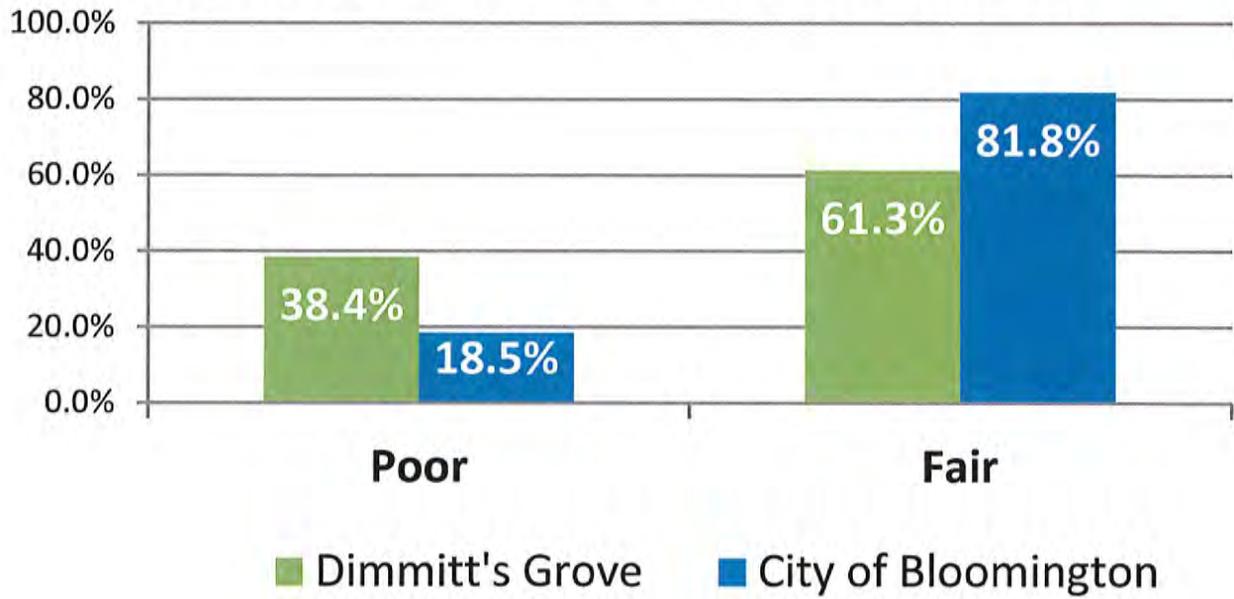
**Figure B.5. Code Violations**



	Other	Property Maintenance	Yard Upkeep
■ Dimmitt's Grove	9.38%	59.38%	31.25%
■ Bloomington	17.38%	32.62%	50.00%

**Figure B.5. Sidewalk Conditions**

**Dimmitt's Grove and City of Bloomington**



## SWOT ANALYSIS RESPONSE SUMMARY

### Strengths

#### HISTORY & ARCHITECTURE :

- One of the City's oldest neighborhoods
- History in every corner; movers and shakers of the community lived here
- Beautiful historic structures with unique architecture: Queen Anne, Italianate, Foursquare, Craftsman, Bungalows, California Mission, Cottage, and Colonial Revival
- Pillsbury homes
- Beautifully preserved and being restored
- Many structures on the National Register of Historic Places (on Grove, Taylor, Clayton, and Front)
- Landmarks structures such as the Vrooman Mansion nestled in the neighborhood

#### CHARM & CHARACTER:

- Not a cookie-cutter neighborhood
- Variety of scenes and spaces
- Mature trees
- Beautiful flowers and landscaping
- Well-kept yards
- Cleanliness
- Pleasant to walk about
- Quiet and peaceful ambience
- Alleys and other unique features that you do not see in the newer subdivisions
- One of the few "true neighborhoods" in Bloomington
- Small neighborhood park (Marie Litta)

#### LOCATION:

- Proximity to Downtown (heavily celebrated)
- Walkable neighborhood with many amenities close by, such as:
  - Several shops and galleries in Downtown
  - Grove Street Bakery
  - Bars and restaurants
  - Farmers Market
  - Bloomington Public Library
  - History Museum (soon to be visitors' center as well)

#### DIVERSITY:

- Neighborhood that thrives on diversity
- Many occupations (significant for a community with a few dominant employers)
  - Artists
  - Teachers
  - Professors
  - Professionals
  - Students
  - Business owners...
  - ... and many other professions
  - History Museum (soon to be visitors' center as well)

# SWOT ANALYSIS RESPONSE SUMMARY

## Strengths

### DIVERSITY (CONTINUED):

- Many income levels
- Many types of households:
  - Families and singles
  - Married and unmarried
  - Gay and straight

### AFFORDABILITY:

- Affordable housing (the majority of respondents noted this)
- Diversity of housing options
- Many fixer-uppers available for people who value history
- Low taxes

### SENSE OF COMMUNITY:

- Friendly neighbors who meet and greet you
- Community pride
- Strong sense of community
- Active neighborhood watch
- Wonderful neighborhood organization that meets bimonthly and organizes variety of social events, such as:
  - Traveling Socials
  - Chili Cook-off
  - Day in Dimmitt's Grove
  - Neighborhood Flea Market
  - Bake Sale
  - Neighborhood website and NextDoor

# SWOT ANALYSIS RESPONSE SUMMARY

## Weaknesses

### HOUSING:

- Absentee/disengaged landlords (big issue)
- Increasing number of rental properties and high population turnover rate
- Multifamily homes that are designed for single family use
- Bad remodeling/upkeep, particularly rental units
- Code enforcement, or lack thereof (big issue)
- Property values going down
- Upkeep of historic housing stock is an expensive endeavor
- Lack of driveways and garages – challenge to attracting home ownership
- Empty and vacant properties that further drive down the property values
- Lack of resources for property owners to improve their properties
- Disparity of housing conditions from block to block

### TRAFFIC AND PARKING:

- On-street parking (big issue)
  - Need more off-street parking
  - Multifamily units exacerbate parking issues
- Speeding cars
- Intersections are dangerous (particularly along Clinton)

### PUBLIC SAFETY:

- Break-in and theft issues
- Drugs
- Street lights
- Lack of proper screening of tenants
- Neighborhood close to a “rough area” with some spillover effects
- Lack of police presence (despite police department within two blocks)
- Nuisance issues that add to the perception of crime
  - Noise levels too high
  - Dogs off leash

### AGING INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Crumbling sidewalks make the otherwise walkable neighborhood more difficult to walk
- Underground infrastructure (water and sewer) needs replacement
- Water pressure needs improvement

### UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE:

- Unkept houses and yards mixed equally with well-maintained creates an impression of blight
- Lack of cleanliness
- Lack of maintenance of streets and alleys
- Snow plowing issues, particularly in the alleys
- Leaf pickup issues

# SWOT ANALYSIS RESPONSE SUMMARY

## Weaknesses

### OTHER:

- Lack of grocery store
- Lack of parks
- The current elementary school assignment
  - Students are bussed to Sheridan
  - Two other schools within walking distance, Washington and Irving
  - This is discouraging young families to move into the neighborhood
- Lack of community engagement
  - A few groups of neighbors are very engaged; many homeowners do not care as much
  - Lack of engagement from landlords and renters

## Opportunities

- Central location & proximity to Downtown
- History and character
- Multimodal access
- Diversity
- Affordability

## Threats

- Sprawl & Veterans Parkway
- Aging infrastructure
- Crime
- Absentee landlords
- School districting

**BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT  
Gang and Drug Activity Suppression**

**What individual citizens can do to help police fight gangs and drugs:**

- Notify police of suspected gang and drug activity
- Help form or become involved in active neighborhood watch programs
- Organize and participate in "Citizen Patrols" of your neighborhood
- Be aware of signs of gang involvement in youth
- Provide or support alternatives for "at risk" youth (recreational, vocational, and social)
- Set a good citizenship example for youth and others
- Monitor youth activities in your neighborhood
- Know where your children are, with whom they associate, and what they are doing
- Support law enforcement gang and drug suppression efforts
- Don't purchase or use illegal drugs
- Remove or report graffiti
- Maintain property in good order
- Help elderly or less fortunate neighbors maintain their property
- Support appropriate community and neighborhood urban renewal projects
- Report city code violations
- Obey the law

**What citizens are not expected to do:**

- Take personal risk to prevent crime or confront offenders
- Work outside law enforcement procedures

**Signs that gang or drug activity are taking place:**

- High volume of sporadic stop-and-go traffic (pedestrian and vehicular)
- Short stays by visitor and frequent stops by the same visitor
- Telltale sign of drug use (drug pipes, brillo pads, scales, razor blades, etc.)
- Fortification of a residence
- Strange odors (cat urine, Ether, Ammonia) related to methamphetamine cooking
- Use of signaling (hand signs, lights, or verbal commands)
- The presence of subjects outside a residence for long periods of time (look outs)
- Visible gang colors on multiple subjects at an address (tattoos, gang signs, slogans, graffiti)
- Appearance of organized meetings by subjects all wearing the same colors.

**What is helpful to police:**

- Names or descriptions of suspects
- The address in question with a description
- Vehicle descriptions and license plate numbers, if possible
- Methods and times of operation
- Information regarding the presence of weapons or vicious dogs

**How to contact police:**

- Dial 911 in an emergency (felony crime in progress)
- Call 820-8888 to report a crime or have an officer respond
- To pass on intelligence or other information, contact BPD Public Affairs at (309) 434-2355 or online at our web site, [www.cityblm.org](http://www.cityblm.org).

Bloomington Police Department, Public Affairs Office  
305 S. East Street  
Bloomington, Illinois 61702 (309) 434-2355 or e-mail [police@cityblm.org](mailto:police@cityblm.org)

### On Elevators

- Avoid parking in poorly lighted and/or isolated areas. When using a parking garage, try to park in well-lighted, frequently-traveled areas or near the entrances or exits.
- Always make sure your vehicle has enough fuel and is operating properly before traveling. Plan to have emergency cash available.
- If you believe you are being followed, **do not** drive home. Go to the nearest police or fire station, or open business. If you are unable to get out of your vehicle, use the horn to get someone's attention.
- Make sure you know the route you are driving and don't deviate from it. Telephone a family member or friend and tell them when you are leaving, the route and the estimated time of arrival. Contact them upon your arrival to let them know you are safe.
- **Do not** pick up hitchhikers. Call the police when it is safe to do so. Never hitchhike yourself.
- If your vehicle breaks down, raise the hood, use the emergency flashers or flares, place a "Help - Call Police" placard in a window or tie a white cloth to the antenna or door handle. Stay in your car, lock the doors and roll the window down only enough to speak to someone who has stopped to offer assistance. Ask them to contact emergency road assistance for you and provide the telephone number if you belong to a motor club. Carry a cell phone for emergencies.

## PERSONAL SAFETY



### If You Are Attacked

- Remain calm. Try not to panic or show any signs of anger or confusion.
- If the attacker is only after your purse, wallet, keys or other valuables, don't resist. You don't want to escalate a property crime into a violent physical confrontation. Your property can be replaced.
- Make a conscious effort to get an accurate description of the suspect, such as age, race, complexion, body build, height, weight, type and color of clothing. Remember to get a good look at the face for positive identification.
- Call the police immediately, providing your name and location. Remain until help arrives.

**Bloomington Police Department**  
**305 S. East Street**  
**Bloomington, Illinois 61701**

**Public Affairs Unit**  
**(309) 434-2355**  
**police@cityblm.org**

## How Do I Become "Streetwise?"

It's easy! It's really just using common sense and thinking ahead. You should develop a positive, realistic attitude and take practical actions to prevent and avoid crime. **Most criminals tend to pick easy targets.** If you take precautions, criminals will be less likely to victimize you. Don't be an easy target!

### Remember Three Basic Rules

#### 1. Trust Your Instincts

If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, leave and go to a place of safety.

#### 2. Stay Alert

Always be aware of your surroundings -- the location, who's in front of you and behind you. Don't allow yourself to be distracted.

#### 3. Walk With Confidence

Physically communicate the message that you are calm, collected, confident and know where you are going. When someone approaches you, sweep your gaze across them and then over their head. This projects a strong, secure self image. It also sends the message you are aware of their presence. Don't look down at your feet while walking.

## When Walking or Jogging

- Stay on well-lighted, highly-traveled streets, and walk facing traffic so you can see approaching vehicles.
- Walk close to the curb, away from shrubbery, buildings and other dark places where a would-be attacker could be hidden.
- Avoid taking shortcuts through wooded areas, unfamiliar neighborhoods, parking lots or alleys.
- If you must carry a purse, hold it close to your body. Don't allow the straps to dangle, and don't wrap the straps around your neck. Carry in your purse only what you will need for this activity.
- If you carry a wallet, place it in your front pants pocket, inside a coat pocket and not in your back pants pocket.
- Don't carry or flash around a lot of cash, expensive jewelry or electronics.
- Don't allow someone to distract you, as criminals sometimes work in pairs. One may ask you for directions, fake an injury or beg for money. The other one may be out of your sight, but ready to overpower you. Always be aware of who is behind you.
- If you believe someone is following you, immediately cross the street or switch direction. Walk toward or into an open business and if provoked, scream for help.
- Don't wear clothing or shoes that will restrict your movements.

*(continued on next page)*

- Keep your keys in your pocket or in your hand, not in your purse or briefcase. Have your car or house key in your hand as you approach the door.
- Always have emergency money for cab, bus or train fares or a public telephone.
- When using a public telephone, stay alert to what's happening around you.
- If you need to use an automated teller machine, try to use it during the daytime and have your card in your hand. Don't approach the machine if you're uneasy about the people nearby. Block the key board and screen with your body, to protect the personal identification number from being seen. Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Don't wear stereo headphones. You will be distracted from hearing what's around and behind you.
- Consider carrying a whistle, some type of personal alarm or approved chemical protection aerosol spray. However, know that these devices have limitations.

## When Driving

- Always roll up the windows and lock the doors when leaving the vehicle.
- Look inside before entering the vehicle.
- Never leave valuables visible in the passenger area, even when you're in the vehicle. When leaving the vehicle, secure the items in the trunk or other concealed area.

*(continued on next page)*

## BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Bloomington Police Department currently has two officers assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit.

They have received specialized training in the area of domestic violence and in the collection of evidence needed for prosecution.

These officers also act as a resource for other officers in the field.

The officers and the victim advocate work together to insure that the victims are aware of their rights and available resources.

### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

#### Law Enforcement

Bloomington Police Department (309) 820-8888  
 Domestic Violence Unit (309) 434-2358  
 (Advocate)

#### Sexual Assault Services

Sexual Assault Hotline (PATH) (309) 827-4005  
 Stepping Stones (309) 662-0461, x272

(Continued on next page)

### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

#### Victim Services

Neville House (24-hour hotline) (309) 827-7070  
 McLean County State's Attorney  
 Domestic Violence Unit (309) 888-5521  
 Chestnut Health Systems\*  
 Secure Program (309) 820-3500

#### Children's Services

Neville House (309) 827-7070  
 For Children's Sake (309) 438-3615  
 Child Abuse Hotline (800) 252-2873  
 Child Protection Network  
 Children's Advocacy Center (309) 888-5656  
 Children's Home & Aid  
 Crisis Nursery/Family Visitation Center (309) 834-5260

#### Abuser Services

A.V.E.R.T.\* (309) 828-2860  
 Twin Cities Behavioral Health\* (309) 451-2910  
 Chestnut Health Systems\*  
 ITR Program (309) 820-3500

#### Elder Abuse and Neglect

PATH (during business hours) (309) 827-4006  
 Elder Abuse Hotline (after hours) (800) 252-8966

#### Legal Assistance

Prairie State Legal Services (309) 827-5021  
 McLean County State's Attorney (309) 888-5400  
 To find a lawyer in Illinois (217)-525-5297  
 (or online at: [www.illinoislawyerfinder.com](http://www.illinoislawyerfinder.com))

\* A fee is charged for these services

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT



A COOPERATIVE EFFORT  
 AMONG POLICE,  
 LEGAL SERVICES,  
 VICTIM SERVICES  
 AND ABUSER SERVICES

Bloomington Police Department  
 305 S. East Street  
 Bloomington, Illinois 61701

## WHAT IS THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT?

The purpose of the Bloomington Police Department Domestic Violence Unit is to reduce the number of domestic violence victims by providing an integrated response to the problem of domestic violence.

The Bloomington Police Department, as well as a Victim Advocate from Countering Domestic Violence (CDV) Neville House, work together to provide safety for victims, and to assure the appropriate services are available to victims, abusers, and couples who are experiencing relationship difficulties.



## ABUSER SERVICES

Assessment & counseling services are available for those accused and/or convicted of domestic violence related offenses.

Individuals who have used verbal and/or physical violence in varying degrees of severity are urged to seek counseling. One does not have to be involved in the court system to receive services.

When individuals receive services in the early stages of these unhealthy patterns, they may actually avoid the need for law enforcement involvement.

There are 3 agencies in McLean County that are approved by the Illinois Department of Human Services to offer such services:  
**A.V.E.R.T.** (Accused Violators Early Response Team) can be reached at (309) 828-2862.

**Twin Cities Behavioral Health** can be reached at (309) 451-2910.

**Chestnut Health Systems'** "Invitation to Responsibility" program can be reached at (309)820-3500.

## COUNTERING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (CDV) NEVILLE HOUSE

A victim advocate from CDV contacts the victims and other individuals who might benefit from services offered by Countering Domestic Violence. That determination is made by CDV.

The many services provided by CDV are explained and are offered at no cost. Those services include:

- **24-hour hotline (309) 827-7070**
- Emergency shelter (Neville House)
- Legal advocacy (309) 888-5521
- Outreach intervention services
- Support groups for victims of domestic violence
- Support groups for children dealing with domestic violence
- Parenting classes and groups
- Community education training

## OTHER FEATURES

On the gray bar above the map, you will find tabs for "Data Grid", "Analytics", and "Metadata".

The Data Grid displays the incidents showing on the map in a grid format. The Analytics page provides a pie chart showing crime type frequency, a bar graph displaying crime type by day of week, a crime type timeline, and a temporal topology showing the level of crime activity at a particular day and time. The Metadata tab will show you the date of the most recent update and other statistical information.

You can register to receive special information from the police department by clicking on the Citizens on Patrol button. The alerts can be in the form of e-mails or texts.

[Join Citizens On Patrol](#)

You can also create a customized neighborhood watch report subscription. By doing so you will receive automatic updates about crimes that occur within a buffer zone you can establish around a specific Bloomington address. The frequency of the updates can be set for weekly or monthly.

[Sign up for crime alerts](#)

For more information about the Bloomington Police Department's crime mapping service, contact the Public Affairs Unit at [police@cityblm.org](mailto:police@cityblm.org) or (309) 434-2355.

## CRIME TYPES AND SUBCATEGORIES

**Aggravated Assault** also includes:

- Attempted Murder
- Aggravated Battery
- Heinous Battery
- Aggravated Battery of a Child
- Aggravated Battery of Senior Citizen
- Ritual Mutilation

**Arson** also includes:

- Aggravated Arson

**Burglary** also includes:

- Residential Burglary
- Home Invasion

**Homicide** includes:

- First Degree Murder
- Second Degree Murder

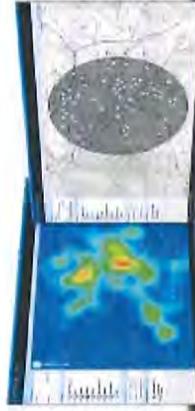
**Larceny** includes:

- Theft Over \$300
- Theft \$300 and Under
- Retail Theft
- Theft / Burglary from Vehicle
- Theft / Burglary of Vehicle Parts or Accessories
- Pocket Picking
- Purse Snatching
- Theft from Building
- Theft from Coin Operated Device

**Robbery** also includes:

- Armed Robbery
- Vehicular Hijacking
- Aggravated Vehicular Hijacking
- Aggravated Robbery

# CRIME MAPPING



This brochure is designed to help you navigate the crime mapping feature contained on the City of Bloomington website ([www.cityblm.org](http://www.cityblm.org)).

The feature works best on Windows Internet Explorer or Google Chrome.

## GETTING STARTED

In association with Colorado-based Bair Software, the Bloomington Police Department offers an interactive crime mapping service on the city of Bloomington website ([www.cityblm.org](http://www.cityblm.org)). In the search portal on the home page, type the words Raids Online, then click on the arrow. On the next page, click on any of the entries that appear. On the following page, click on the picture of the computer screens and the BPD mapping service will begin loading.



## IDENTIFYING THE DOTS

The first thing you will see is a map of Bloomington sprinkled with colored dots. Each dot represents an incident that occurred within the past two weeks and which fit into the crime categories listed on the dashboard to the left of the map. Expand the tab labeled "Crime Types" by clicking on the arrow. Many of these crime types have sub-categories, which are listed elsewhere in this brochure. (Sexual assaults are not displayed and the "Other" button is not currently used.)

## THE DOTS BECOME ICONS

The crime types can be searched in any combination or individually by clicking on the "Deselect All" button and clicking the box next to any of the crime categories. The color of the dots on the map corresponds to the color of the icon representing a particular crime type. As you zoom in on the map, you will also notice that the dots convert to the appropriate square icons. The red dot, for example, will change to a red square containing a fist, indicating an incident of aggravated assault or any of the sub-categories associated with that crime type.



## SETTING THE DATE RANGE

It is important to note that each time you open the BPD crime map, the date range will default to the **PAST TWO WEEKS**. A different date range can be set in one of three ways. On the dashboard to the left of the map, click on the tab labeled "Date Range". You can set a generic date range by expanding the drop-down box below the words "QUICK DATE" and selecting any of the options that appear ("one month", for example). The map will automatically load.

If you wish to establish a specific date range, click on the bars next to "Start Date" and "End Date" and use the calendars that appear. Use the left and right arrows at the top of the calendars to change months. You can look as far back as two years from the current date. However, a maximum of 500 incidents can be displayed on the map at one time. Long-range searches (those extending back several months or more) might have to be done one or two crime types at a time. You can also use a "slider" to set a date range. Click the box next to the phrase "View points using time slider" and the slider will appear on the map.

## ESTABLISHING YOUR FOCUS

Let's go back to the top of that dashboard to the left of the map...to the tab labeled "Search Address". In the box next to the search address icon, enter an address that you would like to use as your focal point for crime searches (home address / business address / relative's home, etc.). Be sure to include "Bloomington, IL" in the address. Click on the "Go to Address" button and the icon to the right will appear at that address. A bit lower in the Search Address box is the word "BUFFER". Click



in the box next to the word "off" to establish a buffer around your selected address.

## ADJUSTING YOUR BUFFER

The word "off" will change to "on" and a half-mile buffer zone will appear around your address icon on the map. To enlarge the buffer zone, click on the drop-down box and choose one of the other options, which range from 1 mile to 5 miles. If you wish to see only crime incidents within that buffer zone, click on the box next to the words "Only display crimes within buffer".

## GETTING THE DETAILS

Now let's go the map and look at the crime incidents that are on display. By clicking on a dot (or a crime type icon, depending on how far you have zoomed in or out), you will open a box with details about that particular crime incident.



- The type of crime
- The incident number
- The date of the incident
- The time of the incident
- The location (residence, business, sidewalk, etc.)
- The address (a block range only, such as 11XX N SMITH STR)
- The distance from your selected address (0.7 miles, for example)

## CHANGING THE VIEW

You can move the map by using your mouse [left click and hold...the hand will "grab" the map...then move up / down or left / right].

Or you can use the circle device with the four arrows in the upper left corner of the map to "pan" up or down, left or right.

Below the that device is the tool for zooming in [+] or zooming out [-].

In the upper right corner of the map are boxes labeled "Map", "Satellite" and "Terrain". You can use them to change the map's appearance. The "Satellite" view, for example, uses overhead photographs to display the city.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Helpful Links:

#### **Casserole:**

<https://www.casseroleclub.com/#howItWorks>

#### **Domestic Violence brochure**

<http://www.cityblm.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=1126>

#### **Gang and Drug Activity Suppression brochure:**

<http://www.cityblm.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=1127>

#### **Historic Preservation Commission**

<http://www.cityblm.org/index.aspx?page=254>

#### **Historic Preservation Commission: Architectural Review Guidelines**

<http://www.cityblm.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=2372>

#### **Neighbor Circles**

<http://www.lawrencecommunityworks.org/node/64>

#### **Neighborhood Watch app**

<http://nwapp.org/>

#### **Nextdoor's Neighborhood Watch**

<https://help.nextdoor.com/customer/portal/articles/1019177>

#### **Personal Safety brochure**

<http://www.cityblm.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=984>

#### **RAIDS Online**

<http://www.raidsonline.com/?address=Bloomington%2CIL>

#### **RAIDS Online brochure**

<http://www.cityblm.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=1017>

#### **Streetbank**

<http://www.streetbank.com/splash?locale=en>

## McLean County Regional Planning Commission & Staff



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