

# Downtown Bloomington Strategy

**City of Bloomington, Illinois**

*Prepared for:*  
Downtown Bloomington Association

*Adopted December 9, 2013*



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Downtown Bloomington Association

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# I. Project Overview

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# I. Project Overview

## Executive Summary

This report concludes that Downtown Bloomington, McLean County's greatest asset, is threatened by a failure of consensus on how to maintain, regulate, redevelop and generally manage this valuable and unique community asset. The work of this study builds on core insights and wisdom gained from Bloomington leaders, business folks, and residents, and also draws from successful communities and best practices nationally to propose a comprehensive approach to address these concerns.

Many recommendations made in this plan, such as those regarding streetscape improvements and parking management, can be undertaken immediately or in the short-term future, providing early benefits to Downtown merchants and residents. Others, such as zoning recommendations, will set the stage for future development when the real estate market regains strength.

No plan is without critics, but one does not have to agree with everything in this report to recognize its core strategies and insights. We believe that this plan has achieved a critical mass binding leadership to a specific and thoughtful plan for ongoing Downtown maintenance, improvement, and investment. Sustained leadership and guidance, over a long period of time, is required to implement the goals of this plan; however, in taking these necessary steps to improve Downtown, Bloomington will gain incredible social, economic, and aesthetic benefits.

### Community Vision

Downtown Bloomington is one of the greatest assets in the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area and has the potential to enhance its regional draw. Its abundant historic features and character, location on Illinois Route 51, a major commercial thoroughfare, and centralized position within the community give Downtown an advantage over other regional centers (see Figure I-1). However, in order to capitalize on this advantage, the City of Bloomington and its residents must recognize the importance of Downtown as a critical asset as well as the fundamental shift taking place across the country, particularly among young adults and the elderly, towards living in more urban settings. This shift will increase the demand for the lifestyle provided by Downtown Bloomington, and the benefits of this demand can be captured most effectively through implementing the policies contained in this document.

While conditions within Downtown are stable, the area is not

reaching its potential due to several errant planning issues. To originally identify these issues, at the outset of this planning process, participants at a community meeting were asked to describe their hope and vision for Downtown in one word. Typical responses included that residents envisioned Downtown as sustainable, walkable, cultural, energetic, accessible, and clean (see Section II: Downtown Vision for more information).

Participants were also asked what they felt the greatest threats and weaknesses were for Downtown. One of the greatest threats voiced was the infringement of Veteran's Parkway and other suburban sprawl into the retail market that could be locating within Downtown. The auto-oriented style of retail development prevalent along Veteran's Parkway is not conducive to a Downtown setting, particularly Downtown Bloomington, which has such an intact historic retail core. It was decided through the public process and market study that Downtown should seek to emphasize its urban character to provide a different experience to visitors than that offered by typical suburban commercial development.

These responses from the community indicate that Downtown can use improvement in several key realms, such as urban design, parking, transportation, and overall place making, that it was the goal of this plan to remedy. To do so, this master plan assesses and makes recommendations on key areas that will greatly influence the future of Downtown. In order for Downtown to fulfill the community's vision for an energetic, vibrant destination that is regionally competitive in the long term, certain steps, outlined in this plan at length, must be taken to improve these areas of concern. The following provides a brief overview of the different components of the report and their major findings.

### Master Plan Components - Built Environment

#### Market Assessment

The market assessment section of this report was undertaken to ground the master plan in economic realities. Demand for housing, retail, office, and hotel space must be known to produce a master plan that has reasonable parameters and expectations and, in addition, this information will greatly aid developers who are looking to invest within Downtown.

Many critical findings came out of the market assessment. For

example, the market study found that Downtown has current unmet demand for 38,000 square feet of retail, with another 36,000 square feet of demand possible by 2030. The Downtown market was also found to have current unmet demand for 500 housing units, with the potential to add 500 to 600 more units by 2030, if Downtown continues to grow and evolve. The retail and housing markets appear promising, but are dependent upon the improvements and recommendations outlined within the master plan. The market study's findings served to inform the majority of other recommendations in the plan, including the retail plan.

#### Retail Plan

The retail plan seeks to embody the findings of the market study. The market study found that up to 74,000 square feet of retail by 2030, which is an encouraging number; however, it also indicates that the market for retail in Downtown is limited. Currently, almost the entire study area is zoned for commercial development, which enables retail to occur anywhere. In order to fill in empty storefronts and vacant parcels in key retail nodes within Downtown, consolidation of retail is required. The retail plan created in this master plan identifies three major retail nodes within which to focus retail: Main Street between Jefferson and Locust; the parcels around the McLean County Museum of History; and the small cluster of mixed-use buildings on east Front Street. Focusing retail in these specific areas will help to fill in vacant parcels and create vibrant Downtown shopping districts.

#### Land Use & Zoning Recommendations

Based upon the findings of the market study and exemplary urban design principles, land use and zoning recommendations were made for the Downtown study area. These recommendations should guide the future of development for the next several years and will result in an appropriate mixture of uses and development styles. In general, most residential, office, service, civic, and industrial uses were kept in place as they exist currently. One major change is that, as discussed above, retail is shown as being consolidated into three main nodes. Another recommendation is to provide flexibility in the uses of certain areas on the east side of Downtown, where the market may need a chance to mature to determine what type of development is most appropriate. These areas are adjacent to residential neighborhoods to the east of Downtown, and should

step down in intensity from the core of Downtown in order to provide a transitional area.

Lastly, the zoning recommendations section's major recommendation is the creation of a zoning overlay for the Downtown study area. Such an overlay is necessary to implement the recommendations of this report, as well as to protect the historic buildings within Downtown. A proposed zoning overlay framework map is provided as a guide to developing the zoning overlay.

#### Site Plan

The overall site plan for Downtown gives one depiction of how the recommendations of the other built environment sections of the report could play out in a physical sense. Redevelopment scenarios are given for each opportunity site identified in order to provide a starting point for developers, City officials, and stakeholders in pursuing development. These scenarios are meant to illustrate one potential option for a site, not necessarily what must occur.

### Master Plan Components - Infrastructure

#### Parking Policy Framework

One of the most common complaints during the public involvement process at the outset of this project was that parking was a major problem for Downtown. It is critical to resolve this issue in order to encourage visitors to Downtown and improve quality of life for those living and working there. Luckily, the initial parking analysis found promising news – that there is an adequate supply of parking, but the way it is being managed is the issue. This is an easier problem to fix than having to increase parking supplies.

Several recommendations for managing both public and private parking are outlined in the Parking Policy Framework section. One of the key recommendations includes the installation of parking meters in specified locations Downtown. Currently on-street parking is free in all of Downtown, leading to congestion in several areas. Pricing on-street parking according to the demand will help greatly in managing those spaces and also provide a revenue source. Also, currently several surface parking lots exist within Downtown, including some within the prime area between the Madison-East couplet.

# I. Project Overview

## Study Area

It is recommended that those lots in the core of Downtown be redeveloped with context-sensitive mixed-use buildings, and the parking housed on those lots be transferred as needed to public parking decks. This will improve the built environment and provide more visual interest in the heart of Downtown without sacrificing parking needs.

### Connectedness and Mobility

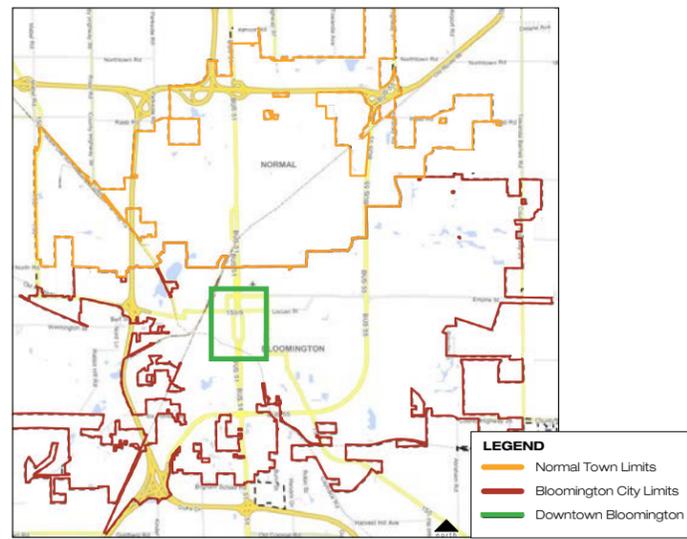
Bloomington developed as a traditional American downtown with a grid system of streets. This pattern is very functional, providing a high level of pedestrian and vehicular access into and out of the downtown. The plan includes recommendations on how these streets can be improved for access to the downtown by vehicles, busses, bicycles and pedestrians, with better amenities and wayfinding.

### Conclusion

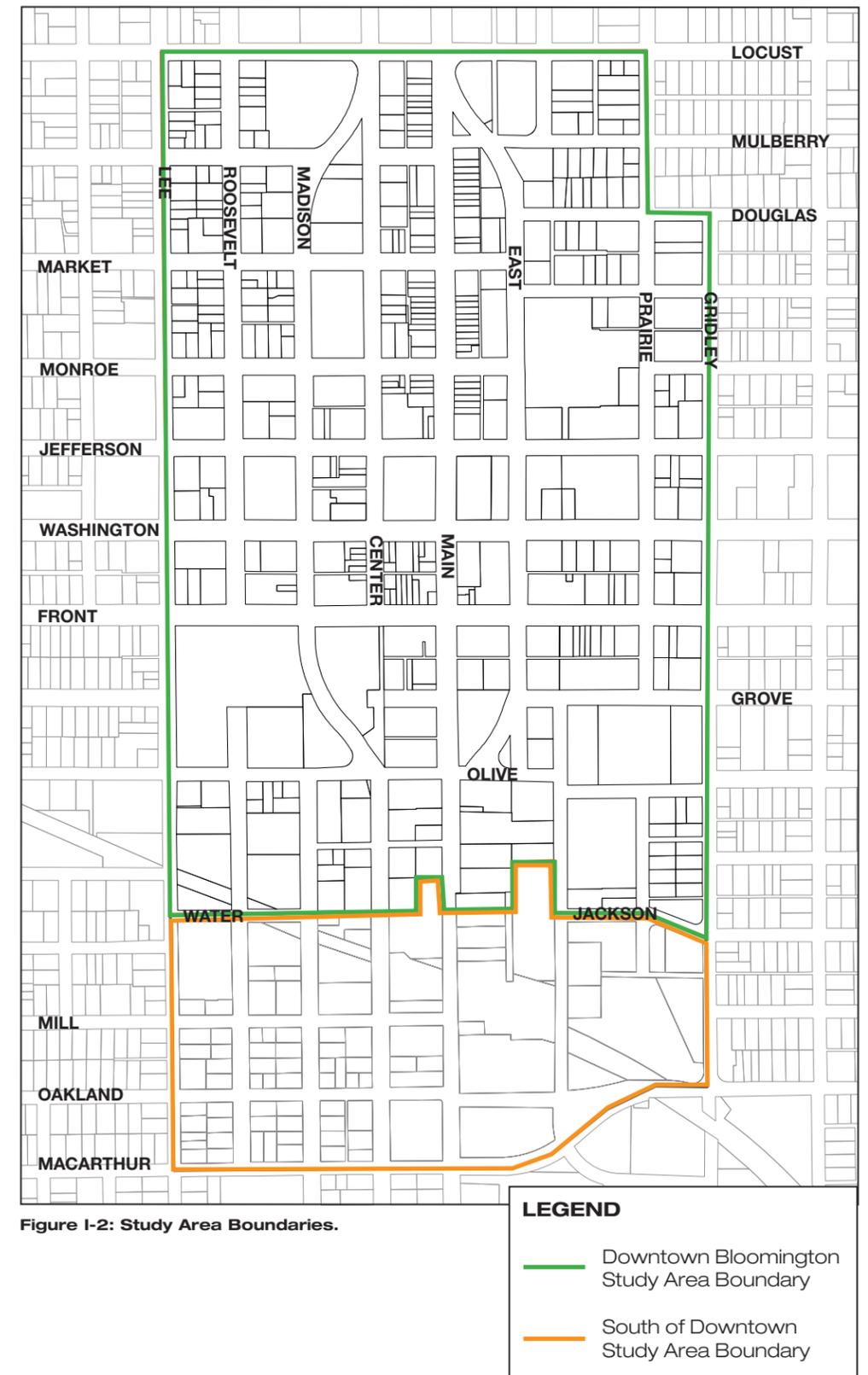
The ideas and recommendations expressed in this master plan are substantial tasks that will take a great deal of time, money and fund-raising, political will, and commitment to realize. The Implementation Matrix contained with this report identifies the parties responsible for each major recommendation made in the plan and also lists potential funding sources for these tasks. However, the goals of this plan will not come to life without the perseverance and work of those dedicated to improving Downtown, which will be an enormous asset if managed properly.

## Study Area

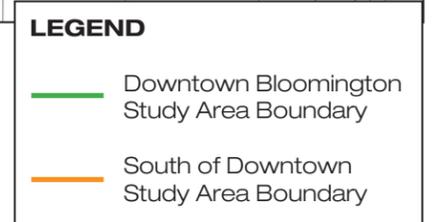
The Downtown Bloomington Master Plan study area includes the area locally referred to as Downtown Bloomington (see Figure I-2), which is roughly bounded by Locust Street to the north, Prairie Street to the east down to Douglas Street, Gridley Street to the east from Douglas to Jackson Street, Jackson and Water Streets to the south, and Lee Street to the west. Section III, Warehouse District, focuses on the area depicted in orange in Figure I-2; this section of the report is the only section where the warehouse district to the south of Downtown is included.



**Figure I-1: Downtown Bloomington in Relation to Bloomington-Normal.**  
Source: McLean County GIS <http://www.mcgis.org/>



**Figure I-2: Study Area Boundaries.**



# I. Project Overview

## Community Involvement

The community input phase of this master plan project included several components. At the outset of the project, a public kick-off meeting was held to gather information from the community on what type of development they felt was most appropriate and needed in the Downtown. Next, a two-day charrette was held to create redevelopment scenarios for specific sites within the Downtown. At the end of the charrette, a public meeting was held to present drafts of the different scenarios. Near the end of the planning process, a public open house was held to present the master plan draft. The following describes the community input process in greater detail.

### Kick-Off Meeting

The public kick-off meeting for the project was held on November 6, 2008 at the State Farm Insurance building in Downtown Bloomington. Roughly two hundred people attended the meeting, which consisted of a brief presentation covering an overview of the project and past planning initiatives, as well as an in-depth brainstorming session to gain feedback from the public on the existing conditions and potential future direction of Downtown. The following subsections describe the discussion at the kick-off meeting. There were several general themes and concerns for Downtown, including:

- Great desire for a vibrant, welcoming, beautiful, safe, clean, and fun Downtown
- Vision of Downtown as a tourist destination; Emphasis on preserving and enhancing the historic assets of Downtown
- Concern over economic competition with auto-oriented commercial areas in the region and need for economic



Participants at the project's kick-off meeting.

- development and improved assistance for small or start-up businesses
- Concerns with safety, vagrancy, and cleanliness
- Demand for Downtown to embrace pedestrian-orientation and alternative modes of transportation, especially bicyclists and pedestrians
- Frustration with parking availability
- Worry over a lack of leadership, management, and funding to carry out the goals of the plan

Participants were asked a series of questions to refine goals, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to Downtown; responses included the following.

### *In a word, describe your hope for Downtown.*

Responses included: sustainability; beautification; color; vibrant; community; collaboration; walkable; convenience; diversity; destination; lifestyle; commitment; cultural; hip; multipurpose; safe; preservation; cleanliness; center; 24/7; fun; green; energy; creative; hub; art; historic; vitality; neighborhood; genuine; personality; unique; welcoming; unintimidating; home; multifaceted; tourism; romantic; spatially convivial; hotel; accessible; occupied.

### *What are the Strengths of Downtown?*

Responses included: Lincoln heritage; architecture; artistic community; venues; arts center; farmers' market; friendliness; Performing Arts Center; history museum; numerous colleges; professional community; law and justice center; county seat; surrounding neighborhoods; largest county in Illinois; highway access; residential; Coliseum; local retail base; Amtrak; decent public transportation; jobs; taverns; State Farm; churches; Route 66; Central Illinois Regional Airport; parks; library; Constitution Trail; independent restaurants; west side community garden; historic neighborhoods; strong neighborhood association; home of Dan Brady; Downtown Bloomington Association; good radio stations; technology; tourism potential; strong social services; Downtown Bar Association; people care.

### *What are the Weaknesses of Downtown?*

Responses included: perception of failure; lack of wayfinding signage; 4-lane bypass; proximity of residents to entertainment; one-way streets; dirty; poorly lit; homeless people; perception of the poor; retail closes too early; surrounding neighborhoods; increased crime; too much rental; on-street parking regulations;

not knowing or understanding past; lack of respect and economic opportunity for poor people; vandalism; need more gyms; navigation and visibility; failure to embrace college students; alcohol abuse; insufficient pedestrian and bicycle facilities; parking structures; garbage, recycling, and management; no water element; unhelpful city when a new business; lack of Downtown manager; lack of focus on environmental; ghost town on Sunday; sewer maintenance; missing services; bad public transit; inconsistent retail; streetscape lack; aesthetics.

### *What are Opportunities for Downtown?*

Responses included: colleges and Downtown coexist; better promotion; more density and retail to be had; opportunity sites; larger range of housing prices; add night security presence; early morning cleanup; unify residents; bike link to Constitution Trail; cable car around the Courthouse; Lincoln history and tourism; Route 66; trolley/shuttle between Downtown and uptown Normal; move Visitors' Bureau to Downtown; green roofs; more bike racks and events; restructure the couplet; pedestrian-friendly features; "61704s" - shift retail from Veterans' Parkway; stoplights yellow after 10 pm; wi-fi; entertainment venues self-supporting; breakfast restaurant; kid-friendly destination; lack of holiday decor; movie or arts theater; hotel; resident services and retail; conventions; sell to business people; signs from highway pointing to Downtown; signage and murals by local artists; public art; outdoor concerts; reverse Jefferson.

### *What are the Threats to Downtown?*

Responses included: sprawl and retail shift; lack of cooperation and support in government; community apathy; regulations (ie grease traps); current economic crisis; youngsters with nothing to do; funding for implementation; strip malls; perception of crime; plan for whole area - not just one part; Illinois Department of Transportation; opposition by uninformed citizens; lack of accountability for police; not welcoming of change; banks not supporting local development; free parking; city management doesn't understand Downtown; Uptown Normal; racism and lack of diversity; Normal willing to spend money; exploitation of poor; lack of retail competition; City doesn't help new businesses; corporations.

### *Pick Your Model Place: What Should Downtown Look/Feel Like?*

Responses included: Omaha, NE; Fort Collins, CO; Saugatuck, MI; Madison, WI; Iowa City, IA; Burlington, VT; Decatur,

IL; Dallas, TX; Santa Cruz, CA; Utica, IL; Galena, IL; Great Barrington, MA; Urbana, IL; Columbia, MO; Portland, ME; Ithaca, NY.

### *What does Downtown want to be?*

Responses included: better; alive; vibrant; creative, artistic; hub of everything; connection; Downtown in motion; capitalize on travelers to metropolitan areas; diversified magnet

### **Downtown Redevelopment Charrette**

A charrette is a public design workshop in which the consultant team, community stakeholders, developers, City officials, and residents collaborate to achieve a shared vision or set of goals for a project. The Downtown Redevelopment Charrette brought the consultant team together to brainstorm redevelopment ideas. Feedback and input was sought from the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, and the finalized ideas were presented to the public, where they were well supported. The redevelopment scenarios are summarized below; for more information, see Section II: Downtown Vision.

### *Redevelopment Scenario #1*

Scenario 1 involved the redevelopment of several parcels along north Main Street, between Market and Mulberry, that are



Participants at the Downtown Redevelopment Charrette.

currently being utilized as parking lots. The consultant team sought to illustrate how new development could blend in successfully with existing historic buildings that surround the parking lots by integrating similar design features as the existing structures.

### *Redevelopment Scenario #2*

The second redevelopment scenario, at Washington and Prairie Streets on the southeast side of the study area, was chosen by the Steering and Technical Advisory Committees for its position as a transitional area between Downtown and the residential neighborhoods to the east. The consultant team illustrated how new development could either take the shape of townhouses, to blend in with residential neighborhoods, or small-scale mixed-use or office development, to relate to the core of Downtown.

### *Redevelopment Scenario #3*

The final redevelopment scenario focused on the Market Street Garage parcel, which is slated for redevelopment by the City of Bloomington in the near future. Brainstorming with the working committees at the beginning of the charrette brought up the idea of relocating the YMCA (which is currently located further south on Main, outside of the study area) to the site. Discussions with the YMCA leadership and board revealed that they would be interested in pursuing the idea. Redevelopment scenarios shown illustrate the YMCA as one potential option, or a mixed-use office or civic center with a parking garage underneath as another option.

### **Public Open Houses**

Two public open houses were held, both at State Farm Insurance in Downtown, to solicit comments, responses, and questions from the public on the draft master plan. The first open house, held on September 30, 2009, consisted of a Powerpoint presentation to present the draft with a limited period of discussion at the end of the meeting. The public was invited back to continue the discussion two weeks later, at a Question and Answer session, to give enough time to review the document.

The Question and Answer session was held on October 13, 2009. Major topics of conversation included the integration of parking meters, need for public bathroom facilities, assistance for entrepreneurs and small business start-ups, and integration of the Downtown plan with the West Bloomington Neighborhood Plan. The consultant team addressed these and other community concerns in revising the master plan in preparation for public hearing.

### **Working Group Meetings**

In addition to public meetings, the master plan was also informed by the participation and feedback of two working groups, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Steering Committee (SC). The TAC members consisted of city staff as well as professionals with technical expertise, while the SC members consisted of community leaders, stakeholders, and business owners. Both committees were asked to give their input and feedback on the master plan throughout its development.



*First Public Open House to present the draft document.*

# I. Project Overview

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives below were created, with input from the public as well as the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, to provide a vision and direction for Downtown Bloomington.

### Leadership

*Goal:* Engage strong leadership and achieve consensus on how to maintain, regulate, manage, and redevelop Downtown.

#### *Objectives:*

1. Create transparency in the decision-making process to garner community support and to ensure that decisions made are in accordance with the recommendations set forth in this plan.
2. Hold local government and other organizations accountable for the responsibilities assigned to them to implement this plan.

### Historic Preservation

*Goal:* Protect, preserve, and restore the historic resources in Downtown.

#### *Objectives:*

1. Preserve existing historic Downtown buildings and infill non-historic parcels with buildings of similar character and scale.
2. Promote the restoration of historic buildings through incentive programs.

### Economic Development

*Goal:* Build a healthy Downtown economy that offers diverse employment, retail, cultural, and entertainment opportunities.

#### *Objectives:*

1. Provide a pedestrian-friendly shopping experience as an alternative to the auto-oriented experience offered by Veteran's Parkway and other regional shopping centers.
2. Develop the Downtown as a destination that will attract regular shoppers and investment.
3. Cultivate start-up businesses and entrepreneurs in the Downtown to keep an emphasis on local businesses and maintain a strong retail core.
4. Promote office and employment uses within Downtown to provide a strong economic base.
5. Build upon the presence of the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts and the U.S. Cellular Coliseum, as well as various artist galleries, to further enhance the arts and cultural amenities within Downtown.
6. Create attractions within Downtown that will serve as a regional draw for tourism and further enhance interest and investment in the area.
7. Recognize the interdependence of Downtown with its surrounding neighborhoods and work towards the revitalization of those neighborhoods as well.

### Land Use and Development

*Goal:* Create a successful mix of land uses, including residential, retail, office, service, and institutional, in the appropriate locations in the Downtown area.

#### *Objectives:*

1. Focus retail uses around existing nodes in the core of Downtown, defined as the area contained within Madison and East.
2. Utilize a mixed-use building type for the majority of the commercial core of Downtown, with retail or office space on the ground floor and office or residential space on the upper floors.
3. Preserve existing residential uses and promote new urban housing types.
4. Preserve existing industrial uses and buildings on the south end of Downtown and foster the development of new "craftsman" industrial uses in the area.

### Urban Design and Aesthetics

*Goal:* Create a unified aesthetic vision for the Downtown that will encourage investment from developers and business owners and patronage from residents.

#### *Objectives:*

1. Implement streetscape and pedestrian and auto wayfinding signage improvements in the Downtown.
2. Create a zoning code overlay for Downtown to preserve and replicate desired physical characteristics.

### Clean and Safe

*Goal:* Maintain a clean, attractive, orderly, and safe Downtown.

#### *Objectives:*

1. Manage noise, debris, and other negative externalities associated with Downtown businesses.
2. Create an inviting environment that is welcoming and safe.

### Walkability

*Goal:* Develop an integrated transportation system that favors pedestrians and cyclists while also providing for the safe movement of people and goods via motor vehicle traffic and alternative transportation.

#### *Objectives:*

1. Reconfigure Center Street and Main Street to restore connectivity and ease of use.
2. Utilize the existing public transportation system and actively invest in improvements that will make the system more successful.
3. Incorporate crosswalks and dedicated bicycle facilities where possible to create a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.



Historic buildings at Jefferson and Center Streets.



Inviting streetscape including benches, street trees, and wide sidewalks.



Mixed-use buildings south of the McLean County Museum.



Market Street Public Parking Garage.

### **Parking**

*Goal:* Provide and manage an appropriate amount of parking to realistically meet the needs of residents and businesses without negatively impacting land use, streetscape, and use of transit.

*Objectives:*

1. Focus parking in strategically placed on-street spaces and parking decks to reduce the negative economic and aesthetic impacts of surface parking lots.
2. With an eye toward future transportation trends, re-evaluate the amount of parking that is needed to accommodate residents and businesses.

# I. Project Overview

## Tour of Downtown

Downtown Bloomington boasts many community resources, historic buildings, and other assets. This section contains an overview of many, although not all, of these places. Some areas, with proper cultivation, may in the future become irreplaceable assets as well - for example, the Warehouse District at the south end of the study area or the single family areas on the periphery of Downtown. The following key areas were considered throughout the planning process; refer to Figure I-3 for locations.

### 1 Phoenix & Lincoln Towers

Phoenix Towers is located on the northwest side of Madison Street and Lincoln Towers is located on the southwest side of Madison. These two 9-story senior housing buildings are some of the tallest buildings in the area and are prominent as part of the view people see while in or around Downtown.

### 2 Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts

Originally built in 1921 as Bloomington's Scottish Rite Temple, the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts was recently renovated and reopened in 2006 as an anchor to Downtown Bloomington's cultural district, offering performing, visual arts, and arts education facilities.

### 3 East Douglas Apartments

This 19th-century industrial loft building was recently converted into 52 affordable dwelling units with an addition to the west. The existing building section of the development is on the National Register of Historic Places.

### 4 Mixed Use Core

The northern end of Main Street and buildings surrounding the McLean County Museum of History (see #9), are considered the retail mixed-use core of Downtown. These areas consist primarily of beautiful historic mixed use buildings with shops, restaurants, or bars on the ground floor.

### 5 Market Street Parking Garage

The Market Street parking garage is a major public parking facility in Downtown Bloomington. The facility will either need substantive repairs or to be torn down in the near future. The site also houses a branch of the United States Postal Service.

### 6 Second Presbyterian Church

Founded in 1855, Second Presbyterian Church is a staple in the community, providing opportunities for worship

and service. Its recently constructed facilities take up a block on the east side of Downtown.

### 7 PNC Bank Facilities

PNC Bank, formally National City Bank, has a large facility, drive-through, and several parking lots in Downtown. There is also a small park on this site.

### 8 State Farm Fire Company Building

The State Farm Fire Company building was built in 1929 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The building originally housed State Farm's corporate headquarters, which has since moved to east Bloomington. There is also a heavily used parking garage on-site, which is primarily used by State Farm employees.

### 9 McLean County Museum of History

The McLean County Museum of History, built in 1903, is on the National Register Historic Places. The building was designed by William Reeves and John Baillie and housed the McLean County Circuit Court from 1900-1976; The courts are now located in facilities a few blocks to the south.

### 10 Pantagraph

The Pantagraph is a daily newspaper that serves eight counties and over 60 communities in Central Illinois. Founded in 1847, it is the oldest business in McLean County. Its facilities occupy several parcels.

### 11 Government Center

The Government Center houses various county and city offices.

### 12 Lincoln Garage

With 906 spaces, the Lincoln Garage is by far the largest public parking facility in Downtown Bloomington. Heading north into Downtown on East Street, Lincoln Garage is one of the first things a visitor will see.

### 13 Law & Justice Center

The McLean County Law and Justice Center, built in 1976, is regarded as the "county seat," and includes County courts, the McLean County Jail and County Coroner and Morgue, as well as other County offices.

### 14 McLean County Health Department

The McLean County Health Department is located on the first three floors of this building, while other floors are occupied by various state, City, County, not-for-profit, and law offices.

### 15 U.S. Cellular Coliseum

The U.S. Cellular Coliseum is an 8,000 seat entertainment venue that opened in April of 2006. Since its inception, the Coliseum has drawn tens of thousands of people to Downtown annually.

### 16 City Hall, Police Department, & Library Complex

These parcels house several buildings related to local government, including City Hall, the Police Department, and the public library.



Pantagraph.



McLean County Museum of History.



Law & Justice Center.



City Hall.

# I. Project Overview

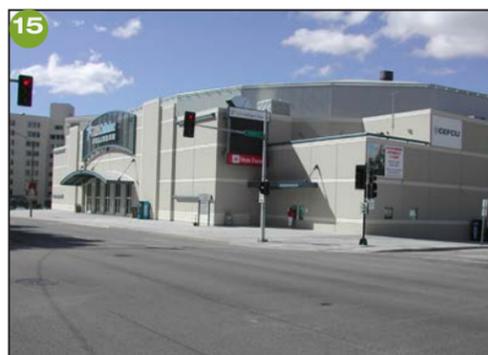
## Tour of Downtown



Phoenix Towers.



Mixed use core of Downtown.



U.S. Cellular Coliseum.

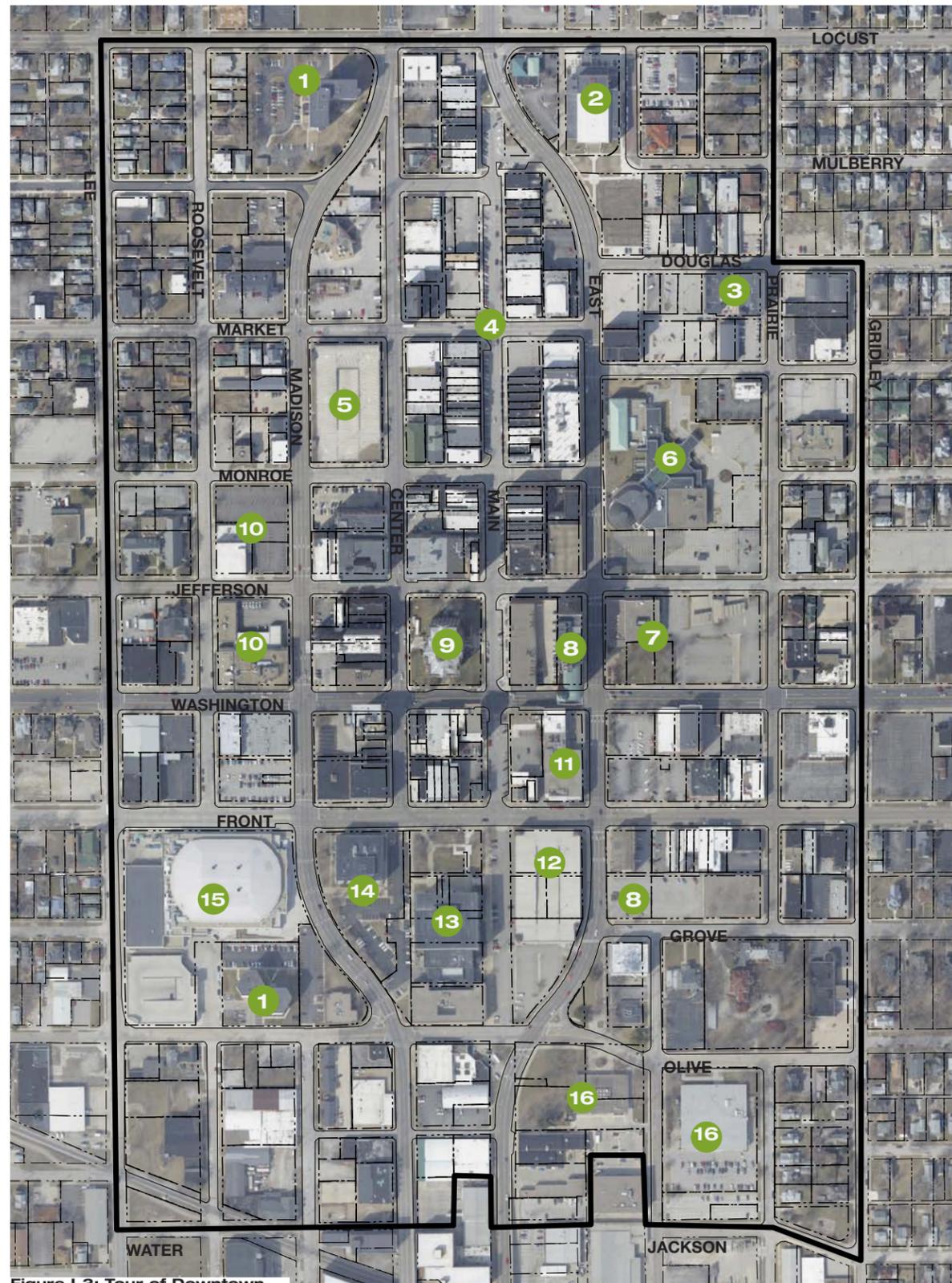


Figure I-3: Tour of Downtown.



East Douglas Apartments.



Government Center.



State Farm Fire Company Building.



Second Presbyterian Church.



Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts.



PNC Bank Facilities & Park.



Lincoln Parking Garage.

# I. Project Overview

## Historic Amenities

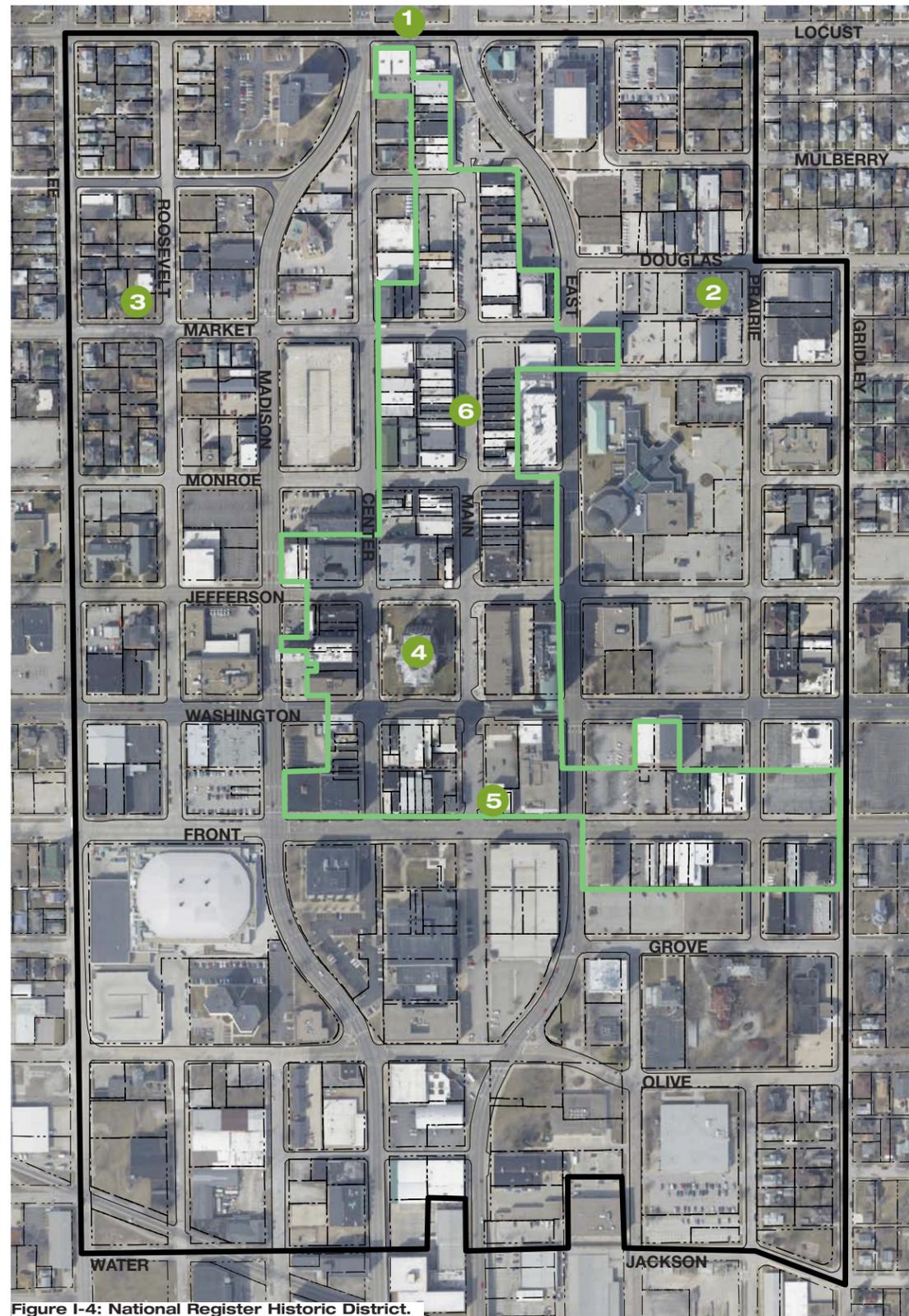


Figure I-4: National Register Historic District.

Downtown Bloomington National Register of Historic Places Locations

- 1 Holy Trinity Church  
704 N. Main St.
  - 2 White Building  
215 E. Douglas St.
  - 3 George Miller House  
405 W. Market St.
  - 4 McLean County Museum of History
  - 5 Miller-Davis Law Building  
101 N. Main St.
  - 6 Bloomington Central Business District
- National Register Historic District



Figure I-5. The historic McLean County Museum of History is located in the Bloomington Central Business Historic District, and it is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places individually.



Figure I-6. A view looking west down Jefferson Street illustrates the physical characteristics of the historic district. Brick and stone facades, large windows, decorative facade treatments, and a pedestrian scale all give Downtown its sense of character.

## Brief History of Downtown

Downtown Bloomington has a long and rich history that includes events and personalities ranging from American presidents to the famous Route 66 highway. Today, Downtown Bloomington retains much of its 19th Century historic architectural character. Filled with historic commercial buildings that showcase brick facades, large windows, decorative cornices, and terra cotta designs, the buildings make up a vibrant historic district at a classic pedestrian scale. Several buildings are significant enough on their own to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see Figure I-4).

In the mid-19th Century, Abraham Lincoln practiced law from the historic Miller-Davis Law Buildings. Downtown Bloomington recovered from a disastrous fire that swept through in 1900 that destroyed great portions of the Downtown, with the city rebuilding with even more impressive buildings in their places. Also, in the early 20th Century, several street car lines transected Downtown including lines on Main Street and Washington Street. Later, during the rise of the automobile age, the famous Route 66 traveled right through Downtown Bloomington, making the Downtown both a regional and tourist destination. The well-known insurance agency State Farm began in Downtown Bloomington, and later built the State Farm Fire Building (which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places) there to house their operations. Today, Bloomington embraces its rich heritage and proudly showcases its historic Downtown resources.

## Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission

The City of Bloomington established the Bloomington Historic Commission in 1983 to oversee the city's preservation ordinance. The local ordinance establishes a special zoning category, S-4: Historic District, for historically significant property. This special district requires a Historic Commission review of exterior changes to the structure. The Historic Commission is a volunteer citizen board appointed by the mayor that oversees the protection of the architectural and historical heritage of the community.

Owners of historic property in Bloomington can seek S-4 District designation by nominating their property, and final decisions about the zoning are made by the city council.

# I. Project Overview

## Historic Amenities

Although not currently funded, there have been special incentives for structures zoned S-4 made available to property owners. Special grants can also help offset the cost of maintenance or rehabilitation of the historic buildings. One such grant is the Downtown Rust Grant, which has been funded through TIF funding.

The local designation of buildings protects Bloomington historic buildings by requiring an exterior design review for any proposed changes to the facade. This is in addition to the protection offered to the properties honored on the National Register of Historic Places.

The requirements for local S-4 designation cover a range of criteria that include a number of features of significance. Properties that have important heritage and cultural value may be considered, as well as property associated with a famous or historic person or a historic event. Architectural criteria includes the building possessing distinguishing characteristics of a particular architectural style or method of construction. A property may also be considered if it is the work of a famous architect.

### Bloomington Central Business Historic District

Roughly bordered by Locust Street to the north, Front Street to the south, Center Street to the west, and East Street to the east (see Figure I-4 for exact boundaries and Figures I-6, I-7, and I-8 for images), the Bloomington Central Business Historic District is the heart of Downtown Bloomington. With significant buildings ranging in construction date from 1842-1942, the district contains a wide range of historic architectural styles and numerous buildings important to the heritage of the City of Bloomington. The district was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

Covering approximately fifteen city blocks, the district includes numerous historic commercial buildings that shape the character of the streets. While the majority of buildings in the district are contributing significant structures, there are a few buildings that are exceptional enough to be listed on the National Register individually.

For example, the civic and architectural anchor of the district

is the McLean County Museum of History (see Figure I-5). Completed in 1903, the grand structure replaced the previous courthouse that the Downtown fire of 1900 destroyed. It is a graceful, but monumental, building that was constructed mostly of stone because of fears of additional fires.

On the corner of Main Street and Front Street is the Miller-Davis Law Building (see Figure I-9). This building is historic in its own right, dating to 1843, but gained even more significance because in his early years, Abraham Lincoln practiced law there.

More characteristic of the commercial buildings in the district, the White Building (see Figure I-10) on Douglas Street is a superior example of late 19th Century commercial architecture. The building was recently rehabilitated and now houses apartment buildings, with a historically-sensitive addition to the west.

### Illinois Main Street Program

Bloomington joined the Illinois Main Street Program in 2005. The Main Street Program, which is sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is a volunteer-driven, preservation-based Downtown revitalization program. It offers information, guidance, and access to the national preservation community to its member cities. Focusing on community organization and promotion, Bloomington and its Main Street Program are proactively promoting the historic identity of the City.

Downtown Bloomington is a historic community with a wealth of physical historic heritage. The City's continued support for Downtown business and property owners illustrates the pride that the entire community has for these irreplaceable historic amenities.



Figure I-7 and Figure I-8 (left and right). Facade elevations showing distinctive windows, paint treatments, and storefronts in Downtown.



Figure I-9. The Miller-Davis Law Building served as an office for Abraham Lincoln during his time as a lawyer.



Figure I-10. The White Building typifies commercial and warehouse buildings of its time. The design featured numerous windows to let in light and air before buildings were wired for electricity.



## II. Illustrative Master Plan

Downtown Vision

Market Assessment

Key Redevelopment Opportunities

Retail Plan

Overall Site Plan

Open Space

## II. Illustrative Master Plan

### Downtown Vision

During the charrette conducted at the outset of this master planning project, the consultant team, directed by the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, developed several redevelopment ideas to guide the remainder of the project. The ideas were then presented to the community at a public meeting, where the response was overwhelmingly positive. The redevelopment ideas center upon creating a more walkable and vibrant Downtown that focuses on a mix of land uses and preservation of existing historic features. A brief overview of each redevelopment scenario follows.

### Scenario 1: North Main Street

The intersection at Market and Main Streets in the core Downtown retail area was chosen because of its critical location and impact on the surrounding built environment. The following features were noted for the existing and proposed developments.

#### Existing Development

- 1 Expansive parking lots currently occupy several parcels on the block of North Main between Market and Mulberry Streets.
- 2 Existing historic mixed-use buildings are in good condition, but are located in a vacuum, with parking lots on either side.
- 3 Erratic street trees are located along the street.
- 4 Existing streetscape elements, such as planters, benches, and garbage cans, are located sporadically in this area (see Section V: Streetscape Recommendations).

#### Proposed Redevelopment

- 1 Private parking lots in the core of Downtown are replaced by consolidated public parking supplies (see Section IV: Parking Policy Framework) and are infilled with new development. The scale and character of this new development matches that of the existing historic structures in the area. Storefronts are utilized to create an interesting pedestrian environment, buildings are located adjacent to the sidewalk, and a height of 2-3 stories is maintained in keeping with the local context.
- 2 Historic mixed-use buildings are preserved.
- 3 Street trees are spaced regularly along the street to provide a shaded and green environment to those passing by.
- 4 Existing streetscape elements, such as planters, benches, and garbage cans, are preserved and enhanced with new additions when possible (see Section V: Streetscape Recommendations).

#### EXISTING



Existing intersection looking north at Market & Main.

#### PROPOSED



Proposed redevelopment looking north at Market & Main.

### Scenario 2: East Washington Street

Washington Street was chosen as a redevelopment area due to its existing historic buildings and importance as a connection between Downtown and the neighborhoods to the east. Emphasis was placed on the importance of integrating new structures with the existing historic buildings on the south side of Washington (and State Farm further to the west). The following features were noted for the existing and proposed developments.

#### Existing Development

- 1 Expansive parking lots currently occupy almost the entire north side of the block. According to the parking analysis done as part of this report, this surface parking is currently underutilized.
- 2 Existing historic mixed-use buildings include the Castle Theater and Paxton's on the south side of Washington, as well as the State Farm Downtown Building further west. In addition, there are several historic buildings on Front Street directly to the south.
- 3 Street trees are located sparsely along the street.

#### Proposed Redevelopment

- 1 Consolidated public parking supplies make it possible in the future for surface parking lots to be replaced by new development. Depending on market forces, this area could redevelop as townhomes (shown in option 1) or as non-retail mixed-use buildings (with office or service uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses above, shown in option 2).
- 2 Historic mixed-use buildings are preserved.
- 3 Street trees are spaced regularly along the street to provide a shaded and green environment to those passing by.
- 4 Distinctive pedestrian crosswalk treatments are added to enhance safety and alert motorists that pedestrians may be present.

#### EXISTING



Existing intersection looking west down Washington at Prairie.

#### PROPOSED



Proposed redevelopment (option 1) looking west down Washington at Prairie.

#### PROPOSED



Proposed redevelopment (option 2) looking west down Washington at Prairie.

## II. Illustrative Master Plan

### Downtown Vision

#### Scenario 3: Market Street Garage

The Market Street Garage is a public parking garage which is nearing the end of its functional life. The City of Bloomington owns the site and has indicated they are pursuing the possibility that the site may be redeveloped as something other than a parking garage, or as a development with a parking garage component. The following features were noted for the existing and proposed developments.

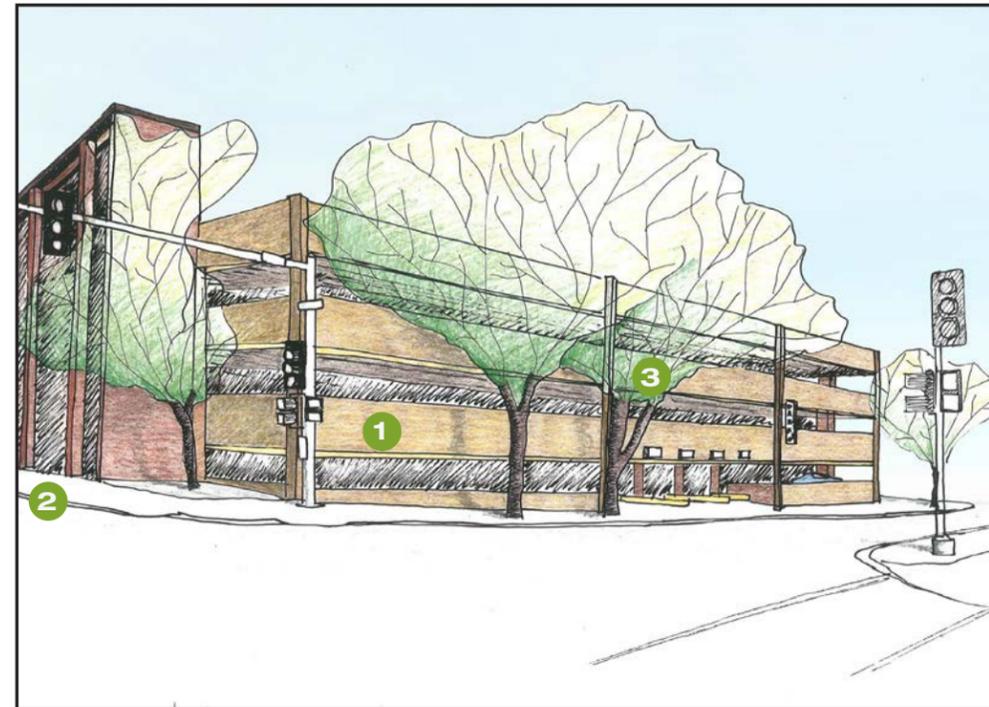
##### Existing Development

- 1 The current site contains a monolithic parking structure that lacks a relationship with the street.
- 2 There is a significant grade change running from north to south along the site, which must be taken into consideration when redevelopment occurs.
- 3 Existing street trees should be preserved when possible.

##### Proposed Redevelopment

- 1 Option 1 shows the redevelopment of the Market Street Garage site into a new YMCA facility. This idea was brainstormed during the charrette and presented to the YMCA board by the consultant team. The YMCA board subsequently wrote a letter of support for the concept to the Bloomington City Council. Such a facility would bring a steady flow of visitors, encourage Downtown workers to stay past working hours, provide much needed services to the population in and around Downtown, and provide a family-friendly destination.
- 2 Option 2 shows the redevelopment of the parking garage into a mixed use facility. Such a building could hold office, service, or civic uses on the ground floor and offices, apartments, or condominiums on the upper floors.
- 3 Parking is located underneath the facility to avoid a break in the street wall created by the building. Additional parking spaces may be replaced in other public decks (see Section IV: Parking Policy Framework).
- 4 Street trees are filled in along the street to provide a shaded and green environment to those passing by.

#### EXISTING



Existing intersection looking south at Market & Center Streets.

#### PROPOSED



Proposed redevelopment (option 1) looking south at Market & Center Streets.

#### PROPOSED



Proposed redevelopment (option 2) looking south at Market & Center Streets.

## II. Illustrative Master Plan Market Assessment Summary

The following is a summary of the full market study completed for Downtown Bloomington. The unedited version of the market study may be found in Section VII: Appendix.

### Summary of Market Assessment (market assessment completed in 2009)

#### Summary of Demographics and Economic Trends

Bloomington, Normal, and the surrounding region are steady growth markets without a recent history of dramatic swings in demographic indicators or construction patterns. Bloomington is in a strong regional position, with a relatively high growth rate, well-educated population, high per capita income, professional workforce, and stable industries dominated by large employers. Net migration to the region is generally positive, despite net losses to other states and the Chicagoland area; in-migrating households come from a wide variety of places. On the whole, the study area population is less educated and has lower incomes than that of the region.

Psychographic data categorizes households into 67 market segment categories based on shared demographic traits, lifestyle preferences, values, and consumer behaviors. These shared traits are useful for generating a nuanced understanding of a local population, including housing and retail preferences. The psychographic profile for the Downtown core adds another dimension of information with which to interpret demographic data, and demonstrates that nearly half of all households in this area are likely to have primarily chosen Downtown to take advantage of its unique lifestyle amenities. Meanwhile, the psychographic profile of nearby eastern neighborhoods demonstrates the inclusion of households similar to those found Downtown, plus additional households that are likely to generate current demand for unique Downtown offerings and provide potential future demand for Downtown housing.

In-depth demographic and economic analysis found strong positive trends that can benefit Downtown Bloomington, but their potential has not yet been realized. Downtown offers a unique niche for housing, retail, and office uses; this niche limits the depth of potential demand, yet also provides Downtown with a distinct and strong competitive position. The following sections summarize the potential for housing, office, retail, and hotel uses in Downtown within the framework of leveraging Downtown's unique assets to maximize its ability

to capture the share of market demand compatible with the area.

#### Housing Market Findings

*Downtown competes against other locations in the Bloomington-Normal region based on its unique setting and unique housing offerings.*

No other location in the Bloomington-Normal region offers the combination of amenities and walkable urbanity of Downtown Bloomington, nor does any other location offer a concentration of unique loft spaces. Uptown Normal is the next closest competitor in both regards, but is relatively small and lacks Downtown Bloomington's historic character, concentration of lofts, and cultural amenities.

*The rental market in Downtown has consistently performed well.* The rental market has consistently performed well over the past ten years, with rapid absorption and lower vacancy rates than the Bloomington-Normal region.

*Rehabilitated loft rental units are generally larger than apartments elsewhere in the region, but less expensive on a per square foot basis.* Downtown lofts are differentiated by their large size relative to apartments elsewhere in the region. The size of the lofts results in high gross rents, but the price per square foot is lower than units elsewhere in the region.

*Condominiums have generally not performed well in Downtown, but small units have a better sales record than larger high-end units.* Absorption of large loft-style condominium units has been stymied by poor market timing, high total prices, and other extraordinary issues. However, some smaller units – similar to traditional apartments – have sold since 2000.

*Historic neighborhood households are a strong source of future demand for living in Downtown.*

The psychographic profile of households in Historic Neighborhoods near Downtown suggests that their preferences are compatible with Downtown living. This demand will grow further as homeowners in these neighborhoods age and become more likely to downsize to condominiums.

*There is current demand for an additional 500 households in Downtown and an additional 500 to 600 by 2030, but conditions must be correct to capture this demand.*

Psychographic profiles and current regional housing preferences suggest that there is significant demand for Downtown living,

but much of this demand is being captured by other locations. Growth will require that Downtown capture additional demand by offering sufficient additional housing units while further improving as a walkable, vibrant, amenity-rich urban environment.

#### Retail Market Findings

*Downtown Bloomington contains a concentration of unique, independent retailers that draw customers from throughout the region.* Successful retailers in Downtown Bloomington are able to offer a special experience or product that can draw customers from throughout the region.

*Downtown retail is clustered in three agglomerations, or “nodes.”* Three retail nodes create synergies between their tightly-clustered businesses by generating foot traffic, visibility, and varying opportunities to easily shop, dine, and imbibe. These nodes are located around Main Street between Jefferson and Locust, the blocks south of the Museum of History and Square, and Front Street between East and Prairie.

*Downtown retail business is boosted by events and non-retail “anchors” that draw visitors from throughout the region and beyond.* Currently, the role of a regional retail anchor is fulfilled by event programming and the presence of cultural and performing arts anchors in Downtown, including the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, McLean County Arts Center, McLean County Museum of History, U.S. Cellular Coliseum, and Pepsi Ice Center. These assets attract visitors to Downtown and help to increase business for some of the small retailers. However, the draw is not as consistent or strong as an actual retail anchor.

*There is current unmet demand for nearly 38,000 square feet of retail in Downtown, with an additional 36,000 square feet by 2030.*

*Downtown Bloomington retail opportunities are limited by traffic volumes, store sizes, store configurations, and the scale of Downtown.* Downtown Bloomington will not be able to compete with suburban locations in terms of parking access and large store formats. Instead, Downtown Bloomington must continue to offer a unique historic urban environment, the “café culture” that accompanies such a place, and a collection of one-of-a-kind specialized stores and restaurants that will continue to draw people from throughout the region. These independent retailers are also more able and willing to adapt to the unusual or antiquated configurations found in Downtown retail storefronts.

It is not likely that a large national chain will be attracted to Downtown in the foreseeable future due to high income, access, and population requirements.

*Retail growth in Downtown Bloomington requires an emphasis on a well-connected, amenity-rich, and safe environment.*

The focus on specialty retail and unique drinking and eating establishments in Downtown Bloomington shifts the emphasis from meeting unmet demand to creating an environment that encourages additional agglomerations/clusters of businesses able to draw customers from throughout the region. This strategic direction is supported by the low likelihood that large comparison goods stores will locate Downtown, and by business owner statements that local workers and residents comprise only a small share of their business.

#### Office Market Findings

*Downtown Bloomington is the sole major submarket outside of Veterans Parkway, although the vast majority of office space in the region lies within one mile of the parkway.*

The Class A and B office space surrounding the Museum of History and Square is considered the strongest subarea of Downtown given its proximity to county and local government offices and inclusion of the State Farm Insurance Building. Rents in Downtown Bloomington are generally lower than the region, but vary widely depending on building condition and proximity to government offices.

*The Downtown office market is dominated by State Farm Insurance, City and County government offices, and small professional firms that largely service the government offices.*

*Low rents have encouraged startup businesses in Downtown.*

Although some office rents in Downtown match those of new Class A space in the region, rents vary widely and are lower than the region overall. This has made Downtown an attractive location for smaller startup businesses and firms that prefer to remain small.

*The small office spaces in Downtown buildings reduce the ability of businesses to grow in place.*

Anecdotal evidence suggests that growing businesses are likely to eventually move out of Downtown since there are few large spaces available. Future development can help overcome this problem, but such development must respect the historic scale and character of Downtown.

## II. Illustrative Master Plan

### Market Assessment Summary

*Downtown Bloomington is likely to remain a specialized office market centered on large existing employers and smaller firms that enjoy a specific location or cost advantage in a Downtown site.*

The specialized office market in Downtown reduces the breadth of demand it may capture in the foreseeable future, but also ensures its competitive advantage as a uniquely-positioned niche market. The domination by large employers will result in fairly slow growth in demand for office space (barring an unforeseen expansion decision), but some additional demand will come from growing startup and small companies.

#### **Hotel Market Findings**

*Three major entities are likely to drive demand for a hotel in Downtown Bloomington: U.S. Cellular Coliseum, Illinois Wesleyan University, and State Farm Insurance.*

Additional demand is generated by the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, other businesses, and more distant institutions such as Advocate BroMenn Regional Medical Center and Illinois State University.

*Preliminary evaluation of the Bloomington-Normal hotel market suggests that there is pent-up demand for a hotel in Downtown.*

It is difficult to discern at this time whether hotel demand is strong enough to warrant constructing a new facility within the next 3 to 5 years. However, given the strong synergy between a hotel and other uses in the Downtown – especially U.S. Cellular Coliseum – a high priority should be placed on attracting a hotel to Downtown. To determine the type of lodging that would best succeed in the Downtown, a more recent market analysis should be conducted. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued in October of 2012 to initiate a Hotel Market Demand and Feasibility Study. This will update the findings here from the 2009 study.

#### **Overview of Findings**

Downtown has a number of assets, but there is little synergy between them. Improvements will depend on strategic management of these assets to generate the synergy essential to drive future investment and growth. Strategic management efforts must be focused on four main goals:

- 1) General placemaking, i.e. creating a vibrant, high-quality public realm that attracts pedestrian activity by providing attractive destinations, interactive social encounters, and well-connected, stimulating public spaces
- 2) Tying together the existing anchors and retail nodes

- 3) Drawing new anchors, such as a hotel and/or a YMCA
- 4) Maintaining the historic character and resultant small scale that generate Downtown's competitive differentiation

### Recommendations by Land Use

#### **Housing**

*Build connections between Downtown and the eastern historic neighborhoods.*

Strategically sited housing development can connect Downtown to the historic neighborhoods to its east. This connection will physically and conceptually connect Downtown to these neighborhoods and drive retail business by growing the residential customer base and increasing the likelihood that existing nearby residents will walk to Downtown businesses.

*Focus on the creation of additional rental units.*

The Downtown rental market remains stronger than the condominium market. Developers should focus on this market in the immediate future, although condominium demand will increase over time.

*Focus on the creation of smaller condominium units.*

Less expensive apartment-style condominiums have met with more success than large, expensive, customized units. The low prices of smaller condominiums reduce barriers of entry to homeownership for purchasers interested in the Downtown lifestyle. Such smaller units will help prove the strength of the Downtown condominium market for future purchasers and also create dedicated Downtown stakeholders.

#### **Retail**

*Target retail tenant types.*

The full market study at the end of this report identifies targeted retail tenant types based on compatibility with small Downtown storefronts, potential to create a unique specialty business able to serve both local and regional residents and capitalize on Downtown assets, and, when applicable, capture regionally unfulfilled demand.

*Build connections between nodes and anchors.*

Steps to implement improved signage, traffic calming measures, an upgraded street environment, and possibly a circulator can help to connect each of the dispersed retail nodes and cultural/performance/arts anchors to each other and parking garages.

*Concentrate business in existing nodes.*

The three identified business nodes provide incubators for new businesses by increasing visibility and providing a linkage to the existing community of Downtown stakeholders. New retail development should be concentrated adjacent to these existing nodes to avoid spreading retail too thinly.

*Preserve existing storefronts.*

The Downtown rent competition between office and retail uses favors office conversion of ground floor spaces to office use. Although these conversions may have removed empty storefronts in the past, such conversions pose serious long-term challenges to development of the Downtown environment. The City and Downtown Bloomington Association, in conjunction with stakeholders, should examine the possibility of mandating preservation of storefront retail spaces, particularly in and near existing nodes.

*Attract and grow new anchors for Downtown Bloomington.*

It will be a number of years before a single large retail anchor exists or is viable. In the interim, other non-retail anchors can help to fill the gaps in the Downtown streetscape and also draw more foot traffic and residents to the area. Such opportunities could include a library, YMCA, or community college.

*Actively manage Downtown Bloomington.*

There is potential for the Downtown Bloomington Association or another organization to take on an even more proactive role that helps property owners and tenants target particular sites for particular business types. The completed Downtown Bloomington Strategy will be a useful guide for these decisions, though ongoing assistance from specialized consultants will also be valuable.

*Cultivate the artist community.*

The vibrant Downtown artist community has recently shown greater cohesion and capacity for action. The Downtown Bloomington Association can further work with this community to encourage public recognition and patronage. It may also be to the benefit of both the artists and Downtown to further promote galleries with stable hours that show the works of multiple artists, thus providing a consistent draw to the area.

#### **Office**

*Tailor assistance to the needs of startup businesses.*

Smaller startup businesses are the most dynamic component of the Downtown office market, which is otherwise largely dominated by State Farm Insurance, government offices, and small professional firms linked to the government offices.

*When feasible, pursue development of larger office spaces that can accommodate growing Downtown businesses.*

There are few large office spaces in Downtown that are capable of accommodating businesses as they grow. This is not particularly damaging to Downtown given the stability of its larger employers, but it would be preferable to retain these businesses in the Study Area. Market demand may eventually reach a level sufficient to develop a building that will fill the niche for large office space.

*Ensure that future development respects the historic scale and character of Downtown.*

Downtown's historic scale and character differentiates it from other locations in the Bloomington-Normal region and is a key asset. Future development must respect this character and integrate into the existing urban fabric, especially if larger spaces are being provided.

#### **Hotel**

*Place a high priority on the development of a hotel in Downtown.*

A hotel in Downtown will have numerous spinoff benefits. Hotel development must be evaluated quickly, as the presence of a hotel will help spur numerous other improvements in the study area. An independent, boutique hotel would be most suitable for Downtown. A boutique hotel provides greater design flexibility and would fit the historic nature of Downtown; such a development could even take place within a historic building.

### Phasing and Outlook

#### **Short- and Mid-Term Development Potential and Strategy Recommendations (to -2020)**

The overall focus will remain on reuse of the existing building stock, with a few new construction projects possible toward the end of the 10 to 15 year time horizon. Emphasis is on growth of retail and housing, plus steps to encourage the development of a generally vibrant, pleasant, appealing place. The current

## II. Illustrative Master Plan Market Assessment Summary

economic environment makes it likely that little development activity will occur until at least mid-2010, but possibly later than that. Early residential development will continue to focus on upper-floor conversions of space to a mixture of rental and condominium units; the majority will be rental units. Townhomes are ideal for the open sites east of Downtown.

A limited number of additional office spaces can be accommodated in existing buildings. A small new office building, likely built on the periphery of Downtown where development is easier and less expensive, may become possible during this time period.

Significant mixed-use infill development within the Madison Street / East Street couplet is relatively unlikely during this period. Other possibilities during this time period include the construction of an additional (non-retail) anchor and construction of a hotel. The parking garage on the northwest corner of Monroe Street and Center Street presents an excellent opportunity for catalytic redevelopment with public assistance, especially since the City owns the site.

### Long-Term Development Potential and Strategy Recommendations (~2020-2030)

If all goes well with developing the retail and residential markets and resolving the various concerns raised in this report, then demand and rents can rise to a level during this time period such that new construction of residential units becomes more commonplace. The City can jumpstart this process by applying tax increment financing monies to these developments, just as it has assisted many of the apartment and condominium conversion projects. Alternately, joint development is possible on City-owned lots.

Mixed-use infill retail/housing/office development within the Madison Street / East Street couplet will become increasingly common during this period, but remain the most difficult product type to deliver. New construction near existing retail nodes or on pathways between such nodes, anchors, and surrounding neighborhoods should include a ground-floor retail component to accommodate increasing demand for specialty and local-serving shopping. Population growth and increased desirability will generate demand for additional office development.

## Enterprise Zone

To help initiate development in Downtown, an enterprise zone extension has been proposed. Enterprise zones encourage development and investment by offering tax concessions, special financing and other incentives to developers and business owners which create jobs and improve the local economy.

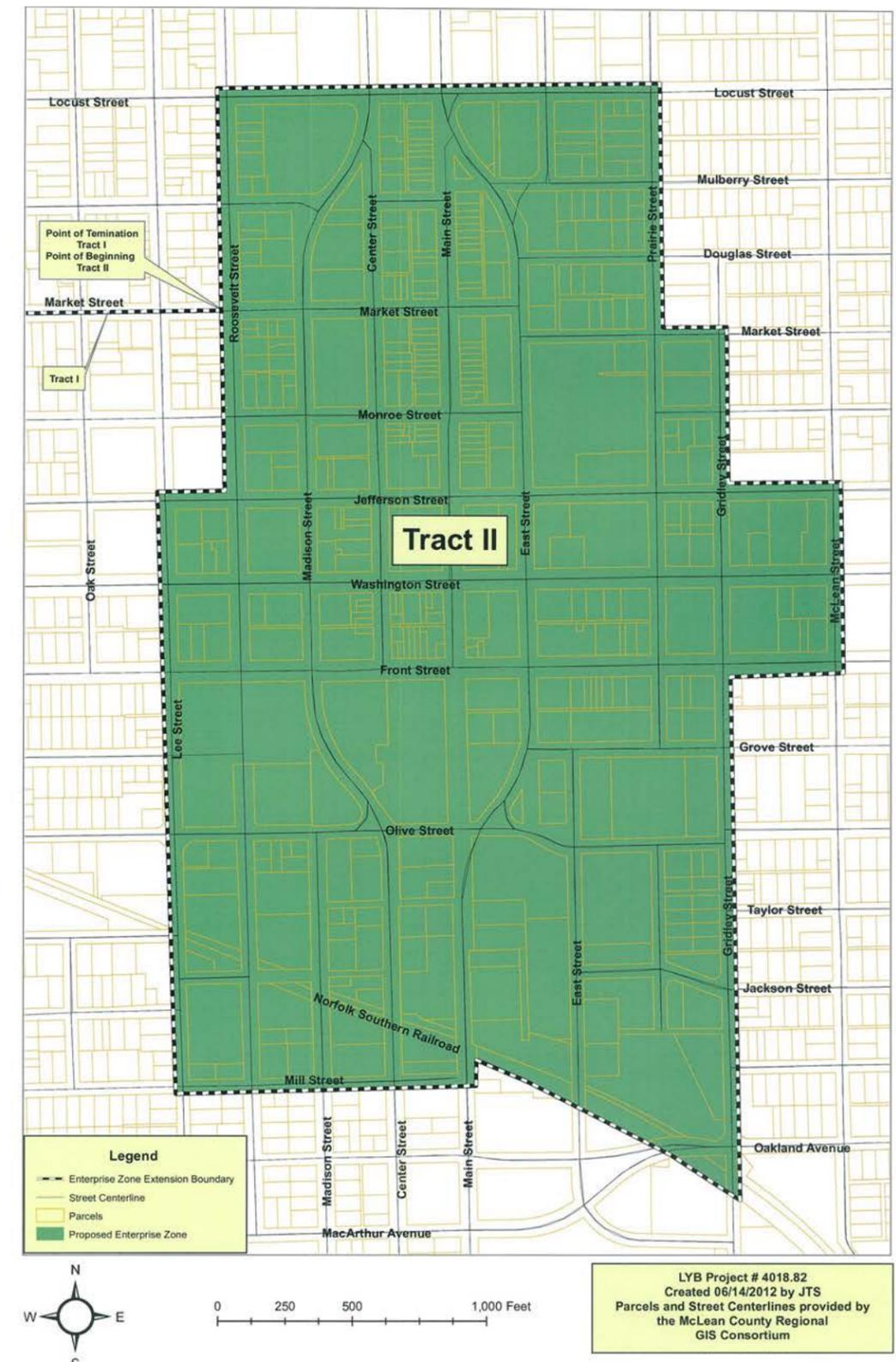
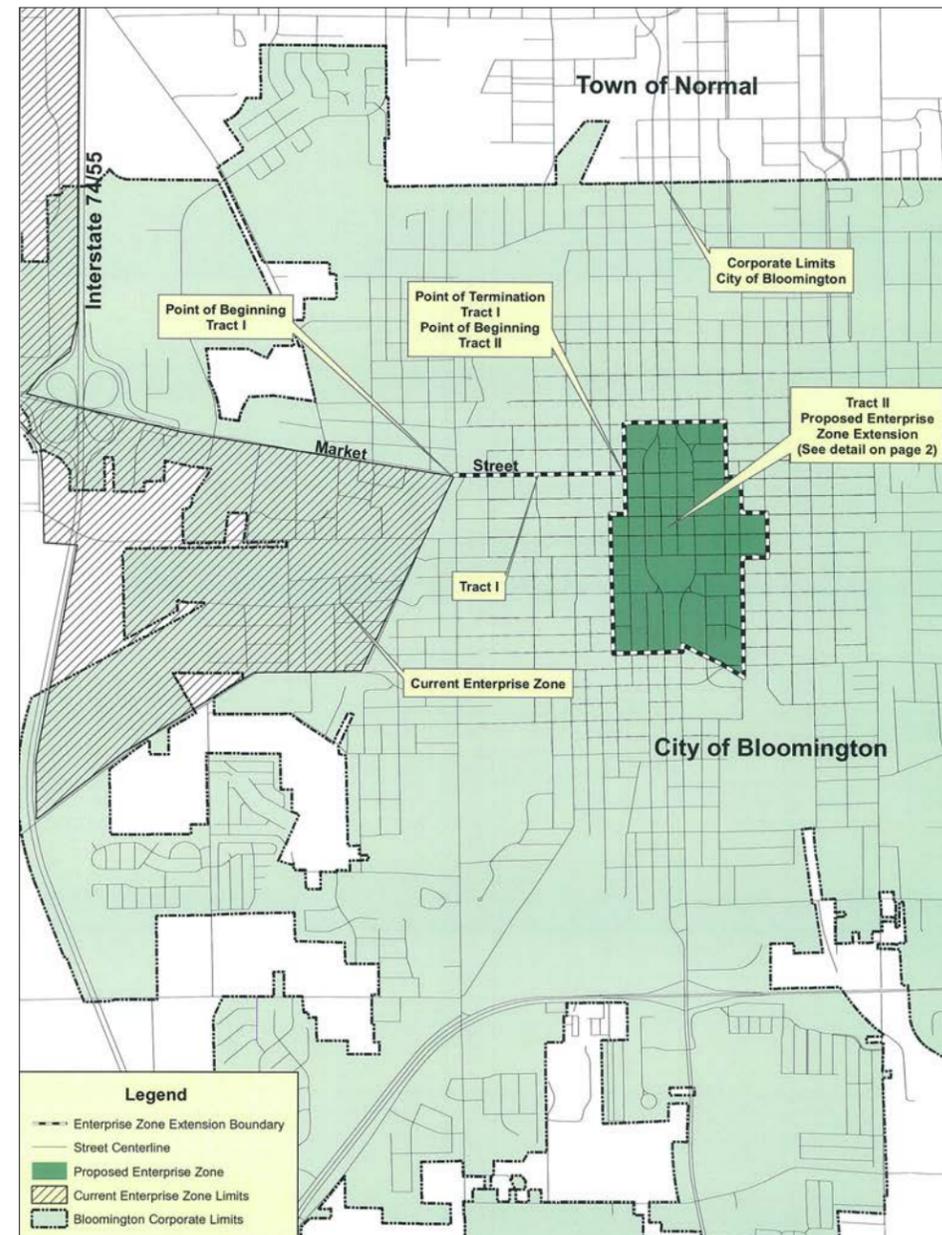


Figure II-X: Proposed McLean County/Bloomington Normal Enterprise Zone Extension

# II. Illustrative Master Plan

## Key Redevelopment Opportunities



Electronic billboard site.



Market Street Parking Garage.



Roosevelt Avenue parcels.

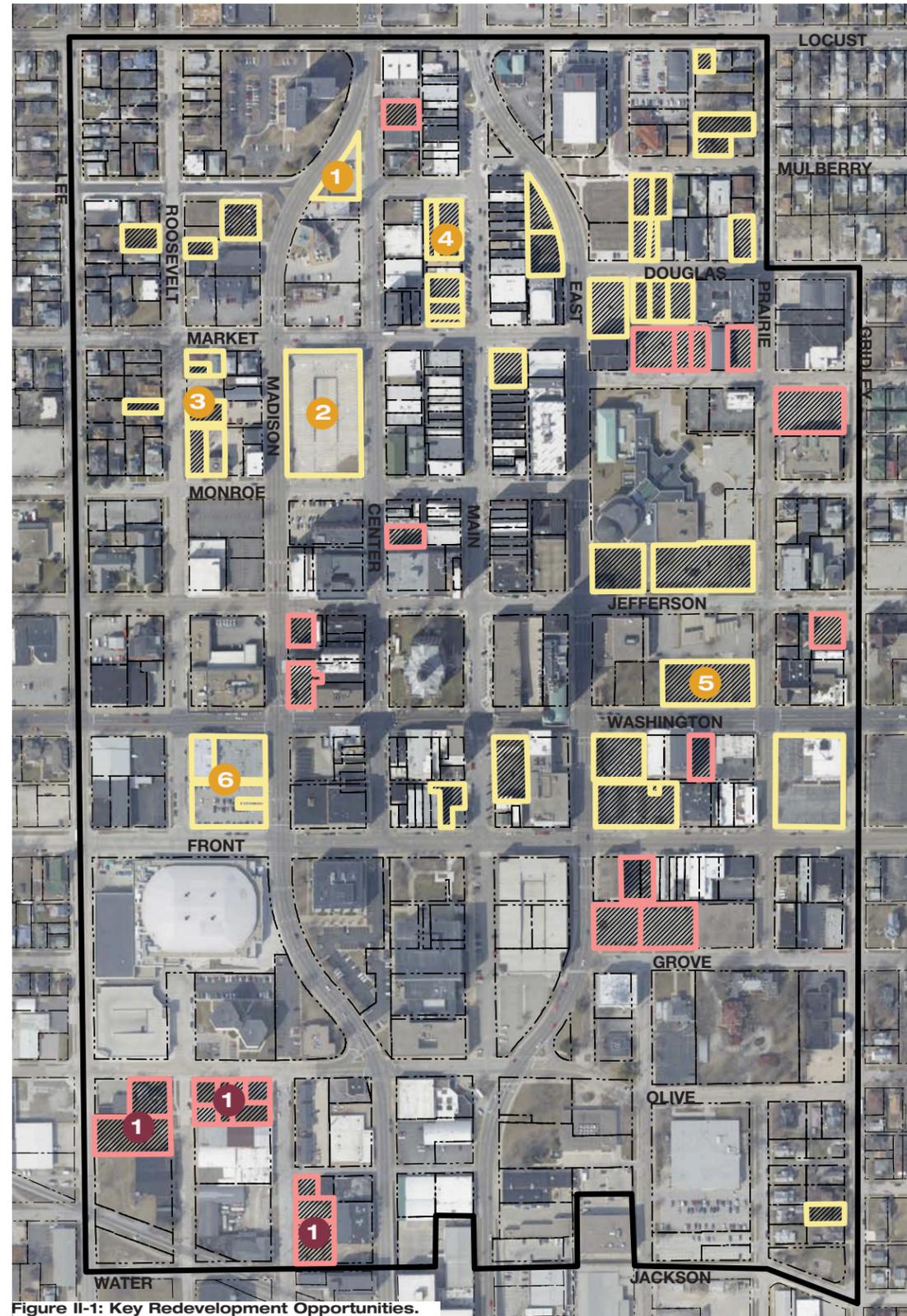


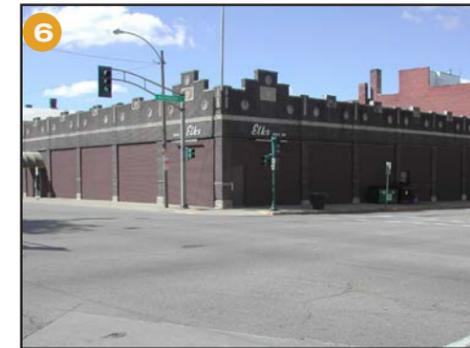
Figure II-1: Key Redevelopment Opportunities.



Main Street parking lots.



PNC Bank parking lots.



Bulter lot & Elks Lodge site.



Figure II-1 illustrates key redevelopment opportunities within Downtown Bloomington. These sites are not being used to their fullest potential, particularly in a Downtown setting where land demand should be relatively high. A primary concern for developing such sites is that parking inventory will be reduced and further strain other existing parking facilities. The parking component of this plan addresses the redistribution of surface parking into parking decks; more information can be found in Section IV: Parking Policy Framework.

In Figure II-1, sites outlined in yellow or pink (with no hatch) either currently contain buildings or require further explanation for their classification as opportunity sites. Sites outlined in yellow or pink with a crosshatch are either currently vacant or being used for parking. More information on these sites may be found in the two sections below.

### Short Term Opportunity Sites

The opportunity sites identified in this section are classified as short term opportunity sites, meaning that they have the potential to redevelop within the next five to ten years.

- 1 Electronic Billboard Site**  
 This site is currently the first impression that visitors have of Downtown Bloomington if they are driving south. The site houses a large electronic billboard and parking lot, which gives the impression that Downtown is an auto-oriented place. The opportunity exists to transform this site into a lively gateway parcel that will draw visitors in to shop, dine, and play.
- 2 Market Street Parking Garage**  
 The Market Street Parking Garage is in a state of disrepair and is slated for redevelopment by the City of Bloomington. This site represents one of the largest redevelopment parcels available in Downtown and is a great opportunity to kick start development in Downtown. This site was examined during the Downtown redevelopment charrette; see Section II: Downtown Vision for more details.
- 3 Roosevelt Avenue Parcels**  
 The parcels along Roosevelt Avenue between Market and Monroe Streets contain a mixture of older residential buildings and vacant lots. The City of Bloomington

recently acquired about half of the properties on this block with the hope of pursuing a redevelopment project there.

#### 4 Main Street Parking Lots

There are currently several parcels on the west side of north Main Street between Market and Mulberry Streets that are being used as parking lots. These parcels' location in the heart of the retail core makes it imperative for them to be redeveloped as mixed-use buildings of similar scale and character to those that currently exist Downtown. See Section II: Downtown Vision for more information; these parcels were included as redevelopment sites during the Downtown redevelopment charrette.

#### 5 PNC Bank Parking Lot

PNC Bank currently occupies an entire block on the east side of the study area, with a large portion of the block dedicated to parking and drive-through facilities. According to our parking study, these parking areas are not heavily used. In addition, in the short term future, other parking decks proposed in the area (see Section IV: Parking Policy Framework) may make PNC's parking facilities unnecessary. The area currently dedicated to parking could then be utilized for other uses. See Section II: Downtown Vision for more details; this site was included as a redevelopment site during the Downtown redevelopment charrette.

#### 6 Butler Lot & Elks Lodge Site

This block is currently being explored as a redevelopment site by the City of Bloomington. The City owns the Butler Lot, an underutilized public parking lot on the south side of the site. The Elks Lodge building on the north side of the site was recently sold to provide parking for a condo building. The combination of these parcels into one redevelopment site would present a large area with the potential to provide supportive services, such as a hotel, to attractions within Downtown.

## Long Term Opportunity Sites

The opportunity sites identified below and in pink on Figure II-1 may be redeveloped in the longer term future, within the next ten to twenty years. Longer term opportunity sites will need to wait for the market to emerge to support the type of development that should occur on the site.

#### 1 Warehouse District Parcels

The majority of parcels on the study area's southern edge are either vacant or contain older industrial buildings that are in disrepair and may need to be demolished as appropriate. As a long term redevelopment strategy, it is recommended that this area focus on parcel redevelopment and play upon its industrial roots to become a more "craftsman industrial" and arts district (see Section III: Warehouse District for more details) if a critical mass of buildings are identified as suitable.

#### 2 Auto-Oriented Buildings

While not shown as opportunity sites on Figure II-1, there are several structures within the Downtown core (within the East and Madison couplet) that are currently automobile, instead of pedestrian, oriented (see pictures numbered "2" to the right for examples). Auto-oriented buildings typically situate the building further back on the lot to make room for parking in the front and/or side of the building. This has a negative impact on the character of Downtown because such buildings do not match the historic physical features of other surrounding buildings.

While these buildings should be utilized as long as they are viable, they will likely feel development pressure as investment increases Downtown. When these parcels are redeveloped, it is critical that the new structures incorporate pedestrian-friendly features that match the character of the rest of the Downtown core.



*Warehouse District vacant parcels.*



*Auto-oriented building surrounded by parking.*



*Commerce Bank drive-through.*

# II. Illustrative Master Plan

## Existing Retail

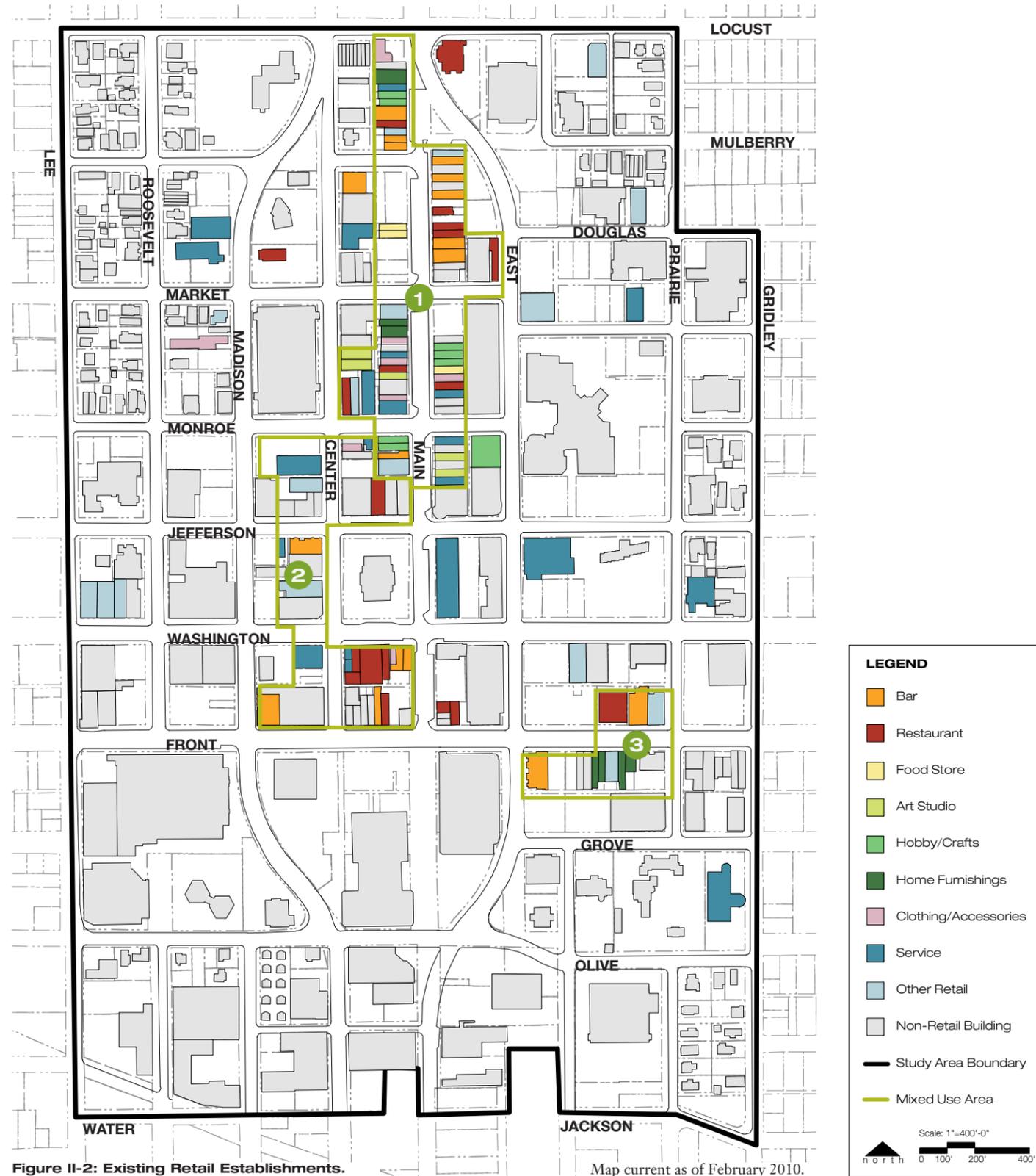


Figure II-2: Existing Retail Establishments.

Map current as of February 2010.

This section examines existing retail areas within Downtown, which are scattered around the study area and are almost exclusively comprised of independent specialty businesses. These businesses include approximately 40 stores, 16 restaurants, 15 bars, 20 service businesses, and 6 art studios. The 40 stores consist of a wide range of uses, but larger categories include approximately 7 clothing and accessory stores (mostly resale), 6 hobby and crafts stores, 4 home furnishings stores, and 3 food stores. The retail in Downtown is organized loosely into 3 nodes, which are described below.

For the purposes of this study, “retail” is defined as the small-scale (<7,500 square feet) selling of goods, wares, or merchandise directly to the ultimate consumer; Service uses, including bars and restaurants, are also included in the retail category for purposes of this discussion, as they also contribute to a pedestrian-friendly, vibrant environment.

### 1 Main Street Mixed Use

Main Street’s mixed use area extends from Locust Street south almost to Jefferson Street. There are a wide range of uses in this area, including a couple of tailors, hobby and crafts stores, furniture stores, art galleries, and a coffee shop. This is the strongest base of retail businesses in Downtown, and the most likely to draw people from across the region.

#### Main Street Bar & Restaurant Node

The cluster of businesses along north Main Street between Market and Locust Streets represent one of two restaurant and bar districts within Downtown. There are several bars along this stretch of street, as well as a few restaurants and two food stores, including a candy store and an organic grocer.

### 2 Museum of History & Square Mixed Use

The Museum of History and Square mixed use node consists of a pharmacy, clothing boutique, and two banks, in addition to the second cluster of bars and restaurants in the study area.

#### Museum of History & Square Bar & Restaurant Node

Directly to the south of the McLean County Museum of History and Square is the second restaurant and bar district within Downtown. The high number of restaurants and cafes suggest that these businesses are

frequented by daytime workers in the surrounding office and governmental buildings.

### 3 Front Street Mixed Use

This area includes a small cluster of businesses along Front Street between East and Prairie Streets. Though limited in number, these businesses are housed in beautiful historic buildings that provide a strong foundation for future adjacent development. Current businesses include a restaurant, a couple bars, book store, and high end antique shop and oriental rug store.



Main Street mixed-use buildings at Market Street.



Museum of History & Square mixed-use buildings along Washington Street.

## II. Illustrative Master Plan

### Proposed Retail Plan

The following recommendations relate to the proposed retail plan - how and where to locate retail uses within Downtown. This is of critical importance to the economic success of Downtown, due to the limited amount of retail that the market study found could be supported in the area. Figure II-3 illustrates the proposed retail plan, and each recommendation is explained further below.

#### Recommendation: Focus retail into 3 major nodes

The market study conducted as part of this plan found that a limited amount of new retail, approximately 74,000 square feet, could be accommodated within the study area. In order to make the existing retail nodes more vibrant, it is recommended that future new retail businesses be located within the three core existing retail nodes outlined in the previous section. The three retail nodes create synergies between the tightly-clustered businesses, resulting in increased foot traffic, visibility, and opportunities for visitors to shop and dine.

Figure II-3: Proposed Retail Plan shows specifically where retail development should be focused in Downtown. The pink and purple areas designate retail areas, while gray or uncolored buildings or parcels will consist of other land uses (see Section III: Proposed Land Use). These uses will be regulated through the zoning code overlay produced as part of this project.

#### Recommendation: Permit appropriate uses within each retail area

The retail areas in Downtown have been broken up into three different mixes of land uses to suit the context of the different areas of Downtown and to provide flexibility to respond to market changes. These three retail mixes are discussed below and examples of appropriate uses for each retail mix are shown in Table II-1: Appropriate Uses for Each Retail Mix. The lists in Table II-1 are not exhaustive and will be expounded upon further in the zoning code overlay; they are meant to provide examples of the types of retail that should be permitted in each area.

#### 1 Retail Mix 1

Retail Mix 1 is shown for the majority of Main Street's mixed use area north of Jefferson Street. Only small-scale retail and service uses are recommended, since this retail mix is meant to embody the retail core of Downtown (see Table II-1). This retail area is the strongest in Downtown and is most likely to successfully integrate new retail

businesses.

#### 2 Retail Mix 2

Retail Mix 2 is the proposed retail category applied for the parcels surrounding the McLean County Museum of History and Square. It includes all of the uses permitted in Retail Mix 1, but provides a bit more flexibility by including additional service and office uses. Typically, in the retail core of a Downtown, office uses would not be found on the ground floors of buildings because such uses do not provide as interesting an environment for pedestrians. However, in order to concentrate retail and provide flexibility, as well as accommodate existing uses, it is recommended that this area allow limited office uses (see Table II-1).

#### 3 Retail Mix 3

Retail Mix 3 is mapped along Front Street in the southeastern quadrant of the study area. This retail mix includes all of the uses permitted in Retail Mix 1 but also would permit limited larger footprint, "destination retail" users, such as a grocery store, furniture store, or appliance and electronics store, all of which are in demand in the region. These destination retail uses should be limited to a maximum of 15,000 square feet to keep in scale with the surrounding area.

There are several reasons to include larger users in this area. First, there are larger redevelopment parcels available in this area, which would be essential for businesses with a bigger footprint. Also, the trips generated by the retail mix proposed for this area are more likely to involve automobiles, particularly uses such as a grocery store, furniture store, or appliance and electronics store. Some amount of off-street parking may be necessary for these types of businesses, making larger parcels vital. Lastly, a few destination retailers, such as an antiques dealer and rug merchant, already exist in this area and could benefit from the clustering of other such businesses.

#### 4 Recommendation: Liquor Commission should restrict new taverns to designated Tavern Districts

Two New Tavern Districts, outlined in orange on Figure II-3, are designated to concentrate the drinking establishments within Downtown. New nightclubs, bars,

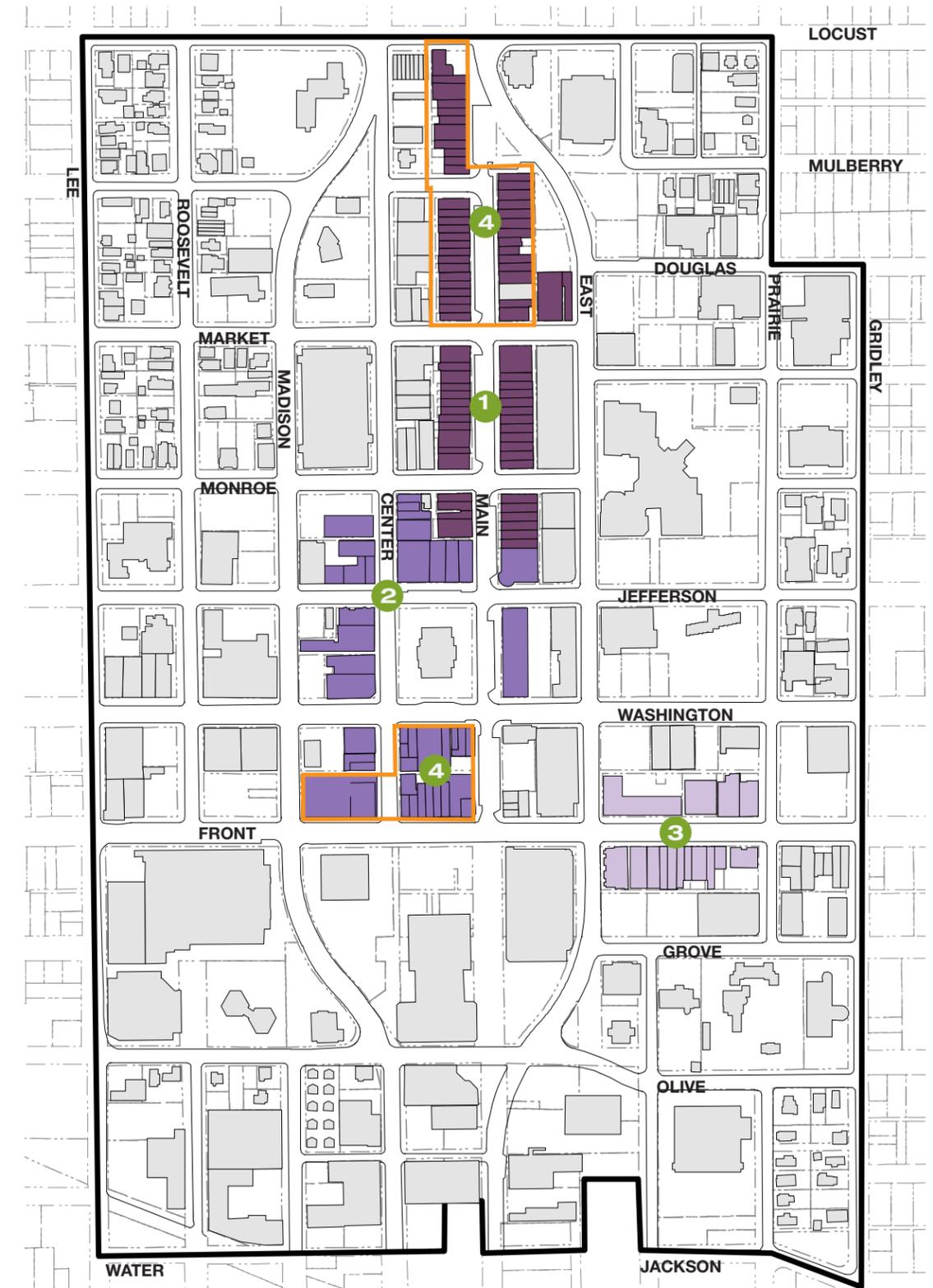


Figure II-3: Proposed Retail Plan.

# II. Illustrative Master Plan

## Proposed Retail Plan

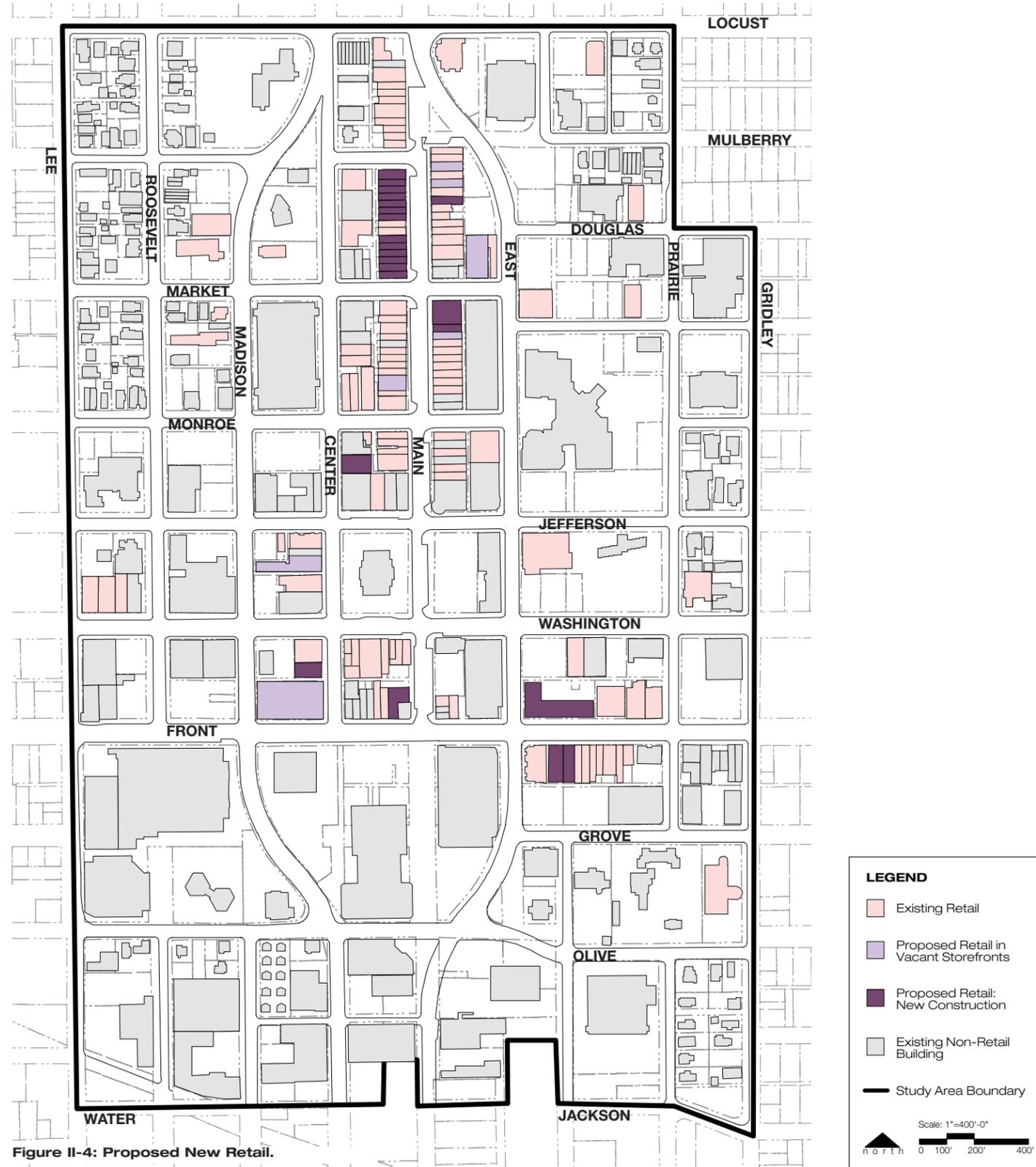


Figure II-4: Proposed New Retail.

and other drinking establishments should be concentrated in these two areas to minimize potential negative impacts, such as noise, litter, and crime, on the surrounding neighborhoods. These negative impacts were frequently cited as an issue during the public input process of this project. This recommendation should not be read to suggest that additional taverns are needed or desired, or as an invitation for the expansion of such establishments.

The two New Tavern District areas were chosen due to their existing concentrations of drinking establishments and the two locations' distance from existing residential neighborhoods. The taverns are an important asset within Downtown that attract visitors and help move Downtown toward becoming a 24-hour destination. It must be understood that, while many negative impacts from the taverns can be mitigated, some, especially noise, will likely remain to a certain extent.

It is recommended that the Bloomington Liquor Commission adopt a policy to restrict new Class "TA" and "TB" liquor licenses issued in the Downtown study area to those approximate locations indicated on Figure II-3. It is critical that this restriction apply only to *new* taverns, such that existing taverns with valid liquor licenses located outside the designated New Tavern District boundary are able to operate in perpetuity (barring a change in location). The restriction should not include liquor licenses related to the sale of liquor at restaurants, convenience stores, specialty shops, wholesalers, etc.

### Proposed Retail Areas: Constraints

Ideally, there would be an inexhaustible market for retail uses within Downtown that would allow for the development of retail space over the majority of the study area. While that is not the case in Downtown Bloomington, the market study conducted as a part of this report did find that Downtown has the capability to accommodate an estimated additional 74,000 square feet of retail between now and 2030.

The map to the left shows where existing retail (shown in pink), proposed retail in vacant storefronts in existing buildings (shown in light purple), and proposed new construction retail (shown in dark purple) are located in Downtown. Existing retail includes the bars, restaurants, art studios, service businesses, and stores

outlined in the previous section. Proposed retail in vacant storefronts would involve filling in already existing storefronts, while proposed new construction retail would entail the creation of new mixed use buildings.

The total proposed new retail area shown in Figure II-4: Proposed New Retail is approximately 119,000 square feet, with approximately 50,000 square feet of infill retail in existing buildings and approximately 69,000 square feet of new retail in new construction mixed use buildings. This is significantly higher than the market study's finding that the Downtown area can accommodate up to 74,000 square feet of retail in the next 20 or so years. However, since the retail mixes discussed above are combined with service and office uses, the total amount of retail area will likely be far less than 119,000 square feet. By providing flexibility, the area will be better equipped to deal with market shifts in the future as more (or less) retail area is desired.

Retail Mix 1	Retail Mix 2
<b>RETAIL USES</b>	Retail Mix 1 plus:
Antique Shop	<b>SERVICE USES</b>
<b>Apparel &amp; Accessory Store</b>	Bank
<b>Beer, Wine, &amp; Liquor Shop</b>	Theater
<b>Book, Magazine, &amp; Newspapers</b>	<b>OFFICE USES</b>
<b>Camera &amp; Photo Supply Store</b>	Computer Programming
<b>Convenience Store</b>	Educational Services
Drug Store/Pharmacy	Employment Agency
Flower Shop	Professional Offices
Gift, Novelty, & Souvenir Shop	Property Development
<b>Hardware Store</b>	Radio & TV Studio
Hobby, Toy, or Craft Shop	Research Agency
<b>Jewelry Sales &amp; Repair</b>	Veterinarian
<b>Luggage &amp; Leather Goods</b>	
<b>Office Supply</b>	<b>Retail Mix 3</b>
Pet Shop	Retail Mix 1 plus:
<b>Specialty Food Market</b>	<b>SERVICE USES</b>
<b>Sporting Goods Sales &amp; Rental</b>	Bank or Other Financial Services
	<b>Grocery Store</b>
	Theater
	<b>DESTINATION RETAIL USES</b>
	<b>Appliance/Electronics Sales</b>
	<b>Computer &amp; Software Sales</b>
	<b>Furniture Store or Repair</b>
	Home Furnishings Sales/Rentals
	Medical Supply Store & Rental

\*\*Items bolded within this list represent uses that this study has found to be in demand regionally in the Bloomington-Normal area and are compatible with the space limitations and character of the study area. See Section VII: Appendix (Market Study) for more details.

Table II-1: Appropriate Uses for Each Retail Mix.

# II. Illustrative Master Plan

## Overall Site Plan

The consultant team, with guidance from the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, applied the results of the existing conditions analysis and the community input process to create the following site plan for the Downtown study area. The plan shown in Figure II-5 recommends the following roadway improvements; other recommendations on specific sites are reviewed on the next several pages. See Section V: Transportation Component for more information on road improvements and Section V: Streetscape Recommendations for more information on streetscape elements.

### 1 Sidewalk Treatments

Throughout the Downtown core retail area, pedestrian crosswalk treatments are shown to slow traffic and create safe crossing areas for pedestrians. These crosswalk treatments should be a distinctive color and texture, such as brick or cobblestone, to be noticeable to drivers.

### 2 Median Safety Strip

To facilitate the use of travel lanes as shared between cyclists and drivers, median safety strips are proposed along several streets. These strips should be of a cobbled texture to make drivers aware when they are driving over it. In the context of the proposed narrower travel lanes along these streets, the safety strips serve to provide additional room to carefully pass a parking vehicle or cyclist, or for emergency vehicle access.

### 3 Street Trees

Sporadic street trees have already been incorporated in several areas of Downtown, but there is still opportunity for improvement. Street trees should be placed opportunistically, ideally every 30-40', and should be housed in at least 4' by 6' iron tree wells. Also, sidewalk widths of at least 8' are desirable for street trees to provide enough room for people walking by; therefore, those sidewalks narrower than 8' in Downtown are not shown with trees.

### 4 Madison Street Extension

Currently, the Warehouse District to the south of Downtown is bypassed by Madison as it heads south over the bridge and turns into Center Street. To improve access to the area underneath the bridge, it is recommended that Madison Street is extended through

the existing parking lot to link to the Warehouse District to the south.

### 5 Mulberry Street Extension

It is recommended that Mulberry at Center Street be extended through to Madison Street to improve circulation within Downtown.



An example of a median safety strip with a cobbled texture.

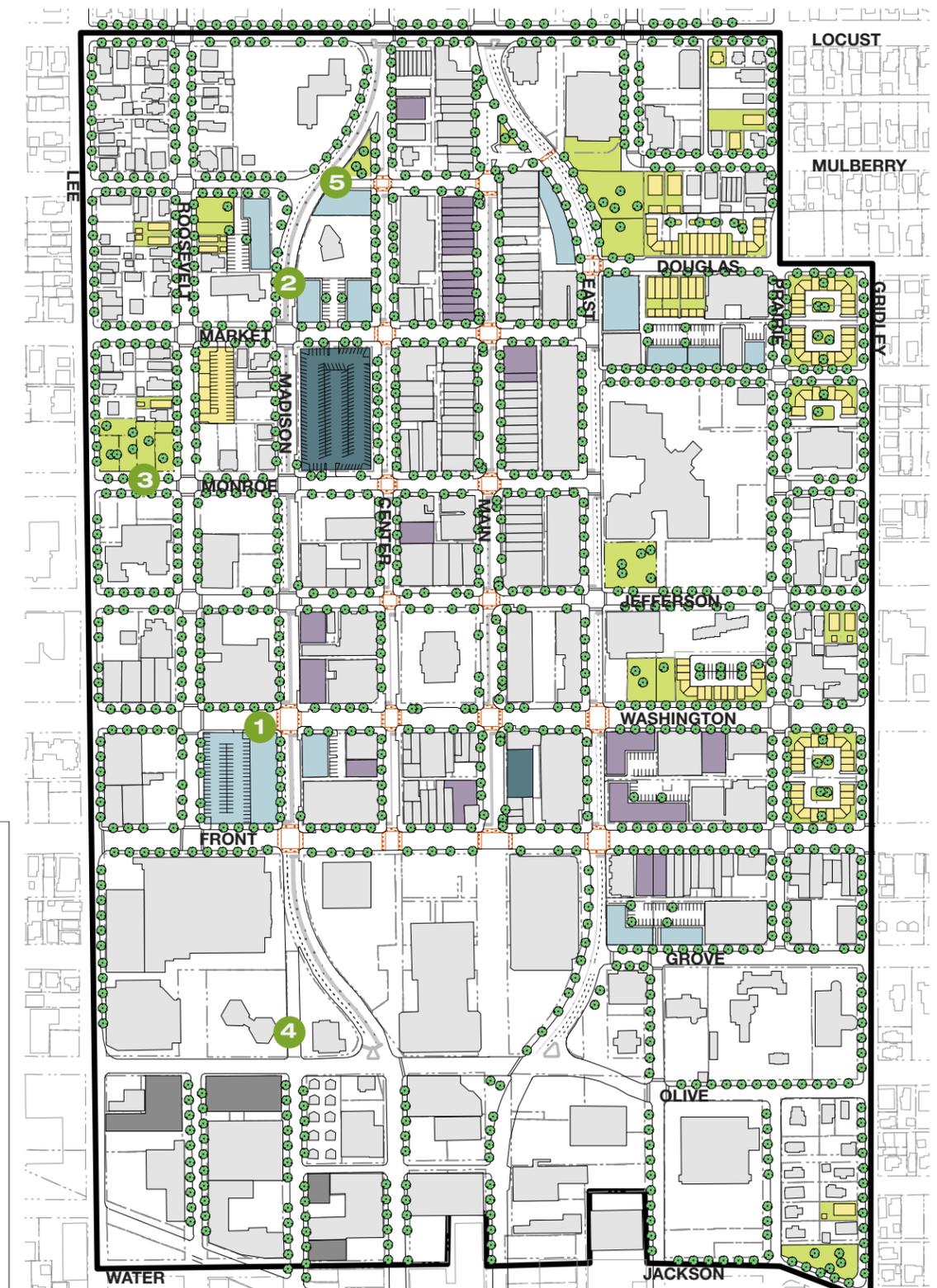


Figure II-5: Overall Site Plan.

# II. Illustrative Master Plan

## Site Plan: Northwest Quadrant

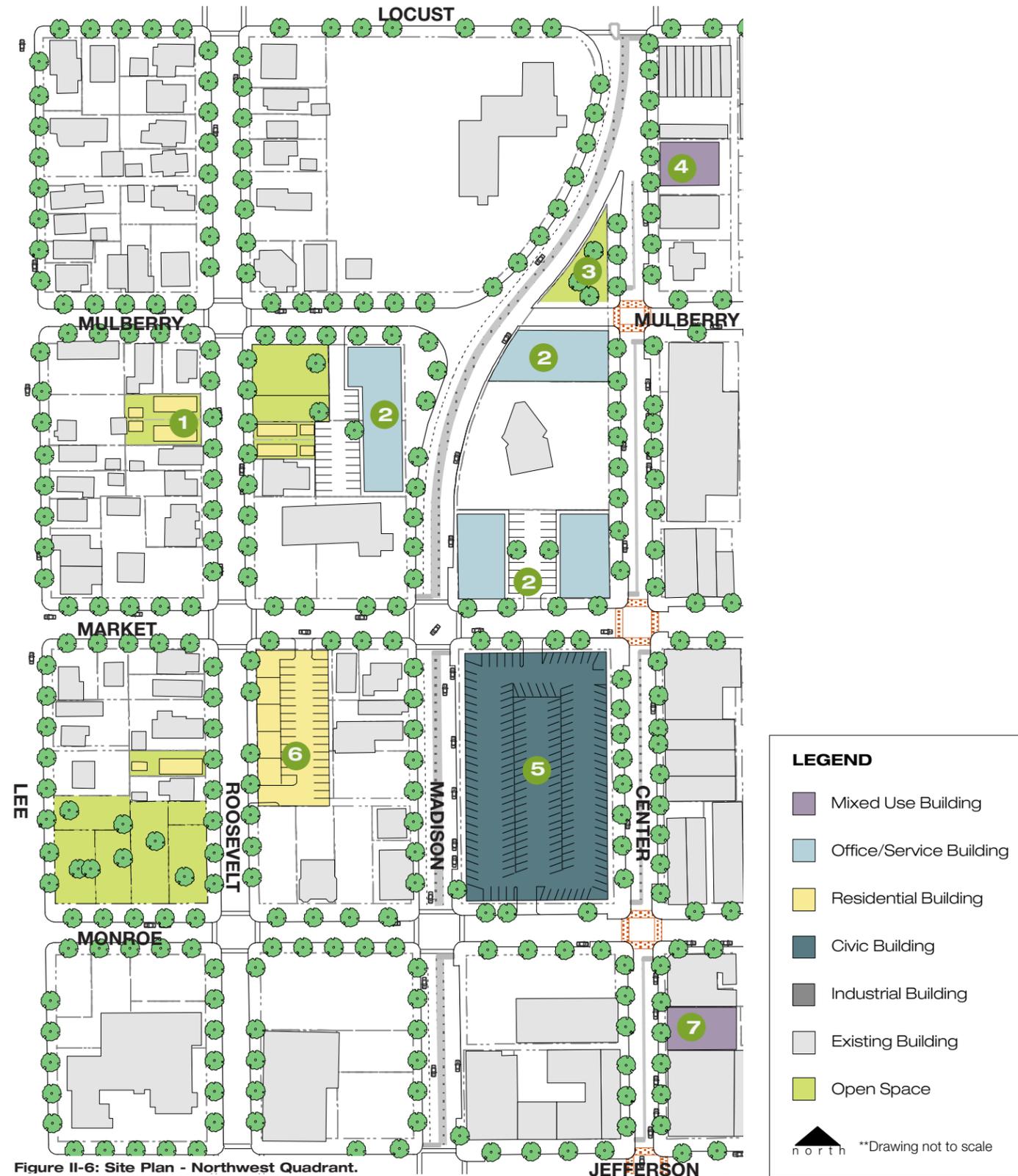


Figure II-6: Site Plan - Northwest Quadrant.

Figure II-6 illustrates proposed redevelopment for the opportunity sites located within the northwest quadrant of the study area. Specific information on each opportunity site is provided below.

- 1 Single Family Infill**  
Within this residential area adjacent to Downtown, there are several vacant lots, which should be filled in with single family residential development of similar size and scale to the existing neighborhood.
- 2 Office Infill**  
While these parcels were not called out on Figure II-1: Key Redevelopment Opportunities, they are critical gateway parcels into Downtown and must be considered as such. Currently, these parcels house auto-oriented businesses; however, the opportunity exists to create iconic development there that would set the tone for all of Downtown. Madison Street is a prime location for office and service uses, as these parcels' proximity to the core of Downtown makes them ideal for such uses. These buildings are shown as lining the street (on both sides as is the case with the through lots between Center and Madison Streets), with parking on the side and rear.
- 3 Gateway Open Space**  
Currently, as visitors drive down Madison heading into Downtown, they see this parcel first, which contains a large electronic billboard, parking lot, and minimal green space. Since this parcel is oddly shaped, it would be difficult, although not impossible, to design a feasible building to be built there. For this reason, it is recommended that this parcel become a small park, perhaps featuring public art by local artists.
- 4 Non-Retail Mixed Use Infill**  
The market study recommended that mixed use retail buildings be focused in specified sections of Downtown (see Section II: Proposed Retail Plan). However, many historic mixed use buildings exist along Center Street, which should be preserved. These buildings, instead of containing retail uses on the ground floor, should house supportive office, service, and civic uses. New buildings constructed along Center should match the character and form of those buildings that already exist along the street.

- 5 Market Street Garage Redevelopment**  
The Market Street Garage represents one of the largest redevelopment sites within Downtown. At the time of this report, the local YMCA was pursuing the possibility of locating a new facility in this location, moving from a location further south on Main Street outside the study area. A YMCA in this location would be a tremendous amenity for residents, business owners, and visitors.
- 6 Roosevelt Street Garage with Liner Housing**  
The large amount of available space on the east side of Roosevelt Street presents a unique opportunity to construct housing as well as a parking garage (potentially public) behind the units. This parking garage could help to replace spaces lost from the Market Street Garage Redevelopment. It is recommended that such a garage be developed in conjunction with liner single family attached housing along Roosevelt to maintain an active street and relate to the single family homes across the street.
- 7 Center Street Retail Mixed Use Infill**  
Certain portions of Center Street near the McLean County Museum of History have been identified as appropriate for retail mixed-use development, keeping in character with several other retail businesses along Center.

## II. Illustrative Master Plan

### Site Plan: Northeast Quadrant

Figure II-7 represents proposed redevelopment for the opportunity sites located within the northeast quadrant of the study area. Specific information on each opportunity site is provided below.

- 1 Single Family Infill**  
Within this residential area adjacent to Downtown, there are several vacant lots, which should be filled in with single family residential development of similar size and scale to the existing neighborhood.
- 2 New Townhouse Development**  
The market study conducted as part of this project indicated a strong market for single family attached development in peripheral areas of Downtown. The proximity of these parcels to the retail core of Downtown makes them ideal to provide a close supportive market for those businesses. However, as Downtown becomes a more desirable place for office and service businesses to locate, this area may also develop to accommodate those enterprises.
- 3 Transitional Townhouse Development**  
The areas directly to the east of the Downtown study area consist primarily of single family neighborhoods. These neighborhoods currently abut intensive commercial or industrial uses, but should be buffered by an intermediate land use intensity, such as a slightly more intensive residential use or smaller scale office or service uses. For this reason, these parcels are shown with single family attached residential development.
- 4 Office Infill**  
The north side of this block is flexible in terms of what development may occur there in the future. Currently, there is one mixed use building on the block, with the remaining parcels being used for parking. The adjoining office and civic uses make these parcels ideal for the same types of uses; however, this area may also be well suited to townhouse development.
- 5 East Street Office Infill**  
The majority of parcels along East Street are utilized for office uses; their proximity to the core of Downtown makes them ideal for such uses. These two parcels at the north end of East Street also provide opportunities for

substantial amounts of office space. The parcel on the east side of East Street is currently a well-used surface parking lot; these parking spaces would need to be replaced elsewhere for development on-site to occur.

- 6 Main Street Mixed Use Infill**  
The retail core of Downtown along Main Street has several parcels that are currently vacant or being used for parking. These parcels should be redeveloped with mixed use buildings of similar character and scale to those that currently exist.
- 7 Jefferson Street Garage with Liner Housing**  
The vast quantity of parking associated with the Second Presbyterian Church, as well as the heavily used State Farm parking deck on site, makes this location a prime site for a public or quasi-public parking garage. A new parking garage here would multiply the amount of parking provided on-site substantially, and, if the parking is shared with surrounding businesses, it may reduce the need for surrounding properties to provide surface lots. It is recommended that such a garage be developed in conjunction with liner housing along the street faces. This housing could take the form of single family attached or multifamily housing units.

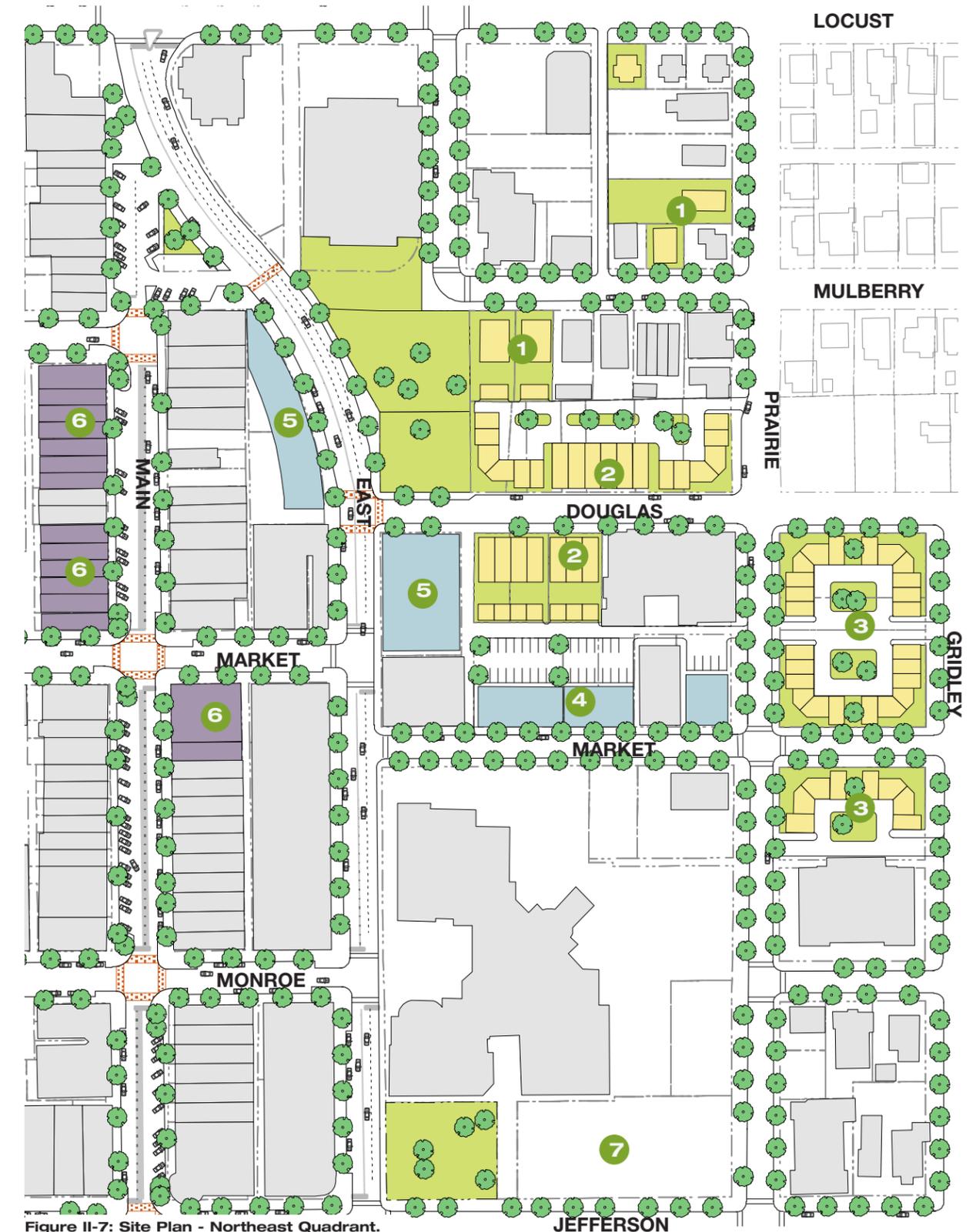
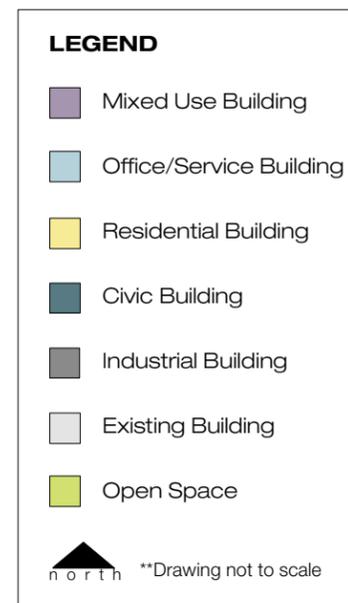


Figure II-7: Site Plan - Northeast Quadrant.

# II. Illustrative Master Plan

## Site Plan: Southwest Quadrant

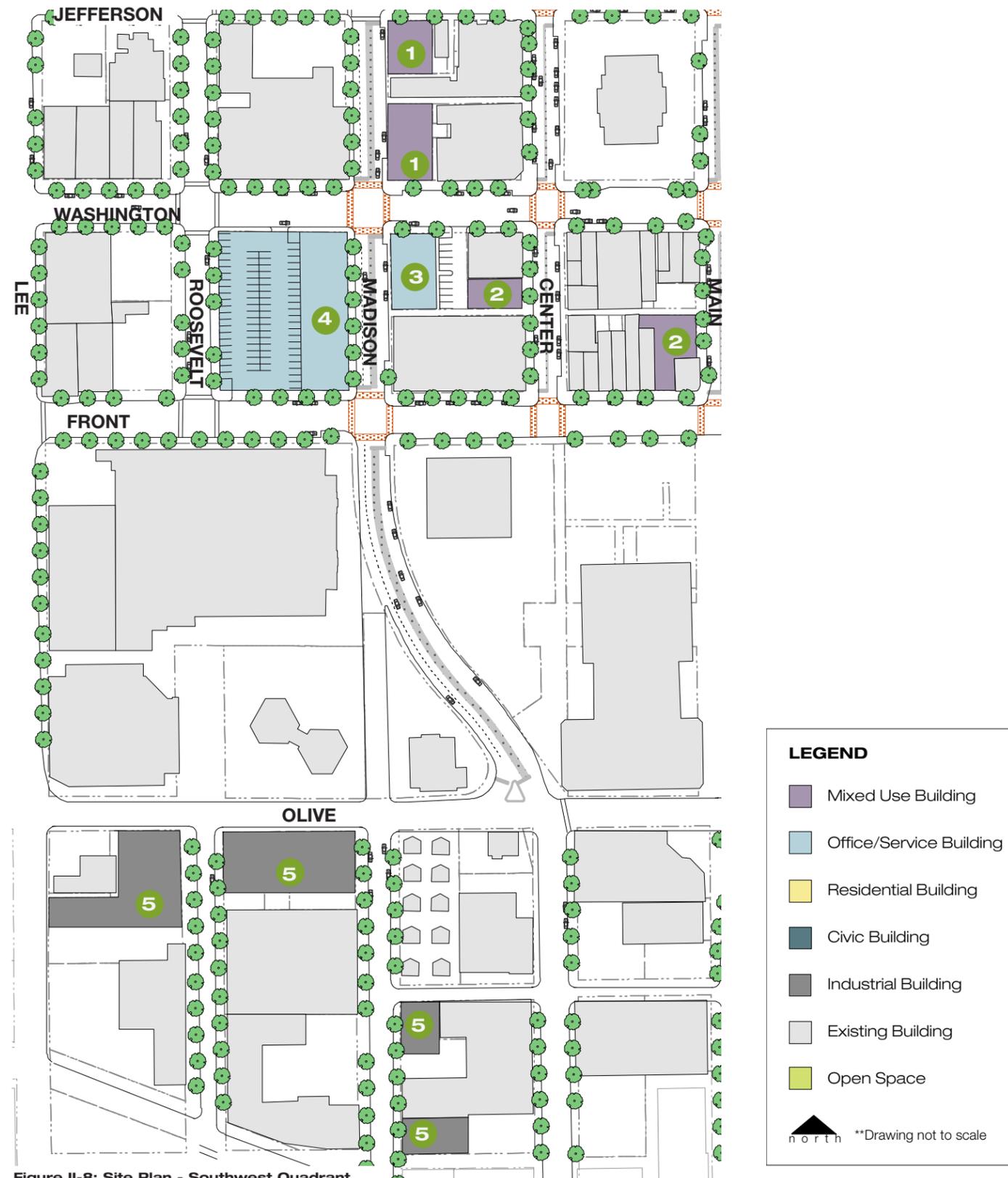


Figure II-8: Site Plan - Southwest Quadrant.

Figure II-8 represents proposed redevelopment for the opportunity sites located within the southwest quadrant of the study area. Specific information on each opportunity site is provided below.

- 1 Non-Retail Mixed Use Infill**  
The market study conducted as part of this project stated that retail businesses should be concentrated in the core areas of Downtown (see Section II: Market Assessment). However, many historic mixed use buildings exist along Center Street, which should be preserved. These buildings, instead of containing retail uses, should house supportive office, service, and civic uses. New buildings constructed along Center should match the character and form of those buildings that already exist along the street.
- 2 Retail Mixed Use Infill**  
These parcels are included in the retail areas outlined in Section II: Proposed Retail Plan and will greatly add to the character of Downtown if they are infilled as mixed use retail buildings. It is important to retain the ambience of the existing Downtown core by emulating its size and scale through such infill buildings.
- 3 Office Infill**  
Madison Street is a prime location for office and service uses; these parcels' proximity to the core of Downtown makes them ideal for such uses. This building is shown as fronting on Madison Street with parking in the rear.
- 4 Potential Hotel**  
Many comments received during the course of this project indicated that this site, which is across the street from U.S. Cellular Coliseum and near to most other amenities within Downtown, would be an ideal location for a hotel. The market study also found that in the near future, Downtown would be able to accommodate a hotel. This site is large enough to accommodate a sizable hotel as well as a parking deck, whether interior to the building or toward the rear of the lot, as shown in Figure II-8. Other similarly sized sites within Downtown would also be appropriate and should be evaluated as the opportunity arises.

A hotel parking deck could be shared with surrounding businesses on off-peak hours, further easing pressure on

businesses to provide surface parking lots. Regardless of where the parking deck is located, the ground floor of the structure should contain hotel uses along both Madison and Front.

- 5 Warehouse District Infill**  
The southern edge of the Downtown study area has historically been used for industrial purposes. Many parcels in the area are either vacant or contain older buildings that are in disrepair. The infill buildings shown on vacant parcels in this area should be sensitive to the industrial character of the area while still cultivating an interest through the arts community (see Section III: Warehouse District).

## II. Illustrative Master Plan Site Plan: Southeast Quadrant

Figure II-9 represents proposed redevelopment for the opportunity sites located within the southeast quadrant of the study area. Specific information on each opportunity site is provided below.

### 1 New Townhouse Development

The market study conducted as part of this project indicated a strong market for single family attached development in peripheral areas of Downtown. The proximity of these parcels to retail and service nodes within Downtown makes them ideal to provide a close supportive market for those businesses. However, as Downtown becomes a more desirable place for office and service businesses to locate, this area may also develop to accommodate those enterprises.

### 2 Single Family Infill

Within this residential area adjacent to Downtown, there are several vacant lots, which should be filled in with single family residential development of similar size and scale to the existing neighborhood.

### 3 Transitional Townhouse Development

The areas directly to the east of the Downtown study area consist primarily of single family neighborhoods. These neighborhoods currently abut intensive commercial or industrial uses, but should be buffered by an intermediate land use intensity, such as a slightly more intensive residential use or smaller scale office or service uses. For this reason, these parcels are shown with single family attached residential development.

### 4 Non-Retail Mixed Use Infill

The south side of this block currently contains a couple of historic mixed use buildings. To limit the amount of retail occurring within Downtown, the opportunity sites shown in Figure II-9 should be developed as non-retail mixed use buildings of similar size and scale to those that currently exist, and should house office, service, or civic uses on the ground floor.

### 5 Retail Mixed Use Infill

This node of historic mixed use buildings currently contain a range of uses. The parking lots that exist on the block create a gap in the pedestrian environment and should be filled in with similar mixed use development.

Some of the parking that currently exists on these sites may be replaced in the rear of the building.

### 6 Government Center

This parcel, adjacent to the Government Center, is a prime location for a civic or office building. It is currently being used as a parking lot, but development pressure may cause this parcel to be developed in the near future.

### 7 Office Infill

The proximity of these parcels to the Law and Justice Center as well as several large Downtown office buildings will make them an ideal location for new office development in the long-term future. If possible, the building at the corner of Grove and East Streets should turn the corner to provide frontage along East Street; parking may be located in the rear.

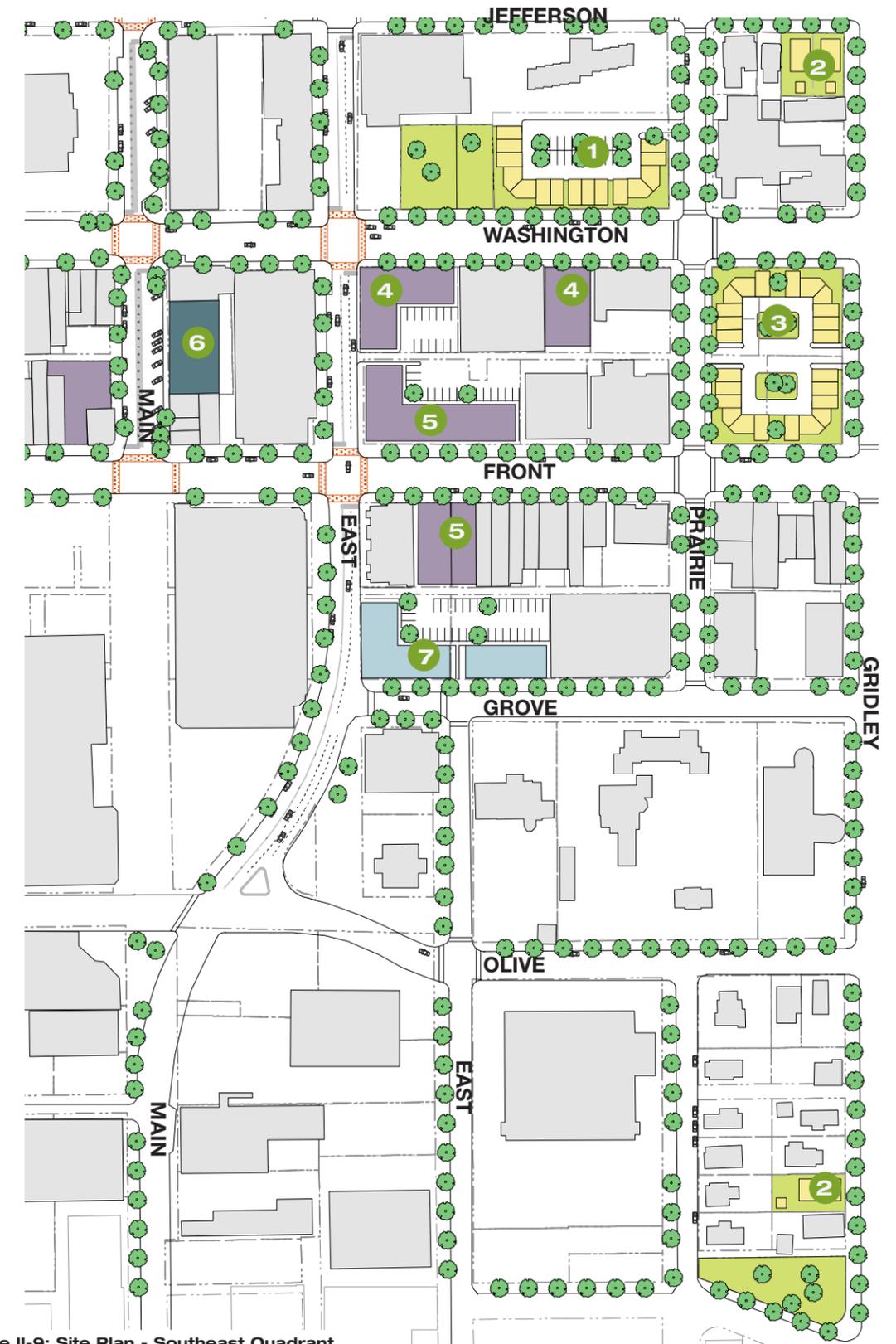
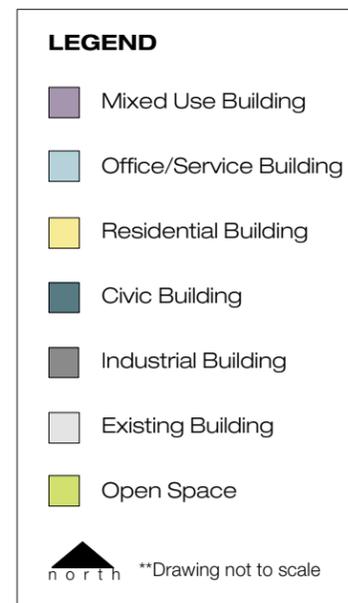


Figure II-9: Site Plan - Southeast Quadrant.

## II. Illustrative Master Plan

### Open Space

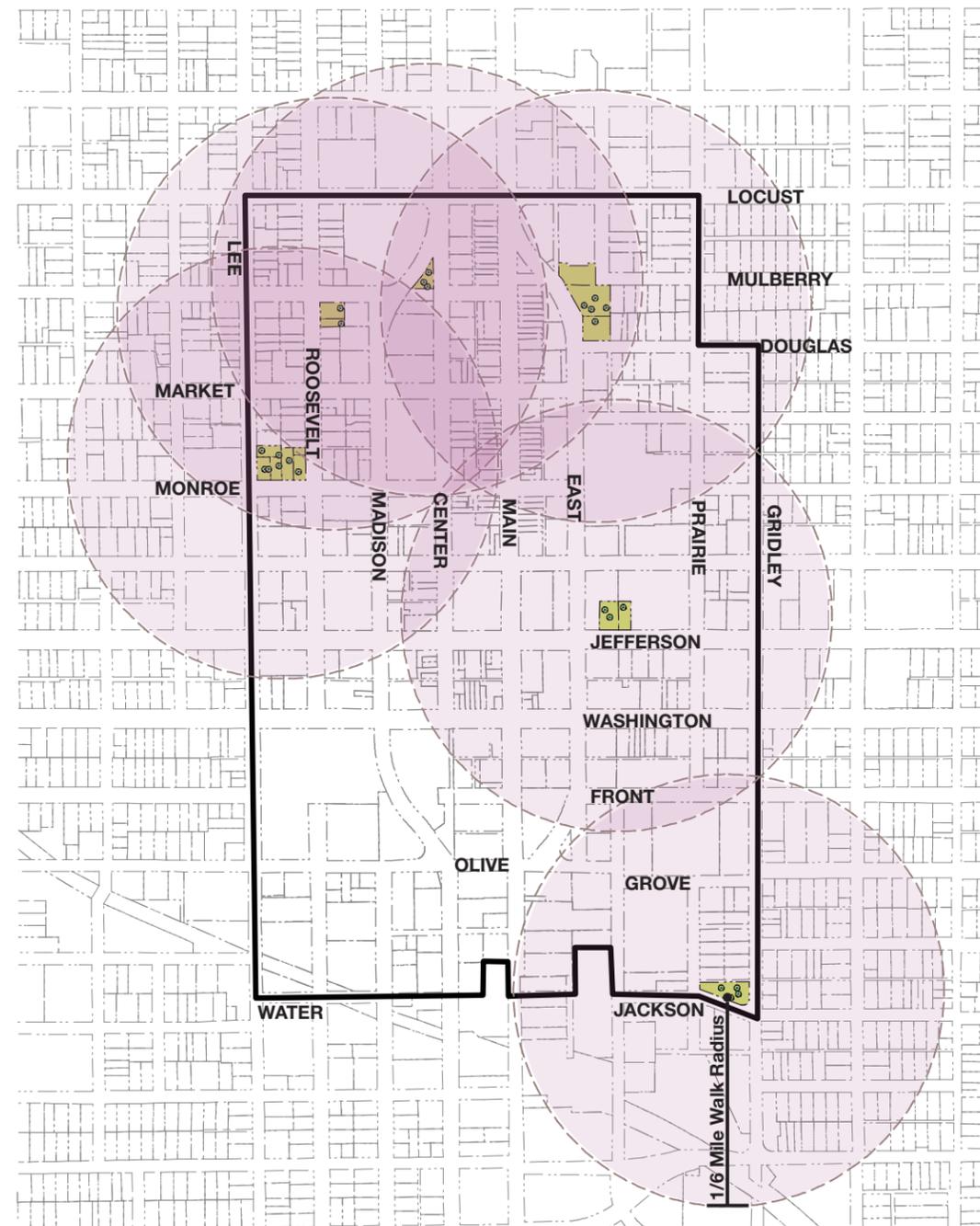


Figure II-10: Open Space with 1/6 Mile Radius.

Downtowns require open space in order to be livable, walkable, and more attractive. Figure II-10 illustrates where open space currently exists within the Downtown Bloomington study area (in green). There are several areas of open space sprinkled throughout the study area. The majority of open spaces in Downtown are greater than 1/6 acre in size, which is the recommended minimum size for usable open space.

In addition, it is a general planning rule that residences and businesses should be located within 1/6 mile of public open space, as 1/6 mile is considered the maximum distance most people will walk to get to a destination. To illustrate areas of Downtown that are not within 1/6 mile of open space, each open space in Figure II-10 is shown with a 1/6 mile radius circle (in pink) extending out from its center. This exercise illustrates that most residences and businesses in Downtown are within 1/6 mile of at least one open space area, with the exception of the southwest corner of the study area.

**Recommendation: Create new open spaces within Downtown, with a focus on the southwest quadrant**

Figure II-10 illustrates that most areas of Downtown are within proximate distance (1/6 mile) to open space. However, the southwest quadrant of Downtown is underserved, and should be focused on for opportunities for new open space. One potential location for open space could include vacant industrial property at the southwestern tip of the study area.

Additionally, there is room for improvement in the quantity and quality of open spaces through the rest of Downtown. A park space within the core of Downtown (between the Madison and East couplet) would be a great asset to the area. This space could be accomplished by transforming vacant parcels or parking lots into a park; several opportunity sites exist within the core of Downtown that could be good candidates (see Section II: Key Redevelopment Opportunities).

Peripheral areas on the east and west sides of the study area are perhaps the best served in the study area in terms of open space. However, since these peripheral areas are largely residential, more open space would be appropriate. There are many opportunities to create open space with the high number of vacant parcels in the transitional areas, and such open space would help to bridge Downtown with the neighborhoods to the east and west.

**Recommendation: Address safety, lighting, and maintenance issues**

One of the only drawbacks to providing open space is that safety can be a concern if the spaces aren't properly lit, maintained, and policed. To avoid these issues, it is recommended that all open spaces provide adequate lighting, and that the City of Bloomington make a commitment to maintain and patrol these public amenities.

### III. Zoning & Land Use Recommendations

Land Use Recommendations

Zoning Recommendations

Warehouse District

# III. Zoning and Land Use Recommendations

## Existing Land Use Analysis



Figure III-1: Existing Land Use.

The existing land uses within Downtown Bloomington are quite varied, as can be seen from Figure III-1: Existing Land Uses and Figure III-2: Pie Chart of Existing Land Uses in Downtown. The largest amount of area is taken up by civic and institutional uses, which comprise about a quarter of the total acreage of developable land Downtown. Office and service uses, as well as residential uses, also make up a considerable chunk at 18% and 17% of total land, respectively. Several uses comprise the rest of developable land, including commercial (9%), retail mixed use (7%), industrial (7%), non-retail mixed use (2.5%), and open space at 1.5%. Vacant parcels or buildings or parking lots make up approximately 13% of the developable area Downtown.

### Clustering of Land Uses

As demonstrated in Figure III-1, similar land uses tend to locate near one another. Clustering of land uses is highly beneficial, particularly for businesses that may benefit from walk-by traffic and increased visibility. Such clustering is also beneficial for public health, as it promotes an environment where walking from place to place is feasible.

For example, much of the southern third of Downtown Bloomington is occupied by civic and institutional uses, such as the Law and Justice Center, City Hall, public library, Government Center, and Lincoln parking deck. However, many other civic and institutional uses are sprinkled throughout the Downtown study area, including churches, the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, and the Market Street parking deck.

Along Main and Center Streets, there is a predominance of mixed use buildings that include either retail, office, or service uses on the ground floor and office or residential on the upper stories. Mixed use buildings containing retail on the ground floor are referred to as “Retail Mixed Use” on the legend, while those buildings containing office or service uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses on the upper floors are called “Non-Retail Mixed Use.” There is also a cluster of such mixed use buildings along east Front Street as well as around the McLean County Museum of History. These areas represent the bulk of the commercial uses that are located within Downtown; however, there are a few large parcels outside the Madison-East couplet that contain single-use commercial buildings.

In addition to the office and service uses contained within mixed use buildings, single-use office and service buildings are also present within Downtown, comprising the second largest land use category. These uses do not appear as clustered due to the fact that they are also represented within the “Non-Retail Mixed Use” category. When taking this into account, it can be seen that office and service uses are represented widely across the study area.

In the northwestern quadrant of the study area, there is a large cluster of residential uses, which shows the connection of these parcels to the surrounding residential neighborhood. In fact, the majority of residential land uses within Downtown are located along the periphery of the study area boundary, next to adjacent residential neighborhoods. The majority of residential structures appear single-family in nature; however, many of these buildings have been divided to house 2 or more units. There are also a few more traditional multifamily buildings in Downtown.

Industrial land uses occur at the southwestern edge of the study area, at the northern end of the “Warehouse District” to the south of Downtown. These uses are housed in older industrial buildings, which vary greatly in their conditions. While some of these buildings may represent a challenge in terms of their physical states, this area represents an important piece of Downtown’s history that should be preserved. It also has potential to be reinvented as other such industrial areas within Downtowns have been (See Section III: Warehouse District).

### Inactive Spaces

Inactive spaces, such as parking lots, vacant parcels, and vacant storefronts, make up over 13 percent of the developable area Downtown. Such spaces pose a major issue in creating a vibrant and lively Downtown because they create gaps in the street environment that are not pleasant to walk or drive by.

# III. Zoning and Land Use Recommendations

## Proposed Land Use

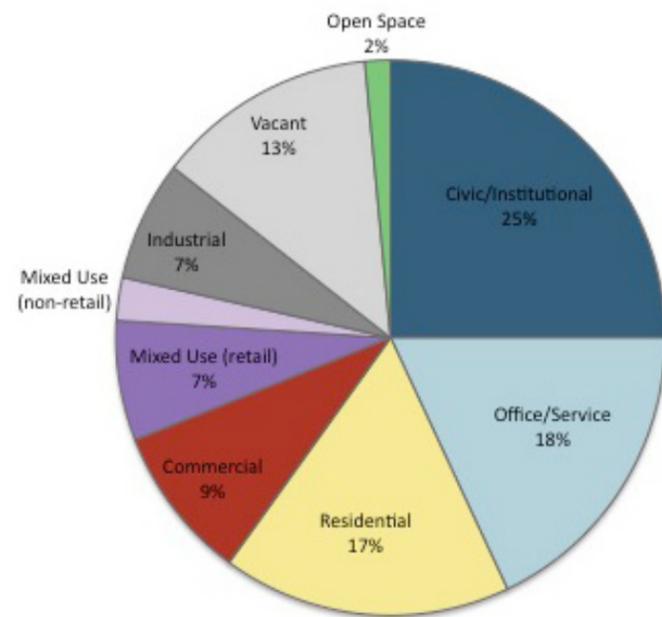


Figure III-2: Pie Chart of Existing Land Uses in Downtown.

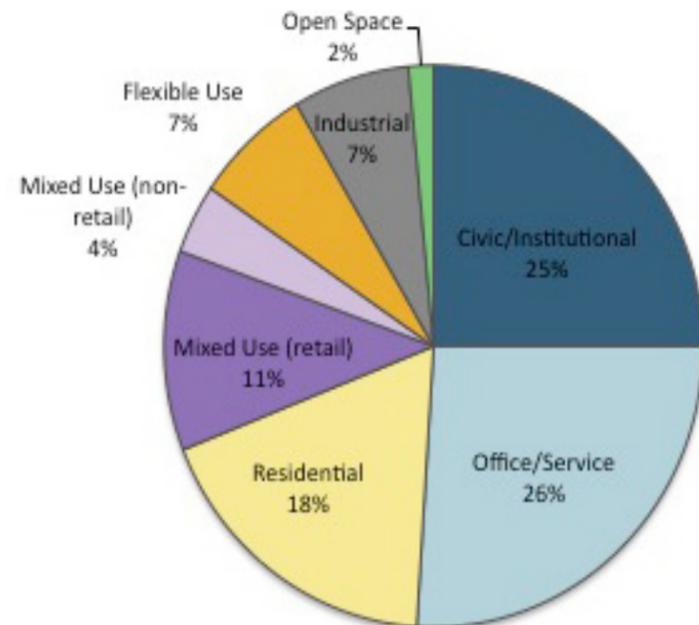


Figure III-4: Pie Chart of Proposed Land Uses in Downtown.

Figure III-3: Proposed Land Use and Figure III-4: Pie Chart of Proposed Land Uses in Downtown illustrate the proposed land use for Downtown Bloomington. The proposed land use plan has the following goals: to concentrate retail in the core of Downtown in the 3 nodes identified by the market study (see Section II: Proposed Retail Plan and Section II: Market Assessment); to promote infill of vacant and underutilized parcels to create a vibrant Downtown; and to strengthen peripheral areas of Downtown, such as the residential and industrial areas, to fortify Downtown's diversity of uses.

**1 Recommendation: Concentrate the retail within the study area into 3 retail nodes**

Currently, commercial uses are permitted in most of the study area under the B-3: Central Business District, resulting in commercial that is spread too thin, with vacant lots and storefronts. Focusing the retail that occurs in the study area into the historic core of Downtown will help to create an aesthetically pleasing, economically viable, and pedestrian-friendly shopping experience.

In the Proposed Land Use plan, mixed use buildings containing retail on the ground floor are focused into 3 main nodes, which were identified as key areas by the market study (see Section II: Proposed Retail Plan). These three nodes build upon existing retail mixed use in Downtown. The first proposed node is on Main Street between Locust and Jefferson Streets. This area is where the bulk of Downtown's mixed use retail has historically been located. The second proposed node is around the McLean County Museum of History, where a cluster of mixed use retail already exists, but more infill is possible. The last proposed node is along Front Street and the south side of Washington Street. While there are some vacant parcels along these streets, the buildings that exist are historic mixed use buildings that provide a solid foundation for a retail node.

In terms of redevelopment, filling in existing vacant storefronts with new retail uses within the three nodes should be the first priority. Secondly, parcels within the retail mixed use areas that are vacant or currently being used as parking lots should be redeveloped as mixed use infill buildings.

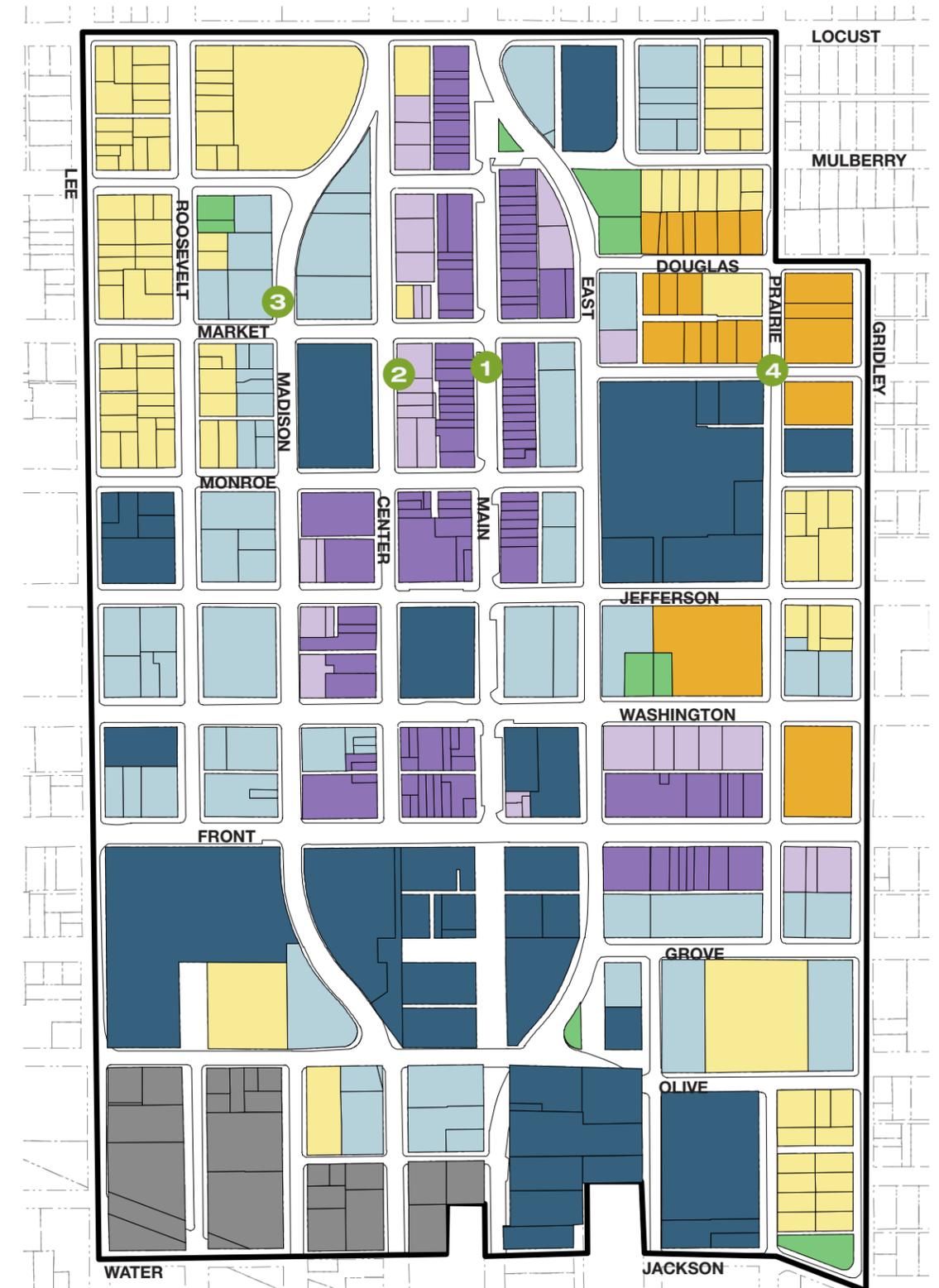


Figure III-3: Proposed Land Use.

# III. Zoning and Land Use Recommendations

## Proposed Land Use

**2 Recommendation: Locate office, service, or residential uses on the ground floors of mixed use buildings adjacent to the 3 retail nodes**

Traditional mixed use buildings, such as those in Figure III-3, comprise much of the building stock within the Madison-East couplet. These types of buildings are typically filled with retail uses on the ground floor and office or retail above. However, due to market constraints, retail uses are only recommended for certain specified areas of Downtown. To maintain the historic building stock of Downtown, the areas not included in the retail nodes should be mixed use buildings with office, service, or residential uses on the ground floors and office or residential on the upper floors.

**3 Recommendation: Allow single-use buildings around Downtown’s mixed-use core**

Higher-intensity, mixed use buildings should be reserved for the business and retail core of Downtown (the area within the Madison and East couplet). Single-use buildings, such as those containing only office, residential, industrial, commercial, or service uses, are appropriate for areas further from Downtown’s core, such as along Madison and East, and outside of the couplet.

**4 Recommendation: Provide flexibility in uses for transitional areas**

Many of the areas within the Downtown study area are currently in flux, with either vacant buildings or parcels that are not being utilized to their full potential. It is difficult to predict the shape that some of these areas will take as well as how the market will change in the future. It



Figure III-5: Mixed Use Buildings.

is therefore critical to allow some flexibility as such areas begin to redevelop.

Current uses in the flexible areas shown on Figure III-3 are very inconsistent, and include parking lots, a bank, a vacant office building, and a janitorial supply store. Based on these existing uses, office or service uses may be appropriate in the future. However, residential uses may also be suitable. Many of these parcels are located directly adjacent to the residential neighborhoods to the east. The market study showed strong potential for residential development in these areas, while the market for office was somewhat weak. Incorporating residential uses in this area will help to provide a supportive market for businesses locating within Downtown.

**5 Recommendation: Encourage the use of transitional parcels as patios, plazas, or other public spaces**

Currently, parking lots and vacant parcels within Downtown create gaps in the built environment. Utilizing these spaces as patios, plazas, small parks, or other public spaces will help to make the street a more active and lively place.

**6 Recommendation: Maintain existing residential, civic, and institutional uses that occur within Downtown**

Residential uses occur at the edges of Downtown and serve as a bridge between Downtown uses and the residential neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown. They also provide a proximate market for businesses locating in Downtown. These residential uses should be preserved and in some cases, as on the east side of Downtown, expanded.

There are many major civic and institutional uses within Downtown that provide vital services and draw visitors into the area. These uses include the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, churches, government buildings such as the Government Center, Law and Justice Center, and City Hall, and public parking decks. Such uses are critical to the functioning of Downtown and should be kept in place when possible.

**7 Recommendation: Preserve and rehabilitate the existing Warehouse District**

The industrial parcels to the south of Downtown represent a valuable market niche that should be preserved and enhanced. Many of the historic buildings located in the Warehouse District are in disrepair; the City and DBA should find opportunities to help stabilize these structures until the market emerges to support the resurgence of the Warehouse District (see Section III: Warehouse District). *If the district loses a critical mass of properties to demolition, the City should consider appropriate new uses for this area.*

**8 Recommendation: Beautify surface parking lots when redevelopment of the lots is not feasible or desired**

There are many surface parking lots within Downtown, many of which are not being utilized to their full potential. As Downtown’s market for housing and retail improves, demand to redevelop these parking lots will increase, particularly within the Madison-East couplet. Such redevelopment should be encouraged whenever possible.

However, there are several surface parking lots outside the couplet that may continue to provide ancillary parking facilities to residents or employees that are necessary in addition to the public parking decks proposed for

Downtown (see Section IV: Parking Recommendations for more information). These parking lots can become an asset rather than an eyesore by utilizing simple beautification methods. For example, landscaping the edges of the parking lot that are adjacent to streets will improve the view of the parking lot from the sidewalk. It is recommended that shade trees, shrubs, and fencing be installed around the perimeter of all parking lots. Also, within the parking lot itself, medians planted with shade trees should be installed, which will help to cool cars and pavement as well as manage the site’s stormwater runoff.

Land Use*	Acreage	Percent of Total Area
Civic/Institutional	24 ac	25%
Office/Service	17 ac	18%
Residential	16 ac	17%
Commercial	8.5 ac	9%
Mixed Use (retail)	7 ac	7%
Industrial	7 ac	7%
Vacant	12.5 ac	13%
Mixed Use (non-retail)	2.5 ac	2.5%
Open Space	1.5 ac	1.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96 ac</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Land uses exclude streets and right-of-way area

Table III-1: Land Area of Existing Land Uses in Downtown.

Land Use*	Acreage	Percent of Total Area	Percent Change from Existing
Civic/Institutional	24 ac	25%	0%
Office/Service	25 ac	26%	+8%
Residential	17.5 ac	18%	+1%
Mixed Use (retail)	11 ac	11.5%	+4.5%
Flexible Use	6.5 ac	7%	+7%
Industrial	6.5 ac	7%	0%
Mixed Use (non-retail)	4 ac	4%	+1.5%
Open Space	1.5 ac	1.5%	0%
Vacant	0 ac	0%	-13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96 ac</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>--</b>

\*Land uses exclude streets and right-of-way area

Table III-2: Land Area of Proposed Land Uses in Downtown.

# III. Zoning and Land Use Recommendations

## Existing Zoning Analysis

The current zoning categories that are mapped within Downtown consist primarily of the B-3: Central Business District and S-2: Public Lands and Institutions District. There are a sprinkling of other zoning categories on the periphery of the study area. These zoning districts are each discussed below.

### B-3: Central Business District

The B-3: Central Business District is the most commonly mapped zoning district within the Downtown study area and is meant to provide a variety of retail shops, offices, and services in the core of the City of Bloomington. The B-3 District currently allows for an extensive range of uses and has no minimum parking requirement. The B-3 District is “overmapped” within Downtown, covering almost the entire study area. Permitting core retail, office, and service uses over such a large area dilutes the capability of Downtown to foster interesting subdistricts (i.e. a retail or cultural subdistrict), as similar uses may be dispersed.

Another issue associated with the B-3 District is that it does not protect the historic resources within Downtown, or ensure that future development is complementary to existing buildings. Currently, even within the retail heart of Downtown, someone could theoretically tear down a historic building and replace it with a single-story fast food restaurant.

### B-2: General Business District

The B-2 District is primarily mapped in areas adjacent to the B-3 District. The majority of activities permitted in the district include auto-oriented uses such as wholesale suppliers, retail businesses, and service establishments. The auto-dependence of the B-2 District requires that each user within the District provide its own parking area. While B-2 zoning may be appropriate for other areas within the City of Bloomington, its use within Downtown depletes the critical mass of commercial space needed within the core to create a vibrant shopping area.

### S-2: Public Lands and Institutions District

The S-2 District includes public uses, publicly-regulated uses, and private uses that have an inherent relationship with the public interest, such as schools, recreation centers, and utility uses. The majority of these areas within Downtown will likely remain public or institutional in nature.

### S-4: Historic Preservation District

The S-4: Historic Preservation District Overlay serves to protect, enhance, and the assets of special character or historical

value in the City of Bloomington. The overlay is mapped sparsely throughout Downtown, applied only to select parcels found to have significant historic features, although many of the buildings in the core of Downtown have great historic value. The uses permitted within the S-4 District are the same as those of the underlying zoning classification, which is quite permissive in most instances within Downtown.

### M-1: Restricted Manufacturing District

The M-1: Restricted Manufacturing District provides for industrial uses that do not have offensive external effects, such as light manufacturing, warehousing, and storage. These areas are developed at low densities to minimize potential negative impacts. The M-1 District is mapped only at the very southern end of the study area, toward the “Warehouse District” adjacent to Downtown (see Section III: Warehouse District).

### R-3B: High Density Multiple-Family Residence District

The R-3B residential district is the highest density district in the City of Bloomington, permitting up to six stories and 70 dwelling units per acre. It is mapped in a couple locations along the fringes of B-3: Central Business District zoning. The majority of the areas zoned R-3B in Downtown do not take advantage of the high density allowed; most contain primarily single family or duplex dwellings, likely due to the lack of demand for high-density buildings on the outer edges of Downtown.

### GAP Neighborhood Code Overlay

The GAP-3 and GAP-4 Districts are mapped in the northwest corner of the Downtown study area. These districts were created as a part of the Gridley-Allin-Prickett (GAP) neighborhood code, which was adopted in 2007. The two districts are similar, with both districts allowing a variety of single family building types and apartment buildings on corners. The GAP-4 District is slightly more intense, as it also permits a single-family attached building type.

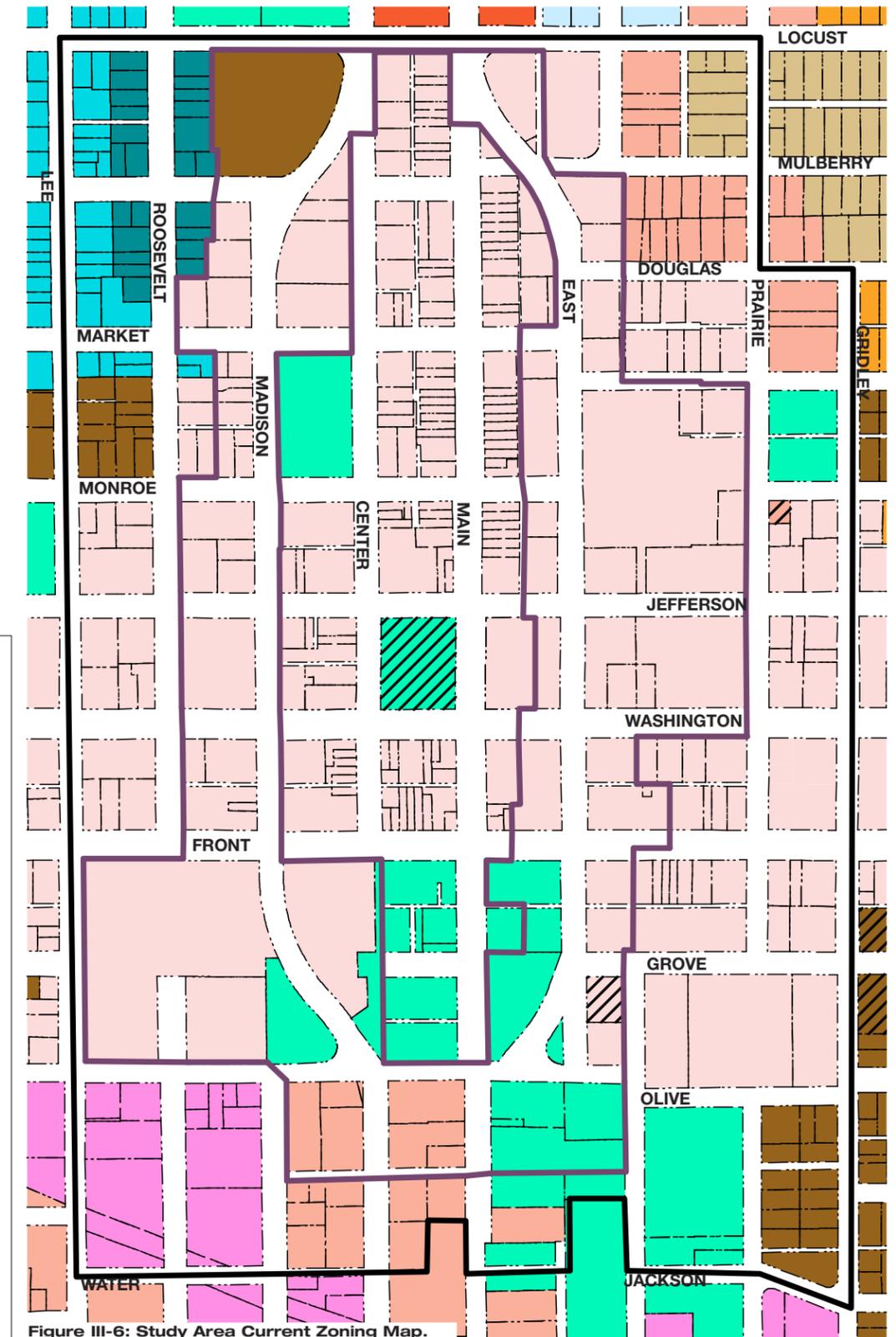
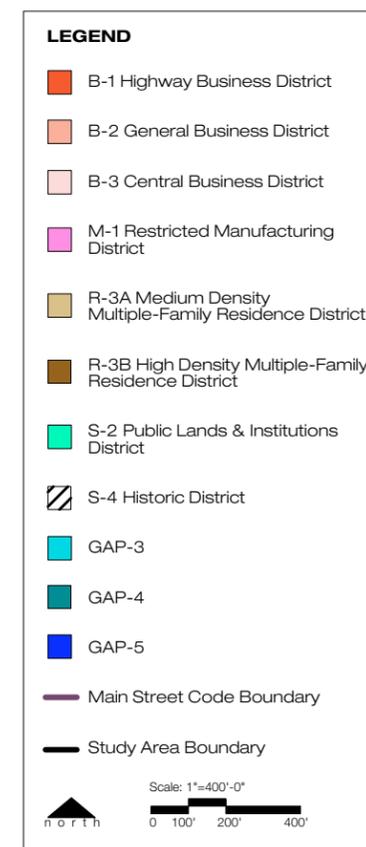


Figure III-6: Study Area Current Zoning Map.

# III. Zoning and Land Use Recommendations

## Zoning Recommendations

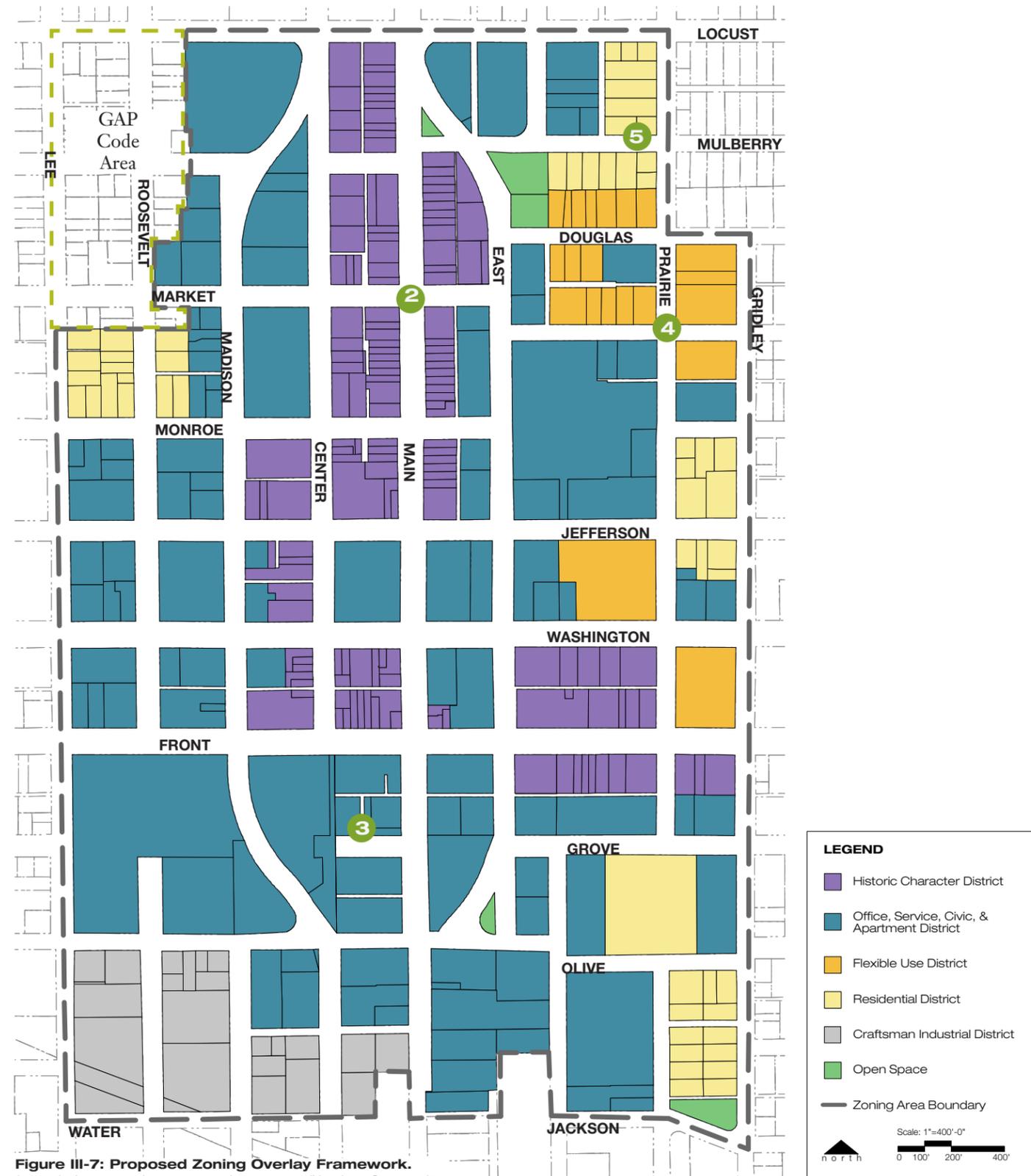


Figure III-7: Proposed Zoning Overlay Framework.

Downtown Bloomington is an unparalleled resource within the Bloomington-Normal region. However, its current zoning regulations do not reflect its historic character or intrinsic assets. The majority of Downtown is blanketed by the B-3: Central Business District zoning category, which is not much different from any other commercial zoning classification in the City of Bloomington. Creating new zoning regulations will ensure that Downtown’s zoning assists in creating the vision outlined in this plan instead of being a hindrance to it.

Figure III-7: Proposed Zoning Overlay Framework shows the areas within the Downtown study area boundary proposed to be covered by the zoning overlay. The zoning code covering the Gridley-Allin-Prickett (GAP) neighborhood has recently been revised and will produce the type of development recommended by this plan; for this reason, the GAP neighborhood is not included in the zoning overlay.

**1 Recommendation: Create a zoning overlay to guide development within Downtown**

A zoning overlay is recommended to further define appropriate development within Downtown as an implementation measure of this plan. There are currently several problems with the underlying zoning within the study area, which a zoning overlay will correct. These issues are outlined below.

*Overmapping of B-3: Central Business District*

Currently, the B-3 District is mapped far too extensively for a city the size of Bloomington. B-3 permits an exhaustive list of uses, including all types of commercial and retail, that do not relate to the unique character of Downtown Bloomington. Also, as was discovered through the market study and Retail Plan (see Section II: Proposed Retail Plan), there is only a limited amount of retail area that can be supported within Downtown. To create a vibrant shopping district in the heart of Downtown, retail must be concentrated in specified areas. However, the existing zoning allows retail almost everywhere. Under Figure III-7: Proposed Zoning Overlay Framework, retail uses will be focused in those areas labeled in dark purple, “Mixed Use Buildings.” These areas correspond to those outlined in the Retail Plan.

*Extraneous Land Use Lists*

B-3, S-2, and B-2 Districts are mapped for the majority of land Downtown. The commercial zoning districts currently used permit a wide array of uses, many of which are not appropriate in a pedestrian-friendly and vibrant Downtown. For example, auto sales and service lots are currently permitted by-right in the heart of Downtown, as are gas stations. These types of auto-oriented uses send a message to pedestrians that they are not welcome, and are typically not pleasant to walk past. In addition, these uses take the place of uses that could be accommodated that would contribute greatly to the ambience of Downtown. To prevent this from happening, it is necessary to examine the land uses permitted for each district that occurs within Downtown to ensure that they are all working together to create the desired outcome.

*Lack of Context-Sensitive Design*

The historic buildings within Downtown are an irreplaceable asset that add great character and charm to Downtown. However, the existing zoning for Downtown does not require historic buildings to be bolstered or complemented by new construction. The same type of construction that is allowed on Veteran’s Parkway is permitted to happen Downtown. Fostering a sense of place within Downtown requires special regulations that encompass its existing assets and creates development that is in line with its historic nature. This can be done through carefully crafted bulk and land use regulations that will produce the desired outcome in different subareas of Downtown.

*Few Transitional Residential Areas*

One critical missing piece in the Downtown area right now is a connection between Downtown and its adjacent residential neighborhoods. The neighborhoods surrounding Downtown are cut off by the Madison-East couplet and larger-scale commercial development that does not relate to the neighborhoods. These residential areas should be buffered from Downtown by transitional residential areas of intermediate density, such as townhomes or low to mid-rise apartment buildings. The current zoning permits high density residential development on the periphery of Downtown, when this type of housing should be located a bit closer to its retail

# III. Zoning and Land Use Recommendations

## Zoning Recommendations

core. The zoning should include the highest density housing toward the core of Downtown (i.e. along East and Madison, with intermediate density housing just outside the couplet to relate to the residential neighborhoods on the periphery.

**2 Recommendation: Incorporate zoning requirements that protect the character of the historic core of Downtown**

Existing historic buildings within Downtown provide a strong foundation for a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly place. These areas should be incorporated into one or more zoning districts (shown on Figure III-7 as the Historic Character District in purple) that preserves and codifies existing physical characteristics. This will ensure that future development in Downtown in key historic areas will be appropriate and in character.

All buildings within the Historic Character District should be mixed-use buildings (including either retail and/or non-retail uses according to Figure III-3: Proposed Land Use Plan) with a minimum of two stories required. These buildings should be built to the sidewalk and parking, if any, should be located in the rear. Another key aspect of creating a walkable environment Downtown will be incorporating an adequate amount of glass on the ground floor of mixed use buildings (see Figure III-8). The vast majority of existing buildings within the Historic Character District meet these parameters already; the zoning code will exist to ensure that future development also follows the same development criteria.

**3 Recommendation: Zone for supportive uses around the core of Downtown**

The Office, Service, Civic, and Apartment District shown (in blue) on Figure III-7 is meant to complement those uses occurring within the core of Downtown. Office, service, and civic uses are prevalent already within Downtown, and the market study has shown that Downtown has pent-up demand for housing, particularly rental apartment units. These uses will benefit from locations adjacent to the core of Downtown, and should fit in with the building style existing in the mixed use core.

To that end, this district will require buildings to be built to the sidewalk, with on-site parking, if any, preferred in

the rear of the building. Buildings in these areas may be single-story or multiple-story, although taller buildings should be encouraged within the Madison-East couplet.

**4 Recommendation: Provide a flexible zoning category for peripheral areas that will allow Downtown to accommodate future market shifts**

The areas included in the Flexible Use District on the eastern side of Downtown are meant to respond to the market as it shifts over the next several years. Office, service, and civic uses will be permitted as well as low-rise apartments and townhouses. Residential uses are ideal for these lots, as they are adjacent to single family neighborhoods and the market study indicated that there would be a strong market for residential in this area in the near future. Bulk and land use regulations will be flexible to accommodate the breadth of options permitted in these areas.

**5 Recommendation: Preserve existing single family areas within Downtown**

Existing single family areas on the periphery of Downtown should be preserved as they currently exist. These areas provide a critical link between Downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Within the zoning code, it is likely that single family detached residences as well as duplexes and “big house” style multifamily residences will be permitted in the Residential District (shown in yellow on Figure III-7). The zoning code will take existing physical features of these areas into account to ensure that the areas continue to function as they are.



Figure III-8: Having a transparent storefront is welcoming and inviting to people passing by.

# III. Zoning and Land Use Recommendations

## Warehouse District

The area just south of Downtown (see Figure III-9) is known as the Warehouse District and consists of several warehouse buildings from the mid-19th to early 20th century. Many of these are historic properties that presently remain in operation. This is an important commercial district within the City of Bloomington, offering a different set of uses and employment than the Downtown retail core or Veteran's Parkway. The Warehouse District developed along with the rail line that runs through the district to the northwest. As early as 1926, busy Main Street was elevated to bypass the railroad crossing; the Center Street overpass followed shortly thereafter. The construction of these overpasses physically separated the area south of Downtown from the more traditional Downtown area.

This physical separation undoubtedly has made it possible for the warehouses and more industrial businesses in the area to remain insulated from Downtown development pressures. However, there are concerns about the condition of the area and about the deteriorating physical condition of some of the aging industrial buildings. While the idea of removing the Main and Center Street overpasses has been considered as a solution to improve the appearance and economic viability of the area, the effect on the existing businesses could be harmful by opening the area up to development pressure. The City recognizes the importance of maintaining a diverse business base and has made planning for the retention of businesses in the Warehouse District a priority. If retaining the current character and land uses are no longer a priority, then the City should plan for this

area's future development including appropriate uses.

### Main and Center Street Overpasses

The most imposing physical presence in the Warehouse District are the sloping overpasses of Main and Center Streets that lead into and away from Downtown (see Figure III-10). These overpasses are likely the reason the businesses and historic buildings in the area have remained with little pressure from Downtown expansion. Any decision made about how to address this roadway infrastructure, whether it be improving it or tearing it down, is associated with broad economic and land use impacts on the surrounding area.

The removal of the overpasses could bring a great change to the area in the mid- to long-term future. The development of Downtown-centered uses like retail and residential have traditionally ignored the Warehouse District. The biggest reason for this is because these types of uses do not mix well with the intrusive, loud, and light blocking set of overpasses. The area around the overpasses does not make for a comfortable pedestrian environment the way that Downtown does. Also, the noise and traffic associated with many industrial and warehouse uses are not as comfortable for residential and retail uses to locate around.

While the area may not be appropriate for residential and retail uses, it is ideal for types of businesses and buildings currently situated there. The Warehouse District buildings developed

there over the course of the last century because of the easy access to the railroad, and the presence of the overpasses does not negatively affect the warehouse and craftsman businesses. In fact, the presence of the overpasses has protected the area and made it possible to retain businesses by keeping rents low.

In communities where elevated highways have been demolished, such as New York City, Milwaukee, and San Francisco, the result has been increased development activity on the site of the former infrastructure and surrounding land. Much of the new development comes in the form of residential and commercial uses, which become more feasible as the quality of light and air increases. Often times these developments are a welcome addition because they can reconnect communities. In the case of the Warehouse District, however, residential and retail uses would most likely be a detriment to the existing community of businesses in the area, raising property taxes and potentially driving such businesses away.

If this area does not remain a warehouse district, the existing businesses are important to a diversified tax base and should be assisted in relocation to other parts of the City.

There are more suitable recommendations to improve the physical appearance and condition of the area that better support the existing businesses in the Warehouse District.

### Recommendation: Encourage the stabilization of Warehouse District building conditions

Happily, many of the historic building in the Warehouse District remain in active use. Many, however, suffer from maintenance issues due to their age and the cost of repairs. Bloomington has seen great success in the outcome of its preservation efforts in the Downtown and should recognize the importance of continuing these preservation and stabilization efforts in the Warehouse District. If adaptive reuse is not a viable option or if a critical mass of buildings are lost to demolition, this area should be considered for redevelopment.

### Recommendation: Introduce and promote a targeted loan or grant program for the Warehouse District

The City and DBA should designate funding to assist building owners in stabilizing and improving the conditions of their buildings. This type of program should focus on restoring the immediate soundness and historic character of the structures. Examples of this type of work would be roof repair, structural

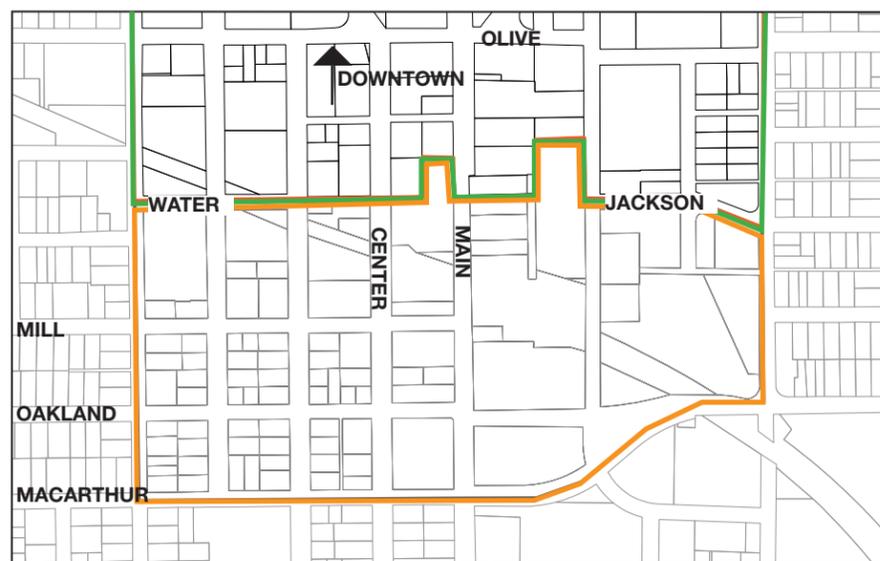


Figure III-9: Warehouse District Study Area Boundaries.

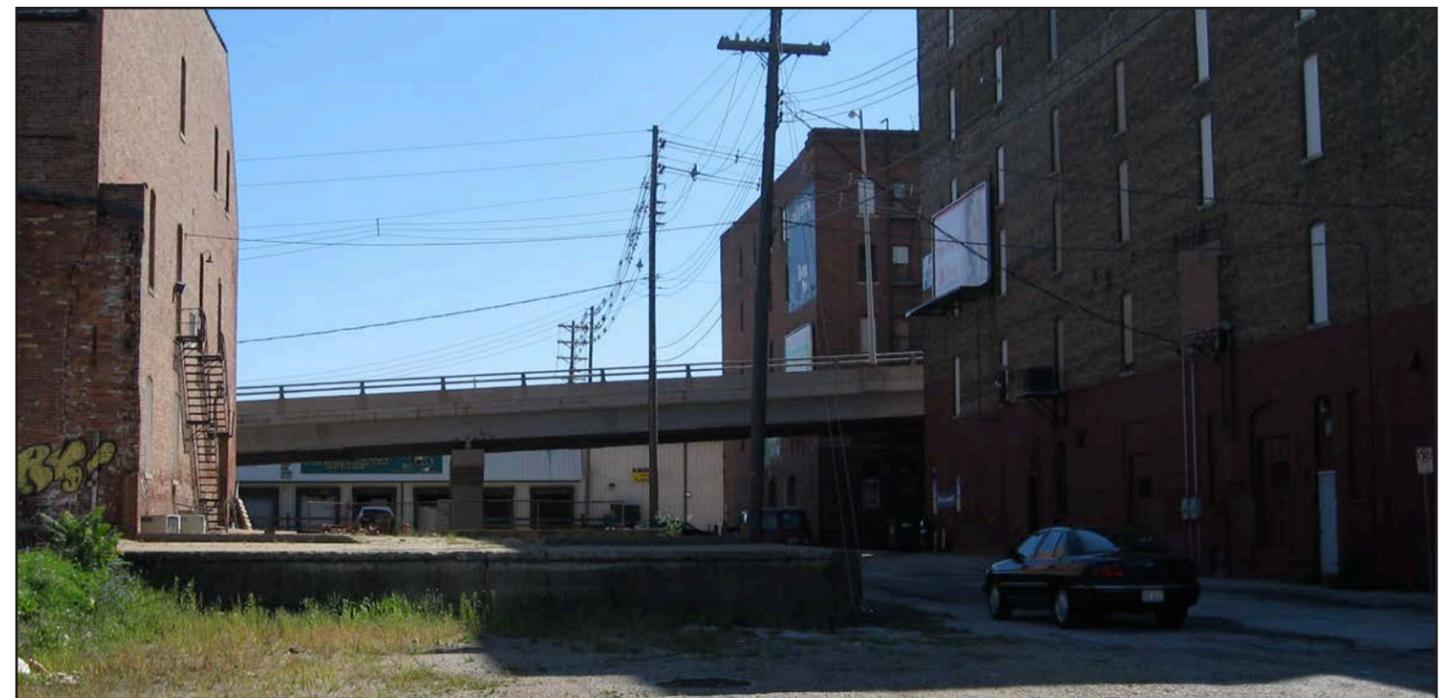
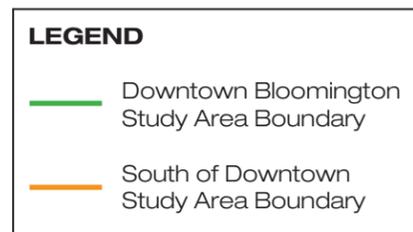


Figure III-10. The Main/Center overpass cuts through blocks of the Warehouse District, creating a sunken affect in the area.

# III. Zoning and Land Use Recommendations

## Warehouse District



*An example of a historic building in the Warehouse District. Traditional industrial building elements like brick walls and large painted sign are common throughout the area.*



*A main goal for the Warehouse District includes providing property owners access to funds to stabilize and rehabilitate their buildings.*

reinforcement, and brick tuckpointing. This program would not cover complete costs, but rather offer incentives for owners to invest in their property.

**Recommendation: Educate property owners regarding other funding sources or tax benefits of rehabilitation**

The DBA should identify additional funding sources like grants and tax credits for property owners to assist in the rehabilitation of Warehouse District structures that are salvageable. By educating property owners about these types of funding opportunities, Warehouse District properties could be rehabilitated or redeveloped with little expense to the DBA.

**Recommendation: Cultivate the artist community as well as craftsman industrial uses in the area**

Downtown Bloomington has a flourishing artist community that is beginning to take advantage of the types of spaces available within the Warehouse District. In addition, “craftsman industrial” uses, which are small scale industrial uses with little to no noxious by-products, should be encouraged to locate in the Warehouse District. Craftsman industrial uses can often include a showroom or small retail outlet, and often include such businesses as commercial bakeries, wood shops, furniture and fixture manufacturing, and pottery studios. Art galleries

and craftsman industrial businesses also may host special events that will help to bring people into the Warehouse District and further encourage investment.

**Recommendation: Connect the Warehouse District with Madison Street**

The Warehouse District is presently cut off from Downtown by the Main-Center overpass, making access to the area difficult and confusing. Reconnecting Madison Street through the existing parking lot (see Figure II-5 in Section III) would provide an easy route to access the area, improving its visibility and bringing more visitors. As the Warehouse District becomes more of an attraction to visitors, it is also recommended that wayfinding signage be installed to direct passers-by to the area.

**Recommendation: Maintain the current manufacturing zoning classifications in the Warehouse District**

Currently, much of the property within the Warehouse District is zoned M-1: Restricted Manufacturing District, which permits the types of structures and uses that exist in the area. This zoning designation should be maintained to further protect the businesses in this location. The City should discourage loft-style residential redevelopment in this area in order to contain development pressures as Downtown begins to redevelop.



*This rehabilitated warehouse building shows its industrial past by retaining its loading bays, fire escape, and large painted sign.*

### LoDo District

*Denver, Colorado*

LoDo (Lower Downtown) in Denver, Colorado is an example of successful reinvestment in a commercial warehouse district. Anchored by Denver Union Station and Coors Field, the district is comprised of the highest concentration of historic commercial buildings in the city, many of which are rehabilitated warehouse and industrial buildings.

**Maintaining District Character**

Preservation of LoDo District buildings was a main priority in redevelopment plans. In the City of Denver Lower Downtown Neighborhood Plan, the industrial past of the area was embraced and viewed as an asset. Design guidelines encourage the retention of elements unique to warehouse building design like loading bays, fire escapes, and large painted wall signs. These elements are highly valued and give the area its distinct sense of character.

The rehabilitated warehouse buildings now support a variety of uses in downtown Denver. Residential and office uses occupy the upper stories of structures, with restaurants and shops lining the ground floors. While this mixed use district is more suitable for Main Street than south of Downtown, an important example can be drawn from the treatment of the collection of historic warehouse buildings by the community in LoDo.



*Historic Denver Union Station is a major civic anchor in the neighborhood.*



*A historic street wall creates a pleasant pedestrian experience.*



## IV. Parking Policy Framework

Introduction

Parking Inventory and Occupancy Analysis

Parking Recommendations

# IV. Parking Policy Framework

## Introduction

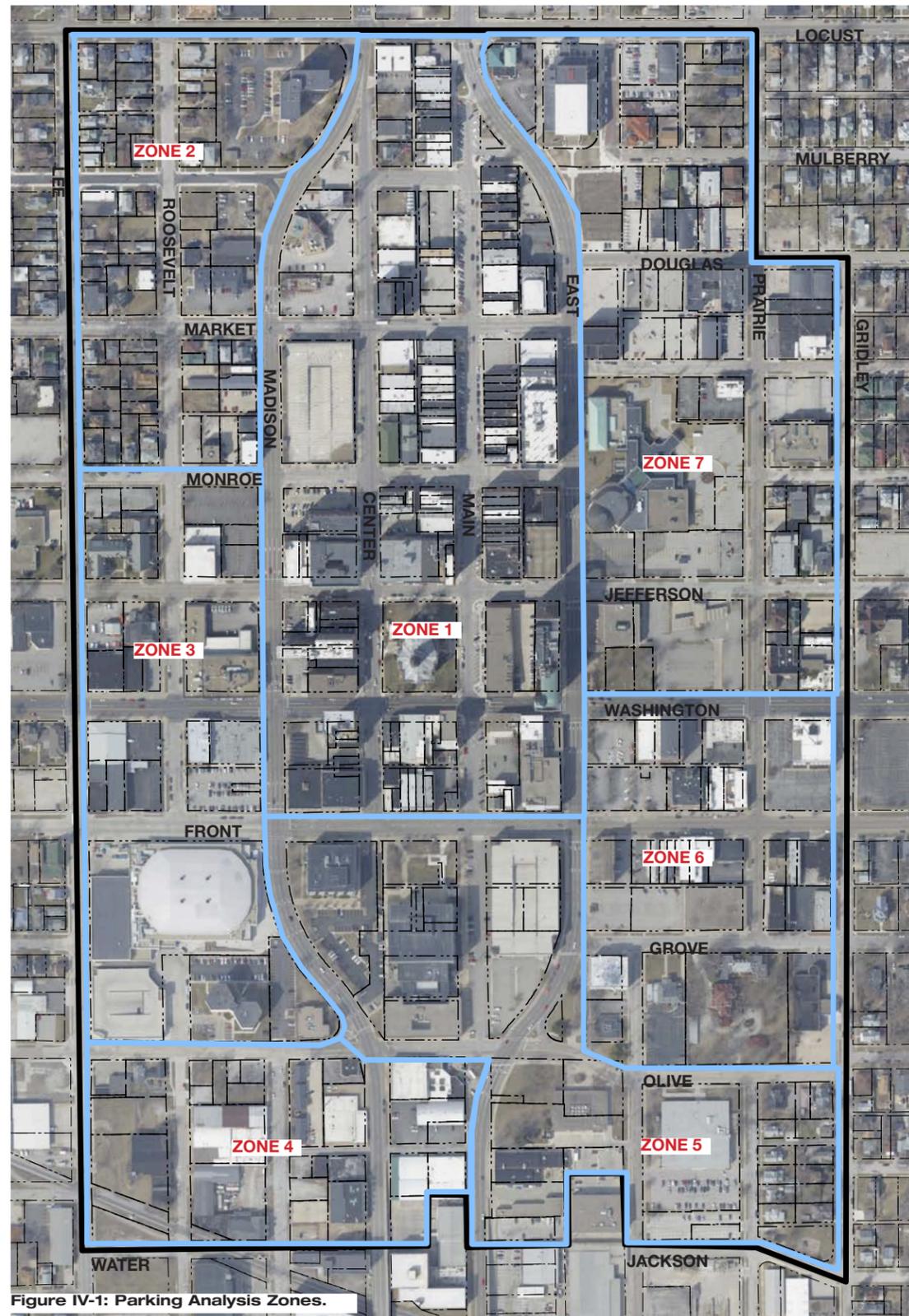


Figure IV-1: Parking Analysis Zones.

Parking in Downtown Bloomington was noted as a major issue by participants in the community process for this project. Parking is provided through on-street spaces (unmetered), public off-street spaces (garages and lots), and private off-street spaces (garages and lots). On-street spaces are not metered, but are managed with time limits, generally 90-minute and 2-hour limits, with no peak period restrictions. There are numerous private off-street surface lots, generally designated for various retail, residential, and business uses.

The study area was divided into seven zones, based upon the general clumping of land uses. As shown in Figure IV-1, the zones include:

- Zone 1 – central Downtown core, generally bounded by Locust, Front, East, and Madison Streets;
- Zone 2 – northwestern quadrant comprised primarily of residential uses; bounded by Locust, Monroe, Madison, and Lee Streets;
- Zone 3 – mid-western area generally comprised of industrial and warehouses; bounded by Monroe, Olive, Madison, and Lee Streets;
- Zone 4 – southwestern quadrant generally comprised of industrial uses; bounded by Olive, Water, Main, and Lee Streets;
- Zone 5 – southeastern quadrant primarily with civic uses; an “L” shaped zone generally bounded by Front and Olive on the north, Water/Jackson on the south, Gridley and East on the east, and Madison and Main on the west;

- Zone 6 – mid-eastern area primarily comprised of retail uses; bounded by Washington, Olive, Gridley, and East Streets; and,
- Zone 7 – northeastern quadrant comprised of a mix of land uses, bounded by Locust (and partially Douglas) on the north, Washington on the south, Gridley and Prairie on the east, and East St. on the west.

### On-Street Parking

Inventory and occupancy counts of on-street parking spaces were collected at various locations within the study area by City of Bloomington staff. The data was collected by the parking attendants that patrol the Downtown area for parking violations. Counts were taken on weekdays for the following general time periods:

Thursday, October 31, 2008:	10am, 1pm, 3pm
Friday, October 31, 2008:	8am, 1pm, 4pm
Monday, November 3, 2008:	1pm, 2pm, 3pm
Tuesday, November 4, 2008:	9am, 11am, 3pm
Wednesday, November 5, 2008:	9am, 11am, 2pm

As shown in Table IV-1, 528 on-street parking spaces within the Downtown study area were inventoried. These spaces are primarily 90-minute and 2-hour parking limits. Over the five days that were counted, the highest overall occupancy occurred in the afternoon, from about 3pm to 4pm, with a high of 63 percent at 3pm. For vehicular purposes, available parking is considered to be at capacity when about 85-90 percent of the available parking spaces are occupied.

Zone	INV	THURSDAY			FRIDAY			MONDAY			TUESDAY			WEDNESDAY		
		10a	1p	3p	8a	1p	4p	1p	2p	3p	9a	11a	3p	9a	11a	2p
1	344	88	209	243	109	219	184	166	229	96	146	219	194	112	234	196
3	53	7	19	18	6	13	24	17	20	20	16	27	24	6	37	19
5	34	7	13	17	6	13	21	7	29	8	9	12	19	2	19	16
6	53	12	23	17	15	24	29	12	12	11	15	15	25	12	13	13
7	44	19	30	38	25	22	21	17	25	22	26	30	28	26	25	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>% OCC</b>		<b>25%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>51</b>

\*No parking data was collected for blocks in zones 2 or 4.

Table IV-1. Summary of Parking Occupancy.

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## Parking Inventory & Occupancy Analysis

Figure IV-2 presents a summary of parking occupancy for the peak period (time of highest demand): Thursday at 3:00pm. During the peak time, there were several blocks in Zone 1 and Zone 7 that had occupancies of over 85 percent (shown in red). The area bounded by Jefferson, Front, Madison, and Main Streets had the highest occupancies. In Zone 7, occupancies greater than 85 percent were experienced along Douglas Street and East Street.

While in total it appears that there is enough parking to meet current demand, there are a few blocks that experience higher parking use of on-street spaces. Most visitors desire to park as close to their destination as possible. Very few are willing to park more than about 500 feet from their destination. Employees, particularly in a Downtown or more urban environment, are generally willing to park a bit further, but typically no more than about a ¼ mile from their workplace. Therefore, while parking quantities could meet the “theoretical” demand, the location of the available parking could limit its use and effectiveness. Detailed inventory and occupancy information by zone are shown in the appendix. These tables show that some blocks experience occupancies of 85 percent or more during some portions of the day, particularly in Zone 1.

### Off-Street Parking

#### Public Garages

Data was provided by the City of Bloomington for five public parking garages/lots in the Downtown study area in the fall of 2008:

Facility	Total Spaces	Hourly Spaces	Monthly Spaces	Rented Monthly Spaces
Market St. Garage	550	68	482	502 (101%)
Coliseum Garage	275	171	104	33 (32%)
Butler Lot	71	38	33	25 (76%)
Lincoln Lot	906	100	806	517 (64%)
Snyder Garage	139	36	103	98 (95%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,941</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>1,538</b>	<b>1,168 (76%)</b>

Table IV-2. Downtown Parking Garages.

- Market Street Garage, Zone 1
- US Cellular Coliseum Garage, Zone 3.
- Butler Lot, Zone 3
- Lincoln Garage, Zone 1
- Snyder Garage, Zone 1

All facilities include both monthly and hourly parking spaces, as presented in Table IV-2. Monthly permits are available to be “oversold” by about 10 percent, although only the Market Street garage is fully sold. The general users of these spaces are Downtown employees and residents. Rates at these facilities are \$40 for a monthly permit and \$0.65 per hour for the hourly public parking. Gates are down for paid parking Monday – Friday, 7:00am – 5:30pm at the Lincoln garage and 7:00am – 3:30pm for all other facilities. Parking is free on nights and weekends.

There is a total of 1,941 spaces available in these five facilities. Of the total number of spaces, almost 80% (1,538 spaces) are sold as monthly spaces, leaving only 20% available on an hourly basis. While the available monthly spaces are sold out at the Market Street garage, according to the City of Bloomington, many of the rented spaces are not being used. The hourly spaces available to the public are only about half utilized.

The Snyder Lot has nearly 90% of its spaces designated for monthly parking, while only 64% of those spaces are being used, indicating that a greater number could be used for hourly parking. The Coliseum garage has a greater number of hourly spaces available to the public, with only about a quarter utilized. Data was collected showing hourly parking data for

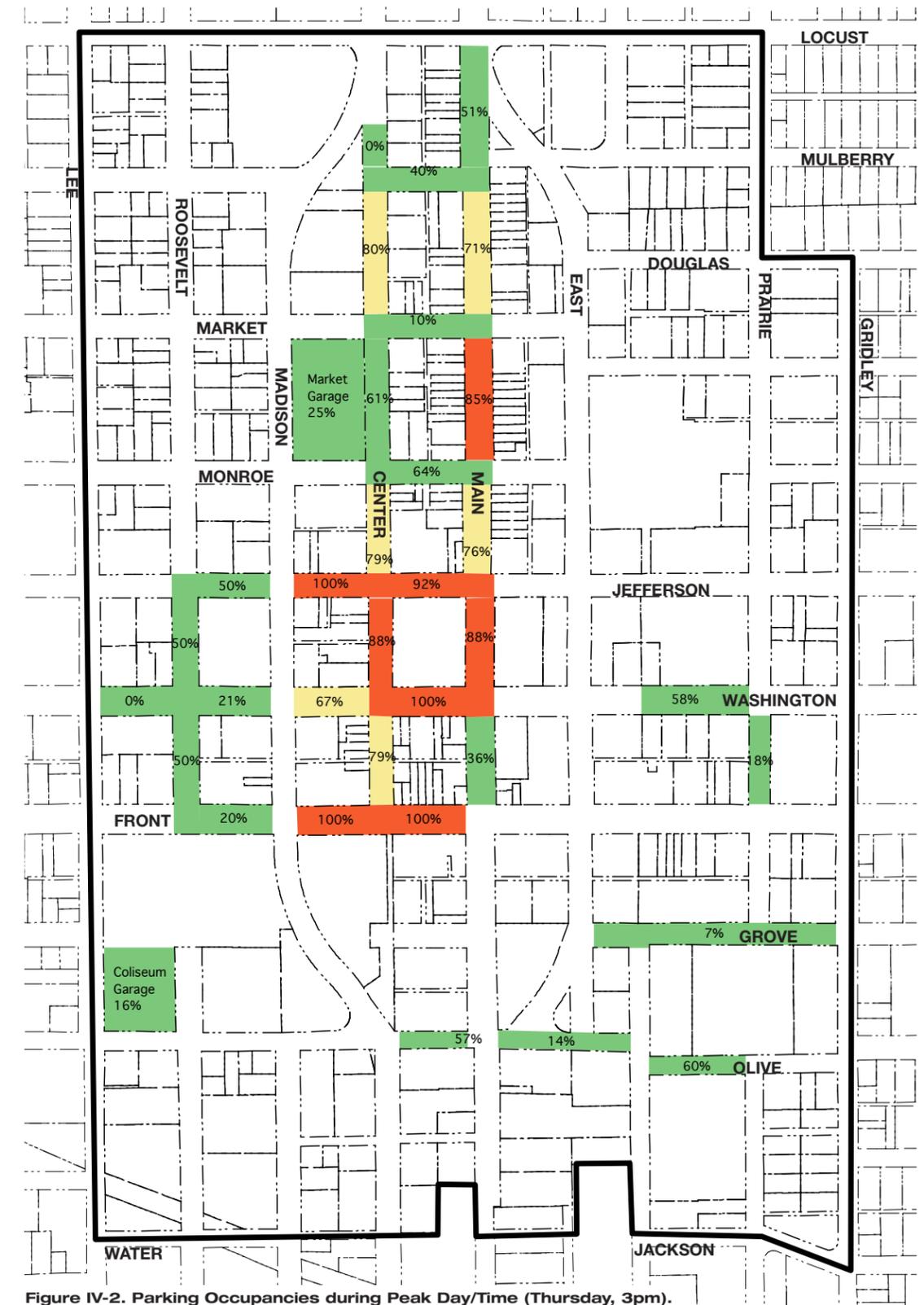


Figure IV-2. Parking Occupancies during Peak Day/Time (Thursday, 3pm).

# IV. Parking Policy Framework

## Parking Inventory & Occupancy Analysis



Figure IV-3: Turnover & Occupancy Count Locations.

public parking during the peak period - Thursday at 3 pm (see Section VII: Appendix for more information). During any of the weekdays counted, the highest usage of the Market Street garage was 54 percent. For the Coliseum garage, the highest usage was 26 percent. The hourly spaces are more typically used during events at the Coliseum.

### Surface Parking Lots

Occupancy counts were conducted in six surface parking lots located in Zone 7 – Northeast Sector. This zone was identified as having potential redevelopment opportunities due to its large surface parking lots and adjacency to the residential neighborhoods to the east. The lots included in this analysis are listed in Table IV-3 and shown in Figure IV-3.

As shown in Table IV-3, there are a total of 376 spaces in the six lots counted. The largest lot is the State Farm structure with 144 spaces. This lot is used for State Farm employees along with free public parking. All other lots are for private use with no general public parking available.

Occupancy counts were taken in May 2009 from 8am until 6pm (see Table IV-4). The State Farm deck had the highest occupancies, generally fully used from 8am until after 3pm. Mixed use lot 1 was considered full (over 85% occupied) during the mid-morning hours and mid-afternoon hours. Mixed use lot 2 was only about half used until after 4pm when its occupancy rate increased. All other lots were generally half full or less during most of the day. This indicates that many of the underutilized lots studied have potential to redevelop in the next several years.

### Turnover and Duration Analysis

In addition to inventory and occupancy studies, turnover and duration studies were also conducted. These studies tracked on-street parkers on selected blocks in the study area. Blocks identified for turnover studies were those in close proximity to the Downtown retail core and were also identified by the City as areas where parking is heavily used or had received complaints regarding parking. The purpose of this analysis was to determine how often each parking space “turns over” (how many cars are parked in a space) during the day and the average length of time that a vehicle is parked in a space. This statistic is important to consider, as the longer a vehicle is parked in an on-street space, the fewer spaces available.

Table IV-5 presents the turnover rates and average duration for on-street parking on a typical day in May 2009. In the blocks selected for turnover studies, there were approximately 246 spaces that were occupied throughout the day by 999 different vehicles. Average turnover on the blocks studied was 4.1 and the average duration was 1.4 hours. This indicates that most of the on-street spaces in the area were being occupied by a vehicle for about 1.5 hours, with about 4 vehicles occupying a parking space per day (during the study hours).

While a duration of 1.4 hours per vehicle appears to fit in with the posted time limits per space, it was observed that a number of the same vehicles were being moved from space to space throughout the day. Further analysis of the data showed that an average of 20-30 percent of the spaces on each block were being occupied by the same vehicles being moved throughout the day.

Lot No.	Name	Location	Inventory
1	Mixed Use 1	SE corner - Douglas & East	35
2	Mixed Use 2	NW corner – Prairie & Market	24
3	Church office lot	SW corner – Prairie & Market	40
4	Church parking lot	NE corner – Jefferson & East	37
5	State Farm/public	NW corner – Jefferson & Prairie	144
6	National City Bank	Prairie/Jefferson/Washington	96
Total			376

Table IV-3. Surface Lot Occupancy Count Locations

# IV. Parking Policy Framework

## Parking Inventory & Occupancy Analysis

This finding was generally common across most of the blocks surveyed.

This indicates that a number of people, most likely Downtown employees, are moving their vehicles at the end of the time limit to avoid a parking ticket. The end result is that this action artificially lowers the duration length and increases the turnover rate. Should these vehicles be considered to be occupying a space for the entire day, the duration rates would actually be higher than the posted time limit.

The act of moving vehicles from parking space to parking space, while not illegal, does take up prime parking spaces during the day that could be used by Downtown visitors and shoppers. However, this may not necessarily indicate a need for more employee parking, but indicates some changes may be needed as to how parking resources are managed. While some employees may need a car to be accessible throughout the day, there appears to also be an unwillingness of some employees to walk from a parking deck or lot further away, particularly when the on-street parking is free.

### Parking Analysis Summary

The parking analysis was based on data provided by the City of Bloomington, supplemented with an analysis of specific subareas. While the overall occupancy data did not include all public parking locations in the Downtown, it does give an indication of how parking is being used, the locations that may warrant changes, and implications for future development. Several issues are identified relative to the demand for parking and location of parking.

- In total, there appears to be adequate parking to meet current (and potentially future) demand. There are, however, several blocks that experience higher parking use. The area bounded by Jefferson, Front, Main, and Madison Streets had the highest on-street occupancies.
- With occupancies of over 85-90 percent, visitors will drive around in search of available parking. Searching for available parking in close proximity to a preferred destination could lead to increased congestion and increased vehicular and pedestrian conflicts, along with potentially more occurrences of double parking.

- Public parking in some of the garages is underutilized. This is a relatively common occurrence in areas where free on-street parking is provided.
- Turnover studies indicate that employees are moving vehicles throughout the day. A variety of options can be used to address the need that some employees may need their vehicle throughout the day, while “encourage” others to park in more appropriate locations. The use of a limited number of Downtown parking permits could be available to employees who need to park near their work location. Adding meters or pay stations could “encourage” employees to park in lots further away. Having a mix of time limits could also encourage employees to park in less congested blocks and eliminate the need for them to move their vehicles throughout the day.

LOT	Name/Use	INV	OCCUPANCY (number)										
			8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	NOON	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM
1	Mixed use	35	22	33	30	28	26	31	30	27	17	9	4
2	Mixed use	24	10	9	9	11	11	13	14	15	17	17	17
3	Church office lot	40	5	31	34	28	24	23	22	26	23	14	10
4	Church Lot	37	5	3	2	4	4	6	6	5	4	4	11
5	State Farm/public	144	144	144	139	137	142	141	141	111	67	33	26
6	Nat'l City Banl	96	26	52	45	55	49	49	43	47	32	18	9

LOT	Name/Use	INV	OCCUPANCY (percent)										
			8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	NOON	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM
1	Mixed use	35	63%	94%	86%	80%	74%	89%	86%	77%	49%	26%	11%
2	Mixed use	24	42%	38%	38%	46%	46%	54%	58%	63%	71%	71%	71%
3	Church office lot	40	13%	78%	85%	70%	60%	58%	55%	65%	58%	35%	25%
4	Church Lot	37	14%	8%	5%	11%	11%	16%	16%	14%	11%	11%	30%
5	State Farm/public	144	100%	100%	97%	95%	99%	98%	98%	77%	47%	23%	18%
6	Nat'l City Banl	96	27%	54%	47%	57%	51%	51%	45%	49%	33%	19%	9%

Table IV-4. Surface Lot Occupancy Counts and Percent Occupancy.

BLOCK	DESCRIPTION	SPACE INVENTORY	VEH. PARKED	TOTAL ACCUMULATION	TURNOVER	DURATION
1	Main St (Mulberry-Locust)	35	102	153	2.9	1.5
2	Main St. (Market-Mulberry)	34	126	160	3.7	1.3
3	Main St. (Monroe-Market)	38	189	245	5.0	1.3
4	Main St. (Jerrerson-Monroe)	29	111	160	3.8	1.4
5	Jefferson (Main-Center)	15	50	84	3.3	1.7
6	Jefferson (Center-Madison)	12	51	77	4.3	1.5
7	Main St. (Washington-Jefferson)	24	117	167	4.7	1.4
8	Washington (Main-Center)	12	36	49	3.0	1.4
9	Washington (Center-Madison)	13	40	51	3.1	1.3
10	Main (Front-Washington)	20	105	140	5.3	1.3
11	Front (Main-Center; no. side)	6	33	39	5.5	1.2
12	Fron (Center-Madison; no.side)	8	39	51	4.9	1.3

Turnover - average number of vehicles using a parking space during study hours.  
Duration - average length of time a vehicle occupies a parking space.

Table IV-5. Turnover Analysis Summary.

# IV. Parking Policy Framework

## Parking Recommendations

The primary goal of any downtown parking policy should be to create an environment where very few downtown trips generate more than one parking action — converting drivers to pedestrians while they are downtown. Such an environment both relies upon and supports local streets that are lined with dense mixtures of interesting land uses and destinations. To achieve this, Downtown needs an appealing, accessible supply of public parking spaces and an interesting and stimulating pedestrian environment that connects parking opportunities and Downtown destinations.

This three-step parking policy framework will work to move Downtown Bloomington toward providing such an environment:

1. Shift to an emphasis on public, rather than private, parking in support of a vibrant Downtown.
2. Use performance-targets to manage existing parking spaces.
3. Convert parking revenues into Downtown improvements.

### Emphasize Public Parking

A conventional approach to parking development typically includes a strong emphasis on accessory on-site parking spaces reserved for individual destinations. When this approach is applied to Downtown areas, the result dilutes the walkability of Downtown attractions by spreading them further apart. On-site parking also weakens the economic potential of urban sites because sites are comprised of parking instead of more building area. Cities with more effective downtown parking have achieved more context-sensitive approaches that recognize the collective costs associated with applying conventional, suburban-oriented zoning standards in urban commercial centers. These approaches usually involve consolidating private surface parking lots into public lots or garages, as well as a variety of other strategies, outlined below.

**Recommendation: Relieve pressure for surface parking lots by offering convenient spaces within public parking decks**

Public parking decks are more efficient than surface parking lots for a couple reasons. First, public garages consolidate spaces into one concentrated area, typically building multiple stories to capitalize on the amount of land available. Surface parking

lots by nature spread out parking spaces horizontally instead of vertically, resulting in the use of more land area. Second, public garages charge for the use of parking spaces, increasing revenue for garage structure improvements or for improvements within Downtown.

Since several public parking decks already exist in Downtown, those decks should first be utilized to their maximum potential before constructing new decks (see Recommendation: Price public garages effectively). Existing parking decks, especially those within the Madison-East couplet (Lincoln and Market Street Garages), are a significant resource for Downtown and should be maintained and utilized to their maximum ability to avoid potential pedestrian conflicts in crossing Business 51.

In the event that the construction of a new parking deck is needed, it is recommended that the City focus on the locations identified in yellow on Figure IV-4. The City should also incorporate active, sidewalk-oriented, commercial or residential land uses into new decks at sidewalk level (see Figure IV-5). The proposed parking deck locations, outlined below, were chosen for their proximity to the Downtown core and are also discussed in Section II: Illustrative Master Plan.

**1 East & Douglas Streets**

This location currently has large surface lots. According to the parking occupancy study, the parking lot along East Street is well used. The construction of a public parking deck in this location could replace all of the current parking spaces and add many more in a proximate location to the heart of Downtown.

**2 Roosevelt Street**

The City of Bloomington currently owns several parcels along this block and has indicated an interest in purchasing more in hopes of a large redevelopment project. If the Market Street Garage is torn down, many of the spaces will need to be replaced elsewhere if a mixed-use development is pursued. This Roosevelt Street location would be an ideal place to replace such spaces, since it is adjacent to the old garage site and will thus serve much of the same population. As discussed in Section II: Illustrative Master Plan, it would be ideal for this garage to incorporate a housing element along Roosevelt Street, such as condos or townhouses, that

would relate to the existing single-family homes across the street.

**3 Jefferson Street**

Another potential parking garage that could include liner housing is the site along Jefferson Street. This site currently houses a small parking deck owned by State Farm that is in need of repairs, as well as a surface parking lot owned by Second Presbyterian Church. A new multistory garage in this location could serve the needs of State Farm as well as the church, and provide public parking for those visiting the businesses along Main Street and around the McLean County Museum of History.

**4 Butler Lot/Elks Lodge**

The Butler Lot location currently houses an underutilized public parking lot. The Elks Lodge, located adjacent to and north of the Butler Lot, was just sold to be used as private parking for a condo building. As was discussed in the Illustrative Master Plan, there is potential for a hotel to develop on this site due to its proximity to the U.S. Cellular Coliseum and other Downtown attractions. A new parking deck could be incorporated as part of the hotel redevelopment or as a standalone deck.



Figure IV-5. Sidewalk-oriented uses can maintain pedestrian continuity in front of garages

**Recommendation: Encourage valet parking**

Valet services can expand the effective-inventory serving Downtown destinations by making parking facilities that would be either too inconvenient (remote) or off-limits (private) to self-parking customers. Valet operators typically make arrangements with owners of under-utilized parking facilities (public or private) that would otherwise sit idle at times when parking-constrained uses typically experience peak demand. Additionally, valet operations can expand the effective-capacity of individual facilities by allowing efficient parking configurations such as tandem (bumper to bumper parking) and stacked (mechanical lifts) arrangements unavailable to self-parking operations.

**Recommendation: Price public off-street parking lots & garages effectively**

Effective pricing of public parking facilities can help to address constraints as well as under-utilization. Downtown's off-street garages also play a vital role in creating and supporting a park-once environment. The previous section included a summary of recent utilization data from the five current Downtown public facilities/garages.

Spaces within Downtown's public facilities accommodate both hourly and monthly parking, with each garage setting aside a portion of spaces for each. This is a common management practice that recognizes that off-street facilities are the preferable locations for commute-oriented parking, while at the same time acknowledging their role in supporting specific short-term and medium-term parking needs.

The recent occupancy patterns at these facilities, however, as assessed through data provided by the City of Bloomington, indicate an over-supply of short-term parking at each, while monthly parking is under-supplied at the Market Street garage. Under-supplying the monthly set-aside at this facility misses an opportunity to both increase public parking revenues and remove long-term parking pressure on nearby streets. Additionally, much of the short-term parking demand that exists today at these facilities is likely created as much by high curb-occupancies as by specific demand for garage parking.

Management of each facility should follow these basic guidelines:

1. Shift as much day long parking demand away from curb spaces as possible.

# IV. Parking Policy Framework

## Parking Recommendations

2. Reserve garage spaces for short-term or long-term parking only to the extent that demand warrants. Once on-street pricing is established to maintain space availability, demand for these spaces would be expected to fall even lower.
3. Reduce rates for short-term parking at each garage to half that of the lowest hourly-rate charged for on-street parking in Downtown.
4. Use pricing to keep demand and supply in relative balance for monthly parking:
  - a. Leave the price for monthly permits for the Coliseum garage unchanged until any increased demand generated by the introduction of on-street meters can be assessed, after which adjust rates up or down in roughly 25% increments until demand reaches about 105% of the monthly space inventory.
  - b. Increase the monthly rate at the Market Street garage by 25%, and continue to adjust rates up or down to maintain demand at roughly 105% of the monthly space inventory, particularly after on-street metering is introduced.
5. Make clear that the intent of the new pricing structure is to create a rational set of cost-convenience parking options by using demand-responsive rates to ensure availability among all parking options.
6. Use all parking revenues to fund payment of existing garage construction bonds, and to fund construction of new spaces if and when the City determines it is advisable to do so.

**Recommendation: Price on-street parking spaces effectively**

*Curbs that are too full are underpriced.*

Parking meters have been around for over 70 years, and are widely disparaged especially in smaller urban centers. The situation in Bloomington represents a common reaction to this history — turnover is encouraged through time limits rather than meters. Bloomington is also in good company in its struggles to enforce meter-less time limits. In fact, the staffing commitments and technology investments that are necessary to effectively enforce existing limits not only consume scarce public resources, they also engender tremendous resentment, without any conspicuous benefits.

The abandonment of parking pricing is the direct result of the poor implementation of meters throughout most of their history. The meter was introduced specifically for the purpose of generating turnover among curb spaces for which demand would otherwise overwhelm supply. To work effectively in this manner, the price charged by the meters must be high enough to moderate parking stays while not being so high that too many spaces remain empty. However, political reluctance to set prices high enough to impact parking stays has too often reduced meters to little more than tax-collection boxes – charging a fee for which there is no immediate, beneficial impact in terms of space availability.

Despite this history of mismanagement, pricing remains the most direct and most effective means for managing demand for, and thereby maintaining access to, public parking. What many downtown businesses and planners are now realizing is that ready-access is more valued by downtown patrons than is a low meter rate and that it is in fact time limits, not specific meter rates, that create the most resentment and anxiety among downtown patrons.

Pricing that is demand-responsive and set to ensure availability even on the most popular blocks at the most popular times will provide at least two conspicuous benefits — spaces will be available for anyone willing to pay the market-price and time limits will become a thing of the past. Even more conspicuous benefits can accrue from this strategy by returning all meter revenues to fund local physical improvements.

The following are recommended steps for establishing pricing for curb spaces:

1. Establish space availability – rather than supply, price, or turnover – as the primary performance measure for public parking resources.
2. Set an availability target of 15% for on-street spaces during peak hours - one or two open spaces on each block.
3. Install parking meters within the area between Madison and East streets, from Locust Street to Olive Street (see Figure IV-4) to allow better management of turnover and availability patterns among Downtown’s most in-demand parking spaces.
4. Invest in meter technology that provides flexible, convenient payment options, such as credit cards, remote payment, and cell phone payment.

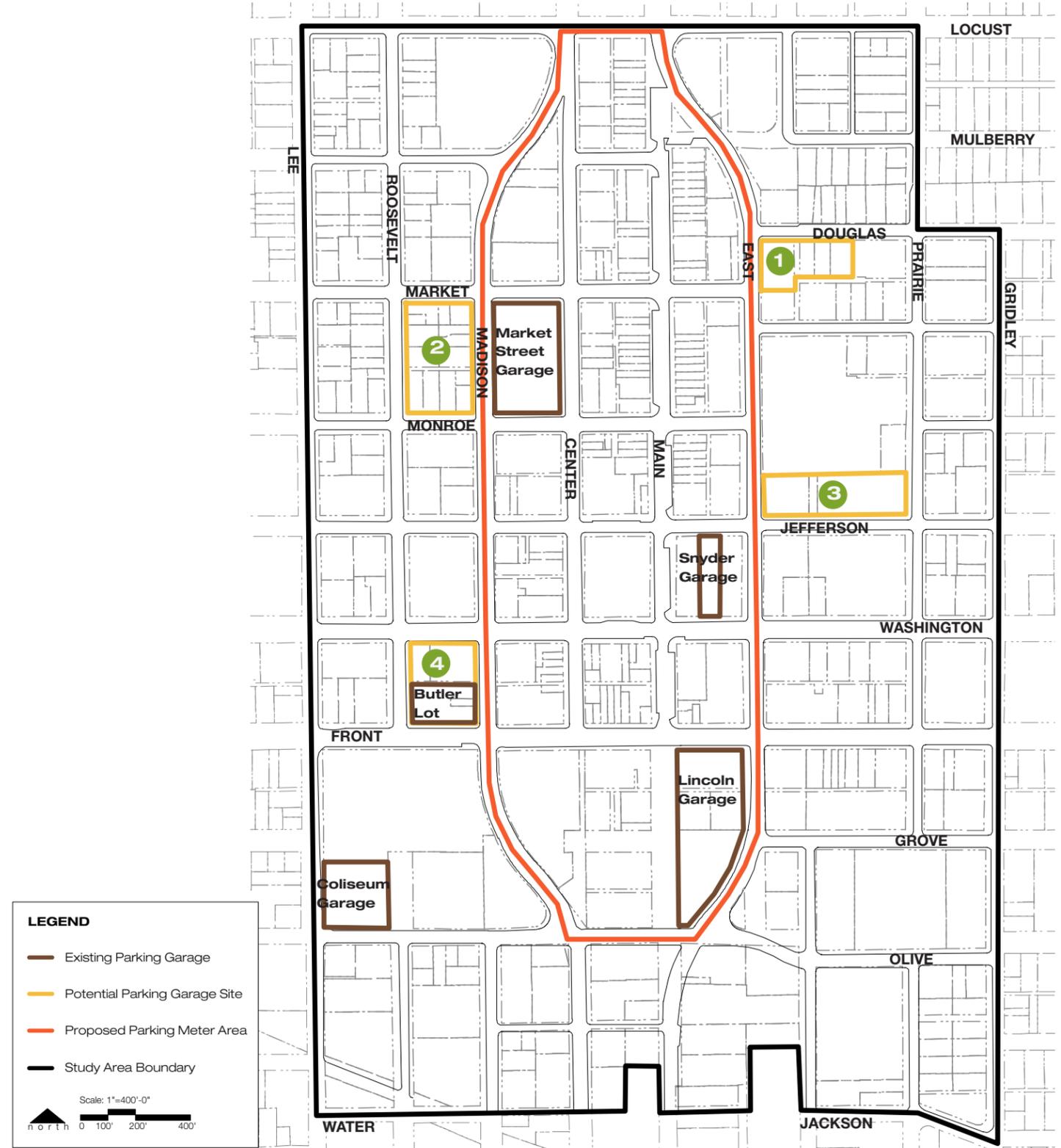


Figure IV-4. Public Parking Garage & Meter Installation Locations.

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## Parking Recommendations

- Invest in meter technology that provides strategic price management options including variable pricing by day, time-of-day, and length of stay.
- Set parking fees based on demonstrated demand. After setting an initial parking rate of perhaps \$0.50 per hour, increase rates (in \$0.25 increments) along blocks with under-performing availability (less than 10%) and decrease rates along blocks with over-performing availability (more than 25%) every three months, based on observed availability patterns.
- Use all parking revenues to fund payment of existing garage construction bonds, and to invest in conspicuous streetscape and/or transportation improvements such as improved bus stops, Downtown employee transit passes, crosswalk improvements, parking shuttles, and bicycle parking (see recommendation below).

### **Recommendation: Use parking revenue to improve Downtown**

Creating an enjoyable, attractive Downtown atmosphere is key to encouraging a walkable environment. Utilizing parking revenues to fund Downtown improvements - commonly referred to as a Parking Benefit District - is one way to achieve this. The Parking Benefit District approach has been used to combine price-based parking management with the creation of new revenue streams dedicated to improving the appearance and functionality of the areas generating parking demand. Keeping revenue in the area where parking demand is created not only helps maintain an effective Park-Once environment, it is also typically a highly effective means for gaining support for pricing strategies among local businesses. Creating a clear, conspicuous connection between money going into meters and the appearance of nearby improvements can also reduce resistance to meters among parking customers and keep people coming Downtown.

### **Recommendation: Require employees to park off-street in public parking decks or lots**

The parking inventory and analysis found that employees working Downtown were utilizing valuable on-street parking spaces, decreasing the supply of on-street parking to those shopping or visiting. To create a favorable parking scenario for such visitors, employers should require their employees to park off-street, either in public parking decks or lots. This will greatly benefit the businesses Downtown, as customers will have easy access to parking near the businesses they wish to visit.

## Manage Private Parking

Existing private parking supplies are a resource that should be managed carefully. Mismanagement results in lots that are completely independent from one another, serving only one establishment each. While this may be necessary for select businesses, most businesses can take advantage of sharing parking supplies with one another during off-peak hours. For new construction of private parking, the City should use techniques that encourage utilization of public garages before businesses construct new surface lots. Several techniques to accomplish this are outlined below.

### **Recommendation: Share private parking supplies**

*A walking customer is a shared customer.*

Encouraging the sharing of private, accessory parking lots within Downtown is a means by which the effective public parking supply can be expanded without sacrificing developable land or paying high construction costs. Daytime uses such as banks, medical offices, dry cleaners, churches, and markets commonly have their own, dedicated parking facilities. These uses also frequently have well-defined peak-demand periods that neatly off-set similarly well-defined peak-use hours at evening-based Downtown uses that typically struggle to provide on-site parking sufficient to their needs — i.e., restaurants, pubs and nightclubs, theaters, and entertainment venues.

Downtown land constraints have long driven businesses to work out formal or informal arrangements to collectively meet parking needs through shared resources. The benefits of such arrangements, however, extend beyond the businesses directly involved. The use of off-site parking options generates walking traffic, adding to a sense of public vitality and exposing parking patrons to Downtown uses beyond their primary destinations. Recognizing the shared benefits of this, many downtowns have explored means by which shared-parking can be publicly encouraged and supported.

### **Recommendation: Use a shared-parking broker**

Creating a shared-parking broker is one popular means by which this can be done. Such a broker can typically be sought within the local Chambers of Commerce, existing business associations and improvement districts, or economic development agencies. A broker can help facilitate a higher volume of such arrangements by:

- Dealing with liability, insurance, and security issues;

- Tracking off-setting peaks to identify opportunities;
- Tracking constraints and opportunities, including terms under which surplus-holders would be willing to open up their inventories; and
- Impersonally connecting opportunities to constraints, rather than leaving it to individuals to take the initiative and negotiate with (go begging among) their neighbors.

### **Recommendation: Discourage new surface lot development in the core of Downtown**

New surface parking lots, particularly within the retail core of Downtown, should not be necessary; such parking spaces can likely be absorbed by existing public facilities or public facilities to be constructed in the future. The City has already recognized this fact, as there is currently no minimum parking requirement for the majority of the study area, which is a great first step. In addition, the City should prohibit new surface lots within the Downtown or, at a minimum, require that parking lots be located to the rear of active, sidewalk-oriented uses.

### **Recommendation: Set parking maximums**

To avoid massive parking lots that occupy valuable land within Downtown, the City should set maximum limits on on-site, accessory parking in areas where developable land is most constrained or to protect primary pedestrian zones.

### **Recommendation: Institute a flexible cap on parking**

Allow developers to build beyond maximum parking standards (see recommendation below) in return for in lieu fee payment or investments in alternative modes — such as the provision of bicycle parking, the reservation of prime spaces for carpool vehicles, or the provision of transit discounts, passes, or reimbursements.

### **Recommendation: Unbundle parking**

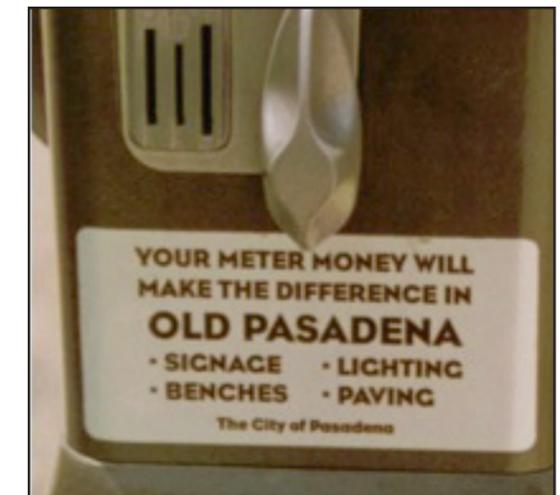
To encourage private parking to respond more to market demand, developers should be encouraged to “unbundle” parking. Unbundling means that the use or ownership of a parking space is identified as a separate, optional cost item for all building occupants. Typically, parking is “bundled” into the cost of leasing, renting, or purchasing office space or Downtown condominiums. By requiring the separate, optional acquisition of parking access, cities can encourage more efficient private parking supplies by creating a cost-incentive for tenants to reduce their parking consumption as well as a cost-incentive for developers to only build as much parking as they can sell.

### **Recommendation: Encourage car-sharing**

Car-sharing programs involve renting cars by the hour as needed. Cars are typically scattered around an urban area in convenient locations; users can simply make reservations online or over the phone and pick a car up at the location closest to them. These types of programs are becoming increasingly popular and there are currently two national car-share companies (Flexcar and ZipCar) and a Chicago-based company (iGo). Also, Illinois State University in Normal recently incorporated Connect by Hertz, a car-sharing company targeted toward university campuses.

Car-share programs decrease the number of total parking spaces needed - instead of one car per person, multiple people are sharing the same car, which takes up only one parking space. Surveys have shown that 50 percent of car-share users can give up their vehicles after joining and 70 percent of members can avoid having to buy a car in the first place. It is also cheaper than maintaining a personal vehicle - typically, members are only required to pay the hourly fee associated with the rental (gas, insurance, and maintenance are handled by the car-share company).

The City should encourage car-sharing through requirements or incentives to offer spaces to established car-sharing organizations. For example, the City could decrease the amount of parking developers are required to build by three to four spaces per car-share space that is incorporated.



*Return parking revenue for Downtown improvements*

## V. Transportation Component

Issues Analysis and Recommendations

Bicycle Facilities

Streetscape Recommendations

# V. Transportation Component

## Issues Analysis and Recommendations

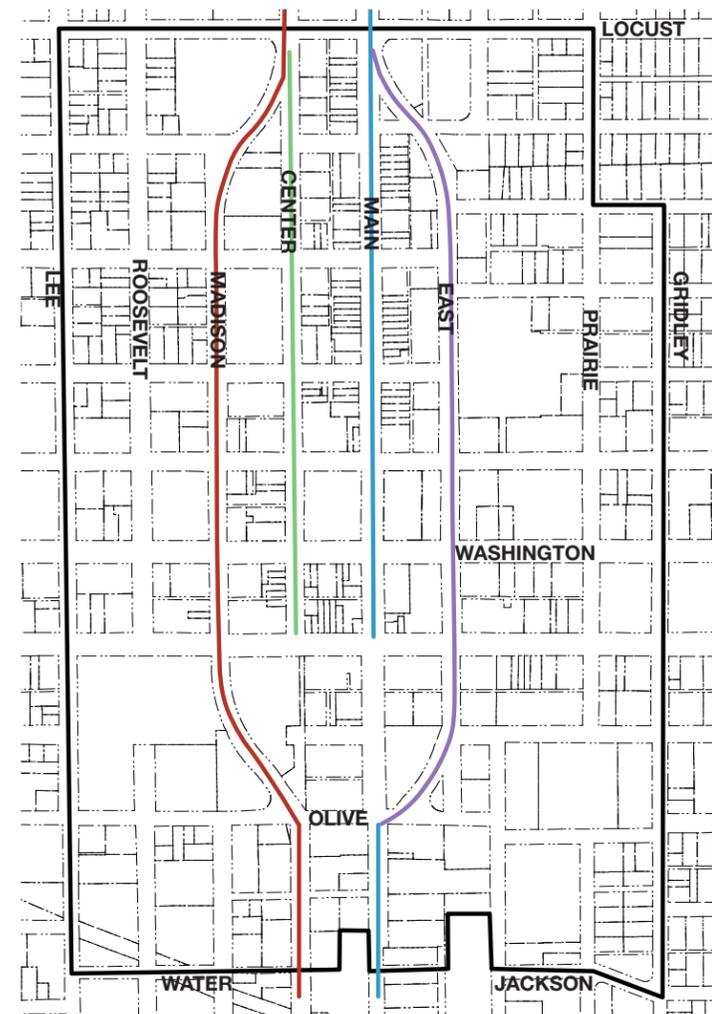
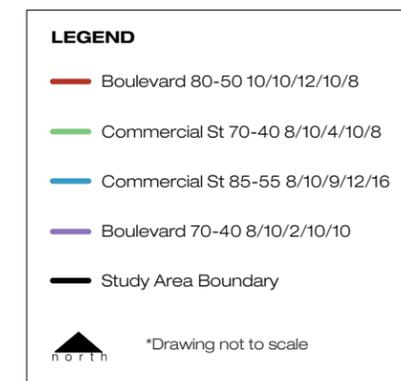


Figure V-1. Thoroughfare Assignment.



“Walkability” is a term used in this plan to describe the extent to which places are comfortable for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. Walkable places require a fine-grained network of connected streets that provide many options for travel, managed vehicle speeds, and human-scaled development placing amenities and services within a ¼ mile radius of one’s home.

Challenges within Downtown include restoring the high levels of walkability that existed in Bloomington prior to World War II. In the last fifty years, modern traffic engineering and development patterns have emphasized automobile transportation over walkability. The resulting street grid is harsh and uninviting to pedestrians. The following transportation assessment and recommendations attempt to soften the auto-orientation of this area and restore greater levels of walkability.

From a transportation planning context, the following issues exist for this master plan: walkable urban design, walkable thoroughfares, and vehicle circulation and mobility.

**Recommendation: Implement walkable urban design**

Much of America’s suburban land development pattern suffers from street and highway networks influencing its structure. Highways designated as arterials change little as they approach developed areas. Generally, speeds drop from 55 to 45 or 35 mph, but on-street parking is usually not allowed in emerging areas and is often removed from older areas. Arterial street designs, by definition, tend to exclude intersections with side streets of limited volume, leading to longer block size (600 to 1,000 feet and higher) and higher speeds of 45 miles per hour (mph) or more, both of which cause difficulty for pedestrians. As shown in Figure V-2, a pedestrian’s chance of being killed in a crash is graphed against vehicle speed. The graph indicates that in a crash with a vehicle traveling greater than 30 mph, a pedestrian’s odds of dying are better than 50%.

Finer grained street networks better serve urban peak travel demand due to multiple streets serving multiple modes – walking, cycling, transit, and the motor vehicle. Transportation plans for balanced mobility can be crafted with walkability considered first and vehicle mobility second. This is not to imply that motor vehicle mobility will be dramatically reduced, but that pedestrians are also given a high priority in addition. Achieving high levels of mobility for pedestrians is more

difficult, as pedestrians are more vulnerable than are drivers, and solutions for their comfort are more complex. Often, greater walkability yields only small reductions in vehicle capacity, even though vehicle speeds are lower.

Downtown Bloomington has retained much of its historic street grid network. Over time, some streets have been widened and some intersections have been modified to permit higher-speed traffic operations than desired for a walkable area.

The vision for Downtown Bloomington (see Section II: Downtown Vision), as described by the community and refined by the design team during the charrette, is a return to the walkable city structure of the early 1900’s, with Downtown residences, places to shop and find entertainment, and restoration of the civic centers in the area. This vision is also an important part of the transportation design criteria for Downtown Bloomington. The return to a walkable city requires managing traffic speeds to pedestrian friendly levels and ensuring connectivity of the street system.

### Bicycle Facilities

All of the street sections to follow include the use of shared lane markings or “sharrows” and an increase in bicycle racks to facilitate greater bicycle use. Bicycle recommendations for Downtown are described in more detail below.

**Recommendation: Include shared bicycle-vehicle lanes**

Providing shared lane markings, such as a sharrow, will encourage greater bicycle use. A sharrow is a specific pavement marking and is used in each of the street sections to follow. Sharrows indicate preferred routing and location for bicyclists within a thoroughfare travel lane and also indicate to motorists that cyclists are sharing the thoroughfare. Greater visibility of cyclists yields increased safety, especially in the vulnerable intersection turns area. They are prevalent all over the country and are being included in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) next update.

Sharrows are the preferred facility type for bicyclists on thoroughfares with posted speeds of 20 mph and 30 mph,

particularly for streets with on-street parking. The sharrow pavement marking consists of a bicyclist or bicycle symbol with two chevrons on top, indicating the direction of travel (Figure V-3). The sharrow should be located such that the center of the marking is along an imaginary line 5’ away from the edge of the parking lane, if a parking lane is present, or 5’ from the curb face if no parking lane is present. On multilane thoroughfares, the sharrow is located in the rightmost lane. The sharrow should be placed at the beginning and end of each block and at least once mid-block. If desired, a sign indicating “Share the Road” or “Bicyclists Sharing Road” may also be used in conjunction with the sharrow.

**Recommendation: Provide bicycle parking facilities**

The provision of adequate bicycle parking at either end of the bicyclist’s trip is critical to encourage alternate forms of transportation. Ideally, bicycle parking should be provided in the front of a store or building, in plain sight, easily visible from inside the store or building. The simple “U” rack for bicycle parking is recommended for use in Downtown (See Figure V-4).

Within Downtown a minimum of one bicycle rack, capable of supporting two bikes, within the public frontage for every five vehicular parking spaces should be installed, oriented parallel and adjacent to the street. This will allow the parked bicycles to take up space between the tree wells, rather than block the sidewalk.

**Recommendation: Connect Downtown with Constitution Trail**

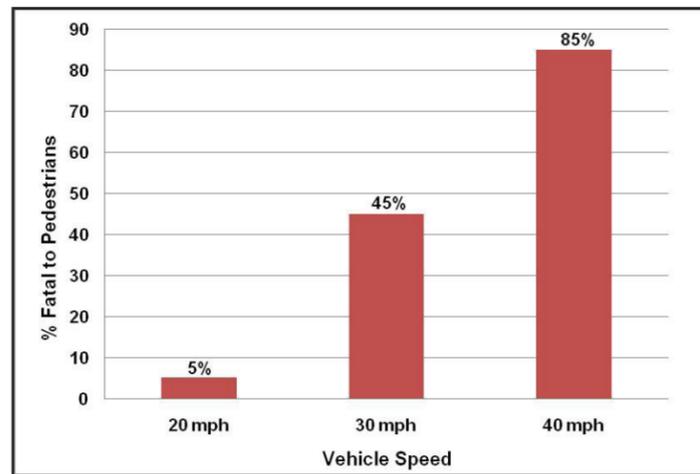
During the public input process, several community members brought up the idea of extending Constitution Trail, a popular 24-mile, multi-use recreational trail, west to connect with Downtown Bloomington (see Figure V-5). This is an idea that has been echoed in recent community plans, including the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, currently in draft form. Connecting the trail would greatly enhance cyclists’ access to Downtown, thereby increasing visibility of Downtown and alternative transportation options, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and promoting public health.

The McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan shows a proposed trail along Washington Street that would link Downtown with Constitution Trail. Other potential locations

# V. Transportation Component

## Bicycle Facilities

include linking with the trail along Front Street, as advocated in the West Bloomington Neighborhood Plan, or directly south of Downtown just north of Mill. In the future, it may also be a good idea to also connect the Trail with Illinois Wesleyan University to the north. The recommendation to connect Constitution Trail should be prioritized and implemented as soon as possible, as it will serve a large population of residents living in and around Downtown.



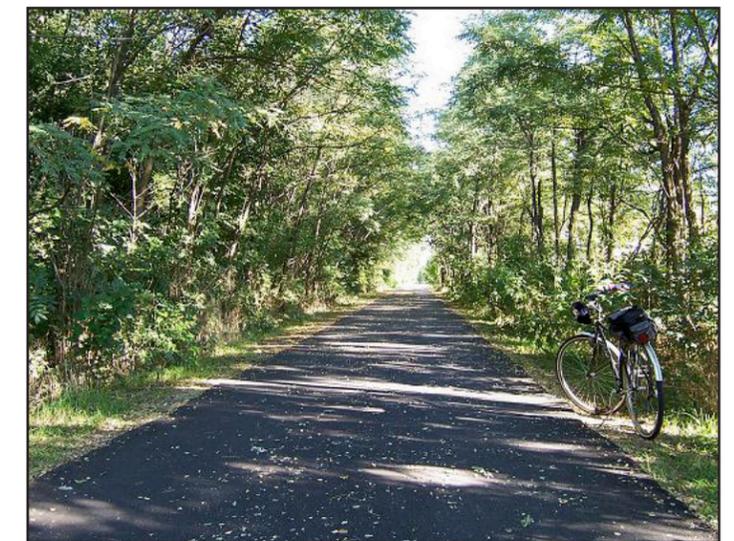
**Figure V-2. Percent of Crashes Fatal to Pedestrians**  
 Source: U.K. Department of Transportation, *Killing Speed and Saving Lives*, London, 1987.



**Figure V-3. Sharrows in Use in Tallahassee, FL**



**Figure V-4. U-Racks Installed on a Sidewalk (Photo from Cycle Safe<sup>™</sup> Bike Racks)**



**Figure V-5. Existing Constitution Trail (Photo from [www.constitutiontrail.org](http://www.constitutiontrail.org))**

# V. Transportation Component

## Streetscape Recommendations



Figure V-21: Existing Streetscape Components.

# V. Transportation Component

## Streetscape Recommendations



### Existing Streetscape Components

This section examines the prevalence of streetscape amenities, such as street trees, planters, distinctive lighting, trash cans, and benches, within Downtown. These streetscape features greatly add to the pedestrian experience while walking through Downtown. While there are quite a few streetscape elements currently in place within Downtown, there is still much room for improvement.

For the purposes of this study, streetscape analysis was focused on the area within the East-Madison couplet. This was done to focus recommendations and future financial resources on the place where streetscape improvements will have the most impact - the core of Downtown. This area also already has a good start on streetscape amenities, giving future investments something to build upon.

Refer to Figure V-21: Existing Streetscape Components for a summary of the Downtown core's existing streetscape features noted by the consultant team as part of this project. The locations of streetscape elements are approximate.

#### Street Trees

Within Downtown, street tree placement is quite sporadic, with some blocks missing street trees entirely. The most regular occurrence of street trees is along Main Street.

#### Planters

Planters are quite prevalent around Downtown, with an average of around two planters per block. These landscape elements add much to the ambience of sidewalk life.

#### Lighting

Three different types of street lighting are found within Downtown. The first is a typical cobra head streetlight with a cement base. The second type is essentially the same as the first, but includes a hanging planter basket, making it more visually appealing (see Figure V-22). The last type of lighting, the "historic context light," is shown in Figure V-23 and is a streetlight that is more sensitive to the historic nature of the Downtown core. The second and third types of lighting are shown on Figure V-17, as they are seen to contribute greatly to the ambience of Downtown.

#### Garbage Cans

While garbage cans may seem run-of-the-mill, they are quite essential in keeping Downtown clean. The garbage cans that are

present Downtown match the historic context streetlights and benches. Garbage cans are found pretty regularly at the end of almost every block within Downtown.

#### Benches

Benches are found in several places within Downtown, but are by no means prevalent. Benches are essential to promoting street life, as they encourage people to spend time on the street.

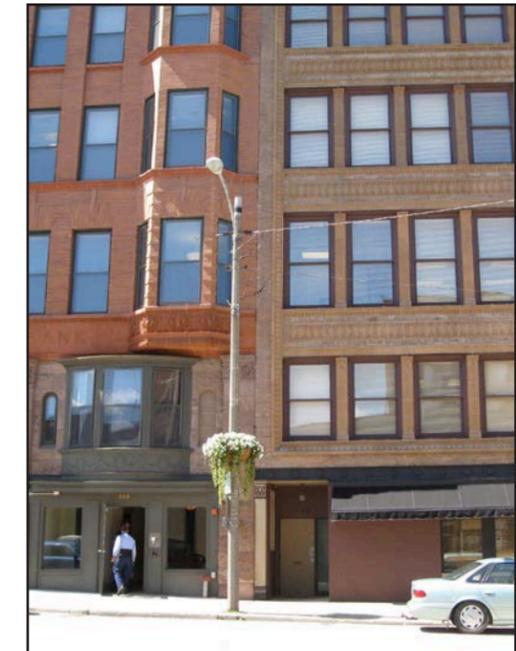


Figure V-22: Downtown cobra head streetlight with hanging planter.



Figure V-23: Typical streetscape elements in Downtown, including a bench, historic context streetlight, street trees, planter, and garbage can.

# V. Transportation Component

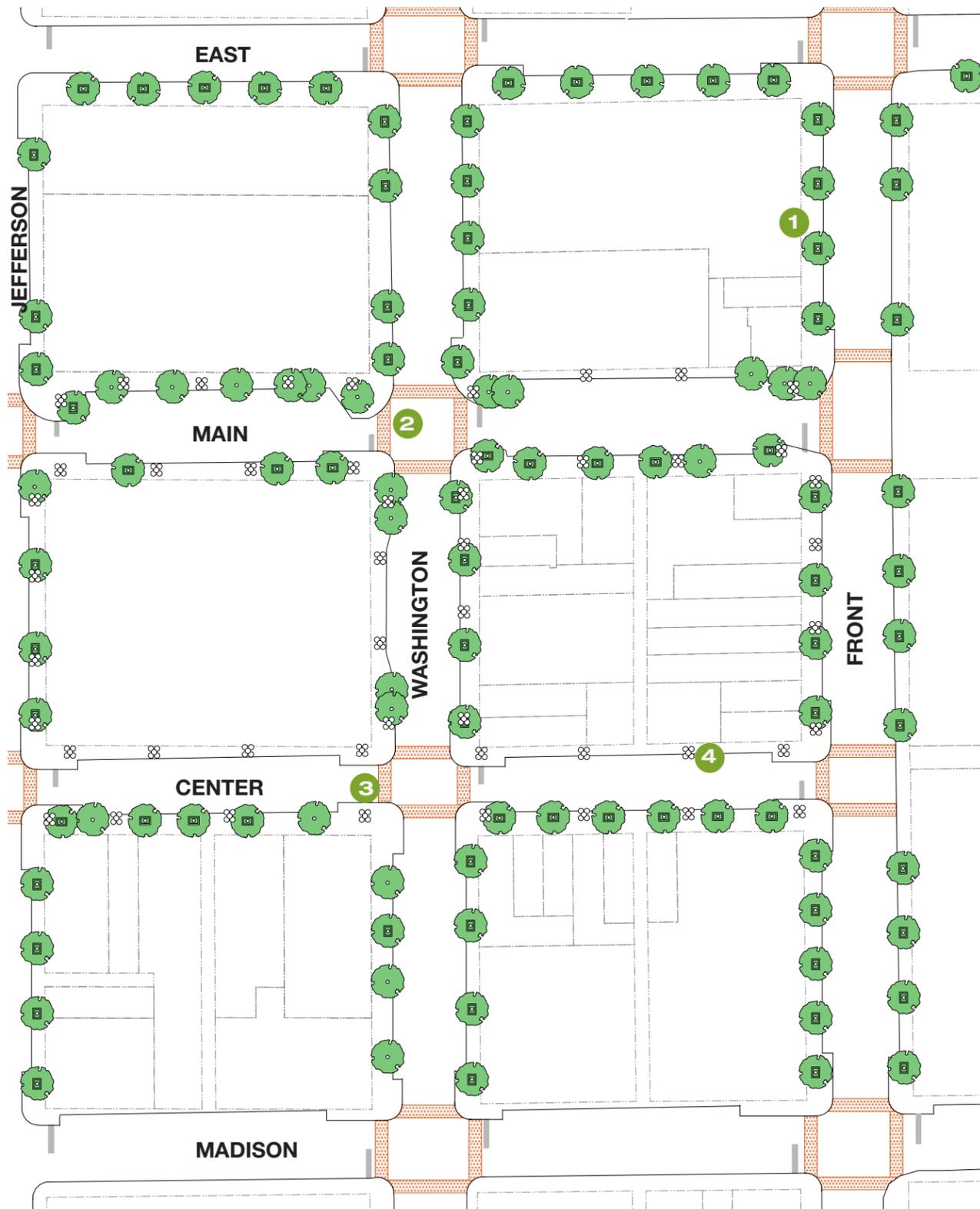
## Streetscape Recommendations



Figure V-24: Proposed Streetscape Improvements.

# V. Transportation Component

## Streetscape Recommendations



### Proposed Streetscape Improvements

The following streetscape recommendations build upon streetscape elements that currently exist within Downtown. These streetscape improvements will greatly add to the ambience of Downtown and will also increase safety and visual interest for passers-by. Refer to Figure V-24: Proposed Streetscape Improvements, which illustrates where various improvements should occur within the study area.

Main Street, Center Street, and the central side streets within Downtown between Main and Center should be the top priority in terms of phasing for streetscape improvements. These areas already have significant streetscape and further improvements here will have the most immediate impact. As the retail core of Downtown becomes more successful, streetscape improvements may be extended to other side streets as well as the East-Madison Street couplet.

#### 1 Install Regularly Spaced Street Trees

Street trees are indispensable to the attractiveness and safety of the Downtown core. Street trees make the street appear narrower to drivers and typically result in a decrease in traffic speed, making the environment more conducive to walking.

Currently, street trees exist irregularly within Downtown. Figure V-24 shows both existing street trees as well as approximate locations for proposed street trees. Typically, street trees should be spaced between 25 and 50 feet apart, depending on the amount of room on the sidewalk and the context of the street. New street trees should be installed to fill in the gaps between existing street trees to create a line of trees as people walk or drive down the street.

Street trees often have difficulty growing in urban environments. Typically, this is due to the fact that such trees are placed in tree wells that are too small for a mature tree, which negatively affects the health of the tree. For this reason, street trees within Downtown should be planted in 4' by 6' cast iron tree grates and, where possible, structural soil, aeration systems, and permeable pavement should be used to ensure adequate water filtration.

#### 2 Install Pedestrian Crosswalk Pavers

To improve the safety of pedestrians walking around Downtown, it is recommended that special paving treatment, such as cobblestone or brick, be installed at a width of at least eight feet at key intersections as shown on Figure V-24. These treatments enhance the visibility of the crosswalk and help motorists to see that pedestrians may be crossing. Figure V-24 shows these crosswalks at all intersections within the East-Madison couplet as well as linking across East Street to the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts and Front Street commercial node and across Madison Street to the U.S. Cellular Coliseum.

#### 3 Utilize Curb Bump-Outs

Installing curb bump-outs at intersections creates additional space for pedestrians and shortens the crosswalk. A bump-out does not eliminate any potential parking spaces, because it is located between the intersection and the first permitted parking spot. Bump-outs should be installed within the Downtown core at any intersection that does not include a bus stop or turn lane.

#### 4 Install Distinctive Lighting

Currently, the most prevalent type of lighting within Downtown is a typical cobra head streetlight with a cement base. However, distinctive street lighting, as currently seen in limited places within Downtown, adds much to the ambience and historic character of the area. Also, historic context streetlights are located much closer to the sidewalk than typical cobra head streetlights, and therefore provide a greater amount of light and increase safety.

It is recommended that historic context streetlights, as shown in Figure V-23, replace existing lighting along Main and Center Streets and the center side streets within Downtown (refer to Figure V-24 for recommended historic context streetlight locations). All other street lights within the study area should be retrofitted with planter baskets as shown in Figure V-22. Being selective about where to locate historic context streetlights, which are more costly than typical streetlights, will help to save money and create a sense of place within Downtown.

# V. Transportation Component

## Proposed Streetscape Improvements

- 5 Continue the Adopt-a-Pot Program**  
The primary reason that beautiful planters are prevalent around Downtown is the Adopt-a-Pot program, where local businesses, community groups, and families plant and maintain an assigned flowerpot. Currently, over one hundred people participate in the program, and the resulting planters add a lot of character to Downtown. This program should continue to be sponsored by the Downtown Bloomington Association, and new planters should be placed opportunistically around Downtown (see Figure V-25).
- 6 Continue to Install Benches**  
Benches add greatly to street life within Downtown, encouraging people to socialize and spend leisure time outdoors. Benches of the same style as those existing within Downtown should continue to be installed opportunistically as funding becomes available. Benches should first be installed at intersections and along Main Street, then along Center Street and the east-west side streets. To discourage vagrancy, benches may incorporate dividers or armrests at regular intervals.
- 7 Install Coordinated Wayfinding Signage**  
Wayfinding signage is signage installed in the public right-of-way that provides directions or courtesy information intended to assist the public in navigation. Wayfinding signage should be installed to direct visitors to such Downtown amenities as: public parking garages,

shopping areas, U.S. Cellular Coliseum, Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, the Law and Justice Center, City Hall, and the McLean County Museum of History. Additionally, signage identifying the area of the Bloomington Central Business Historic District (see Section I: Historic Amenities) and other key historic assets should be incorporated.

Wayfinding signage should be located at key intersections and could mimic the style shown in Figure V-26, which is ideal for pedestrians. Since this scale of signage may not be legible to motorists, it is also recommended that signage directed at automobiles should be put in place for public parking garages and larger attractions Downtown (see Figure V-27).

- 8 Create a Downtown Ambassador Program**  
To further assist with wayfinding, as well as help to control quality of life crimes such as aggressive panhandling and graffiti, it is recommended that a Downtown Ambassador Program be created. The farmers' market provides a de facto Downtown Ambassador Program on Saturday mornings through half of the year, but a more comprehensive program would benefit Downtown greatly. Such a program is quite common in cities across the country, including Seattle, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Madison, WI, and Dayton, OH.

Typically, for an area the size of Downtown Bloomington, an Ambassador Program should consist of two or three full-time Ambassadors or a few volunteers only in the spring, summer, and fall. Such programs typically have three areas of focus: hospitality (answering questions, directing visitors to parking or attractions), information (providing information to visitors or even providing social resources to panhandlers or homeless people), and assistance (helping residents and visitors with minor emergencies such as theft or vandalism as well as providing an extra set of eyes for crime). An Ambassador Program would help considerably in making Downtown a navigable and welcoming place for both visitors and residents.

- 9 Encourage Sidewalk Cafes**  
Sidewalk cafes greatly enhance the vibrancy of street life, making the street much more enjoyable both to people utilizing the cafes and those walking by (see Figure V-28). The City of Bloomington should continue to work with property owners and streamline the permitting process to facilitate the opening of sidewalk cafes within key areas of Downtown.

- 10 Continue Facade & Roof Improvement Grants**  
It is important to rehabilitate historic facades and roofs within Downtown. As facade rehabilitations are critical to improving the physical environment Downtown, it is recommended that programs, such as the Downtown Rust Grant, continue to assist property and building owners with improvements. Other programs, such as facade incentives, should be considered as funds become available.

- 11 Encourage Public Art**  
Public art is a great way to beautify and add character to a Downtown. There have been some public art installations in Downtown Bloomington in the past, such as the "Corn-on-the-Curb" pieces, and such installations should be continued as opportunities arise in the future.

Other potential opportunities for public art were recognized by the community during the public input process. One such opportunity would be "dressing up" the radio tower, locally called the "Eiffel Tower," at Madison and Mulberry Streets, one of the gateway entrances into Downtown. Local artists could create pieces to decorate the tower, such as signage or lighting, or could even decorate it as a Christmas tree during the holidays.



Figure V-25: Adopt-a-Pot with a historic context streetlight.



Figure V-26: Pedestrian-oriented informational signage relating to events within Downtown.



Figure V-27: Auto-oriented wayfinding signage.



Figure V-28: A sidewalk cafe in Downtown Bloomington.

Another opportunity, originally recognized in the West Bloomington Neighborhood Plan, is to beautify the U.S. Cellular Coliseum with a mural and street trees. Currently, the Coliseum structure is largely windowless, creating expansive blank walls that are not interesting to look at or walk by. Creating a public art mural will help to remedy this situation and beautify the area.

### 12 Bridge the Downtown core and its surrounding neighborhoods with physical connections

Currently, Downtown is largely separated from the surrounding neighborhoods due to disinvestment in the transitional areas and the presence of the Madison-East couplet, which acts as a barrier. Integration with these neighborhoods is critical, as the economies are interdependent and the success of Downtown is linked to the success of the surrounding areas. Streetscape improvements can help to provide a physical connection between Downtown and surrounding areas; however, due to the high expense of such improvements, they should be targeted to very specific areas.

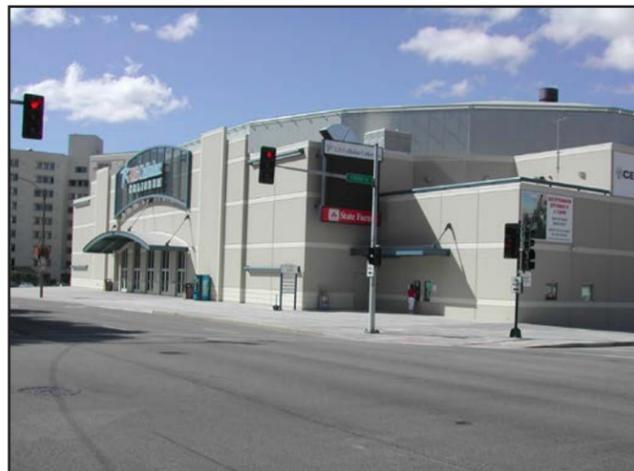
#### *West Bloomington Neighborhood Connection*

One particular area where streetscape improvements could make a big difference, called out in the West Bloomington Neighborhood Plan, is on Washington and Market Streets between Madison and Lee. The West Bloomington Plan proposes to pick up these streetscape improvements along Washington and Market between Lee and Morris, which

would make the two streets connected via visual cues to Downtown. It is recommended that the streetscaping along these streets within the Downtown study area follow the form determined by the West Bloomington Task Force or City. The West Bloomington Plan proposes adding landscaping, lighting, street furniture, parking, bus stops, and crosswalks.

#### *BCPA and Coliseum Connections*

Additionally, Downtown Bloomington should be visually connected with the U.S. Cellular Coliseum and the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts. Such connections will provide synergy between the different districts and will increase the amount of foot traffic that Downtown businesses receive from visitors to the two major cultural institutions. It is recommended that lighting, street furniture, and street trees matching the style recommended for the Downtown core be incorporated near the Coliseum and BCPA, and that pedestrian crosswalk pavers be installed across Madison and East Streets to create a safer pedestrian crossing. To enliven the lawn adjacent to the BCPA, it is also recommended that street furniture is installed there and that the space is made more readily accessible to outside groups wishing to hold markets and festivals in the space.



**Figure V-29: U.S. Cellular Coliseum is primarily windowless; Adding a mural and streetscape will beautify the area.**



## VI. Implementation Strategy

Organizational/Procedural Goals & Actions

Business Development Goals & Actions

Implementation Matrix

Physical Environment Goals & Actions

# VI. Implementation Strategy

## Organizational/Procedural Goals & Actions

Using the goals and action items of the Downtown Bloomington Master Plan, this section proposes ways in which recommendations can be implemented. The Implementation Matrix (see Table VI-1) summarizes the implementation action items' priority levels, timeframes, funding sources, and responsible parties. Within the matrix, the following definitions apply:

- “Timing” takes into consideration both the priority and ability to fund each action item. Immediate items can and must commence immediately, Ongoing items require continuous effort to move them forward, Short-term items can occur within the next 1-2 years, Mid-term items within 2-4 years, and Long-term items will require a longer time horizon due to significant funding requirements.
- “Funding Source” identifies the primary funders of each action item.
- “Responsible Party” identifies the primary party to implement each action item, but the DBA will need to be an advocate for moving each item forward.

The following narrative then briefly defines each action, discusses how it moves the plan forward, and provides guidance on next steps to ensure effective execution of the action item. The memo identifies the entities primarily responsible for implementation of each action item, but the Downtown Bloomington Association must be the consistent and persistent advocate for ensuring that the actions are implemented.

The Goals and Action Items are divided into three major categories:

### 1. Organizational/Procedural

These items reorganize the structures of organizations and processes to better focus on plan implementation and continued, efficient funding

### 2. Business Development

These items improve the retail and/or office business environment in Downtown by driving additional customer traffic and providing business development services

### 3. Physical Environment

These items improve the physical environment of Downtown by addressing functional and aesthetic deficiencies that hinder growth of businesses, residents, and visitors by reducing overall perceptions and experiences of Downtown

## Organizational/Procedural Goals & Actions

### Goal 1: Consider Implementation of a New Tax Increment Financing District

The Tax Increment Financing (“TIF”) District in Downtown Bloomington is a powerful tool for supporting economic and physical improvements; the City and DBA must vigorously pursue the creation of a new TIF District. The current combined sales and property tax-based TIF district has existed in Downtown since 1986 and is due to expire in 2010. Proceeds from the TIF District, which directs local increases in tax revenue toward local improvements, have been used to assist rehabilitation of vacant and blighted buildings, restore historic facades, make critical repairs to roofs, and fund DBA operations. The TIF funds have incentivized some of the most significant investments in Downtown and helped to maintain its valuable historic character.

Tax increment is a key funding source for implementation of the Downtown Master Plan, providing continued financial support for physical improvements and programs. The TIF District ensures that value increases in the Downtown tax base are reinvested in the area, thus aligning incentives for tax dollars to be spent locally and creating a cycle of continuous improvement that ultimately accelerates growth of the overall tax base. Downtown still faces challenges in resolving blighting factors – especially in the southern industrial portions – and assisting property owners facing extraordinary renovation costs for buildings often constructed 80 to 100 years ago, as demonstrated by the City’s decisions in recent years to support nearly 25 percent of rehabilitation costs for several buildings that otherwise would not have been renovated. Finally, the TIF can provide a steady revenue stream for the DBA.

*1.1: Negotiate a new tax increment financing structure with other taxing entities*

The City, with DBA support, should create a new TIF District and include negotiated “pass-through agreements.” In such an

agreement a portion of the tax increment income is transferred to other taxing entities that overlap the TIF district; for example, it might be negotiated that twenty percent of tax increment proceeds are ‘passed-through’ to the school district rather than used for Downtown projects. In Bloomington, the negotiated pass-throughs must allocate an agreed-upon share of tax increment toward School District 87, which provides educational services for the Downtown and surrounding areas. The school district boundaries are very limited, and the district is therefore losing a significant share of its potential revenue to the existing TIF District. Furthermore, a premise of TIF is that the tax assessment increases are ultimately returned to the pre-existing taxing entities. It is also politically unlikely that a new TIF District will be viable in Downtown unless the needs of District 87 are met.

*1.2: Improve the ease of applying for funds and transparency of how funds are used*

Improvements should be made to publicizing the TIF District’s grant programs, clarifying the application process and contact person among City staff, and tracking and distributing information regarding the use of TIF funds. Downtown property owners have expressed frustration with the difficulty of finding information about the façade and rehabilitation grant programs and determining whom they should contact with inquiries about their applications. Strategic Economics and the DBA have encountered difficulty in obtaining comprehensive and accessible information regarding use of TIF funds and the status of the program as a whole.

The City Manager’s office can alleviate these concerns through relatively simple steps, such as creating a dedicated web page on the city website, further disseminating information through the DBA and its website, designating a consistent and accessible contact person on city staff, and publishing publicly accessible revenue and use data annually.

## Business Development Goals & Actions

### Goal 2: Develop a Catalyst Project that Can Serve as an Additional Downtown “Anchor”

The Downtown Master Plan emphasizes the importance of attracting additional “anchors” for Downtown that will attract visitors and increase retail, restaurant, and service business. Downtown is unlikely to attract a large retail anchor, but

there are other public-private partnership opportunities that can develop visitor-generating anchors to better support local businesses and create a lively, urban environment. The Downtown Master Plan specifically identifies a number of high-priority opportunity sites.

*2.1: Pursue public-private development partnership and assistance opportunities*

In general, the City and DBA should identify potential sites for public-private development partnerships, and actively consider development opportunities that arise or are identified by the City. The Downtown area already contains a number of underutilized sites used for parking that are appropriate future development sites. The Downtown Master Plan also specifically identifies a number of high-priority opportunity sites that are both underutilized and positioned to catalyze further development.

A well-structured public-private partnership should be explored by the City for redevelopment of the Market Street parking garage at the southwest corner of Market and Center. This is one of the most promising sites for redevelopment: the existing parking garage has exceeded its design life span and is falling into disrepair, the site is well-positioned to build on the existing strength of nearby Main Street businesses, and the city already owns the site. The City must view redevelopment of the parking garage as an opportunity to support Downtown rather than simply replace an aging structure.

The nature of the Market Street partnership will vary based on circumstance, financing, and private offers. One example of such a partnership is a ground lease, in which the land is privately-developed but publicly-owned, and the developer pays a portion of operating income to the public agency; such an arrangement allows public control over the developer, type of development, and land ownership, while also generating public revenue and fulfilling public goals. Other possibilities revolve around public ownership or development of parking to help encourage private development.

Discussions related to the formation of the Downtown Master Plan also resulted in the promising idea of locating a new YMCA facility in Downtown Bloomington. The YMCA board has already written a letter of support for this concept. The City and DBA must assist in any way possible to work with the YMCA staff and board to identify development sites,

# VI. Implementation Strategy

## Business Development Goals & Actions

form mutually-agreeable catalytic development concepts in an appropriately urban format and, if necessary, explore a public-private joint development partnership. A YMCA facility would bring a steady flow of visitors to Downtown during a wide range of hours, provide incentive for current workers to stay in Downtown after normal office hours, increase street life since it would be easy to walk to the YMCA from Downtown and Downtown-adjacent homes and offices, and provide a family-friendly destination.

**Goal 3: Strengthen Business Recruitment and Retention Activities**

Downtown Bloomington competes with centrally-managed shopping centers and malls that include staff and capacity to focus on business recruitment, retention, ideal tenant mix, and management of relations with the city. Downtown will more effectively compete in the Bloomington-Normal region if it is well-managed, provides strong business assistance, and has an ombudsman with the city.

*3.1: Employ or contract with an economic development specialist*

The DBA should collaborate with the Economic Development Specialist hired by the City of Bloomington. This individual will spend a portion of their time focused on duties including recruitment and retention of businesses, consideration of tenancing mix and strategy (insofar as the DBA is able to make recommendations to property owners), site location assistance, general business development needs, and facilitation of contact between business owners and the City. The current DBA includes some capacity to carry out these duties, but staff attention is divided among competing, time-consuming duties such as event programming/coordination, general administration, and marketing. It is recognized that hiring such a specialist may incur significant additional costs, making this item a longer-term priority.

*3.2: Provide assistance for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs*

The DBA provides some limited assistance currently to start-up businesses, and should continue to point newcomers to resources that are available in the community that will help in interpreting regulations, permits, and bureaucracy and potentially acquiring financial assistance, business advice, and mentorship. Such resources appear to be strong in Bloomington, and include the Economic Development Council, Circles of Seven mentoring program, and Central Illinois SCORE.

**Goal 4: Market and Promote the Unique Brand and Image of Downtown Bloomington**

The DBA has done well in marketing Downtown and creating/promoting new events. Marketing the entire Downtown area helps to establish its unique identity within the region, encouraging people to explore the entire area rather than visit a single store. In addition, the wide reach of the DBA greatly exceeds the advertising capacity of most Downtown businesses.

*4.1: Expand the Downtown Bloomington Association's marketing efforts*

The centralized marketing for Downtown must continue and expand, taking into consideration the retail market study's findings that most Downtown businesses draw from throughout the region, that many restaurants and bars see increases in business from major events at the cultural/performance anchors in Downtown, that there is a cohesive artist community, and that Downtown competes based on its urban environment and unique agglomeration or clustering of independent retailers. Funding for marketing efforts can continue to come from current DBA funding sources.

*4.2: Continue and expand the event programming activities of the Downtown Bloomington Association*

The DBA continues to be successful in its efforts to coordinate events in the Downtown area. These events, such as the farmer's market, First Fridays, etc. have successfully drawn visitors to Downtown. The DBA can also heighten the sense of community among Downtown residents and business owners through special discount and event nights for residents in or near Downtown. Funding can continue to come from the variety of sources currently available to the DBA, including the Friends group for project and program funding.

*4.3: Continue support and coordination efforts for the Farmers Market*

The DBA should continue its support for the Farmers Market as an irreplaceable asset to Downtown. The Farmers Market currently faces logistical issues and complex coordination with property owners. The DBA should provide assistance to the Farmers Market to resolve these issues and continue to support the market's efforts in the future. In addition, the City should work with DBA and the market in making infrastructure changes or recommendations, such as those related to parking, streetscape, and signage.

Strategy	Reference Page(s)	Action #	Action	Timing*	Funding Source	Responsible Party
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL/PROCEDURAL GOALS AND ACTIONS</b>						
<b>Implement a Revised Tax Increment Financing Mechanism</b>						
	64	1.1	Negotiate a new TIF structure with other taxing entities	Immediate	n/a	City
	64	1.2	Improve the ease of applying for funds and transparency of how funds are used	Short-term	n/a	City
<b>BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ACTIONS</b>						
<b>Develop a Catalyst Project that Can Serve as an Additional Downtown "Anchor"</b>						
	27-31, 64	2.1	Pursue public-private development partnership and assistance opportunities	Ongoing	Varies by opportunity	City, DBA
<b>Strengthen Business Recruitment and Retention Activities</b>						
	65	3.1	Employ or contract with an economic development specialist	Mid-term	City	City, DBA
	65	3.2	Provide assistance for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs	Ongoing	n/a	City, EDC, DBA, Chamber
<b>Market and Promote the Unique Brand and Image of Downtown Bloomington</b>						
	65	4.1	Expand the Downtown Bloomington Association's marketing efforts	Ongoing	TIF, BN Visitors Bureau	DBA
	65	4.2	Continue and expand the event programming activities of the DBA	Ongoing	TIF	DBA
	65	4.3	Continue support and coordination efforts for the Farmers Market	Ongoing	DBA	DBA
<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT GOALS AND ACTIONS</b>						
<b>Protect Downtown's Historic Character and Encourage Appropriate New Development</b>						
	38	5.1	Adopt a zoning overlay that captures the scale and character of historic Downtown buildings and provides appropriate parameters for new development	Short-term	DBA, City	City, DBA
<b>Improve the Perception of Downtown as a Clean and Safe Place</b>						
	66	6.1	Systematize cleaning and maintenance activities	Mid-term	TIF	DBA
	66	6.2	Streamline communication with the City regarding infrastructure concerns such as potholes, cracked sidewalks/curbs, lighting, etc.	Ongoing	n/a	DBA
	56-61	6.3	Implement streetscape recommendations per the Proposed Streetscape Improvements section of the master plan	Ongoing	City	City, DBA
	60	6.4	Create a Downtown Ambassador Program to assist residents and visitors	Short-term	City	DBA
<b>Improve Parking Conditions</b>						
	50-52	7.1	Enact policies to encourage and enhance public parking supplies	Short-term	City	City
	50-52	7.2	Encourage shared private parking supplies through valets and private agreements	Ongoing	Businesses	DBA, Businesses
	52	7.3	Establish a parking broker	Ongoing	Varies	DBA
	51	7.4	Install parking meters in designated locations	Short-term	City	City
<b>Improve Street Circulation and Access to Downtown</b>						
	60	8.1	Install wayfinding signage for parking garages and attractions	Short-term	City/TIF	City, DBA
<b>Connect Downtown to the Constitution Trail</b>						
	55	9.1	Advocate for the connection of the Constitutional Trail to Downtown Bloomington	Ongoing	City, State	DBA, City
<b>Stabilize the Condition of Buildings in the Warehouse District</b>						
	40-41	10.1	Introduce and promote a targeted loan or grant program for the Warehouse District	Mid-term	TIF	City
	40-41	10.2	Educate property owners regarding other funding sources or tax benefits of rehabilitation that Warehouse District property-owners can use	Short-term	TIF	DBA
<b>Continue Façade and Roof Improvement Grants</b>						
	67	11.1	Continue to use TIF funds for façade and roof improvements	Ongoing	TIF	City
<b>Reinforce the Connections Between Downtown and Adjacent Neighborhoods</b>						
	27-31	12.1	Encourage development on sites that will link Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods	Ongoing	City	DBA, City
	67	12.2	Form organizational alliances between the DBA and organizations active in surrounding neighborhoods	Ongoing	DBA	DBA
	67	12.3	Pursue public-private development opportunities with major employers seeking employee housing near offices	Ongoing	City, Employers	DBA, City

\*Short-term = 1-2 years, Mid-term = 2-4 years, Long-term = 5+ years; Immediate items must commence immediately, Ongoing items require continuous effort to move them forward

Table VI-1. Implementation Matrix.

# VI. Implementation Strategy

## Physical Environment Goals & Actions

### **Goal 5: Protect Downtown's Historic Character and Encourage Appropriate New Development**

Downtown's historic building stock and small scale combine to create a unique look and feel that is unmatched anywhere else within the region. This character is a major competitive advantage, differentiating Downtown from other locations and providing an appeal for certain demographics of shoppers, business owners, and residents. Despite this value, Downtown has suffered from a history of teardowns that has left gaps in the street environment, and new developments that fail to integrate well with the existing buildings.

*5.1: Adopt a zoning overlay that captures the scale and character of historic Downtown buildings and provides appropriate parameters for new development*

The City should adopt the Downtown Master Plan's recommendations for a zoning overlay ensuring that future developments are compatible with Downtown's existing historic character. The Master Plan provides a detailed breakdown of the appropriate requirements and regulations for a zoning overlay; adoption can therefore be inexpensive, provided that property owners and the City are receptive to such a change. If not, the DBA must advocate for adoption by educating stakeholders as to the benefits of the changes. Upon adoption, planning staff will need to be vigilant in consistently and fairly reviewing new development proposals subject to the new overlay.

### **Goal 6: Improve the Perception of Downtown as a Clean and Safe Place**

Downtown Bloomington continues to suffer from a regional perception as being unsafe, and residents of Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods have frequently complained of trash-strewn streets. As with any place, basic cleanliness, infrastructure, and safety issues and perceptions must be resolved before economic development activities will have maximum impact. Beyond these concerns, an improved street environment will further encourage pedestrian activity and the overall visitor, resident, and worker experience.

*6.1: Systematize cleaning and maintenance activities*

The DBA should pursue a more consistent approach for trash removal, and consider contracting out for additional sidewalk and street cleaning services. In particular, this could help address debris from revelers visiting Downtown's drinking establishments (a major complaint by business owners and

residents alike) – is cleaned up quickly and that the costs are borne by the same Downtown businesses that benefit from the cleaner street environment. In addition, an effort to streamline and standardize trash removal for Downtown businesses could alleviate concerns raised by property owners regarding pickup days and inability to accommodate on-site dumpsters, etc. A similar approach can be taken to efficiently streamline snow removal.

*6.2: Streamline communication with the City regarding infrastructure concerns such as potholes, cracked sidewalks/curbs, lighting, etc.*

The DBA and City should work to identify consistent contact persons within city staff for addressing infrastructure concerns quickly and efficiently. Addressing infrastructure concerns is particularly important in the urban environment of Downtown, since the heavier pedestrian traffic results in greater notice of sidewalk and curb conditions, greater potential for injuries due to gaps and cracks, and increased need for effective, functional lighting.

*6.3: Implement streetscape recommendations per Proposed Streetscape Improvements section of the master plan*

The Proposed Streetscape Improvements section of this report recommends short-term street improvements, including the installation of street trees, expansion of distinctive lighting, installation of pedestrian crosswalk treatments, and other streetscape improvements. Such improvements will increase the pedestrian orientation of Downtown and encourage walking between locations. The DBA should advocate strongly for these improvements.

### **Goal 7: Improve Parking Conditions**

Although Downtown Bloomington currently has sufficient parking space to meet needs, several parking management concerns must be addressed. Specifically, the consultant team heard complaints revolving around residents, customers, and employees competing for on-street spaces, unclear parking regulations, ineffective regulations that result in reshuffling of automobiles among spaces, and unclear direction to off-street parking options. The Downtown Bloomington Master Plan recommends a "park once" strategy that encourages a single automobile trip into and out of Downtown, with internal Downtown trips accomplished on foot. Implementation of this strategy requires the following action items, but the

general emphasis is again on holistic management rather than a piecemeal approach.

*7.1: Enact policies to encourage and enhance public parking supplies*

The City should enact the Master Plan's policy changes regarding the provision and management of public parking supplies, including ensuring that public parking is positioned for access to multiple destinations, parking maximums are put in place, and that developments can pay in-lieu fees for development of public facilities rather than on-site private parking. The City will need to create firm parking regulations for the Downtown area, and follow-through will require collaboration by the departments of the City Manager, Planning, and Public Works.

*7.2: Encourage shared private parking supplies through valets and private agreements*

The DBA should proactively coordinate shared private parking arrangements, including the possible implementation of a valet. A shared valet service can serve multiple restaurants, stores, and drinking establishments along the Main Street commercial area; the DBA can coordinate and manage such a valet for the multiple stakeholders along these blocks. The DBA can also connect private parking owners with businesses to arrange specific agreements for sharing spaces.

*7.3: Establish a parking broker*

The DBA is the most logical organization to host a parking broker responsible for parking management duties in Downtown. This role could possibly be combined with the duties of the economic development specialist recommended in Action 4.1.

*7.4: Consider the installation of parking meters in designated locations*

The Downtown Master Plan's recommendations for parking meters and availability- and price-based demand management techniques are on the forefront of modern parking planning and will alleviate concerns over availability of parking or over-use by specific groups of users. Implementation will require up-front and ongoing maintenance investments by the City, but will also generate revenue that can be used to repay initial outlays and fund future parking improvements.

### **Goal 8: Improve Wayfinding Downtown**

*8.1: Install wayfinding signage for parking garages and attractions*

The DBA and City should collaborate to provide wayfinding signage directing pedestrians and automobiles to attractions and parking garages within Downtown. Downtown Bloomington features sufficient parking and several attractions that draw visitors from throughout the region, yet is very confusing to drivers and pedestrians trying to find these attractions. The DBA should advocate for implementation, but primary funding and implementation should come from the City, with possible funding by some of the major attractions. The attractions in Downtown Bloomington draw both city residents and visitors from a wide area, and therefore bring money into the City; it is worth investing in their success by making them accessible, encouraging exploration of other attractions, and generally improving the visitor experience.

### **Goal 9: Connect Downtown to the Constitution Trail**

The Constitution Trail currently consists of over 24 miles of paved trails throughout the Bloomington-Normal region. It began as a joint venture between Bloomington and Normal in the mid-1980s, and recent expansions have been partly funded by grants from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The trail currently bypasses Downtown Bloomington. A more robust connection will benefit Downtown by increasing recreational opportunities and alternative transportation modes. Strategic Economics' psychographic analysis of households in Downtown and adjacent areas found a sizable share of households that seek out "urban" lifestyles; such households are typically interested in recreational opportunities and are more willing to use transportation alternatives to the private automobile.

Connecting the Constitution Trail to Downtown, whether through comfortable on-street bicycle lanes or an actual trail extension, will help satisfy recreational demand, provide an inexpensive transportation alternative for households unable to afford an automobile, and transform Downtown into a weekend destination for trail users.

*9.1: Advocate for the connection of the Constitutional Trail to Downtown Bloomington*

The DBA should remain focused on advocating for the connection of the Constitution Trail to Downtown, with the City ultimately responsible for implementing the connection.

# VI. Implementation Strategy

## Physical Environment Goals & Actions

Funding can come from additional Illinois Department of Natural Resources grants, the City of Bloomington, and possibly the DBA and other large Downtown organizations.

### **Goal 10: Stabilize the Condition of the Buildings in the Warehouse District**

The Warehouse District in the southern portion of the Study Area contains a number of warehouse buildings dating from the mid-19th to early-20th century, many of which have valuable historic character. Most of these buildings are still in active use, but suffer from maintenance concerns related to their age and the high cost of maintaining them relative to achievable rents. Just as historic preservation in the Downtown Core has maintained a unique and attractive stock of historic buildings that are now appealing to visitors and new residents, it is in the City's interest to preserve the historic warehouse buildings for future uses.

#### *10.1: Introduce and promote a targeted loan or grant program for the Warehouse District*

Assuming that a new TIF District is created in the future, the City should focus use of funds to stabilize the condition of buildings in the Warehouse District. Such a program should concentrate on maintaining the basic soundness and historic character of the structures, such as roof repair/replacement, structural reinforcement, and brick repointing. It is not envisioned that this program would cover all costs, but instead provide additional incentive for the property owners to reinvest in the properties. The intent and use of this program would be somewhat similar to the current Harriett Fuller Rust Grant (recommended for continuation in Action 12.1 below), and can possibly be administered under that program.

#### *10.2: Educate property owners regarding other funding sources or tax benefits of rehabilitation that Downtown property-owners can use*

The DBA should gather information about alternative funding sources and tax credits, and focus on educating Downtown property owners of these benefits. Doing so would incur little expense to the DBA, but possibly facilitate rehabilitation of these properties by allowing them to access tax credits and other grants.

### **Goal 11: Continue Façade and Roof Improvement Grants**

#### *11.1: Continue to use tax increment financing funds for façade and roof improvements*

Assuming the creation of a new TIF District, tax increment proceeds should continue to be used for façade and roof improvement grants, as has been carried out in the past through the Harriett Fuller Rust Grant. The façade rehabilitations are critical to ensuring the removal of visual blight in the pedestrian-oriented portions of Downtown. For maximum effectiveness, it is recommended that façade rehabilitations are targeted to concentrated areas of the Downtown, such as along Main, Center, and East Front Streets, since scattered rehabilitation will have little impact on the overall appearance of any particular block.

### **Goal 12: Reinforce the Connections between Downtown and Adjacent Neighborhoods**

A key economic development strategy requires strengthening the physical and conceptual connections between Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods, particularly those to the immediate east and west. The fates of Downtown and these neighborhoods are intertwined: each contributes to the other's historic character and overall environment, overlapping household psychographic characteristics imply potential demand for Downtown housing and retail, and there are a number of high-potential opportunity sites ripe for development that will fill in gaps and naturally encourage greater interaction between the areas.

The need to connect Downtown with its surrounding neighborhoods was of less importance in the recent past, when Downtown primarily served as a regionally-focused employment, retail, dining, and entertainment center. However, Downtown is again becoming a residential neighborhood in its own right. This process strengthens Downtown, and will be accelerated if local-serving amenities and retail exist. Such retail and amenities will be developed more quickly if strengthened neighborhood connections increase the potential customer and local visitor base, resulting in a self-reinforcing cycle of amenity growth and residential growth that ultimately creates a more vibrant Downtown.

The needed "connections" between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods are both physical and conceptual.

The physical connections are straightforward, requiring attractive development that will encourage a sense of continuity between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods from both automobile and pedestrian perspectives, and a linkage between physical property improvements in both areas. The conceptual connection requires a cultural shift in the perceived context of Downtown's location, with an acknowledgment that Downtown is the integral core of a larger community of residential neighborhoods. It takes time and tremendous effort to change firmly-held perceptions of a place.

#### *12.1: Encourage development on sites that will link Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods*

Similar to Action 3.1, development should be encouraged on opportunity sites that lie on the outskirts of the Study Area, especially the opportunity sites identified in the Downtown Master Plan. Many of these sites consist of large parking lots, and would therefore be relatively inexpensive and easy for willing owners to develop. Housing is the most logical use for these sites, with mixed-use construction making more sense closer to existing mixed-use buildings.

The City should encourage development by ensuring adequate, affordable public parking availability (precluding the need for parking on surface lots), entering public-private partnerships for surplus City-owned land, and staying vigilant in condemning properties that are not maintained. The DBA should help by connecting interested property owners and developers.

#### *12.2: Form organizational alliances between the DBA and organizations active in surrounding neighborhoods*

Perceived linkages between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods can be brought about through better organizational connections between the DBA and other organizations operating in those neighborhoods. Open dialog and coordinated actions between these organizations will help align the activities of the DBA with those of community development corporations and neighborhood associations operating nearby.

Strategic Economics was unable to find previous instances in which local economic development activities specifically emphasized building connections between commercial districts and surrounding residential districts. Though most economic development strategies recognize the importance of the

relationship between commercial and residential districts, the existing context informs whether economic development efforts are inclusive of both. For example, in the Broad Ripple neighborhood of Indianapolis, the Broad Ripple Village Association includes the residential and commercial components of the neighborhood since they were already perceived as being inter-related despite their different functions (see the case study for more details). Conversely, organizations in big-city downtowns typically include a variety of organizations that focus on just the Downtown itself or on smaller neighborhoods of Downtown.

Downtown Bloomington is large enough that the DBA should continue to operate solely within Downtown, yet it is small enough that the DBA should work with surrounding organizations to help improve the surrounding area. This strategy makes sense given that Downtown Bloomington is indeed a central hub of the region, yet the region and Downtown are too small to ignore the economic development opportunities of better organizational cooperation.

The DBA should establish and/or maintain close contact with organizations operating in surrounding neighborhoods and explore opportunities for joint programs, particularly those that assist property owners with rehabilitation and development. Prominent organizations include Mid Central Community Action, and the Old House Society, plus local neighborhood associations.

#### *12.3: Pursue public-private development opportunities with major employers seeking employee housing near offices*

The DBA should seek to identify major employers in and near Downtown Bloomington that desire improved and expanded housing options for their employees. These employers, such as State Farm Insurance and Advocate BroMenn Regional Medical Center, may be interested in opportunities to assist with the development and rehabilitation of local housing, or perhaps participating in a mortgage assistance program for employees who choose to live within nearby neighborhoods. The latter tool is a common enticement employed by large employers wishing to contribute to the revitalization of their communities.

# VI. Implementation Strategy

## Case Study: Broad Ripple, Indianapolis

### **CASE STUDY: BROAD RIPPLE, INDIANAPOLIS**

Broad Ripple Village is a neighborhood and commercial district in Indianapolis, Indiana, located about six miles north of Downtown. It is centered on Broad Ripple Avenue, a major commercial corridor. Broad Ripple Avenue has evening and nighttime entertainment venues such as restaurants, bars, and live music venues. It also has clothing and specialty stores, and is distinguished by a concentration of artists and public art. This mix of retail, entertainment, and art contributes to a lively atmosphere during both the day and night.

Broad Ripple's commercial district declined during the 1960s and 1970s as the population shifted to the suburbs. The commercial district began to improve in the following decades, with its early improvement attributed to Butler University students patronizing the district's bars. The customer base currently consists of three major users: shoppers from outside the district during the day, local and regional families/couples/groups patronizing restaurants in the evening, and bar patrons from throughout the region at night.

The residential portions of Broad Ripple always remained stable compared to the commercial district, contributing to positive perceptions of the area. Today the neighborhood around the commercial district is relatively affluent, with a median household income of approximately \$53,836 compared to a Marion County median household income of \$40,421 .

The neighborhood and commercial district is served by the Broad Ripple Village Association (BRVA), a volunteer non-profit organization comprised of both residents and businesses located in the area. The organization tries to work with and serve both the interests of residents and businesses. One of their primary program areas is beautification, which includes planting trees and flowers and administering a cleaning partnership with business owners. BRVA also set up a foundation to raise money to pay for a new streetscape design and pedestrian improvements on Broad Ripple Avenue.

Another primary goal of the BRVA is to act as a liaison to the City of Indianapolis. This includes informing business owners about the City's façade improvement program and trying to get more City investment in the neighborhood. They also do marketing of the neighborhood, such as planning and advertising events such as the "Historic Home Tour," and

creating an annual directory of businesses that is distributed to downtown hotels.

### *Conclusions*

Downtown Bloomington is the central downtown for its entire region, whereas Broad Ripple is a neighborhood within a much larger city. Despite this, Broad Ripple holds valuable lessons for Downtown Bloomington, given that Downtown Bloomington is the hub of a relatively small region and in many ways functions as a smaller-scale commercial district.

Broad Ripple has succeeded in attracting a more stable and continuous customer base throughout the day and night thanks to the positive perceptions driven by the surrounding residential neighborhood; this lends support to actions aimed at improving and connecting surrounding neighborhoods to Downtown Bloomington. Like Downtown Bloomington, economic trends have forced Broad Ripple to compete as a specialty district with a unique, progressive, and artistic identity. Unlike Downtown Bloomington, the area attracts a more consistent volume of business throughout the day, evening, and night. Much of this is due to the strong neighborhood that surrounds the commercial district, resulting in positive regional perceptions of the area and a stable and family-oriented local customer base. In addition, the proximity of active homeowners ensures a base of concerned stakeholders that seek to monitor and rectify problems in the commercial district.

Given this linkage between residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, the Broad Ripple example also suggests that organizational structure is key to resolving diverse stakeholder concerns and successfully linking the economic development of neighborhoods. The Broad Ripple Village Association includes both the commercial and residential portions of Broad Ripple since they are perceived as being inextricably linked and interdependent. As a result, the BRVA is better able to comprehensively address issues that impact homeowners and business owners while balancing the concerns of each group. Downtown Bloomington requires its own standalone organization (the current DBA, for example) given its larger size and unique, diverse mix of uses compared to surrounding neighborhoods, but the Broad Ripple example suggests the value of creating organizational bridges and shared programs with entities operating in surrounding neighborhoods.

### **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT: SPECIAL SERVICE AREAS (SSAs)**

The Special Service Area (SSA) is an economic development tool that can be created to implement many of the plan's recommendations. An SSA is a taxing district that is created by state statute and city ordinance. It works by levying an additional real estate property tax on properties within a designated district to fund services desired by those in the district and beyond those provided by a municipality. Examples of services include: public way maintenance and beautification; district marketing and advertising; business retention/attraction, special events and promotional activities; auto and bike transit; security; façade improvements; and other commercial and economic development initiatives.

An SSA provides a dedicated funding stream for desired improvements without incurring debt or levying a tax on the entire municipality. In short, an SSA allows local governments to tax for and deliver services to limited geographic areas within their jurisdictions for services desired by those within the district.

## VII. Appendix

Market Study

Parking Inventory & Occupancy

Parking Recommendations

Transportation Report

## Downtown Bloomington Strategy Market Analysis and Strategic Recommendations

March 2009

*prepared for:*  
**Farr Associates**



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## I. INTRODUCTION

This report supports the development of the Downtown Bloomington Strategy by analyzing the current market condition and future market potential for residential, retail, office, and hotel uses in the Downtown Study Area. The analysis examines the Study Area’s relevant historical and demographic context, examines the trade areas for Study Area uses, discusses future demand for various product and business types, and presents strategy recommendations that will optimize the capture of future growth within the Study Area. The findings and resultant recommendations draw upon a wide range of sources, including public and private data, stakeholder interviews, discussion with other members of the consultant team, and previous planning documents and market studies.

Note that sections II through VI of this document include summaries of findings on pages 23, 32, 41, 45, and 48 respectively. Section VII ties together the broader implications of these findings and lists recommendations for the continued strategic improvement of the Downtown Bloomington Study Area.

### Geographic Orientation

Geographic references used throughout this report require definition. References to McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal are self-explanatory. “Study Area” refers to the predetermined boundaries for the Downtown Bloomington Strategy. The Study Area consists of the portion of Bloomington roughly bounded by Locust Street, Gridley Street, Jackson Street, and Lee Street (see **Figure 1-1**). It sits along the well-traveled Main Street Corridor running between the “twin cities” of Bloomington and Normal, and is slightly west of the geographic center of Bloomington.

This report also refers to the “Downtown Core” and “Historic Neighborhoods.” The Downtown Core is an area roughly bounded by Locust Street, Prairie Street, Olive Street, and Madison Street (see **Figure 1-1**). “Historic Neighborhoods” include portions of Franklin Park, East Grove Street, Founders Grove, and White Place, all of which are located roughly east of the Study Area.<sup>1</sup>

The Downtown Core boundaries are useful because they include some of the best-preserved and rehabilitated historic building stock within the Study Area. Much of this reinvestment has taken the form of conversions to or renovations of residential units, thus providing the largest population of renters and owners drawn to Downtown Bloomington for reasons beyond low prices or access to fixed-in-place social service providers. The Historic Neighborhoods were selected as a useful comparison to the Downtown area for multiple reasons. The neighborhoods’ preserved historic character best emulates that of Downtown; their residents have demographic and economic similarities to the Downtown residents of rehabilitated market-rate properties; and multiple high-potential opportunity sites for new development connect the Study Area to eastern neighborhoods. In short, these neighborhoods represent both a catalyst for Downtown development and an indication of future residential demand.

### Historical Context

The twentieth century history of Downtown Bloomington will sound familiar to most residents of older downtowns: the added mobility of widespread automobile ownership resulted in decentralization and a shift toward lower-density land use patterns made possible by reduced travel times and required by the space demands of storing parked automobiles at all destinations. Residents and businesses alike were drawn out of Downtown and onto sites that offered less expensive land, designs more compatible with

<sup>1</sup> The exact geographies examined are US Census 2000 tract 13.02 block group 3; 17 BG 3; 18 BG 4; 13.01 BG 2

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automobile use, and new construction that did not require the major reinvestment commitments of older buildings.

A historical development growth map from the City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan (see **Figure 1-2**) demonstrates these rapid changes. Most land developed prior to 1950 featured a compact street grid and was no further than 1.5 miles from the city center in Downtown. Today the city extends nearly 5 miles east of Downtown, with most growth projected to continue near the Veterans Parkway corridor. As will be discussed in more detail, the majority of office, retail, and housing spaces are now located along this high-speed, high-capacity automobile corridor.

Downtown lost its prominence as the business center of Bloomington during this process of decentralization, but is still viewed by retail and office brokers as a submarket within the region (in some instances it is the only definable submarket outside of Veterans Corridor). An office employment base continued thanks to retention of the County and City government offices, related support, legal, and social assistance enterprises, and the ongoing presence of State Farm Insurance.

Decentralization was not as forgiving to the housing stock of Downtown. Numerous residential buildings fell into disrepair and/or were torn down during the post-War era, especially those located in the eastern portion of the Study Area. Often these residences were replaced with parking lots in an effort to improve Downtown's parking access. Some apartments remained, but often fell into disrepair and were taken off the market as rents fell too low to support maintenance and renovation investments. Limited amounts of new units were brought online from the 1960s to 1980s, but were mostly government-subsidized senior housing.

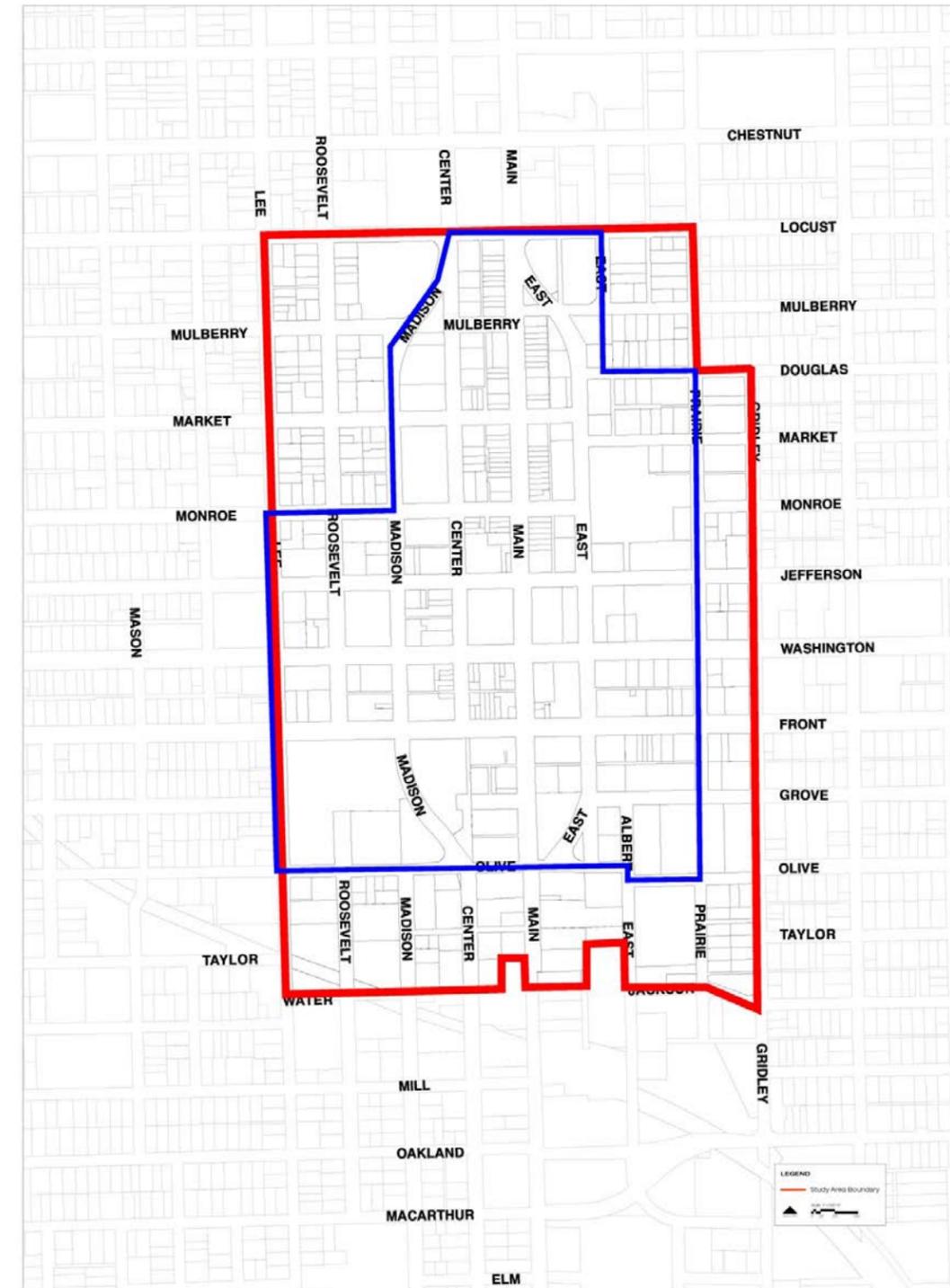
For over thirty years the city and preservation groups have been engaged in an ongoing struggle to preserve the historic building stock. Many nineteenth century buildings burned down or were demolished, but many historic structures have been saved through various preservation efforts, including city programs focused on building stabilization and preservation.

Fortunately, Bloomington has become part of the national trend in conversion of raw upper-floor spaces in historic buildings into apartments. In Bloomington, this process began in the 1970s, accelerated in the mid-1980s, and has continued apace since. Today, Downtown features a robust rental market and nascent condominium market, with residents focused on the amenities and benefits of a downtown lifestyle.

New residents in Downtown exemplify the shift in how downtowns can remain competitive in suburban regions: downtown stakeholders must cease direct competition with suburban building formats and lifestyles, and instead focus on delivering a general environment that is regionally unique and incapable of being matched by suburbs. The residents of rehabilitated market-rate housing in Downtown Bloomington are making a conscious decision to pursue the unique lifestyle available in a downtown, with its distinctive housing options, multi-modal transportation access, vibrant and interactive public spaces, access to cultural facilities, and a cosmopolitan selection of entertainment, shopping, and dining options.

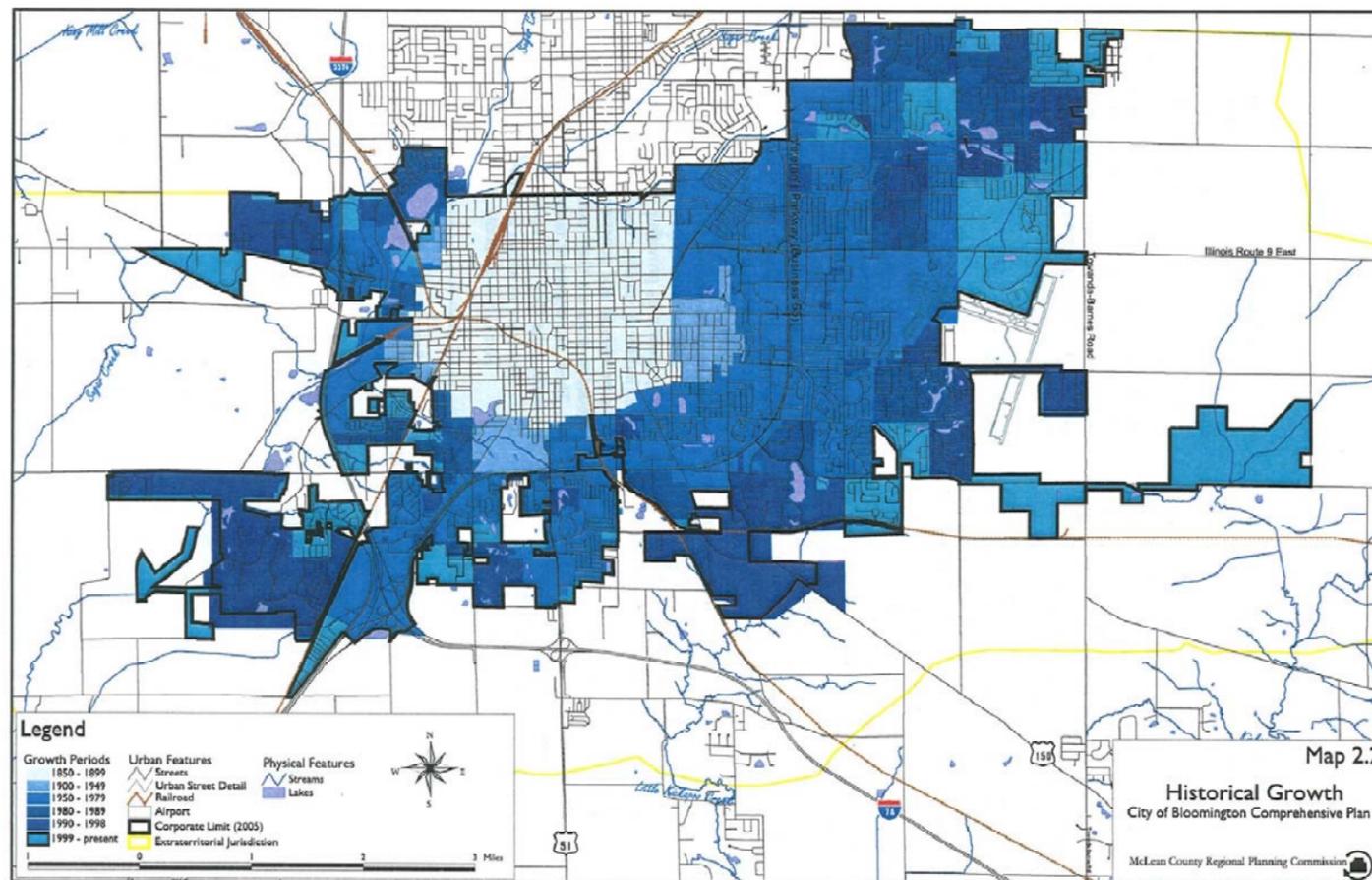
While the potential demand for new units in Downtown is small relative to overall future housing demand in the Bloomington-Normal region, there is probably more demand than could be accommodated both through building rehabilitations and new construction. The major challenge will be to create an environment that can capture as much of existing latent demand and future growth-driven demand as possible.

**Figure 1-1:** Study Area Boundaries (Red) and “Downtown Core” Boundaries (Blue)



Source: Farr Associates 2008 (base map); Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 1-2:** Historical Growth of Bloomington



Source: City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan, 2005

Downtown Bloomington Strategy: Market Analysis and Strategic Recommendations

## II. DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

This chapter opens with an examination of major demographic and economic conditions and trends in Bloomington, with comparisons to Normal, McLean County, and the state of Illinois. These basic measures provide the context necessary to understand Bloomington's relative market position and illuminate the impact of these trends on the Study Area's future development potential. The Study Area is then discussed separately, as its characteristics are dramatically different from the other geographies; psychographic segmentation is used to clarify the distinctions between Downtown, Historic Neighborhoods, and Bloomington and Normal. Finally, McLean County in- and out-migration patterns and their implications are discussed in depth.

### GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

#### *Population growth in Bloomington continues to outpace McLean County and Illinois*

Bloomington has consistently experienced relatively high population growth, with an average annual growth rate of 2.2 percent between 1990 and 2000 (see **Table 2-1**). This growth rate was 1 percent higher than Normal, .7 percent higher than McLean County, and 1.4 percent higher than Illinois. This pattern has continued in the current decade, with the Special Census of 2006 showing average annual growth of nearly 3 percent since 2000. The current population is approximately 79,500 based on the 2006 Special Census and projections created by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission.

As a result of this growth, Bloomington's share of the McLean County population has increased from approximately 40 percent in 1990 to 45 percent today. Housing permitting activity and city plans indicate that much of this growth is being accommodated in new construction on newly-annexed land at the fringes of Bloomington's city limits, as has been the pattern since the 1950s. Disincentives for infill development are created by easy accessibility to inexpensive rural land outside the city and the city's ongoing annexations of areas planned for development.

#### *Racial and ethnic diversity are slowly increasing in Bloomington*

Bloomington is more racially and ethnically diverse than Normal or McLean County, but is less diverse than Illinois (see **Figures 2-1a and 2-1b**). Diversity is increasing, with consistent but slow growth of the Asian, African American, and Hispanic/Latino populations.

#### *Single-person and non-family households comprise a higher share of Bloomington household types than McLean County and Illinois*

Families comprise approximately 60 percent of Bloomington households, compared to 63 percent and 68 percent in McLean County and Illinois respectively. Much of this difference is explained by the high share of single-person households in Bloomington, as shown in Table 2. These single-person households also influence the average household size of 2.3 – comparable to Normal, but less than McLean County (2.4) and Illinois (2.6). Families comprise only 54 percent of Normal's households due to its high college population.

32 percent of all households in both Bloomington and McLean County include children under the age of 18, versus 28 percent in Normal and 33 percent in Illinois. The share of families with children is increasing in Bloomington while slightly decreasing in Normal, the county, and state.

Downtown Bloomington Strategy: Market Analysis and Strategic Recommendations

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### ***Educational attainment is higher in Bloomington than McLean County and Illinois***

Bloomington's population is well-educated, with nearly 42 percent of the population over 24 years holding a bachelor's degree or higher. This compares with 38 percent in McLean County, 26 percent in Illinois, and 42 percent in Normal. (See **Figure 2-2**)

### ***Household incomes in Bloomington are comparable to McLean County and Illinois, but per capita incomes are higher in Bloomington***

Median household incomes in Bloomington (\$53,600) are higher than Normal (\$45,554) and only slightly lower than the county (\$53,746) and state (\$54,894), though this gap has been closing (see **Table 2-1**). However, per capita incomes are significantly higher in Bloomington than any of the comparison geographies; for example, Bloomington per capita income is \$29,393, compared to \$27,007 in Illinois, the next highest amount. The disparity between household and per capita incomes can be explained by Bloomington's smaller household sizes and the high number of single-person households, as single-person households are unlikely to match the potential dual incomes of family households. (See **Table 2-2**)

There is a wide income gap between renter-occupied and owner-occupied households in Bloomington and McLean County. Renter-occupied household incomes are 40 percent and 36 percent of owner-occupied household incomes in Bloomington and McLean County respectively. By contrast, this ratio is 45 percent statewide.

### ***Renter-occupied housing comprises a relatively higher – but decreasing – share of Bloomington housing stock***

Claritas, a demographic and market data service, estimates that 34 percent of Bloomington's housing units are renter-occupied, slightly higher than McLean County and Illinois but lower than college-influenced Normal. However, the vast majority of new housing in Bloomington is owner-occupied, resulting in a decrease in the share of renter-occupied housing. (See **Table 2-3**)

### ***The Bloomington workforce is concentrated in professional and managerial occupations***

Bloomington's resident workforce is more heavily concentrated in professional and managerial occupations than that of the county or state. As a result, Claritas categorizes 70 percent of the population in white collar occupations, contrasted with 67 percent and 62 percent in the county and state respectively. Shown in **Figure 2-3**, the top four industries in Bloomington are Finance and Insurance, Management of Companies and Enterprises, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Retail Trade. These industries comprise over half of all employment in Bloomington.

## **DOWNTOWN OVERVIEW**

### ***Demographics***

As shown in **Tables 2-1, 2-2, 2-3**, and **Figures 2-1, 2-2, 2-3**, and **2-4** the approximately 1,200 residents of the Study Area are largely a low-income population and have demographic characteristics that are very different from the region. Median household income is 39 percent of the citywide number; per capita income is 61 percent of the city; nearly half of all resident workers fall into the "Service and Farm" and "Blue Collar" categories. Nearly 60 percent of the population has no college education. The average household size is a small 1.72, and less than 13 percent of households include children (compared to 32 percent in Bloomington).

These demographic indicators are driven by inclusion of large numbers of older and younger residents, with a large share of people living in income-restricted or very low-cost market rate housing. There are several income-restricted senior housing developments within the Study Area, thus driving down average household size and income. Meanwhile, the residents of market-rate rehabilitated loft apartments often

live alone or with a spouse and rarely have children living with them. These residents also drive down household size. Finally, the population of younger renters is less likely to have high incomes due to their early stage of life, and their household sizes are likely to be small. In short, Downtown's low household incomes result from the inclusion of permanently income-restricted housing and younger households who have sought out Downtown's lifestyle and cheaper rents. The limited affluent households tend to be "empty-nesters."

### ***Major Employers***

Major Downtown employers include State Farm Insurance, McLean County (administrative offices and courthouse), and the City of Bloomington. A number of smaller professional offices and social support services have located in the Study Area to service the concentration of government offices. Nearby large employers include Illinois Wesleyan University, Electrolux, and BroMenn Regional Medical Center. Some of the larger employers have expressed concerns about ensuring availability of high-quality housing to better attract and retain employees.

Downtown's small geography and independent nature of many businesses make it difficult to obtain a reliable estimate of the number of Study Area workers. US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data indicates that there were 4,057 workers employed in the Study Area in 2006, but this data set loses accuracy at small geographic levels. The Downtown Bloomington Association estimates Downtown's daytime population as 8,000, although this includes visitors, residents, etc. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there were 90,700 jobs in the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area in 2007. Downtown's share of regional employment therefore ranges between roughly 4.5 and 7.5 percent.

# VII. Appendix Market Study

**Table 2-1: Basic Population and Household Characteristics**

	Study Area			Bloomington			Normal			McLean County			Illinois		
	1990	2000	2008 (est.)	1990	2000	2008 (est.)	1990	2000	2008 (est.)	1990	2000	2008 (est.)	1990	2000	2008 (est.)
Population*	1,108	1,282	1204**	51,972	64,808	72,358	40,139	45,386	51,345	129,180	150,433	163,626	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,916,583
Households	663	684	637	21,480	26,642	29,952	11,891	15,157	17,845	46,796	56,746	63,022	4,202,240	4,591,779	4,786,787
Families		177	159	12,728	15,724	18,068	7012	8,282	9,679	30,305	35,470	39,393	2,924,880	3,105,513	3,255,738
% Family Households		26%	25%	59%	59%	60%	59%	55%	54%	65%	63%	63%	70%	68%	68%
% of Families with Children		50%	50%	52%	52%	53%	53%	51%	52%	52%	50%	51%	51%	49%	49%
Avg. Household Size		1.72	1.72	2.31	2.35	2.33	2.64	2.43	2.36	2.52	2.45	2.40	2.65	2.64	2.63
Median Household Income***		\$19,713	\$20,877	\$29,354	\$46,496	\$53,599	\$31,376	\$40,379	\$45,554	\$31,366	\$47,021	\$53,746	\$32,252	\$46,590	\$54,894
Per Capita Income***		\$17,089	\$17,970	\$15,667	\$24,751	\$29,393	\$12,101	\$17,775	\$20,628	\$14,138	\$22,227	\$26,447	\$15,201	\$23,104	\$27,007
Median Age		32.41	33.6	no data	32.4	33.7	no data	23.83	24.96	no data	30.5	31.7	no data	34.7	36.0

	Average Annualized Growth 1990-2000					Average Annual Growth 2000-2008				
	Study Area	Bloomington	Normal	McLean Co.	Illinois	Study Area	Bloomington	Normal	McLean Co.	Illinois
Population*	1.47%	2.23%	1.24%	1.53%	0.83%	-0.78%	1.39%	1.55%	1.06%	0.49%
Households	0.31%	2.18%	2.46%	1.95%	0.89%	-0.89%	1.47%	2.06%	1.32%	0.52%
Families		2.14%	1.68%	1.59%	0.60%	-1.33%	1.75%	1.97%	1.32%	0.59%
% Family Households		-0.04%	-0.76%	-0.35%	-0.29%	-0.45%	0.27%	-0.09%	0.00%	0.07%
% of Families with Children		-0.10%	-0.32%	-0.40%	-0.52%	0.01%	0.27%	0.08%	0.21%	0.06%
Avg. Household Size		0.14%	-0.83%	-0.27%	-0.04%	0.00%	-0.09%	-0.36%	-0.25%	-0.06%
Median Household Income**		4.71%	2.55%	4.13%	3.75%	0.72%	1.79%	1.52%	1.68%	2.07%
Per Capita Income**		4.68%	3.92%	4.63%	4.28%	0.63%	2.17%	1.88%	2.20%	1.97%
Median Age		no data	no data	no data	no data	0.44%	0.50%	0.58%	0.49%	0.45%

Source: US Census 1990, 2000; Claritas 2008; Strategic Economics 2008

\*The Bloomington 2008 population is likely closer to 79,487 based on the results of the 2006 Special Census; however, the Claritas number is displayed to ensure proportionate comparability with the other city metrics shown

\*\*To again ensure comparability with other Claritas data, the McLean County population has not been revised upward to reflect the Bloomington Special Census results

\*\*\*The drop in population was reported by Claritas but is judged unlikely to be accurate given interview results and the number of housing units brought to market since 2000

\*\*\*\*Incomes are not adjusted for inflation

**Table 2-2: 2008 Estimated Households by Household Size**

	Study Area		Bloomington		Normal		McLean County		Illinois	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1-person household	396	62.17%	9,879	32.98%	5,182	29.04%	18,250	28.96%	1,288,887	26.93%
2-person household	128	20.09%	9,437	31.51%	6,163	34.54%	21,093	33.47%	1,465,568	30.62%
3-person household	53	8.32%	4,511	15.06%	2,911	16.31%	10,098	16.02%	775,419	16.20%
4-person household	32	5.02%	3,942	13.16%	2,535	14.21%	8,913	14.14%	682,597	14.26%
5-person household	15	2.35%	1,592	5.32%	758	4.25%	3,392	5.38%	341,886	7.14%
6-person household	8	1.26%	455	1.52%	219	1.23%	967	1.53%	136,641	2.85%
7 or more person household	4	0.63%	136	0.45%	77	0.43%	309	0.49%	95,789	2.00%

Source: Claritas 2008; Strategic Economics 2008

**Table 2-3: Housing Unit Occupancy and Resident Tenure**

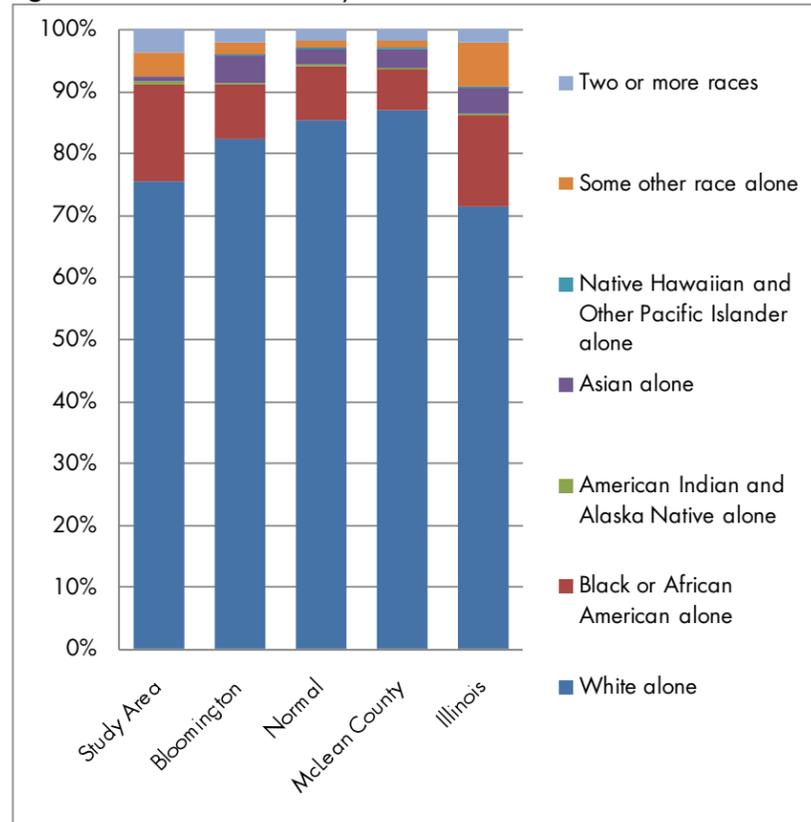
	Study Area			Bloomington			Normal			McLean County			Illinois		
	1990	2000	2008 (est.)	1990	2000	2008 (est.)	1990	2000	2008 (est.)	1990	2000	2008 (est.)	1990	2000	2008 (est.)
Total Housing Units	no data	759	727	22,640	28,431	32,538	12,300	15,636	18,707	49,164	59,972	67,671	4,506,275	4,885,615	5,178,686
% Occupied Units	no data	90.1%	87.6%	94.9%	93.7%	92.1%	96.4%	96.7%	95.4%	95.2%	94.6%	93.1%	93.3%	94.0%	92.4%
% Owner-Occupied Units	no data	15.4%	15.4%	58.3%	63.1%	65.6%	54.9%	54.9%	56.0%	63.5%	66.5%	67.3%	64.2%	67.3%	68.2%
% Renter-Occupied Units	no data	84.6%	84.6%	41.7%	36.9%	34.4%	45.1%	45.1%	44.0%	36.5%	33.5%	32.7%	35.8%	32.7%	31.8%

Source: US Census 1990 & 2000; Claritas 2008; Strategic Economics 2008

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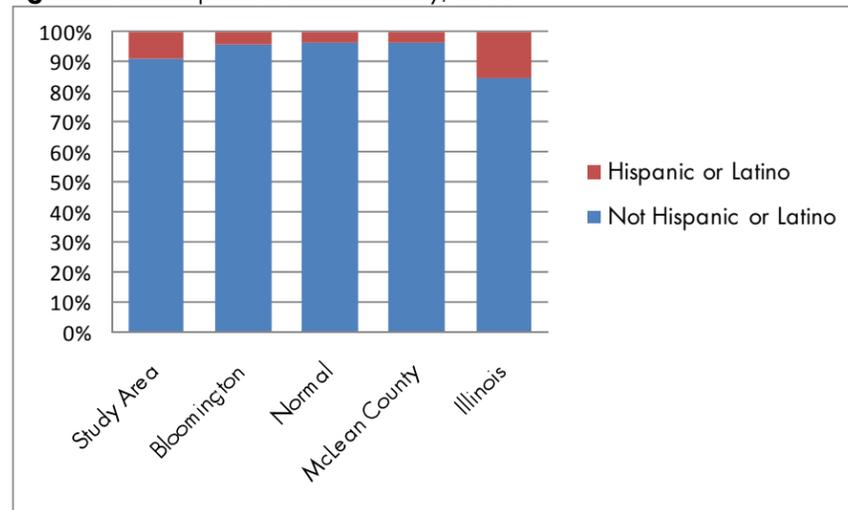
## Market Study

**Figure 2-1a: Race and Ethnicity, 2008**



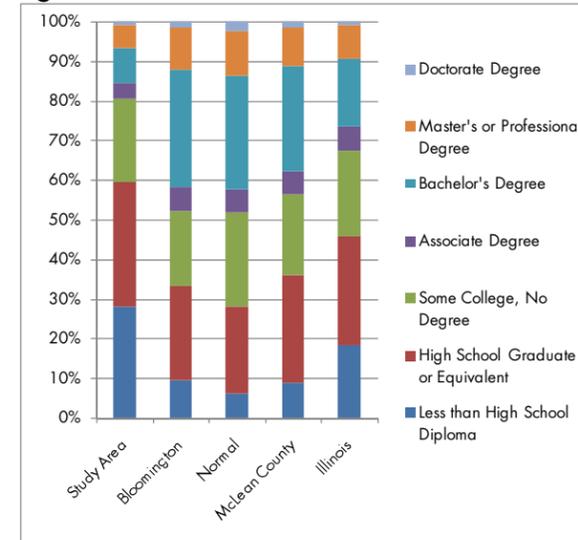
Source: Claritas 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 2-1b: Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, 2008**



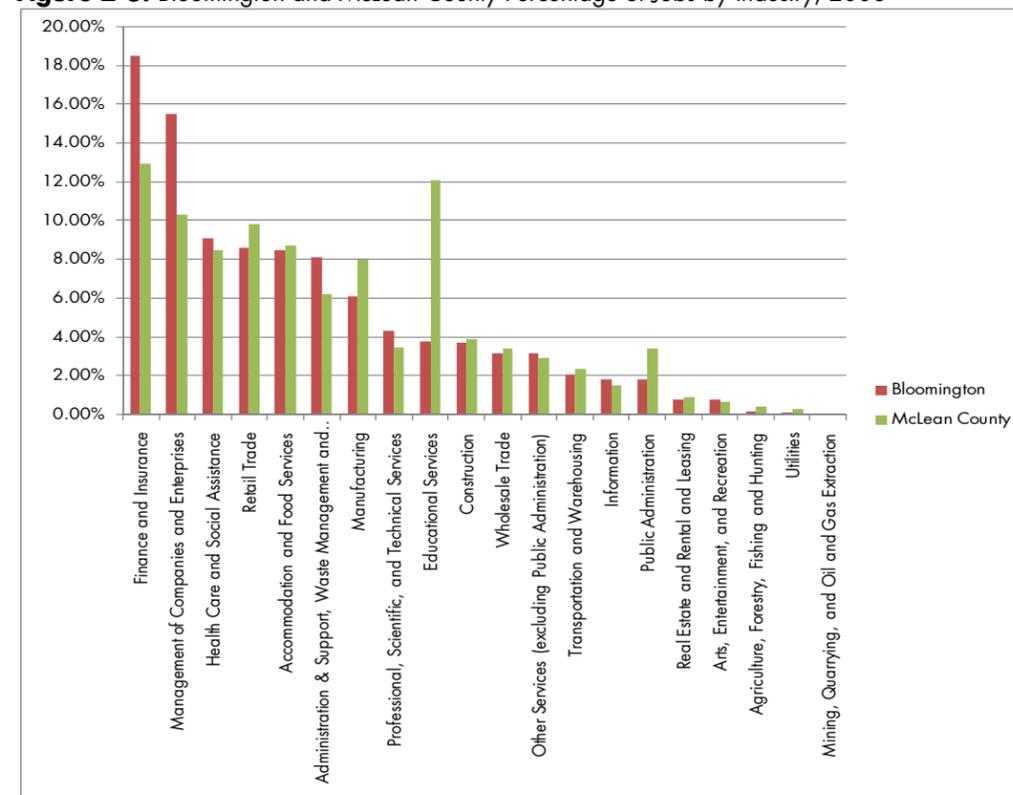
Source: Claritas 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 2-2: Educational Attainment, 2008**



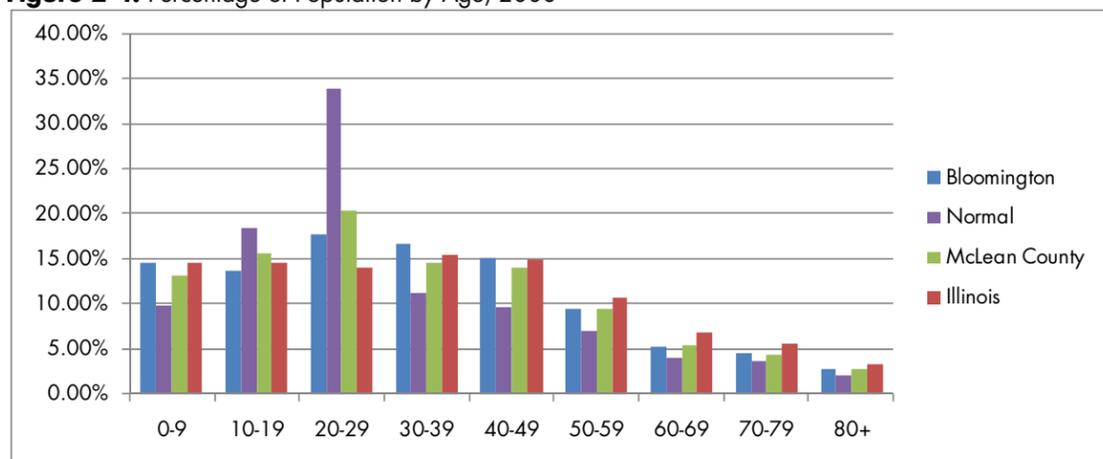
Source: Claritas 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 2-3: Bloomington and McLean County Percentage of Jobs by Industry, 2008**



Source: US Census LEHD 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 2-4: Percentage of Population by Age, 2000**



Source: US Census 2000; Strategic Economic 2009

## PSYCHOGRAPHICS

The Study Area demographic results may come as a surprise given the high number of high-quality apartment rehabilitations that have occurred over the past twenty years. Psychographic information was analyzed to further clarify the characteristics of households in the Downtown Core and comparison geographies. Psychographic data categorizes households into 67 market segment categories based on shared demographic traits, lifestyle preferences, values, and consumer behaviors. These shared traits are useful for generating a nuanced understanding of a local population, including housing and retail preferences.

### *Downtown Psychographics*

Significant Downtown Core psychographic segments are listed in **Table 2-4** and explained in detail in **Appendix A**. Two of the seven major psychographic segment categories found in the Downtown Core consist of household types likely to prefer urban living’s lifestyle amenities: “Boomtown Singles” and “City Startups.” These categories comprise 46 percent of Downtown Core households and consist of young people who, despite low incomes due to their age, pursue an active public lifestyle with a preference for spending time at bars, cafes, and nightclubs. 35 percent of households are comprised of moderate and low-income retirees (mostly single), and the remaining 20 percent are younger low-income families.

### *Historic Neighborhoods Psychographics*

The Historic Neighborhoods were analyzed to determine whether they provide an additional base of downtown amenity-seekers who may be interested in shopping or living in Downtown. This geography was also selected for comparison because the household segments were found to overlap with downtown households living in newly rehabilitated residential spaces.

A significant share of the psychographic segments present in the Historic Neighborhoods are compatible with downtown living and/or overlap with the segments already represented in the Downtown Core. 22 percent of Historic Neighborhood households are in the Boomtown Singles and City Startups categories also found Downtown. The largest Historic Neighborhoods segment – with 26 percent of households – is “Brite Lites, Li’l City.” The segment, which consists of professional, childless middle-aged couples interested in modern trends, is not yet represented in Downtown but is a potential source of future demand as these couples age and are attracted to the amenities and lifestyle offered in a robust downtown environment. “Second City Elite” households are older and wealthier than Brite Lites, Li’l City households, but are another source of potential demand for similar reasons; 9 percent of households in the Historic Neighborhoods are in this segment. Finally, just under 13 percent of households are in the “Up-and-Comers” category, which include active, younger, college-educated people that may be drawn to a downtown environment.

Regardless of future residential demand, the five noted segments in Historic Neighborhoods are a current source of potential demand for Downtown cultural amenities, retail, and entertainment. A key attribute of all these groups is that they enjoy a vibrant public life; some are drawn to high culture while others are drawn to homey cafes or crowded bars, but they all share a common base of interests that generate potential demand for retail, services, and cultural outlets in Downtown’s urban setting.

### *Bloomington and Normal Psychographics*

Bloomington and Normal psychographics were reviewed to illuminate the depth of regional demand among promising segments while also clarifying whether Downtown residents truly represent a distinct subset of the population that has sought out particular lifestyle amenities. Bloomington and Normal household psychographic segments are very different from the Downtown Core and Historic

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Neighborhoods. Psychographics are distributed fairly evenly across most categories. Fewer than 13 percent of Bloomington and Normal households are in the City Startups and Boomtown Singles categories, versus 46 percent of Downtown Core households. The five high-potential Historic Neighborhoods segments make up 24 percent of Bloomington and Normal households, but comprise 70 percent of households in those neighborhoods.

These differences demonstrate that the Bloomington-Normal region contains a wide variety of people with a wide variety of preferences for housing, retail, and day-to-day lifestyle. The success of any economic development plan for the Study Area is contingent on identifying these differences, targeting the specific range of household types that are compatible with and prefer downtown living, shopping, and lifestyle amenities, and focusing on creating the environment that will best position the Study Area to capture the maximum depth of demand.

**Table 2-4:** Major Psychographic Categories in the Downtown Core\* and Nearby Historic Neighborhoods\*\* Compared to Distribution in Bloomington and Normal

Segment Name	Social Group	Lifestage Group	Downtown Core		Historic Neighborhoods		Bloomington and Normal	
			# of Households	% of Households	# of Households	% of Households	# of Households	% of Households
City Startups	Micro-City Blues	Striving Singles	101	32.27%	57	3.89%	2,659	5.56%
Park Bench Seniors	Micro-City Blues	Sustaining Seniors	88	28.12%	44	3.01%	1,039	2.17%
Boomtown Singles	City Centers	Young Achievers	42	13.42%	269	18.37%	3,526	7.38%
Mobility Blues	Micro-City Blues	Striving Singles	32	10.22%	31	2.12%	1,980	4.14%
Family Thrifts	Micro-City Blues	Sustaining Families	24	7.67%	38	2.60%	1,299	2.72%
Hometown Retired	Micro-City Blues	Sustaining Seniors	12	3.83%	10	0.68%	587	1.23%
Sunset City Blues	City Centers	Cautious Couples	9	2.88%	99	6.76%	1,367	2.86%
Up-and-Comers	City Centers	Young Achievers	2	0.64%	189	12.91%	3,118	6.52%
Upward Bound	2nd City Society	Young Accumulators	1	0.32%	83	5.67%	683	1.43%
Middleburg Managers	City Centers	Conservative Classics	1	0.32%	107	7.31%	2,564	5.36%
White Picket Fences	City Centers	Mainstream Families	1	0.32%	20	1.37%	1,043	2.18%
Second City Elite	2nd City Society	Affluent Empty Nests	0	0.00%	133	9.08%	917	1.92%
Brite Lites, Li'l City	2nd City Society	Midlife Success	0	0.00%	384	26.23%	1,385	2.90%
Other			0	0.00%	0	0.00%	25,630	53.62%
<b>Total</b>			<b>313</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,464</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>47,797</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Claritas 2008, Strategic Economics 2008

\*The Downtown Core boundaries are drawn to capture residential rehabilitation projects while reducing the number of blighted properties. They are therefore smaller than the study area. See page 3 for further definition.

\*\*Historic Neighborhoods\* include portions of the Franklin Park, East Grove Street, Founder's Grove, and White Place neighborhoods and surrounding areas. See page 3 for further definition.

**MCLEAN COUNTY IN- AND OUT-MIGRATION PATTERNS**

The Internal Revenue Service collects tax record data useful for analyzing county-to-county migration of population, households, and associated income levels. This migration data is based directly on tax returns and therefore does not properly account for non-filing illegal immigrants, the destitute, and students filed as dependents elsewhere. As a result the data is not directly comparable to census results, but is useful for determining the magnitude of migration to and from McLean County and determining the impacts of such migration. Strategic Economics examined McLean County migration data for the period covering 2000 to 2007.

***Net migration accounts for approximately one-quarter of total population growth***

McLean County gained population and households from other places 2000-2003 and 2006-2007 and lost households during 2004-2005, resulting in a net gain of population and households over the 2000 to 2007 period. Migration accounted for just over 23 percent of population growth and over 29 percent of household growth. (See **Figure 2-5**)

***Households entering and exiting McLean County tend to be smaller than the county average***

In- and out-migrating households both had an average size of 1.77 people, versus 2.40 for the county as a whole. Broken into subcategories, the largest households were those moving between McLean County and Other States, followed by Illinois, the Chicagoland region, and Foreign Countries (see **Figure 2-6**). The small household size among in-migrants demonstrates additional potential demand for housing in the Study Area, as these smaller households are less likely to have children.

***McLean County experiences net household out-migration to other states and Chicagoland Counties, but experiences in-migration from adjacent counties, other Illinois counties, and foreign countries***

This pattern remained consistent over the period examined; therefore net migration is generally dependent on the share of migration between McLean County and Other States and Chicagoland counties, versus all other places. Other State moves comprise 40 percent of all household migration activity (both in and out), in-state moves are 58 percent of all activity, and foreign moves 2 percent (see **Figure 2-7** and **Figure 2-8**).

Bloomington-area apartment leasing offices and realtors noted that a large amount of their business is driven by people moving from other states. McLean County experiences net out-migration to other states, but it is likely that most households relocating to the county from other states are locating in the urbanized cities of Bloomington and Normal. In addition, 40 percent of all migration activity (both in and out) is between McLean County and other states, thus making the state-to-state relocations more noticeable even though the net impact is a loss of households. The high volume of inter-state moves can benefit Downtown, as the in-migrants may be more willing to examine all housing types and areas in the region.

***Households and persons leaving McLean County have higher incomes than those entering the county***

The incomes of households and persons leaving McLean County are generally 10-15 percent higher than those entering the county. Households and persons relocating to Other States show the highest income disparity compared to those entering from Other States; this drives much of the difference in incomes between all in- and out-migrants since McLean County consistently loses a high number of households to other states. It is also noteworthy that persons and households entering McLean County from foreign countries have minimal incomes, while those entering and exiting from/to other states have the highest incomes of all groups examined, although the income gap among foreign migrants is likely explained by in-migration from opportunity-seekers versus out-migration by corporate relocations. (See **Figure 2-9**)

***Bloomington experiences in-migration and strong retention across nearly all age cohorts***

Census data was used to examine age cohort patterns, as the IRS data does not include this information. An “age cohort” refers to a population born in a specific time period. Changes in cohorts over time demonstrate the net impact of migration and mortality; this impact is demonstrated by examining the “cohort retention ratio” for each age group. As provided in **Table 2-5**, this metric shows the gross percentage of the 1990 five-year age cohort members that exists in the same area ten years later in 2000.

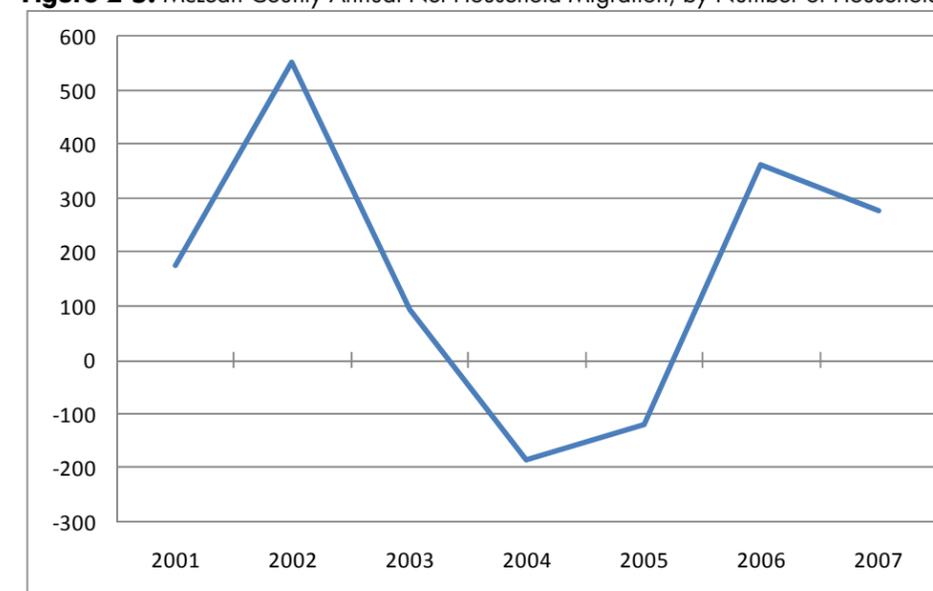
The high retention ratios in the 20 to 29 age groups are likely the result of college student, graduate student, and young professional in-migration driven by students at Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, and State Farm Insurance. However, nearly all age groups experienced net growth with the exception of cohorts entering the 60-74 age groups. Those cohorts lost members to out-migration from Bloomington, as mortality rates are too low to explain the depth of the loss.

As a result of these patterns, the Bloomington population has a lower median age and more persons below 40 than Illinois, as shown in **Table 2-1** and **Figure 2-4**. The populations of McLean County and Normal appear even younger, but much of this difference results from students at Illinois State University and greater presence of children under age 18.

***Most migration in and out of McLean County is driven by job-related relocations***

State Farm Insurance and many of the other large employers in the Bloomington-Normal region have national or global reach and frequently rotate employees and contractors in and out of the area. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that a high share of the migration in and out of McLean County results from work-related relocations rather than personal lifestyle preferences.

**Figure 2-5:** McLean County Annual Net Household Migration, by Number of Households

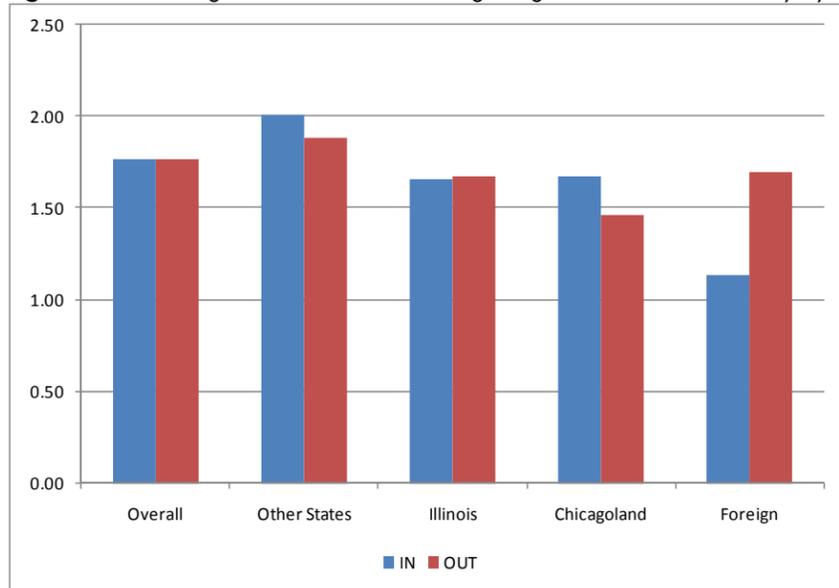


Source: Internal Revenue Service SOI Tax Stats 2009; Strategic Economics 2009

# VII. Appendix

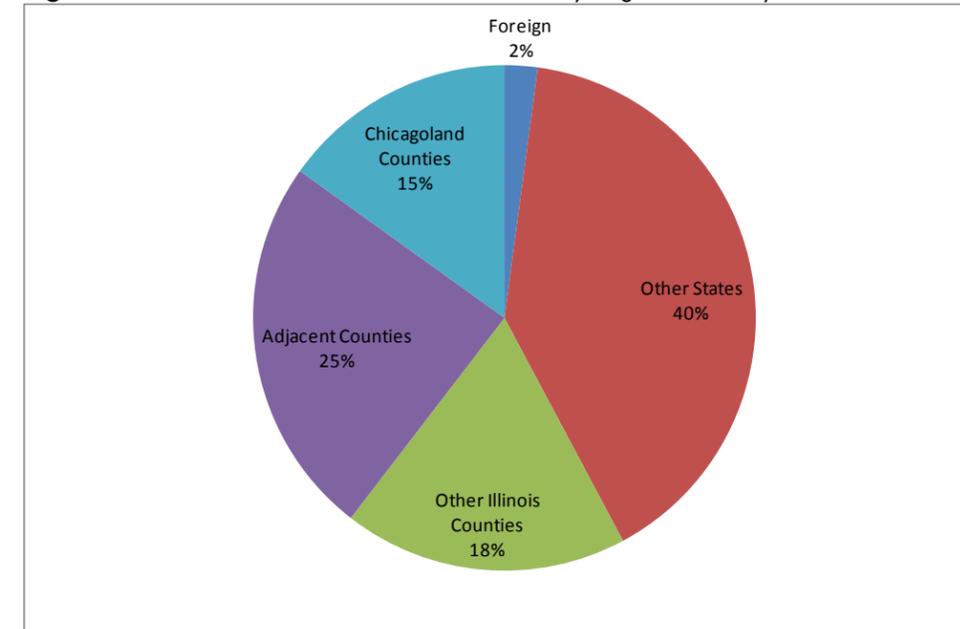
## Market Study

**Figure 2-6:** Average Size of Households Migrating to/from McLean County by Place, 2000-2007



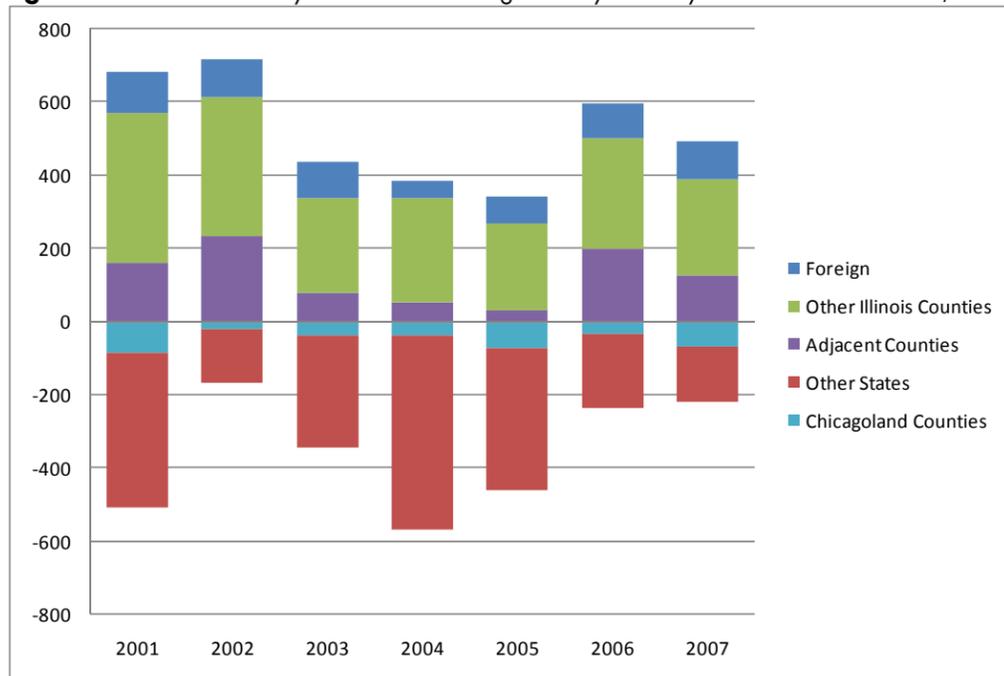
Source: Internal Revenue Service SOI Tax Stats 2009; Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 2-8:** Share of Total Volume of McLean County Migration Activity, 2000-2007



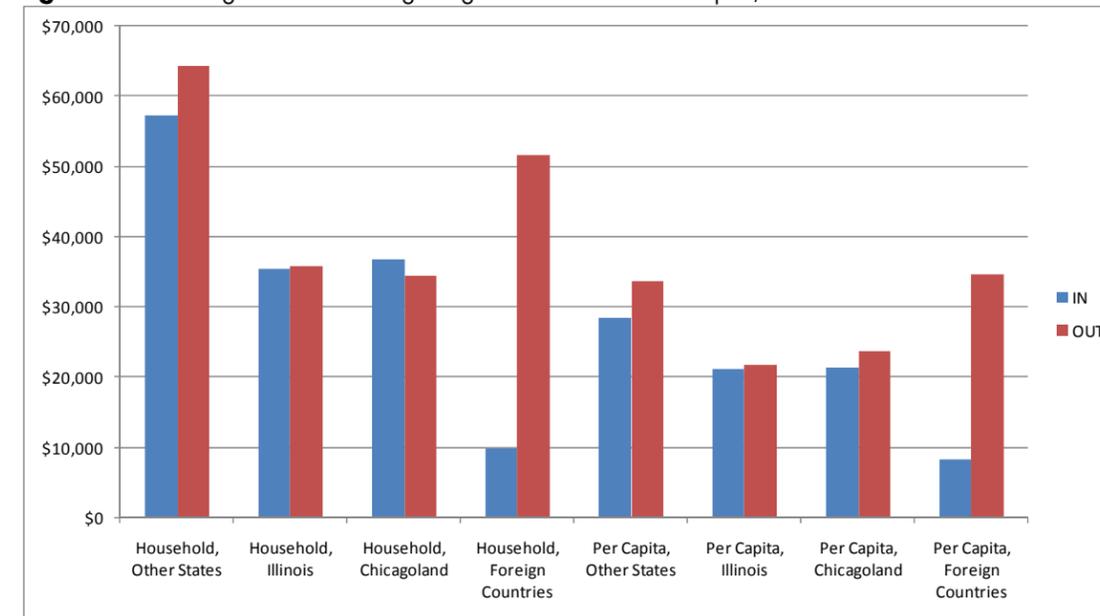
Source: Internal Revenue Service SOI Tax Stats 2009; Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 2-7:** McLean County Net Household Migration by Place by Number of Households, 2000-2007



Source: Internal Revenue Service SOI Tax Stats 2009; Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 2-9:** Average Income Per Migrating Household and Per Capita, 2007



Source: Internal Revenue Service SOI Tax Stats 2009; Strategic Economics 2009

**Table 2-5:** Comparison of Cohort and Age Group Changes in Bloomington, 1990-2000

	Number		% Change 1990 to 2000		Cohort Retention Ratio 1990-2000
	1990	2000	Age Group	Cohort	
0 to 4	3921	4,774	21.8%	-	-
5 to 9	3816	4,717	23.6%	-	-
10 to 14	3140	4,285	36.5%	9.3%	109
15 to 19	3455	4,550	31.7%	19.2%	119
20 to 24	5160	5934	15.0%	89.0%	189
25 to 29	5400	5,583	3.4%	61.6%	162
30 to 34	4948	5,299	7.1%	2.7%	103
35 to 39	4387	5,489	25.1%	1.6%	102
40 to 44	3470	5,202	49.9%	5.1%	105
45 to 49	2401	4,571	90.4%	4.2%	104
50 to 54	1980	3,724	88.1%	7.3%	107
55 to 59	1797	2,431	35.3%	1.2%	101
60 to 64	1867	1,811	-3.0%	-8.5%	91
65 to 69	1760	1,641	-6.8%	-8.7%	91
70 to 74	1460	1584	8.5%	-15.2%	85
75+*	3010	3213	6.7%	-0.2%	100
<b>Total Persons</b>	<b>51972</b>	<b>64808</b>			

Source: US Census 1990 (STF1, P011), 2000 (SF1, P12); Strategic Economics 2008

\*The 75+ category's large range of years results in imprecise cohort retention metrics

### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY AREA

Bloomington, Normal, and the surrounding region are steady growth markets without a recent history of dramatic swings in demographic indicators or construction patterns. Bloomington is in a strong regional position, with a relatively high growth rate, well-educated population, high per capita income, professional workforce, and stable industries dominated by large employers. The psychographic profile depicts a diverse array of household types. Net migration to the region is generally positive, despite net losses to Other States and the Chicagoland area; in-migrating households come from a wide variety of places.

On the whole, the Study Area population is less educated and has lower incomes than the surrounding region. This is driven by the low-rent properties in the Study Area and the inclusion of several income-restricted housing developments for seniors and families. The psychographic profile for the Downtown Core adds another dimension of information with which to interpret demographic data, and demonstrates that nearly half of all households in this area are likely to have primarily chosen Downtown to take advantage of its unique lifestyle amenities. Meanwhile, the psychographic profile of nearby eastern neighborhoods demonstrates the inclusion of similar households as those found Downtown, plus additional households that are likely to generate current demand for unique Downtown retail/cultural offerings and provide potential future demand for Downtown housing.

Some of the regional factors bode well for Downtown Bloomington. The high levels of growth, significant levels of in-migration and retention among younger age groups, smaller household sizes of in-migrants, and generally high share of single-person and non-family households contribute to a market of residents that are more likely to forego suburban private amenities in exchange for the unique urban environment and public amenities of Downtown living. Increasing racial and ethnic diversity, although slow, may someday contribute to demand for new retail and grocery niches best accommodated in the smaller and less-expensive spaces available Downtown. Psychographic segmentation delineates a clear base of potential residents and patrons of Downtown, especially among households concentrated in Historic Neighborhoods. Finally, the availability of professional jobs and a well-educated workforce improve the general likelihood that Downtown will be capable of capturing a sustainable share of employment in its major office sectors.

However, the existence of positive demographic and economic trends in the city and region is no guarantee that Downtown Bloomington will capture all of the potential demand for downtown living. The demand segment for Downtown is relatively small and the market has primarily been skewed to a more “traditional” suburban housing market. As a result, there is limited awareness of the potential emerging demand for an alternative set of residential products. Employment, educational facilities, housing construction, and office construction are largely concentrated along Veterans Parkway and the Illinois State University area, thus frequently drawing the well-educated and in-migrating population to these places and the surrounding suburban fringe.

The demographic and economic overview demonstrates the existence of strong positive trends that can benefit Downtown Bloomington, but their potential has not yet been realized. Downtown offers a unique niche for housing, retail, and office uses; this niche limits the depth of potential demand, yet also provides Downtown with a distinct and strong competitive position. The following sections examine the potential for housing, office, retail, and hotel uses in Downtown within the framework of leveraging Downtown’s unique assets to maximize its ability to capture the share of market demand compatible with the area.

# VII. Appendix

## Market Study

### III. HOUSING

#### MARKET AREA DEFINITION

The Study Area residential market is examined within the context of a broader market area comprised of the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, referred to henceforth as the “Bloomington-Normal Market Area.” Interviews with developers and brokers confirmed that this is the primary market area considered by households moving to and within the Bloomington-Normal region, especially since the remainder of McLean County covers a very large land area and is largely agricultural.

#### DOWNTOWN HOUSING MARKET OVERVIEW

Housing product types in the Study Area can be roughly broken down into five categories:

- *Loft-style apartment and condominium rehabilitations*
  - These are rehabilitated former commercial or residential spaces converted to urban loft-style market rate apartments or condominiums (and some income-restricted apartments).
  - These apartments and condominiums generally feature exposed brick and ductwork, but include interior walls and a high level of fit and finish.
  - Most identified market rate housing deliveries have taken this form, as developers prefer to strip building interiors to their structural elements during rehabilitation, regardless of prior use.
  - However, since 2000 two small apartment buildings were renovated and sold as traditional apartment-style condominiums
- *Large, income-restricted senior housing towers*
- *Single-family homes dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, either renter- or owner-occupied*
- *Traditional apartments in older subdivided homes or older apartment buildings*

The Study Area is located adjacent to several historic neighborhoods containing single-family homes, particularly to the northeast and southeast. The quality of maintenance varies dramatically between neighborhoods and even individual homes, but the proximity of this housing stock and its population can influence perceptions and investment opportunities in the Study Area.

The recently-rehabilitated apartments and condominiums within the Study Area are the chief focus of this report, as they represent the most significant market-rate additions to the housing stock in the Study Area.<sup>1</sup> According to interviews, the rehabilitations commenced in the 1970s, accelerated dramatically during the late-1980s, and have continued since. Buildings that have undergone such rehabilitation are scattered throughout the Study Area, but focused in the Downtown Core. Much of the other housing stock is either income-restricted or has suffered from significant disinvestment for several decades.

The Downtown Core of Bloomington is a highly-differentiated submarket within the Bloomington-Normal Market Area. No other location includes a concentration of urban loft space within rehabilitated historic buildings, nor does any other location approach the level of urban design and lifestyle amenities (such as concentrations of cafes, restaurants, cultural amenities, and employment within easy walking distance) found within Downtown Bloomington. The redevelopment of Uptown Normal will eventually create a more urban environment there, but the product types, smaller geographic size, and proximity to Illinois State University will create a very different market.

<sup>1</sup> East Douglas Apartments, at 215 East Douglas Street, was brought to market in the mid-1990s and includes the most recent brand new residential construction, although this project is income-restricted and primarily consists of a renovated building that dates to the 1890s. Income-restricted senior housing developments were also built in the preceding decades.

#### RENTAL PRODUCT

As previously described, Study Area rental units consist of four major types: older apartment units or subdivided homes that have experienced long periods of disinvestment, large income-restricted senior housing towers, and newly-created urban loft-style apartments in existing commercial buildings. The rental analysis is focused on the latter two rental products, as they represent the majority of market rate housing created in the Study Area within the past ten to twenty years.

#### Rents and Product Characteristics

**Table 3-1** shows a sample of rents and characteristics for rental projects in Bloomington and Normal, while **Table 3-2** provides a sample range of rents for newer rental units in the Downtown Core.<sup>1</sup> Newer apartment developments in the Bloomington-Normal Market Area generally command rents between \$.70 and \$1.00 per square foot per month, with maximum rents nearing \$1.20. Rents in older complexes are generally 10 percent to 15 percent lower. Apartments close to Illinois State University command significantly higher rents due to student demand.

Newer apartment developments across the region generally consist of multiple 2- to 3-story walk-up apartment buildings surrounded by surface parking lots, parking stalls, and green space, all within self-enclosed complexes. These complexes offer a variety of amenities, such as clubhouses, swimming pools, and saunas. Some denser housing products exist in the area near Illinois State University.

Rental units comprise the majority of Downtown Bloomington’s newly-created housing stock successfully brought to market. Rents in newer units generally range between \$.70 and \$.90 per square foot per month, with minimum and maximum rents of \$.45 to \$1.00. However, these newer apartments are often larger than those found in outside complexes and therefore command higher rents by *unit type*. For example, property owners cited 1-bedroom units renting for \$850, \$900, and \$1,000 in Downtown, whereas high-quality, brand-new units are renting for \$550 to \$725 elsewhere in the region. Numerous Downtown 1-bedroom units are 900 to 1,400 square feet, while the region’s units rarely exceed 900 square feet. **Table 3-3** lists an inventory of units brought to market in Downtown since 2000. The inventory includes all known units based on background research, but may not be exhaustive since there is no single reliable source of this information.

Newer market rate rental units in the Study Area exhibit a wide variety of characteristics, as each is a custom build-out in an existing space. Most are second-floor or higher spaces with some “raw” characteristics such as exposed brick or ductwork. Few offer covered parking and some offer no parking spaces at all, although spaces are usually available on-street or in nearby municipal lots.

#### Vacancy

Rental vacancy rates across the Bloomington-Normal Market Area are approximately 2 percent. New developments often have 100 percent occupancy and waiting lists, while older developments are approximately 5 percent vacant. These low vacancy rates are driven by three recent events: the closure of Walker and Dunn-Barton dormitories at Illinois State University (removing approximately 800 beds), the temporary closure of ISU’s Manchester Hall for renovations (another 800 beds), and the recent tightening of home lending standards driven by the faltering mortgage market (thus decreasing the number of renters

<sup>1</sup> Downtown Core rent ranges were determined based on ranges and actual rent samples provided by developers and property managers. Specific building samples are not provided in this report to preserve confidentiality, as requested by developers and property owners. The small number of units in each building and the unique characteristics of each unit would allow for easy identification of specific units.

who decide to purchase a home). Local experts estimated that vacancy rates were previously closer to 10-15 percent, reaching a possible peak of 20 percent in 2005.

Rehabilitated Downtown Core rental units have consistently experienced strong demand throughout the past ten years, with vacancy rates staying below 5 percent and currently near zero. Newly-created rental units are rapidly absorbed, suggesting pent-up demand for this housing product.

### OWNERSHIP PRODUCT

This sub-section examines condominiums in the Downtown Core and historic single-family homes in nearby neighborhoods, including areas outside of the Study Area.

Condominiums are a common product type in urban areas such as Downtown Bloomington, and provide an option for persons seeking urban living yet also interested in the benefits of homeownership. Condominiums are examined for their potential as the next logical step in the residential development of Downtown Bloomington, as their density and versatility of design is compatible with the Downtown setting.

#### Condominiums

The Bloomington-Normal Market Area is largely an untested market for multi-unit apartment-style condominiums. Brokers confirmed that owner-occupied housing is primarily limited to single-family homes and side-by-side duplex townhomes. The affordability of single-family homes and duplex homes has reduced the desirability of condominiums as a way to enter homeownership at a low price.

Nevertheless, a limited number of denser condominiums have recently been brought to market or are planned for construction. Downtown Bloomington has experienced the recent addition of a limited number of loft-style condominium units. These ownership units have taken a wide variety of forms, including 8 condominiums in a restored residential building on Locust between Center and Main, the conversion of the 7-story Ensenberger Building into 28 raw customizable condominium lofts, and the conversion of the Castle Theater building into 6 raw customizable condominium lofts. The Ensenberger and Castle Theater condominiums are being sold as raw spaces that have had the necessary infrastructure installed for residential use, but still require the owner to build out the space (see **Table 3-4** for known condominiums and notes). One unit sold at 221 East Front Street, but other units in the building were rented due to the weak condominium market. Fifteen traditional apartment-style units at 305 West Monroe Street and 106-114 West Locust Street were also renovated and sold.

High-end condominiums, such as those in the Ensenberger and Castle Theater buildings, are generally performing poorly. Poor market timing, unique circumstances, and the reluctance of buyers to purchase an untested product type explain much of this weakness and also make it difficult to gauge current market potential. For example, the 34 units in the Ensenberger and Castle Theater building were brought to market just as it began to weaken. Worse, after three sales the Ensenberger building became mired in multiple ownership lawsuits related to ownership and investment conflicts between the original developers. It is also likely that sales are constrained by the raw space being offered, thus requiring buyers to manage their own custom build-out. An additional fifteen condominiums have sold since 2000 in the more traditional renovated apartment buildings such as 305 West Monroe and 106-114 West Locust, but sales prices were relatively low (units at 305 West Monroe ranged between \$50,000 and \$85,000).

On a per square foot basis many high-end Downtown condominium asking prices are similar to homes in the region (even after considering build-out costs). For example, asking prices for condominiums in the

Castle Theater building at 209 E. Washington Street are \$300,000 for 6,500 square feet of raw space; this translates to approximately \$54 to \$77 per square foot after build-out costs – well within regional home sales prices. However, the final *total* costs are higher than most single-family homes in the region. **Table 3-3** shows a comparison of total condominium prices in Downtown and other places in the region.

Ultimately, the condominium market in Downtown Bloomington has long-term potential as younger renters with an interest in downtown living become interested in ownership properties and as the senior population grows throughout the region over the next thirty years. Indeed, brokers indicate that seniors already show interest in duplex homes, the closest common corollary to condominiums in the region. In the short term, however, demand for Downtown condominiums will be limited by buyer reticence due to the unproven nature of the product, even after the housing market and access to loans improve.

#### Single-Family Homes

The neighborhoods surrounding Downtown contain a variety of older and historic homes in varying conditions, from severely dilapidated to well-maintained. As expected, some of the highest levels of reinvestment have occurred within historic neighborhoods, such as Franklin Park, East Grove Street, Founders Grove, and White Place.

Brokers reported that historic homes are generally in better condition and the neighborhoods are better perceived further east, although no major difference in sales velocity was noted. The persons interested in purchasing these homes are attracted to the historic character of the neighborhoods and homes themselves.

**Table 3-3** demonstrates the lower total sales prices these homes command relative to locations further east. A price-per-square-foot calculation was not possible with the available data, but the average and median sales prices demonstrate broker sentiment that desirability steadily increases with distance from the neighborhoods surrounding Downtown. Anecdotal evidence also suggests a widely-held perception that households in these neighborhoods are not able to send their children to the better local public schools, thus further reducing desirability; the perception continues despite recognition of local elementary schools as “Spotlight Schools” by the Illinois State Board of Education, and *U.S. News and World Report’s* Bronze-Medal ranking of Bloomington High School.

As previously discussed, psychographic data for areas approximating a sample of well-maintained historic districts indicates that nearly three-quarters of households are in the “Brite Lites, Li’l City,” “Boomtown Singles,” “Up-and-Comers,” “Second City Elite,” and “Middleburg Managers” categories. In contrast, these segments comprise only 24 percent of households in the Bloomington-Normal Market Area. More strikingly, the two highest categories, “Brite Lites, Li’l City” and “Boomtown Singles,” comprise 45 percent of historic households versus 10 percent regionally. Both of these categories represent childless households likely to spend money on lifestyle amenities, with the former in the midlife stage and the latter younger. This bodes well for Downtown, presenting opportunities to capture more of these households in the Study Area, especially if the midlife-stage households consider downsizing into condominiums over time.

# VII. Appendix

## Market Study

**Table 3-1:** Sample of Apartment Projects in the Bloomington-Normal Region

Property Name	Completion Date	Total Units	Occupancy	Unit Type	Sq Ft	Monthly Rent	Rent/Sq Ft	Site Plan	Description	Amenities
<b>Brookridge Heights</b> 3102 East Hamilton Road Bloomington	2003-2008 (phased)	407	99.50%	Studio 1-bedroom 2-bedroom	425 750-879 1,033-1,247	\$495-\$505 \$685-725 \$805-920	\$1.16-\$1.19 \$.91-\$.82 \$.78-\$.74	Suburban	3 story walk up	Pool, fitness center, clubhouse
<b>Danbury Court</b> 19 Basil Way Bloomington	2003-2006 (phased)	256	91%	1-bedroom 2-bedroom 3-bedroom	770-831 984-1,124 1,179-1,371	\$565-\$685 \$675-\$795 \$820-\$845	\$.73-\$.82 \$.69-\$.71 \$.70-\$.62	Suburban	2 story walk up 3-bedroom units are income-restricted	Pool, clubhouse
<b>Wingover</b> 1016 Haeffele Bloomington	2006-present (phased)	266	100%	2-bedroom 3-bedroom		\$750-\$845 \$1,140-\$1,200		Suburban	3 story walk up; townhomes	Pool, fitness center, clubhouse, putting green
<b>Brickyard</b> 20 Brickyard Drive Bloomington	1996-2006 (phased)	212	99.50%	1-bedroom 2-bedroom	680-763 1,011	\$660-\$730 \$815-\$840	\$.97-\$.96 \$.81-\$.83	Suburban	3 story walk up	Pool, fitness center, clubhouse, car wash
<b>Briarwood II</b> 100 Northfield Drive Normal		120	97%	1-bedroom 2-bedroom 3-bedroom	656 840 1,100	\$560 \$580-\$600 \$760	\$.85 \$.69-\$.71 \$.69	Suburban	2 story walk up Income restrictions	Playground
<b>Lancaster Heights</b> 1462 East College Avenue Normal	1972	198	98%	1-bedroom 2-bedroom 3-bedroom	700 950 1,400	\$565 \$620 \$775	\$.81 \$.65 \$.55	Suburban	2 story walk up Income restrictions	Pool, fitness center, clubhouse
<b>Bayberry Village</b> 619 West Orlando Avenue Normal	1997	168	94%	2-bedroom 3-bedroom	940-1,000 1,100	\$630-\$690 \$730-\$755	\$.67-\$.69 \$.66-\$.69	Suburban	3 story walk up	Pool, fitness center, clubhouse

Source: Strategic Economics 2009

**Table 3-2:** Characteristics of Downtown Apartments Brought to Market Since 2000\*

Source	Unit Mix	Unit Type	Size Range (Square Feet)	Rent Range	Rent/Sq Ft	Characteristics
<b>Sample 1</b>	60% 1-bedroom	1-bedroom	600 - 700	\$650 - \$700	\$1.00 - \$1.08	Soft lofts
	40% 2-bedroom	1- and 2-bedroom 2-bedroom	1,600 - 2,200 3,000	\$700 - \$1,000 \$1,200	\$0.44 - \$0.45 \$0.40	
<b>Sample 2</b>	25% 1-bedroom	1-bedroom	600 - 700	\$500	\$0.71 - \$0.83	Soft lofts
	50% 2-bedroom	2-bedroom	1,000	\$900	\$0.90	
	25% 3-bedroom	3-bedroom	2,000	\$1,200	\$0.60	
<b>Sample 3</b>	100% 1-bedroom	1-bedroom	950 - 1,400	\$900 - \$1,000	\$0.71 - \$0.94	Soft lofts
<b>Sample 4</b>	-	1- and 2-bedroom	650 - 1,200	\$600 - \$1,000	\$0.83 - \$0.92	Soft lofts
	-	2-bedroom	1,500	\$1,200	\$0.80	
<b>Sample 5</b>	-	Studio	-	\$475	-	
	-	2-bedroom	-	\$875	-	
	-	3-bedroom	-	\$950	-	
<b>Sample 6</b>	-	1-bedroom	1,200 - 1,400	\$1,000	\$0.71 - \$0.83	Soft lofts
	-	2-bedroom	1,500	\$900 - \$1,600	\$0.60 - \$1.07	

Source: Strategic Economics 2009

\*More precise information is not provided due to confidentiality concerns by interviewees; the limited number of apartments in a given building and the custom build-out of each would make it easy to identify exact units and rents

**Table 3-3:** Average and Median Home and Condominium Sales Prices by Area, 1998-2008  
(Average of Sales in Nominal Dollars)

Area	Average 10 Year Sales Price	Median 10 Year Sales Price
<b>Single-Family Homes and Duplexes*</b>		
Far East Side (Wards 3, 5, 9)	\$211,954	\$178,000
Inner East Side (Ward 4)	\$122,541	\$112,000
Historic Neighborhoods**	\$103,906	\$98,750
Study Area***	n/a	n/a
<b>Condominiums</b>		
Far East Side (Wards 3, 5, 9)	\$115,020	\$110,000
Inner East Side (Ward 4)	\$86,907	\$83,350
Historic Neighborhoods**	\$80,279	\$83,950
Study Area***	\$138,200	\$79,900

Source: Assessor's Office, City of Bloomington Township 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

\*Vast majority are single-family homes; data source does not distinguish types

\*\*Assessor neighborhood numbers 58 and 35 (east/northeast of Study Area)

\*\*\*Assessor neighborhood number 100; too few single-family sales to show

**Table 3-4:** Known Inventory of Units in Study Area Prior to 2000 and Brought to Market Since 2000

Property Name/Address	Total Units	Unit Type	Characteristics	Alt. Ground Floor Use?	Notes
Units in 2000 Census	759				
Ensenberger Condominiums 212-216 North Center Street	28	Condo	Custom buildout lofts	Retail Storefront	3 units sold before sales were halted by ownership dispute
Castle Theater 209 E. Washington Street	6	Condo	Custom buildout lofts	Theater/Church	No sales
221 East Front Street	4	Condo and Apartment	Soft lofts	Retail Storefront	1 sold; 3 are now rented
305 West Monroe Street	7	Condo	Traditional apartments	None	Renovation of existing apartment building
106-114 West Locust Street	8	Condo	Traditional townhouse-style apartments	None	
414 North Main Street	2	Rental Apartments	Soft lofts	Retail Storefront	
413 North Main Street	2	Rental Apartments	Soft lofts	Retail Storefront	
309 North Main Street	4	Rental Apartments	Soft lofts	Retail Storefront	Under renovation
405 West Front Street	2	Rental Apartments	Soft lofts	Retail & Office	Work to begin on 3 additional units in neighboring building
Additional Known Units	~20	Rental Apartments	Soft lofts		

Source: Strategic Economics 2009

### REGIONAL AND LOCAL RESIDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND DEMAND DRIVERS / CONSTRAINTS

According to interviews with leasing office representatives and property developers, State Farm Insurance is the primary reason that people relocate to the Bloomington-Normal Market Area. State Farm was said to be drawing employees and technical consultants from across the country in increasing numbers. Indeed, a representative of a new apartment complex near a State Farm campus estimated that 70-80 percent of all tenants were drawn by State Farm. People are also attracted to the region by the other large employers.

Regional location decisions are primarily driven by proximity and access to employment, thus resulting in a high number of professional workers locating near the State Farm campuses and other business centers near Veterans Parkway. Secondary considerations for these residents are proximity to shopping and restaurants and, to a limited extent, the perceived higher quality of School District 5 over 87.

Downtown Bloomington’s unique combination of amenities, community, and product types attract a very specific and deeply-interested niche of residents. Residents of newly-created apartments tend to be singles or couples without children residing in the household. Occupations vary widely according to property owners, but persons working outside of a traditional corporate environment comprise a higher share of residents than in the region. Nevertheless, the majority of Downtown residents are white-collar professionals.

Whatever their background, psychographic data demonstrates that many Downtown renters share an interest in the unique spaces and urban lifestyle offered by the Downtown Core. Many of these residents prefer the strong sense of community shared by the people who choose to live or operate small businesses in Downtown. The large size of the apartments and relatively low cost per square foot also draws residents to the area.

Decisions to locate in Downtown are constrained by common characteristics of urban areas such as reduced storage space, limited green space, relatively complicated parking arrangements, and negative general perceptions. Interviewees agree that Downtown is regionally perceived as unsafe, and that the local schools are weak despite state and national recognition to the contrary.<sup>1</sup> Although the school concern is less of an issue for now, any expansion of household diversity in the future – and thus potential growth – depends on overcoming both concerns.

### DEMAND ESTIMATE

The popularity of apartments in Downtown Bloomington suggests unfulfilled demand for Downtown living. However, past absorption of new and rehabilitated units is an inadequate measure of current pent-up demand and potential future demand since supply has consistently trailed demand, as indicated by low vacancy rates. The low Study Area population and very low number of “renters of choice” also make it difficult to gauge current demand based solely on recent performance.

Instead, Strategic Economics examined the share of households in the Bloomington-Normal region that are likely to desire the amenities and lifestyle that exist within a robust and vibrant urban neighborhood.

<sup>1</sup> Downtown-adjacent elementary schools Bent, Irving, and Sheridan were recently recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education as “Spotlight Schools” in which academic performance is steadily improving while more than half the students come from low-income families. Bloomington High School achieved a “bronze” ranking in *U.S. News and World Report’s* national high school ranking in December 2008.

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According to the U.S. Census' 2005-2007 American Community Survey estimates, there were nearly 11,800 Bloomington-Normal households residing in attached housing units with 9 or fewer units in the structure. These households represent a base of potential Downtown residents since they have chosen to reside in smaller attached housing units of a scale similar to housing found in the Study Area. It is reasonable to estimate that 5 to 8 percent of these households will consider Downtown living, resulting in present demand between 590 and 940 households, or approximately 490 to 840 households after accounting for existing Downtown households whose psychographic characteristics show a preference for Downtown living. Based on this method, an additional 160 to 250 Bloomington-Normal households are likely to prefer Downtown housing by 2030.

Strategic Economics also gauged potential demand based on the psychographic characteristics of the population. As previously discussed, the "City Startups" and "Boomtwn Singles" categories are heavily overrepresented in Downtown, while the "Up-and-Comers," "Second City Elite," and "Brite Lites, Li'l City" are heavily overrepresented in the nearby Historic Neighborhoods. Reasonable capture rates of future growth in these categories indicate that approximately 1,150 households will be interested in Downtown amenities and lifestyle by 2030.

In summary, there is currently significant unmet demand for Downtown living in the Bloomington-Normal region. Based on the results outlined above, **present unmet demand is likely closer to the low end of 500 households**, while population growth will generate demand for an **additional 500 to 600 households**. Based on region-wide tenure split and current Study Area indicators, renters will generate approximately 75 percent of household demand, and condominium buyers will generate the remainder.

These are estimates of *demand*, not necessarily *growth*. Growth requires Downtown to capture the largest possible share of existing and future demand. The ability of Downtown to capture demand is contingent on providing an adequate supply of new units and implementing the recommendations of the Downtown Bloomington Strategy to create a vibrant, walkable, appealing, and interconnected urban environment. Failure to create such an environment will turn away some households interested in the amenities that only a robust urban atmosphere can provide.

### SUMMARY OF HOUSING MARKET FINDINGS

#### *Downtown competes against other locations in the Bloomington-Normal region based on its unique setting and unique housing offerings*

No other location in the Bloomington-Normal region offers the combination of amenities and walkable urbanity of Downtown Bloomington, nor does any other location offer a concentration of unique loft spaces. Uptown Normal is the next closest competitor in both regards, but is relatively small and lacks Downtown Bloomington's historic character, concentration of lofts, and cultural amenities.

#### *The rental market in Downtown has consistently performed well*

The rental market has consistently performed well over the past ten years, with rapid absorption and lower vacancy rates than the Bloomington-Normal region.

#### *Rehabilitated loft rental units are generally larger than apartments elsewhere in the region, but less expensive on a per square foot basis*

Downtown lofts are differentiated by their large size relative to apartments elsewhere in the region. The size of the lofts results in high gross rents, but the price per square foot is lower than units elsewhere in the region.

#### *Condominiums have generally not performed well in Downtown, but small units have a better sales record than larger high-end units*

Absorption of large loft-style condominium units has been stymied by poor market timing, high total prices, and other extraordinary issues. However, some smaller units – similar to traditional apartments – have sold since 2000.

#### *Historic Neighborhood households are a strong source of future demand for living in Downtown*

The psychographic profile of households in Historic Neighborhoods suggests that their preferences are compatible with Downtown living. This demand will grow further as homeowners in these neighborhoods age and become more likely to downsize to condominiums.

#### *There is current demand for an additional 500 households in Downtown and an additional 500 to 600 by 2030, but conditions must be correct to capture this demand*

Psychographic profiles and current regional housing preferences suggest that there is significant demand for Downtown living, but much of this demand is being captured by other locations. Growth will require that Downtown capture additional demand by offering sufficient additional housing units while further improving as a walkable, vibrant, amenity-rich urban environment.

## IV. RETAIL

### INTRODUCTION

This section analyzes retail potential based on a combination of current retail conditions, market demand, stated community preferences, and the unique physical conditions found in Downtown Bloomington. This analysis adds the dimension of “place” to typical supply and demand considerations. The physical layout, location, and character of any place, especially an existing commercial area, will dramatically affect its ability to attract and sustain retail.

Basic background on the retail market in the Bloomington-Normal region was informed by the April 2007 report *Retail Market Assessment for the Main Street Corridor*, prepared by ZHA, Inc. Those findings were combined with additional demand analysis and in-depth research on the Downtown retail market – including community input and extensive interviews with property owners, business owners, and brokers – to determine market niche and recommendations for business recruitment.

### MARKET DEFINITION AND OVERVIEW

Like most historic downtowns, Downtown Bloomington was once the shopping and commerce hub of the region. This role rapidly declined in the period following World War II as the ubiquity of the automobile permitted lower-density development patterns to push further outward, especially to the east. Downtown retail suffered tremendously from a combination of factors: retailers followed the wealthiest residents to the ever-expanding edges of the city; preferred retail formats changed to accommodate the large land requirements and centralization of large-scale comparison goods shopping made possible by the automobile; and spending power within and around Downtown declined as employment pushed outward and local resident incomes and population densities declined. Today’s Downtown retailers and restaurants are therefore highly specialized to attract customers from a wide geographic area. This specialization was bolstered by a new – yet uneven – emphasis on boutiques since the early-2000s.

Regionally, retail is heavily concentrated along the Veterans Parkway corridor, which includes a regional mall, lifestyle center, warehouse club store, and numerous chain stores in strip malls, grocery stores, and multiple big box format office, home improvement, electronics stores, etc. The vast majority of the region’s 4.5 million square feet<sup>1</sup> of retail space is located in this corridor, but additional retail exists in scattered neighborhood-serving strip malls (typically anchored by a grocery store), additional big box stores and related strip malls, and the submarkets of Downtown Bloomington, Uptown Normal, and the Main Street Corridor connecting Bloomington and Normal.

The cities of Bloomington and Normal serve as the retail hub of a much larger market area. Not only are they the only major concentrations of retailers in otherwise rural McLean County, but the 2007 ZHA report also found that, according to Claritas sales data, 35 percent of sales in McLean County come from residents of other counties. Sales leakage analysis for Bloomington and Normal, provided by Claritas, found further support for this high capture of outside sales; the total sales in Bloomington and Normal exceeds the buying power of city residents (see **Appendix B**).

Downtown Bloomington contains a limited amount of retail and restaurant uses, but is a highly-differentiated niche market of specialty retail and non-chain restaurants. Many of these specialty retailers

<sup>1</sup> Estimate obtained from *Bloomington-Normal Retail Market, Second Quarter 2008* market report, published by Coldwell Banker Commercial Heart of America Realtors and prepared by Greg Yount.

are unique destinations that attract customers from throughout the city and the region; this is a necessity given the limited customer base within the immediate area. Interviews with retailers and restaurateurs indicate that Downtown employees provide very little business outside of specific food and drink outlets, although visitors to the McLean County Arts Center, Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, U.S. Cellular Coliseum, McLean County Museum of History, and special events arranged by the Downtown Bloomington Association do drive significant sales increases for some businesses, particularly eating and drinking establishments.

Brokers estimate regional vacancy rates of 7.5 percent to 10 percent, excluding the troubled Bloomington-Normal Factory Stores outlet mall. Regional retail rents generally range between \$10 and \$25 per square foot per year, with smaller spaces in high-traffic areas of Veterans Parkway closer to \$25. Downtown Bloomington retail spaces are significantly less expensive, ranging between \$6 and \$15. Typical Downtown storefronts are narrow and deep, with sizes of less than 1,500 square feet.

### STUDY AREA RETAIL MIX AND CHARACTERISTICS

#### Current Retail Configuration and Mix

Downtown Bloomington’s retail and restaurant businesses are almost exclusively comprised of independent specialty businesses located within the Downtown Core area. Based on information provided by the Downtown Bloomington Association, these businesses include approximately 35 stores, 15 restaurants, 15 art studios, 20 service businesses, and 15 drinking establishments. There is a wide variety of stores, but larger categories include approximately 9 clothing and accessories stores (mostly resale), 7 hobby and craft stores, 3 home furnishings stores, and 3 food stores. (See **Figure 4-1**)

A brief examination of store types demonstrates the wide variety of niche-market retailers. For example, stores include a Mexican grocery, organic grocery, wine/gourmet food store, Abraham Lincoln/Route 66 memorabilia store, chess instruction café, hobby store, eyeglass store, various salons and spas, and numerous clothing stores. Restaurants and bars run the gamut from cafés to microbreweries, sit-down restaurants (tapas, Italian, Thai, etc.), sports bars, live music venues, etc. Interviews with owners found a wide variety of reasons for locating in Downtown, but common themes were the unique character, lower rents, and a personal history with the area. Businesses were split between newer startups and those that have existed for decades in Downtown, often with the latter experiencing ownership changes over the years.

Stores and restaurants are located throughout Downtown, primarily in the ground-floor storefronts of older buildings. As can be seen in the **Appendix C** map, retail, restaurants, and drinking establishments are concentrated in different areas, or “nodes,” of Downtown (each of these nodes will be discussed below). These nodes are a natural and successful outcome of the agglomerative and mutually-supportive nature of such businesses, but the gaps between them reduce pedestrian circulation and constrain development of additional businesses. These gaps in storefronts have often resulted from building demolitions and the conversion of ground-floor space to office use.

Downtown Bloomington does not have any large retail anchors, but benefits from five non-traditional anchors: the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, McLean County Arts Center, McLean County Museum of History, U.S. Cellular Coliseum, and Pepsi Ice Center. Excepting the museum and the Arts Center, these venues primarily attract visitors during evening hours and increase business up to 20 percent for some restaurants and drinking establishments on event nights. Unfortunately, the BCPA, MCAC, and Coliseum/Pepsi Ice Center are somewhat isolated from most Downtown businesses. Business is also boosted by the special events arranged by the Downtown Bloomington Association.

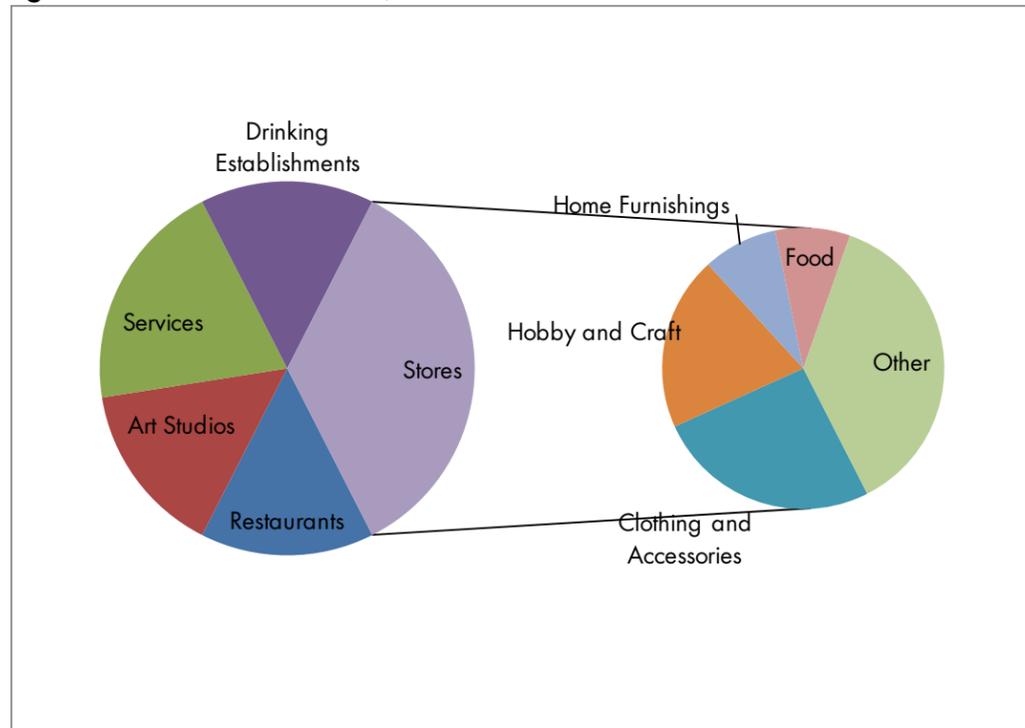
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Downtown retail nodes contain the largest agglomerations of directly-adjacent retail. Each generates synergies between the various retailers, and each has varying size and character. The retail nodes can be roughly divided into the following subareas, as shown in **Figure 4-2**:

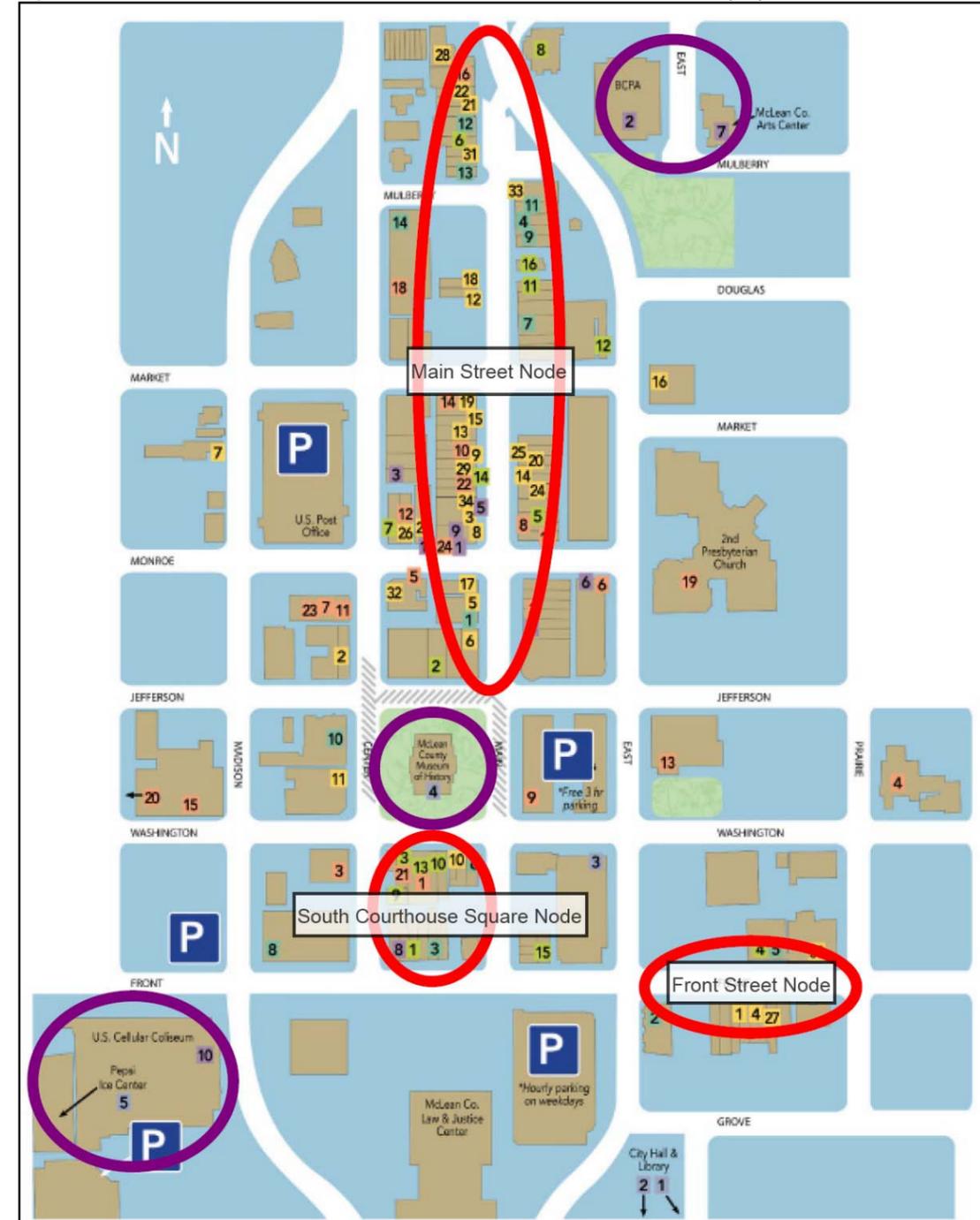
1. *Main Street*: This area includes Main Street and the surrounding blocks between Jefferson Street and Locust Street, with a concentration of retailers between Monroe Street and Market Street, and a mix of eating/drinking establishments and retailers between Market Street and Locust Street. This is the strongest base of retail businesses in the Downtown, and the most likely to be drawing people from across the region.
2. *South Courthouse Square*: A limited number of retail and restaurants are located on the block immediately south of the McLean County Museum of History. The high number of restaurants and cafes suggests that these businesses receive much of their business from the daytime workers in the surrounding office and government buildings. There is potential to add more businesses west of here to better service people attending events at the Coliseum.
3. *Front Street*: This area includes the small cluster of businesses along Front Street between East Street and Prairie Street. Though limited in number, these businesses have laid a foundation in an area with potential for additional development and connections to adjacent neighborhoods. These businesses have already attracted visitors around the region with the existing antiques store and rug store.

**Figure 4-1:** Downtown Core Retail/Restaurant Business Mix



Source: Downtown Bloomington Association 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

**Figure 4-2:** Downtown Retail/Restaurant “Nodes” (in red) and “Anchors” (in purple)



Source: Downtown Bloomington Association (base map) 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

### Artist Community

Downtown Bloomington features a vibrant community of artists, with a number of studios and galleries. This community has grown over a period of decades, with artists initially independently interested in the inexpensive spaces available in Downtown. Today there is much more cooperation and mutual support within this artist community, thus providing a unique asset with capacity to support beneficial programming. Artists have historically been drawn to Downtown by the lower rents and unique character, but today the largest draw is the existing base of artists that generates a creative atmosphere.

Studios and galleries are heavily concentrated near the intersection of Monroe Street and Main Street, with multiple artists at 101 West Monroe Street, 115 East Monroe Street, and no fewer than five studios and/or galleries on the immediately adjacent blocks. Most galleries have limited hours or operate by-appointment only, but availability is slowly improving. A recent positive development is the opening of Main Gallery 404, which shows the work of over 35 artists and maintains consistent business hours. Galleries that show the work of multiple or rotating artists can draw a wider array of people to Downtown more consistently by capturing those who are interested in art, but not loyal to particular artists.

### Taverns

A cluster of drinking establishments exists along Main Street between Market Street and Locust Street, and others are scattered throughout Downtown. This cluster of taverns has been located in Downtown for decades, but interviewees stated that the clientele has increasingly shifted toward college students. Residential growth and success in Downtown events – such as the Saturday morning farmer’s market – has led to increasing conflicts due to the noise, litter, and crime generated by the bar patrons.

The taverns are an important feature of Downtown and a unique business niche in the region that attracts visitors and helps move Downtown toward becoming a 24-hour destination. It must be understood that not all negative impacts can be mitigated, especially noise on blocks where drinking establishments are located. However, most impacts can be alleviated through a combination of increased law enforcement by owners and the city, clustering the taverns so patrons stay concentrated, and policies that ensure drinking establishments quickly clean up trash and other messes. Similar entertainment districts generally carry out this cleanup through bar or merchant associations; thus, owners of drinking establishments pay to reduce the negative impacts of their own businesses while helping to maintain good relations with the community.

## DEMAND DRIVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

### Sources of Demand

Demand in Downtown Bloomington is primarily generated by visitors, local residents, and employees, with visitors comprising the lion’s share of business given the specialty nature of most businesses and the cultural/performing arts anchors nearby. Based on psychographic data, approximately 45 percent of Downtown Core residents are keenly interested in the urban environment and specialty shopping of Downtown, although their actual spending is likely focused on day-to-day amenities such as cafés, restaurants, and taverns. With the exception of some restaurants, most businesses derive minimal benefit from the employee population.

Downtown contains several existing features that help to capture and drive demand to retail businesses, but there are also barriers to upgrading and expanding retail sales. Stakeholder interviews, site visits, and other research identified the following critical drivers and constraints:

### Demand Drivers

- Agglomeration of unique specialty destination retailers and eating/drinking establishments
- Existence of unique start-up businesses drawn by low rents and flexible leases
- Unique physical environment
- Tight-knit community atmosphere
- Special event programming at cultural anchors, festivals, etc.
- Central location in Bloomington
- Existence of the artist community

### Demand Constraints

- Limited wayfinding signage and unclear pedestrian circulation connections between retail nodes
- Limited and uneven business hours
- Reduced willingness of pedestrians to walk between locations due to gaps in street environment (storefront offices, parking lots)
- Lack of well-developed pedestrian and automobile connections to areas outside of the Main Street / East Street couplet
- Limited availability of larger spaces in which successful businesses can expand; for example, A. Renée Wines has been highly successful and the owner has sought a larger location, but was unable to find suitable space in Downtown.
- Automobile parking confusion driven by unclear signage and policies, ineffective management and enforcement practices
- Poor perception of safety
- Slow response to infrastructure conditions (street and sidewalk repair)

## CURRENT AND FUTURE RETAIL DEMAND

This section examines current and future retail demand from the perspective of a traditional demand and supply analysis, using sales leakage and spending potential data to determine regionally unmet demand that may be captured in Downtown Bloomington. However, demand alone is not the best determinate of retail potential for an area like Downtown Bloomington since there are physical and market limitations that restrict the types of establishments drawn to such an area. These restrictions are considered in the summary of retail findings and recommendations.

### Demand-Based Analysis

The 2007 ZHA report, *Retail Market Assessment for the Main Street Corridor*, included an overview analysis of retail opportunities in Downtown Bloomington based on a comparison of the spending potential of employees, local residents, and regional residents, finding potential for 30,500 square feet of additional restaurants and retail. However, ZHA based this estimate on a population of 750, whereas the Study Area population is estimated to approach 1,400. As a result, it is estimated that the Study Area can potentially capture a total additional 38,000 square feet of retail, though a portion of this can be accommodated in already-vacant storefronts.

The demand estimate does not account for visitor spending generated by the various cultural/performance anchors and presence of large places of worship; there is insufficient data available on visitor numbers and their highly variable spending habits to predict their impact with reasonable certainty. However, the additional influence of visitors means that 38,000 square feet is the low end of current unmet retail demand in Downtown.

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Sales leakage analysis shows that there is currently unmet demand in a number of retail categories in Bloomington and Normal, as shown in **Table 4-1**. Leakage analysis demonstrates the difference between predicted consumer spending and actual retail sales in a given geography. In this case, there are 22 specialized categories of retail in which additional sales can be supported in the region based on household spending potential in Bloomington and Normal. However, the number of additional supportable stores is more useful as a *measure of magnitude* than a literal guide since sales per square foot and store size can vary widely.

New households in the region and Study Area will generate additional future demand. By applying current household formation rates by age and family status to population projections from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, it is estimated that McLean County households will increase from 61,000 today to 80,000 in 2030. This report's housing demand projection also estimated that there is potential to add approximately 1,000 to 1,100 households to the Study Area by 2030. Based on the same capture rates used for current unmet demand, it is estimated that household growth will result in demand for an additional 36,000 square feet of retail by 2030. Combined with current unmet demand, there is potential to add 74,000 square feet of retail to the Study Area between now and 2030. (See **Appendix D** for methodology notes)

**Table 4-1:** Leakage Analysis Summary of Additional Supportable Retail in Downtown-Compatible Categories, for Bloomington and Normal\*

Store Type	Unmet Demand	
	Approximate Square Feet	# of Additional Stores**
Automotive Parts/Accessories/Tire Stores	76,426	13 - 20
Furniture Stores	14,878	4 - 7
Appliances, TVs, Electronics Stores	16,848	6 - 8
Household Appliances Stores	7,262	3 - 4
Radio, Television, Electronics Stores	9,585	4 - 5
Computer and Software Stores	8,434	3 - 4
Camera and Photographic Equipment Stores	7,162	2 - 5
Hardware Stores	23,208	3 - 6
Supermarkets and Grocery Stores (non-convenience)	173,734	5
Convenience Stores	21,114	13 - 23
Specialty Food Stores	5,737	5 - 9
Beer, Wine, & Liquor Stores	16,787	9
Miscellaneous Health & Personal Care	5,323	1
Men's Clothing Stores	1,559	<1
Women's Clothing Stores	12,233	3
Children's, Infant's Clothing Stores	10,502	2 - 3
Jewelry Stores	2,753	2
Luggage and Leather Goods Stores	6,631	1 - 5
Sporting Goods Stores	10,348	6 - 11
News Dealers and Newsstands	2,505	1
Office Supplies and Stationery Stores	10,806	10 - 16
Used Merchandise Stores	8,761	4 - 6

Source: Claritas 2008; ICSC: Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers/The SCORE 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

\*Based on sales leakage out of Bloomington and Normal

\*\*The number of stores will vary depending on size of store and sales per square foot; as a result, the number of stores is best used to understand the magnitude of unmet demand

## SUMMARY OF RETAIL MARKET FINDINGS

### ***Downtown Bloomington contains a concentration of unique, independent retailers that draw customers from throughout the region***

Successful retailers in Downtown Bloomington are able to offer a highly-differentiated experience or product that can draw customers from throughout the region.

### ***Downtown retail is clustered in three agglomerations, or “nodes”***

The three retail nodes create synergies between the tightly-clustered businesses, including foot traffic, visibility, and opportunities to easily shop, dine, and imbibe.

### ***Downtown retail business is boosted by events and non-retail “anchors” that draw visitors from throughout the region and beyond***

Currently, the role of a regional retail anchor is fulfilled by event programming and the presence of cultural and performing arts anchors in Downtown. Like a retail anchor, these assets attract visitors to Downtown and help to increase business for some of the small retailers. However, the draw is not as consistent or strong as an actual retail anchor.

### ***There is current unmet demand for nearly 38,000 square feet of retail in Downtown, with an additional 36,000 square feet by 2030***

The recommendations section of this report breaks out retailers compatible with Downtown.

### ***Downtown Bloomington retail opportunities are limited by traffic volumes, store sizes, store configurations, and the scale of Downtown***

Downtown Bloomington will not be able to compete with suburban locations in terms of parking access and large store formats. It lacks the necessary traffic volumes, accessibility, and well-positioned sites. Instead, Downtown Bloomington must continue to offer a unique urban environment, the “café culture” that accompanies such a place, and a collection of one-of-a-kind specialized stores and restaurants that will continue to draw people from throughout the region. These independent retailers are also more able and willing to adapt to the unusual or antiquated configurations found in Downtown retail storefronts.

The small, rectilinear storefronts of Downtown can best accommodate small, independent startup retailers and restaurateurs; the configurations and small sizes make it difficult to attract most large national chains (except perhaps some quick-serve restaurants). The growth of Downtown businesses will increase demand for larger spaces, as has been seen with A. Renée Wines; this demand can be met by combining storefronts or in future construction. However, it is not likely that a large national chain will be attracted to Downtown in the foreseeable future due to high income, access, and population requirements.

Also, it must be understood that the historic character and scale of Downtown is one of its defining features and must be respected by any future development. Any new development and additions of retail must complement and enhance the historic appearance and urban atmosphere of the area. Major gaps in the urban fabric have already resulted from building teardowns to create surface parking lots.

### ***Retail growth in Downtown Bloomington requires an emphasis on a well-connected, amenity-rich, and safe environment***

The focus on specialty retail and unique drinking and eating establishments in Downtown Bloomington shifts the emphasis from meeting unmet demand to creating an environment that encourages additional agglomerations of businesses able to draw customers from throughout the region. This strategic direction is supported by the low likelihood that large comparison goods stores will locate Downtown, and by business owner statements that local workers and residents comprise only a small share of their business.

The psychographics of the households in and adjacent to Downtown further support a place-making strategy. “City Startups” and “Boomtown Singles” comprise 46 percent of Downtown Core households and are likely to be interested in public amenities such as bars and cafes. 70 percent of households in nearby historic neighborhoods are in the former two categories as well as “Up and Comers,” “Second City Elite,” and “Brite Lites, Li'l City” – all are categories of households with an emphasis on public amenities such as restaurants, bars, cafés, and/or cultural and performing amenities such as those found in the Downtown cultural anchors.

## V. OFFICE

### REGIONAL AND LOCAL OFFICE MARKET OVERVIEW

The Bloomington and Normal office market is dominated by large corporate and institutional employers such as State Farm Insurance Companies, Illinois State University, and COUNTRY Financial. These organizations together comprise over 24 percent of employment in the region, but are mostly located in self-contained campuses or buildings. According to broker Greg Yount of Coldwell Banker Commercial, there are 9 to 10 million square feet of class A and B office space in the Bloomington-Normal market area, with 70 percent to 80 percent of this space owner-occupied. State Farm Insurance occupies approximately 5 million square feet. The remainder of the space includes smaller professional firms and medical service providers.

Downtown Bloomington is the sole major submarket outside of Veterans Parkway, although the vast majority of office space in the region lies within one mile of the parkway. Estimates of regional vacancy rates range between 15 and 20 percent, with most estimates closer to 20 percent. Reliable estimates of Downtown vacancies are unavailable, but are generally believed to be slightly higher than the region. The Class A and B office space surrounding the Courthouse Square is considered the strongest subarea of Downtown given its proximity to county and local government offices and inclusion of the State Farm Insurance Building.

Per a Coldwell Banker Commercial Heart of America Realtors broker report, gross regional rents are approximately \$14-\$19 per square foot per year for new construction, \$11-\$14 for existing class A space, and \$8-11 for class B space. Other input suggests that Veterans Parkway rents are \$15-\$19 overall, compared to \$12 regionally. Rents in Downtown Bloomington are generally lower, but vary widely depending on condition and proximity to government offices. Small spaces rent for \$6-\$10 at the low end, while larger spaces and higher-quality buildings rent for \$10 to \$18 at the maximum.

### DEMAND

Downtown Bloomington office rental demand is primarily driven by smaller firms and organizations servicing the array of government offices in the area. These government offices include the McLean County Law and Justice Center, county administrative offices, and City of Bloomington administrative offices. Government offices and State Farm Insurance are the largest consumers of office space, but are housed in owner-occupied single-tenant buildings. (See **Table 5-1** for estimates of workers in some of the largest Downtown employers).

Outside of public administration and insurance, major office sectors in Downtown include professional services (such as lawyers, accountants, finance offices, appraisers, architects), social service organizations, and information technology companies. The professional service offices are a particularly stable sector, as they are compatible with the small spaces offered in Downtown and experience strong location advantages in their proximity to the Justice Center. The relatively low rents also draw a variety of small businesses, including startup companies such as Mavidea Technology Group. Unfortunately, the lack of large office spaces constrains the ability of firms to grow in place, a key necessity to nourish greater agglomerations of office users.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a Downtown Bloomington location is a minor obstacle to attracting new employees. Much of the professional office workforce resides in the suburban areas far east of Downtown, so commute times are slightly higher than alternate locations in the region. Downtown also

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suffers from negative perceptions regarding parking and safety. The longer commute times and negative perceptions initially make Downtown less desirable for prospective employees, but interviewees do not feel these negatives have a dramatic impact on their ability to attract skilled workers. Interviewees also reported that these negative perceptions quickly disappear once employees work in Downtown and realize that the extra commute time is minimal, parking and safety are sufficient, and that Downtown features an enjoyable office environment. Much of the older building stock offers a better worker environment than newer suburban locations; for example, the State Farm Building’s small floor plate sizes prevent large “bullpen” cubicle configurations, thus increasing access to natural light and interaction between the limited number of co-workers on a floor.

**Table 5-1:** Selected Major Employers In and Near the Study Area

Employer	Site Address	# of Employees at Site	In Study Area?
State Farm Insurance	112 East Washington Street	700	Yes
City of Bloomington	115 East Washington Street	~400 to 500	Yes
	109 East Olive Street		
McLean County	104 West Front Street	580	Yes
	200 West Front Street		
	115 East Washington Street		
BroMenn Regional Medical Center	1304 Franklin Avenue	2000	No
Illinois Wesleyan University	1312 Park Street	600	No
Electrolux	807 North Main Street	370	No

Source: Strategic Economics 2009

### OFFICE MARKET OUTLOOK

Downtown Bloomington is likely to remain a specialized office market centered on smaller firms that enjoy a specific location or cost advantage in a Downtown site. Although located along the Main Street Corridor, Downtown lacks the transportation access, professional workforce access, low land/development costs, availability of large sites, and ease of parking enjoyed by sites near Veterans Parkway. The specialized office market in Downtown reduces the breadth of demand it may capture in the foreseeable future, but also ensures its competitive advantage as a uniquely-positioned niche market that consists of: stable, large organizations (State Farm and government offices), stable organizations servicing those large organizations/their employees (lawyers, accountants, consultants, social service organizations), a limited number of firms that simply prefer Downtown (architects, doctors, etc.), and growing startup companies.

A lack of reliable data makes it difficult to formulate projections of office demand for Downtown, but the domination by large employers will result in fairly slow growth in demand for office space (barring an unforeseen expansion decision). Some additional demand will come from offices serving the growing downtown population, such as optometrists, doctors, and accountants. However, the largest source of future demand will come from growing startup and small companies.

Startup and small companies have historically been drawn to Downtown by the less expensive rents and unique character, but stakeholder interviews suggest that the lack of large renter-occupied office spaces discourage these businesses from remaining in Downtown as they grow. Unfortunately, this pattern is likely to continue unless Downtown rents significantly increase and enable new development. Even then, the region currently offers vacant Class-A space at rents 80 percent lower than new construction. Barring a certain attachment to Downtown, expanding businesses are therefore more likely to seek out larger spaces at lower rents elsewhere in the region.

In short, it will be several years – perhaps a decade or more – before demand reaches a necessary level to support the construction of large new office space without outside financial assistance. In the meantime, slow growth in demand among professional services offices can be accommodated in smaller deliveries of new office space within existing buildings or small new buildings.

There are still a number of buildings in Downtown that can be refurbished to provide such office space. This may be to Downtown’s benefit, as office uses should always remain limited to those firms that can fit within buildings of an appropriate scale and character such that they mesh well with Downtown’s existing historic building stock; to do otherwise risks degrading the unique atmosphere that differentiates Downtown from other locations. However, the plan should provide potential opportunity sites for office development, or allow for flexible zoning in which mixed use buildings could have either housing or office uses on their upper stories with ground floor retail.

### SUMMARY OF OFFICE MARKET FINDINGS

*The Downtown office market is dominated by State Farm Insurance, City and County government offices, and small firms servicing the government offices*

*Low rents have encouraged startup businesses in Downtown*

Although some office rents in Downtown match those of new Class A space in the region, rents are lower than the region overall. This has made Downtown an attractive location for smaller startup businesses and firms that prefer to remain small.

*The small office spaces in Downtown buildings reduce the ability of businesses to grow in place*

Anecdotal evidence suggests that growing businesses are likely to eventually move out of Downtown since there are few large spaces available. Future development can help overcome this problem, but the historic scale and character of Downtown must be respected.

## VI. HOTEL

Strategic Economics was not originally tasked to examine the potential for a hotel in the Study Area, but site visits indicated that a hotel may be a key missing element in the further development of the area. As a result, this section discusses the possible demand for a hotel, the type of hotel that might be suitable, and the role of a hotel in Downtown. A complete feasibility study will be necessary to conclusively determine whether and under what conditions Downtown can support a hotel, and what type of hotel is most likely to succeed.

### Regional Market Overview

There is currently no full-service hotel in or near the Study Area. The only Downtown-adjacent lodgings consist of three bed and breakfasts: Burr House, Vrooman Mansion, and Davis Rose Inn. Most hotels in the region are concentrated along the Veterans Parkway corridor, with additional hotels scattered around the periphery of the region. By mid-year there will be approximately 38 hotels operating in the Bloomington-Normal region (see **Appendix E** for a full listing); of these, approximately eight might be considered premium or near-premium mid-range hotels. Examples include Parke Hotel and Conference Center (on the far east side), Marriott Hotel and Conference Center (currently under construction in Uptown Normal), and Crowne Plaza Hotel (located on the far north end of Normal; currently under renovation). The Marriott and Crowne Plaza will add/return 390 rooms to the current stock of approximately 3,076 rooms in the region. An additional 110 rooms will open in an extended stay hotel on the southeastern portion of Veterans Parkway, and 120 rooms are proposed for a site near the airport.

### Regional and Local Demand

A representative of the Bloomington-Normal Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (BNACVB) stated that high-end hotels in the region have recently experienced occupancy rates of 65 to 70 percent. This helps to explain recent hotel construction; hotel supply and demand is considered to be roughly balanced at a 65 percent occupancy rate, and 70 percent occupancy generates sufficient pent-up demand to construct additional rooms. The addition of 390 premium rooms later this year will likely absorb existing demand and lower occupancy rates for a few years. The Marriott hotel's future performance will be an especially important indicator of the strength of the Bloomington-Normal hotel market for additional premium rooms.

Three major entities are likely to drive demand for a hotel in Downtown Bloomington: U.S. Cellular Coliseum, Illinois Wesleyan University, and State Farm Insurance. Additional demand is generated by the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, other businesses, and more distant institutions such as BroMenn Regional Medical Center and Illinois State University.

A 2008 report by the BNACVB indicated that ticketed attendance at the Coliseum between April 2006 and August 2008 included over 120,000 non-group visitors from outside the Bloomington-Normal region. In addition, affiliated groups staying in hotel rooms included over 164,000 visitors and generated 22,020 hotel room nights in the Bloomington-Normal region. All of these visitors are staying elsewhere in the region; as a result, Downtown loses additional visitor spending on meals, entertainment, and travel expenses. Worse, anecdotal evidence indicates that some organizations – such as business associations and religious groups – have chosen not to hold events at the Coliseum due to the lack of nearby lodging.

Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU) generates hotel demand from prospective student/family visits, alumni visiting for homecoming events, faculty/staff recruits, and visitors for commencement ceremonies. IWU draws approximately 2,200 annual visitors from outside Illinois. Visitors are currently directed to mid-level or premium hotels across the region such as Hampton Inn, Country Inn and Suites, Doubletree

Inn and Suites, and Holiday Inn Express. Visitors are also directed to the nearby Burr House bed and breakfast. A university official noted that current hotels require a car to access dining amenities, creating a problem for visitors who fly in and do not rent a vehicle; the Marriott in Uptown Normal is expected to overcome this concern for visitors to Illinois State University, but not IWU. The university is unlikely to need meeting or conference space off-campus, but may drive additional hotel business by holding events at the Coliseum. For example, the 2010 and 2011 NCAA Division III women's basketball conference championships will be held at U.S. Cellular Coliseum.

State Farm Insurance would be likely to drive a relatively small amount of hotel demand. The majority of the Downtown workers are in transactional jobs, but three departments do draw a few hundred visitors annually. These visitors are currently directed to preferred vendor hotels, most of which are mid-level hotels on the east side of the region. State Farm Insurance is unlikely to generate much demand for conference and meeting space in a Downtown hotel, as the company has a 200,000 square foot training center on the east side of the region; however, a small amount of business may be generated by groups seeking a change of pace and wishing to stay close to the Downtown location.

### Hotel Positioning

An independent, boutique hotel is most suitable for Downtown Bloomington. A boutique hotel provides greater design flexibility and a unique offering fitting the historic nature of Downtown Bloomington. For example, a boutique hotel will be free from the standard building design preferences of a large national chain, thus allowing its placement within a renovated existing building or on an infill site with unusual characteristics; this would permit a design that respects the small scale of Downtown. In addition, a chain hotel would dilute the offbeat nature of Downtown.

The hotel must be located within easy walking distance of the Coliseum and also well-connected to the rest of Downtown. Downtown's competitiveness hinges on its position as a unique urban and walkable environment in a largely suburban region. The hotel can contribute to that environment, but only if it is close enough to the Coliseum to be successful, yet integrated into the rest of Downtown's urban fabric such that it encourages guests to seek out the cultural, retail, dining, and drinking offerings in the area.

A Downtown boutique hotel will hold certain advantages that increase its competitiveness against other high-end hotels in the Bloomington-Normal region. These advantages are: 1) it will be adjacent to one of the region's biggest visitor-generators, 2) it will be one of two hotels in a walkable environment (the other being the Marriott in Uptown Normal), 3) it will be located in the region's only large, urban environment; 4) it will be the only upscale hotel in central Bloomington; and 5) it will be the most unique boutique offering in the region. The hotel's competitiveness will be dramatically improved if it dedicates space to meeting/event rooms that can be used by Illinois Wesleyan University, State Farm Insurance, and other Downtown employers.

### Benefits of a Downtown Hotel

A hotel in Downtown Bloomington will increase visitor spending and pedestrian activity in Downtown, thus growing businesses and increasing a general sense of activity. Out-of-town visitors to State Farm Insurance, the Coliseum, BCPA, and other Downtown attractions are currently purchasing food and services close to their hotels elsewhere in the region. A Downtown hotel will capture a share of those visitors and therefore grow business at restaurants and bars in the Study Area. In addition, visitors who have sought the convenience of a hotel close to their destination are likely to walk to the nearby retail nodes and explore the area's other offerings. This will increase around-the-clock pedestrian activity.

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A hotel will also increase the number of events and visitors to the Coliseum, thus creating a self-reinforcing cycle that benefits the hotel, Coliseum, and Downtown generally. As previously noted, the BNACVB representative stated that some events have been lost due to the lack of a nearby hotel.

Finally, a hotel will help to build linkages between Downtown and other nearby destinations. A share of visitors to IWU and BroMenn Regional Medical Center are likely to stay in a Downtown hotel, thus increasing awareness of Downtown and better integrating it into the surrounding uses/neighborhoods.

### Summary of Hotel Market Findings

Preliminary evaluation of the Bloomington-Normal hotel market suggests that there is pent-up demand for a hotel in Downtown, but it is difficult to discern at this time whether this demand is strong enough to warrant constructing a new facility within the next 3 to 5 years. However, given the strong synergy between a hotel and other uses in the Downtown – especially U.S. Cellular Coliseum – a high priority should be placed on attracting a hotel to the Study Area.

## VII. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Downtown Bloomington Study Area can be summarized in the following manner: the whole is less than the sum of its parts. Downtown has a number of assets but there is little synergy between them. Improvements will depend on strategic management of these assets to generate the synergy essential to drive future investment and growth. Strategic management efforts must be focused on four main goals:

- 1) General placemaking, i.e. creating a vibrant, high-quality public realm that attracts pedestrian activity by providing attractive destinations, interactive social encounters, and well-connected, stimulating public spaces
- 2) Tying together the existing anchors and retail nodes
- 3) Drawing new anchors, such as a hotel and/or a YMCA, community college, etc.
- 4) Maintaining the historic character and resultant small scale that generate Downtown's competitive differentiation

Downtown boasts terrific assets. There are anchors that attract visitors (Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, McLean County Arts Center, McLean County Museum of History, U.S. Cellular Coliseum, Pepsi Ice Center). There is a strong and stable base of office employment, a large and long-standing community of cooperative artists, a strong node of retail on Main Street, two other emerging retail nodes, a deeply-interested residential community, and a well-known and popular cluster of taverns. There is sufficient parking to meet needs. Downtown features the events, encouragement, and assistance provided via the Downtown Bloomington Association, and Downtown also boasts a collection of historic buildings unmatched anywhere else in the region.

The trouble is that these assets lack synergy that can elevate them beyond a patchwork of standalone pieces. For example, the nodes, anchors, and centralized parking facilities have long stretches of dead space between them due to wide roads, parking lots, and blank storefronts. Retail and restaurant activity experiences nearly complete lulls in customer traffic between the daytime employees, dinner crowd, and event/post-event-goers from the performance facilities. The artist community has few convenient means by which to show their work and presence. Residential growth has led to conflicts with the taverns. And restaurants and cafes lack sufficient sidewalk space for outdoor dining.

The existing assets can be made to work together via a strategy focused on placemaking, building physical connections, and maintaining the historic character of Downtown. Such a strategy will create the necessary synergies that increase the marketability of Downtown and encourage further investment. A placemaking approach will improve the lively and vibrant environment that is a critical component to the public conception of a true downtown. Tying together the existing anchors and nodes with an enjoyable pedestrian environment will encourage exploration by visitors, thus driving business and creating a stronger perception of Downtown as a cohesive district. And finally, it is important that the historic character and scale of Downtown be respected by any future development. Downtown's unique appearance and feel is a major part of what differentiates it from generic suburban locations; anything that damages this character will damage Downtown's ability to offer a unique alternative.

*Management* is required to implement this strategy. The city and the Downtown Bloomington Association must approach every decision made for Downtown from a strategic viewpoint, with an eye toward how their efforts will hurt or hinder the strategies outlined above. Without concerted and intentional action, Downtown will continue to drift as it has for the past fifty years.

**RECOMMENDATIONS BY LAND USE**

**Housing**

***Build connections between Downtown and the eastern Historic Neighborhoods***

Strategically sited housing development can connect Downtown to the Historic Neighborhoods to its east. This connection will physically and mentally connect Downtown to these neighborhoods and drive retail business by growing the residential customer base and increasing the likelihood that existing nearby residents will walk to Downtown businesses. As shown in **Figure 7-1**, there are a number of opportunity sites to east of Downtown that can potentially be developed with townhomes.

***Focus on the creation of additional rental units***

The Downtown rental market remains stronger than the condominium market. Developers should focus on this market in the immediate future, although condominium demand will increase over time.

***Focus on the creation of smaller condominium units***

Less expensive apartment-style condominiums have met with more success than large, expensive, customized units. The low prices of smaller condominiums reduce barriers of entry to homeownership for purchasers interested in the Downtown lifestyle. Such smaller units will help prove the strength of the Downtown condominium market for future purchasers and also create dedicated Downtown stakeholders.

**Retail**

***Targeted retail tenant types***

Targeted retail types have been selected based upon compatibility with physical Downtown spaces, potential to create a unique specialty business able to serve both local and regional residents and capitalize on Downtown assets, and, when applicable, capture regionally unfulfilled demand. In many instances a listed business type duplicates existing businesses; this is not intended as a recommendation for displacement of any business, but rather a generally suitable category of business that, with proper differentiation, has potential to succeed in the Downtown environment and complement existing businesses.

<b>Business Type:</b>	<b>Notes:</b>
Upscale drinking establishments	Momentum already established; can complement visitors uninterested in taverns, including restaurant and event-goers
Sit-Down Restaurants	Greater specialization is possible
Quick Order Restaurants	Growth likely as residential population increases
Other Eating and Drinking	Taverns and variety of restaurants have proven the market
Bakeries	
Art Galleries	Additions of galleries with consistent hours can complement existing artist community and galleries, provide further concentration
Apparel Stores	Leakage analysis shows regionally unfulfilled demand in men's, women's,

	and infant categories
Independent Book Stores	Numerous specializations are possible
Camera Stores	Leakage analysis shows regionally unfulfilled demand
Office Supplies	Leakage analysis shows regionally unfulfilled demand
Jewelry and Accessories	Leakage analysis shows regionally unfulfilled demand; additions can complement existing unique stores in Downtown
Luggage and Leather Goods	Leakage analysis shows demand; repair and sales are both possible
Gifts	
Specialty Groceries	Momentum built by natural foods and Mexican grocery stores
Newsstand	Leakage analysis shows demand; success depends on proper location and resident growth
Comedy Club / Entertainment	Momentum built by taverns, performance venues
Bicycle Sales and Repair	Matches tastes of persons preferring Downtown lifestyles
Antiques	
Toys	
Hobbies / Arts & Crafts	
Outdoor Goods	

***Build connections between nodes and anchors***

Downtown Bloomington is laid out in a pattern of three dispersed nodes and three cultural / performance / arts anchors. Improved signage, traffic calming, street environment, and possibly a circulator can help to connect each of these anchors and nodes to each other and parking garages.

***Concentrate business in existing nodes***

The three identified business nodes provide incubators for new businesses by increasing visibility and providing a linkage to the existing community of Downtown stakeholders. Not coincidentally, these nodes also contain the highest amount of contiguous retail and restaurant storefronts. Any new retail development should be concentrated adjacent to these existing nodes to avoid spreading retail too thinly.

***Preserve existing storefronts***

The Downtown rent competition between office and retail uses favors office conversion of ground floor spaces to office use. Although these conversions may have removed empty storefronts in the past, such conversions pose serious long-term challenges to development of the Downtown environment. The city

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and Downtown Bloomington Association, in conjunction with stakeholders, should examine the possibility of mandating preservation of storefront retail spaces, particularly in and near existing nodes.

### ***Attract and grow new anchors for Downtown Bloomington***

The five previously-identified cultural/performing arts facilities and the special event programs in Downtown serve a role as anchors that draw business to retailers and restaurateurs and increase overall visibility of Downtown. However, these anchors will remain suboptimal compared to a true *retail* anchor, even after connections to the retail nodes are improved. Each of the current anchors draws visitors in large masses on an occasional basis, often outside of retail store operating hours. A unique retail anchor would provide a regular regional draw, and could also provide services and amenities – such as groceries – to nearby residents.

There are few national chains of anchor-like stores that would choose to locate in Downtown Bloomington due to their high population density, accessibility, parking, and income requirements. The likelihood of attracting a national chain will increase as Downtown Bloomington grows, but a better alternative may be to focus on attracting a growing business from Downtown or elsewhere in the Bloomington-Normal region.

It will be a number of years before a single large retail anchor exists or is viable. In the interim, other non-retail anchors can help to fill the gaps in the Downtown streetscape and also draw more foot traffic and residents to the area. Such opportunities could include a library, YMCA, or community college.

### ***Actively manage Downtown Bloomington***

Malls, lifestyle centers, and shopping centers benefit from active management with knowledge of what stores to attract and how best to arrange stores to maximize traffic to the mall and foot traffic between tenants. No organization could or should exert this level of control over Downtown Bloomington, but there is potential for the Downtown Bloomington Association or another organization to take on an even more proactive role that helps property owners and tenants target particular sites for particular business types. The completed Downtown Bloomington Strategy will be a useful guide for these decisions, though ongoing assistance from specialized consultants will also be valuable.

### ***Cultivate the artist community***

The vibrant Downtown artist community has recently shown greater cohesion and capacity for action. The Downtown Bloomington Association can further work with this community to encourage public recognition and patronage. It may also be to the benefit of both the artists and Downtown to further promote galleries with stable hours that show the works of multiple artists, thus providing a consistent draw to the area.

## **Office**

### ***Tailor assistance to the needs of startup businesses***

Smaller startup businesses are the most dynamic component of the Downtown office market, which is otherwise largely dominated by State Farm Insurance, government offices, and small professional firms linked to the government offices.

### ***When feasible, pursue development of larger office spaces that can accommodate growing Downtown businesses***

There are few large office spaces in Downtown that are capable of accommodating businesses as they grow. This is not particularly damaging to Downtown given the stability of its larger employers, but it would be preferable to retain these businesses in the Study Area. Market demand may eventually reach a level sufficient to develop a large building that will fill the niche for large office space.

### ***Ensure that future development respects the historic scale and character of Downtown***

Downtown's historic scale and character differentiates it from other locations in the Bloomington-Normal region and is a key asset. Future development must respect this character and integrate into the existing urban fabric, especially if larger spaces are being provided.

## **Hotel**

### ***Place a high priority on the development of a hotel in Downtown***

A hotel in Downtown will have numerous spinoff benefits, as discussed earlier. Hotel development must be evaluated quickly, as the presence of a hotel will help spur numerous other improvements in the Study Area.

## **PHASING AND OUTLOOK**

### **Short- and Mid-Term Development Potential and Strategy Recommendations (to ~2020)**

The overall focus will remain on reuse of the existing building stock, with a few small new construction projects possible toward the end of the 10 to 15 year time horizon. Emphasis is on growth of retail and housing, plus steps to encourage the development of a generally vibrant, pleasant, appealing place. In general, the current economic environment makes it likely that little development activity will occur until at least mid-2010, but possibly later than that.

Retail targeting must center on development of independent specialty retail, service, and distinctive eating and drinking establishments that will continue to improve the image and appeal of Downtown. Low rents will continue to encourage risk-taking by entrepreneurs, which will result in some failures but also unique successes by worthy businesses that enhance the area's reputation, increase foot traffic, and create a market for larger spaces for expansion.

Early residential development will continue to focus on upper-floor conversions of space to a mixture of rental and condominium units; the majority will be rental units, with condominium growth dependent on how long the market takes to recover and then establish a more robust sales record. Condominium sales are likely to slowly but steadily increase.

New townhouse development becomes increasingly likely during this period. Townhomes are ideal for the open sites east of Downtown, as shown in **Figure 7-1**. These sites can be developed relatively easily since many contain few or no buildings and are used for parking. Development of these sites will further boost Downtown by proving Downtown's investment potential, better linking Downtown to adjacent neighborhoods, and increasing the residential population of the Study Area.

A limited number of additional office spaces can be accommodated in existing buildings. There is already a limited amount of demand for larger office spaces, so a small new building, likely built on the periphery of Downtown where development is easier and less expensive, may become possible toward the end of this time period.

Significant mixed-use infill development within the Madison Street / East Street couplet is relatively unlikely during this period. The available sites are small and awkwardly arranged for modern needs, land asking prices are likely to be high, retail is not able to contribute sufficient rents, and the total amount of leasable space would be low. Demand must increase significantly across all uses before development is possible in this area.

Other possibilities during this time period include the construction of an additional (non-retail) anchor and construction of a hotel. The parking garage on the northwest corner of Monroe Street and Center Street presents an excellent opportunity for catalytic redevelopment with public assistance, especially since the city owns the site. A hotel may become feasible toward 2020 as Downtown grows and regional demand recovers from the upcoming additions to inventory in Uptown Normal and along Veterans Parkway.

**Long-Term Development Potential and Strategy Recommendations (~2020-2030)**

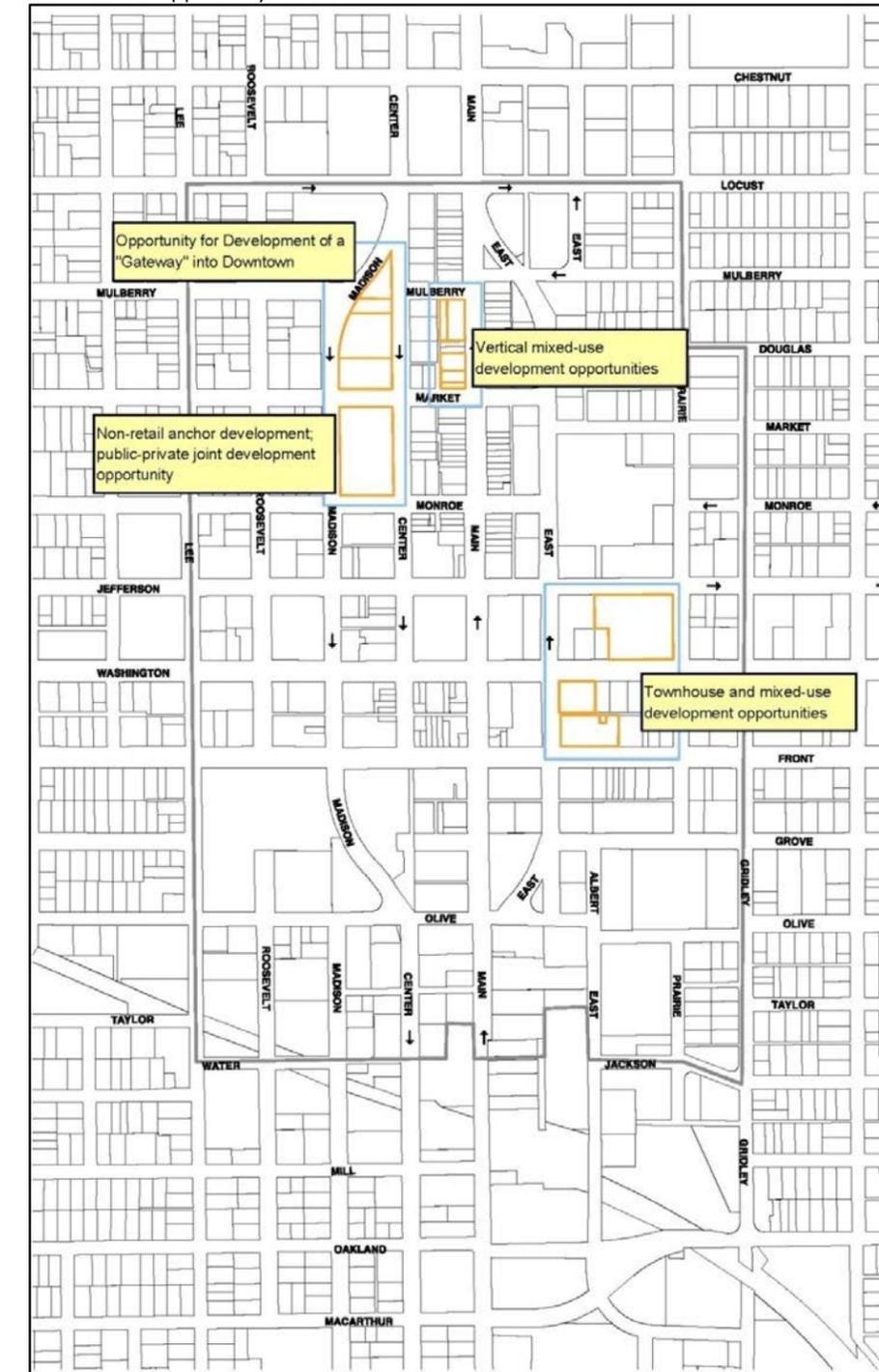
If all goes well with developing the retail and residential markets and resolving the various concerns raised in this report, then demand and rents can rise to a level during this time period such that new construction of residential units becomes more commonplace. The city can jumpstart this process by applying tax increment financing monies to these developments, just as it has assisted many of the apartment and condominium conversion projects. Alternately, joint development is possible on city-owned lots.

Mixed-use infill retail/housing/office development within the Madison Street / East Street couplet will become increasingly common during this period, but remain the most difficult product type to deliver.

The retail market will trail closely behind new housing. Retail rents are unlikely to rise to a level permitting new single-use development in the Downtown Core, nor would such development be desirable in a mixed-use Downtown environment. Instead, new construction near existing retail nodes or on pathways between such nodes, anchors, and surrounding neighborhoods should include a ground-floor retail component to accommodate increasing demand for specialty and local-serving shopping.

Growth of population and increased desirability will generate demand for additional office development. Office development will be delivered later than other product types, as such product is typically delivered late in a development cycle and requires a long lead time from conception to full occupancy. Fortunately, this translates into a high level of pent-up demand from expanding firms by the time such product is delivered.

**Table 7-1: Opportunity Sites**



Source: Farr Associates (base map) 2008; Strategic Economics 2009

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### VIII. APPENDICES

#### Appendix A: Psychographic Data for Downtown Core, Historic Neighborhoods, and Bloomington and Normal

The following pages contain:

- Complete psychographic segmentation data for households in the Downtown Core, Historic Neighborhoods, and aggregated data for Bloomington and Normal.
- Detailed descriptions of the major segments present in the Downtown Core and Historic Neighborhoods.

**PRIZM Household Distribution 2008**

PRIZM Code	Name	Downtown Core Households	%	Historic Neighborhoods Households	%	Bloomington & Normal Households	%	United States Households	%
01	Upper Crust	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	769	1.61%	1,742,531	1.52%
02	Blue Blood Estates	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	556	1.16%	1,120,513	0.98%
03	Movers and Shakers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	908	1.90%	1,829,996	1.60%
04	Young Digerati	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,374,532	1.20%
05	Country Squires	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,464	3.06%	2,228,864	1.94%
06	Winner's Circle	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	887	1.86%	1,252,376	1.09%
07	Money and Brains	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2,276,044	1.98%
08	Executive Suites	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,094	2.29%	1,042,964	0.91%
09	Big Fish, Small Pond	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	251	0.53%	2,650,000	2.31%
10	Second City Elite	0	0.00%	133	9.08%	917	1.92%	1,334,738	1.16%
11	God's Country	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,439	3.01%	1,809,015	1.58%
12	Brite Lites, Li'l City	0	0.00%	384	26.23%	1,385	2.90%	1,684,312	1.47%
13	Upward Bound	1	0.32%	83	5.67%	683	1.43%	1,801,150	1.57%
14	New Empty Nests	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	393	0.82%	1,213,465	1.06%
15	Pools and Patios	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	498	1.04%	1,505,292	1.31%
16	Bohemian Mix	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2,020,210	1.76%
17	Beltway Boomers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	423	0.88%	1,102,507	0.96%
18	Kids and Cul-de-Sacs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,999	4.18%	1,862,336	1.62%
19	Home Sweet Home	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,692	3.54%	2,100,749	1.83%
20	Fast-Track Families	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	0.01%	2,007,267	1.75%
21	Gray Power	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	523	1.09%	1,056,111	0.92%
22	Young Influentials	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2,150	4.50%	1,671,154	1.46%
23	Greenbelt Sports	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	262	0.55%	1,679,640	1.46%
24	Up-and-Comers	2	0.64%	189	12.91%	3,118	6.52%	1,355,455	1.18%
25	Country Casuals	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	8	0.02%	1,862,064	1.62%
26	The Cosmopolitans	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,324,716	1.15%
27	Middleburg Managers	1	0.32%	107	7.31%	2,564	5.36%	2,087,849	1.82%
28	Traditional Times	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	21	0.04%	3,333,156	2.91%
29	American Dreams	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2,443,626	2.13%
30	Suburban Sprawl	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,802	3.77%	1,504,821	1.31%
31	Urban Achievers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,707,456	1.49%
32	New Homesteaders	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	162	0.34%	2,253,925	1.97%
33	Big Sky Families	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	12	0.03%	2,184,896	1.90%
34	White Picket Fences	1	0.32%	20	1.37%	1,043	2.18%	1,406,222	1.23%
35	Boomtown Singles	42	13.42%	269	18.37%	3,526	7.38%	1,453,083	1.27%
36	Blue-Chip Blues	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,232	2.58%	1,430,045	1.25%
37	Mayberry-ville	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2,910,693	2.54%
38	Simple Pleasures	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	7	0.01%	2,693,711	2.35%
39	Domestic Duos	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	545	1.14%	1,367,211	1.19%
40	Close-In Couples	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,316,548	1.15%
41	Sunset City Blues	9	2.88%	99	6.76%	1,367	2.86%	1,888,929	1.65%
42	Red, White and Blues	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	262	0.55%	1,318,372	1.15%
43	Heartlanders	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	49	0.10%	2,346,426	2.05%
44	New Beginnings	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2,568	5.37%	1,708,851	1.49%
45	Blue Highways	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,930,410	1.68%
46	Old Glories	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	730	1.53%	1,112,833	0.97%
47	City Startups	101	32.27%	57	3.89%	2,659	5.56%	1,270,164	1.11%
48	Young and Rustic	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	124	0.26%	2,332,043	2.03%
49	American Classics	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,072	2.24%	1,163,895	1.01%
50	Kid Country, USA	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	55	0.12%	1,492,387	1.30%

Continues on Next Page

PRIZM Household Distribution 2008 (continued)

PRIZM Code	Name	Downtown Core Households	%	Historic Neighborhoods Households	%	Bloomington & Normal Households	%	United States Households	%
51	Shotguns and Pickups	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.00%	1,936,554	1.69%
52	Suburban Pioneers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,588	3.32%	1,179,749	1.03%
53	Mobility Blues	32	10.22%	31	2.12%	1,980	4.14%	1,329,592	1.16%
54	Multi-Culti Mosaic	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,905,706	1.66%
55	Golden Ponds	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,840,549	1.60%
56	Crossroads Villagers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	24	0.05%	2,447,545	2.13%
57	Old Milltowns	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	33	0.07%	1,907,109	1.66%
58	Back Country Folks	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.00%	2,496,583	2.18%
59	Urban Elders	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,488,384	1.30%
60	Park Bench Seniors	88	28.12%	44	3.01%	1,039	2.17%	1,198,514	1.04%
61	City Roots	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,299,001	1.13%
62	Hometown Retired	12	3.83%	10	0.68%	587	1.23%	1,249,987	1.09%
63	Family Thrifts	24	7.67%	38	2.60%	1,299	2.72%	1,889,090	1.65%
64	Bedrock America	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	20	0.04%	2,094,027	1.83%
65	Big City Blues	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,256,172	1.10%
66	Low-Rise Living	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,610,086	1.40%
67	Unclassified	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	
Total		313	100.00%	1,464	100.00%	47,797	100.00%	114,694,201	100.00%

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Prepared On: Mon Dec 22, 2008

PRIZM Household Distribution 2008

## 10 Second City Elite



Upscale, Older w/o Kids

There's money to be found in the nation's smaller cities, and you're most likely to find it in Second City Elite. The residents of these satellite cities tend to be prosperous executives who decorate their homes with multiple computers, large-screen TV sets, and an impressive collection of wines. With more than half holding college degrees, Second City Elite residents enjoy cultural activities--from reading books to attending theater and dance productions.

Social Group: [2nd City Society](#)

Lifestage Group: [Affluent Empty Nests](#)

### 2007 Statistics:

US Households: 1,340,606 (1.18%)

Median HH Income: \$75,708

### Lifestyle Traits

- Order from Readers' Digest
- Travel domestically by rail
- Inc. magazine
- Washington Week TV
- Toyota Avalon

### Demographics Traits:

Urbanicity: Second City

Income: Upscale

Income Producing Assets: Elite

Age Ranges: Age 45-64

Presence of Kids: HH w/o Kids

Homeownership: Mostly Owners

Employment Levels: White Collar, Mix

Education Levels: Graduate Plus

Ethnic Diversity: Mostly White

## 12 Brite Lites, Li'l City



Upscale, Middle Age w/o Kids

Not all of America's chic sophisticates live in major metros. Brite Lights, Li'l City is a group of well-off, middle-aged couples settled in the nation's satellite cities. Residents of these typical DINK (double income, no kids) households have college educations, well-paying business and professional careers, and swank homes filled with the latest technology.

Social Group: [2nd City Society](#)

Lifestage Group: [Midlife Success](#)

### 2007 Statistics:

US Households: 1,694,022 (1.49%)

### Demographics Traits:

Urbanicity: Second City

# VII. Appendix

## Market Study

Median HH Income: \$70,209

### Lifestyle Traits

- Go to college sports events
- Eat at Bennigan's
- Macworld magazine
- Independent Film Channel
- Volkswagen Passat

Income: Upscale  
 Income Producing Assets: High  
 Age Ranges: Age <55  
 Presence of Kids: HH w/o Kids  
 Homeownership: Mostly Owners  
 Employment Levels: Professional  
 Education Levels: College Grad  
 Ethnic Diversity: White, Asian, Mix

Levels:  
 Ethnic Diversity: White, Asian, Hispanic, Mix

### 13 Upward Bound



Upscale, Middle Age w/ Kids

More than any other segment, Upward Bound appears to be the home of those legendary Soccer Moms and Dads. In these small satellite cities, upscale families boast dual incomes, college degrees, and new split-levels and colonials. Residents of Upward Bound tend to be kid-obsessed, with heavy purchases of computers, action figures, dolls, board games, bicycles, and camping equipment.

Social Group: [2nd City Society](#)  
 Lifestage Group: [Young Accumulators](#)

2007 Statistics:  
 US Households: 1,804,891 (1.59%)  
 Median HH Income: \$81,446

### Lifestyle Traits

- Take a skiing vacation
- Go to the zoo
- Family Fun magazine
- Nickelodeon TV
- Toyota Sequoia SUV

Demographics Traits:  
 Urbanicity: Second City  
 Income: Upscale  
 Income Producing Assets: Above Avg.  
 Age Ranges: Age <55  
 Presence of Kids: HH w/ Kids  
 Homeownership: Mostly Owners  
 Employment Levels: White Collar, Mix  
 Education: College Grad

### 24 Up-and-Comers



Midscale, Younger w/o Kids

Up-and-Comers is a stopover for younger, midscale singles before they marry, have families, and establish more deskbound lifestyles. Found in second-tier cities, these mobile twentysomethings include a disproportionate number of recent college graduates who are into athletic activities, the latest technology, and nightlife entertainment.

Social Group: [City Centers](#)  
 Lifestage Group: [Young Achievers](#)

2007 Statistics:  
 US Households: 1,366,547 (1.20%)  
 Median HH Income: \$49,143

### Lifestyle Traits

- Travel to South Pacific, past 3 yrs
- Go in-line skating
- Maxim magazine
- Blind Date TV
- Mitsubishi Eclipse Spyder

Demographics Traits:  
 Urbanicity: Second City  
 Income: Midscale  
 Income Producing Assets: Moderate  
 Age Ranges: Age 25-44  
 Presence of Kids: HH w/o Kids  
 Homeownership: Mix, Renters  
 Employment Levels: Professional  
 Education Levels: College Grad  
 Ethnic Diversity: White, Asian, Hispanic, Mix



## 27 Middleburg Managers

Midscale, Older w/o Kids

Middleburg Managers arose when empty-nesters settled in satellite communities which offered a lower cost of living and more relaxed pace. Today, segment residents tend to be middle-class with solid white-collar jobs or comfortable retirements. In their older homes, they enjoy reading, playing musical instruments, indoor gardening, and refinishing furniture.

**Social Group:** [City Centers](#)

**Lifestage Group:** [Conservative Classics](#)

### 2007 Statistics:

US Households: 2,088,515 (1.84%)

Median HH Income: \$50,050

### Lifestyle Traits

- Play bingo
- Do needlepoint
- Saturday Evening Post
- Hollywood Squares TV
- Mercury Sable

### Demographics Traits:

Urbanicity: Second City

Income: Midscale

Income Producing Assets: Above Avg.

Age Ranges: Age 55+

Presence of Kids: HH w/o Kids

Homeownership: Mostly Owners

Employment Levels: White Collar, Mix

Education Levels: Some College

Ethnic Diversity: Mostly White



## 34 White Picket Fences

Midscale, Younger w/ Kids

Midpoint on the socioeconomic ladder, residents in White Picket Fences look a lot like the stereotypical American household of a generation ago: young, middle-class, and married with children. But the current version is characterized by modest homes and ethnic diversity, including a disproportionate number of Hispanics and African-Americans.

**Social Group:** [City Centers](#)

**Lifestage Group:** [Mainstream Families](#)

### 2007 Statistics:

US Households: 1,406,079 (1.24%)

Median HH Income: \$50,073

### Demographics Traits:

Urbanicity: Second City

### Lifestyle Traits

- Own a treadmill
- Eat at Carl's Jr.
- Baby magazines
- Toon Disney channel
- Mitsubishi Montero Sport

Income: Midscale

Income Producing Assets: Moderate

Age Ranges: Age 25-44

Presence of Kids: HH w/ Kids

Homeownership: Mix, Owners

Employment Levels: BC, Service, Mix

Education Levels: Some College

Ethnic Diversity: White, Black, Asian, Hispanic



## 35 Boomtown Singles

Lower-Mid, Younger w/o Kids

Affordable housing, abundant entry-level jobs, and a thriving singles scene--all have given rise to the Boomtown Singles segment in fast-growing satellite cities. Younger, single, and working-class, these residents pursue active lifestyles amid sprawling apartment complexes, bars, convenience stores, and laundromats.

**Social Group:** [City Centers](#)

**Lifestage Group:** [Young Achievers](#)

### 2007 Statistics:

US Households: 1,456,182 (1.28%)

Median HH Income: \$38,910

### Lifestyle Traits

- Go snowboarding
- Watch Fuse Network
- The Source magazine
- Futurama TV
- Nissan Sentra

### Demographics Traits:

Urbanicity: Second City

Income: Lower-Mid

Income Producing Assets: Below Avg.

Age Ranges: Age <35

Presence of Kids: HH w/o Kids

Homeownership: Mix, Renters

Employment Levels: WC, Service, Mix

Education Levels: Some College

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## Market Study

Ethnic Diversity: White, Asian, Mix Black,

### 41 Sunset City Blues



Lower-Mid, Older Mostly w/o Kids

Scattered throughout the older neighborhoods of small cities, Sunset City Blues is a segment of lower-middle-class singles and couples who have retired or are getting close to it. These empty-nesters tend to own their homes but have modest educations and incomes. They maintain a low-key lifestyle filled with newspapers and television by day, and family-style restaurants at night.

**Social Group:** [City Centers](#)  
**Lifestage Group:** [Cautious Couples](#)

**2007 Statistics:**

US Households: 1,889,008 (1.66%)  
 Median HH Income: \$38,280

**Lifestyle Traits**

- Belong to a veterans' club
- Eat at casual/buffet restaurant
- CBS Sunday Night Movie TV
- Price is Right TV
- Mercury Grand Marquis

**Demographics Traits:**

Urbanicity: Second City  
 Income: Lower-Mid  
 Income Producing Assets: Moderate  
 Age Ranges: Age 55+  
 Presence of Kids: Mostly w/o Kids  
 Homeownership: Homeowners  
 Employment Levels: Mostly Retired  
 Education Levels: High School Grad  
 Ethnic Diversity: White, Black, Mix

### 47 City Startups



Low Income, Younger w/o Kids

In City Startups, young, multi-ethnic singles have settled in neighborhoods filled with cheap apartments and a commercial base of cafés, bars, laundromats, and clubs that cater to twentysomethings. One of the youngest segments in America—with ten times as many college students as the national average—these neighborhoods feature low incomes and high concentrations of African-Americans.

**Social Group:** [Micro-City Blues](#)  
**Lifestage Group:** [Striving Singles](#)

**2007 Statistics:**

US Households: 1,271,177 (1.12%)  
 Median HH Income: \$23,196

**Lifestyle Traits**

- Go snowboarding
- Play soccer
- Jane magazine
- Late Night with Conan O'Brien
- Suzuki Aerio

**Demographics Traits:**

Urbanicity: Second City  
 Income: Low Income  
 Income Producing Assets: Low  
 Age Ranges: Age <35  
 Presence of Kids: HH w/o Kids  
 Homeownership: Renters  
 Employment Levels: White Collar, Mix  
 Education Levels: Some College  
 Ethnic Diversity: White, Black, Asian, Mix

### 53 Mobility Blues



Low Income, Younger w/o Kids

Mobility Blues is a segment of young singles in working-class neighborhoods in America's satellite cities. Ethnically diverse and young, these transient Americans tend to have modest lifestyles due to their lower-income jobs. Surveys show they excel in going to movies, playing basketball, and shooting pool.

**Social Group:** [Micro-City Blues](#)  
**Lifestage Group:** [Striving Singles](#)

**2007 Statistics:**

US Households: 1,326,675 (1.17%)

**Demographics Traits:**

Urbanicity: Second City

Median HH Income: \$28,614

**Lifestyle Traits**

- Go to college basketball games
- Shop at Express
- WWE Magazine (wrestling)
- George Michael Sports Machine TV
- Kia Rio

Income: Low Income  
 Income Producing Assets: Low  
 Age Ranges: Age <35  
 Presence of Kids: HH w/o Kids  
 Homeownership: Mix, Renters  
 Employment Levels: White Collar, Mix  
 Education Levels: Some College  
 Ethnic Diversity: White, Black, Asian, Hispanic

Ethnic Diversity: White, Black, Mix

**60 Park Bench Seniors**



Low Income, Older Mostly w/o Kids

Park Bench Seniors are typically retired singles living in the racially diverse neighborhoods of the nation's satellite cities. With modest educations and incomes, these residents maintain low-key, sedentary lifestyles. They are one of the top-ranked segments for TV viewing, especially daytime soaps and game shows.

**Social Group:** [Micro-City Blues](#)  
**Lifestage Group:** [Sustaining Seniors](#)

**2007 Statistics:**

US Households: 1,199,575 (1.06%)  
 Median HH Income: \$23,409

**Lifestyle Traits**

- Watch Game Show Network
- Eat at Blimpie's
- Daytime TV
- Hollywood Squares TV
- Kia Rio

**Demographics Traits:**

Urbanicity: Second City  
 Income: Low Income  
 Income Producing Assets: Low  
 Age Ranges: Age 55+  
 Presence of Kids: Mostly w/o Kids  
 Homeownership: Renters  
 Employment Levels: Mostly Retired  
 Education Levels: Some High School

**62 Hometown Retired**



Low Income, Mature Mostly w/o Kids

With three-quarters of all residents over 65 years old, Hometown Retired is one of the oldest segments. These racially diverse seniors tend to live in aging homes--half were built before 1958--and typically get by on social security and pensions. Because most never made it beyond high school and spent their working lives at blue-collar jobs, their retirements are extremely modest.

**Social Group:** [Micro-City Blues](#)  
**Lifestage Group:** [Sustaining Seniors](#)

**2007 Statistics:**

US Households: 1,249,908 (1.10%)  
 Median HH Income: \$26,682

**Lifestyle Traits**

- Eat at Golden Corral
- Watch soap operas
- CBS Sunday Night Movie TV
- Montel Williams Show TV
- Chrysler Sebring

**Demographics Traits:**

Urbanicity: Second City  
 Income: Low Income  
 Income Producing Assets: Below Avg.  
 Age Ranges: Age 65+  
 Presence of Kids: Mostly w/o Kids  
 Homeownership: Homeowners  
 Employment Levels: Mostly Retired  
 Education Levels: Some High School  
 Ethnic Diversity: White, Black, Mix

# VII. Appendix

## Market Study



### 63 Family Thrifts

Lower-Mid, Younger w/ Kids

The small-city cousins of inner-city districts, Family Thrifts contain young, ethnically diverse parents who have lots of children and work entry-level service jobs. In these apartment-filled neighborhoods, visitors find the streets jam-packed with babies and toddlers, tricycles and basketball hoops, Daewoos and Hyundais.

**Social Group:** [Micro-City Blues](#)  
**Lifestage Group:** [Sustaining Families](#)

#### 2007 Statistics:

US Households: 1,895,774 (1.67%)

Median HH Income: \$29,787

#### Lifestyle Traits

- Buy rap music
- Eat fast food
- Vibe magazine
- Toon Disney channel
- Kia Spectra

#### Demographics Traits:

Urbanicity: Second City  
 Income: Lower-Mid  
 Income Producing Assets: Low  
 Age Ranges: Age 25-44  
 Presence of Kids: HH w/ Kids  
 Homeownership: Mix, Renters  
 Employment Levels: WC, Service, Mix  
 Education Levels: High School Grad  
 Ethnic Diversity: White, Black, Hispanic

### Appendix B: Aggregate Sales Leakage Data for Bloomington and Normal

Sales leakage analysis compares an area's current retail sales against the potential spending power of local households. Strategic Economics used Claritas sales leakage data to inform the retail analysis in this report. The complete leakage data is presented below. However, the apparent surplus of retail in Bloomington and Normal should not necessarily be interpreted as "over-retailing," as these two cities serve a much bigger trade area encompassing much of McLean County and surrounding counties.

RMP Opportunity Gap - Retail Stores 2008  
 Bloomington and Normal

Retail Stores	Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
<b>Total Retail Sales Incl Eating and Drinking Places</b>	<b>2,105,245,039</b>	<b>2,038,032,223</b>	<b>67,212,816</b>
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers-441	412,377,651	288,261,790	124,115,861
Automotive Dealers-4411	354,830,898	262,047,338	92,783,560
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers-4412	26,292,509	14,066,648	12,225,861
Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire Stores-4413	31,254,244	12,147,804	19,106,440
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442	51,658,105	65,260,272	-13,602,167
Furniture Stores-4421	27,780,779	22,275,451	5,505,328
Home Furnishing Stores-4422	23,877,326	42,984,821	-19,107,495
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	52,260,973	41,070,287	11,190,686
Appliances, TVs, Electronics Stores-44311	38,986,051	32,721,792	6,264,259
Household Appliances Stores-443111	7,981,287	5,281,033	2,700,254
Radio, Television, Electronics Stores-443112	31,004,764	27,440,759	3,564,005
Computer and Software Stores-44312	11,223,521	8,087,495	3,136,026
Camera and Photographic Equipment Stores-44313	2,051,401	261,000	1,790,401
Building Material, Garden Equip Stores -444	222,982,984	274,020,623	-51,037,639
Building Material and Supply Dealers-4441	204,455,627	253,086,260	-48,630,633
Home Centers-44411	81,841,489	82,543,501	-702,012
Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412	4,532,488	14,775,733	-10,243,245
Hardware Stores-44413	17,221,267	8,201,368	9,019,899
Other Building Materials Dealers-44419	100,860,383	147,565,658	-46,705,275
Building Materials, Lumberyards-444191	34,609,317	50,321,522	-15,712,205
Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores-4442	18,527,357	20,934,363	-2,407,006
Outdoor Power Equipment Stores-44421	2,659,923	3,711,174	-1,051,251
Nursery and Garden Centers-44422	15,867,434	17,223,189	-1,355,755
Food and Beverage Stores-445	235,657,487	132,772,843	102,884,644
Grocery Stores-4451	211,838,790	124,157,482	87,681,308
Supermarkets, Grocery (Ex Conv) Stores-44511	200,338,139	122,157,944	78,180,195
Convenience Stores-44512	11,500,651	1,999,538	9,501,113
Specialty Food Stores-4452	6,392,802	2,520,575	3,872,227
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores-4453	17,425,895	6,094,786	11,331,109
Health and Personal Care Stores-446	99,293,663	103,516,040	-4,222,377
Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	85,707,007	87,587,837	-1,880,830
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores-44612	3,340,718	5,869,336	-2,528,618
Optical Goods Stores-44613	4,300,212	6,397,043	-2,096,831
Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619	5,945,726	3,661,824	2,283,902

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## RMP Opportunity Gap - Retail Stores 2008 Bloomington and Normal

Retail Stores	Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
Gasoline Stations-447	221,732,945	258,481,123	-36,748,178
Gasoline Stations With Conv Stores-44711	167,652,746	177,817,282	-10,164,536
Other Gasoline Stations-44719	54,080,199	80,663,841	-26,583,642
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448	104,945,426	144,745,522	-39,800,096
Clothing Stores-4481	76,711,936	111,580,067	-34,868,131
Men's Clothing Stores-44811	4,907,100	4,544,427	362,673
Women's Clothing Stores-44812	20,328,495	17,482,131	2,846,364
Childrens, Infants Clothing Stores-44813	3,692,414	1,248,893	2,443,521
Family Clothing Stores-44814	40,993,674	78,828,634	-37,834,960
Clothing Accessories Stores-44815	1,730,259	3,847,969	-2,117,710
Other Clothing Stores-44819	5,059,994	5,628,013	-568,019
Shoe Stores-4482	13,663,249	20,560,557	-6,897,308
Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores-4483	14,570,241	12,604,898	1,965,343
Jewelry Stores-44831	13,440,103	12,604,898	835,205
Luggage and Leather Goods Stores-44832	1,130,138	0	1,130,138
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451	48,214,375	66,966,941	-18,752,566
Sportng Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores-4511	28,964,267	35,690,373	-6,726,106
Sporting Goods Stores-45111	15,349,163	11,261,223	4,087,940
Hobby, Toys and Games Stores-45112	8,691,497	15,651,782	-6,960,285
Sew/Needlework/Piece Goods Stores-45113	1,990,294	2,662,802	-672,508
Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores-45114	2,933,313	6,114,566	-3,181,253
Book, Periodical and Music Stores-4512	19,250,108	31,276,568	-12,026,460
Book Stores and News Dealers-45121	14,475,503	24,607,643	-10,132,140
Book Stores-451211	13,982,440	24,541,434	-10,558,994
News Dealers and Newsstands-451212	493,063	66,209	426,854
Prerecorded Tapes, CDs, Record Stores-45122	4,774,605	6,668,925	-1,894,320
General Merchandise Stores-452	253,983,083	319,535,649	-65,552,566
Department Stores Excl Leased Depts-4521	123,805,192	134,029,898	-10,224,706
Other General Merchandise Stores-4529	130,177,891	185,505,751	-55,327,860
Warehouse Clubs and Super Stores-45291	111,333,577	160,729,031	-49,395,454
All Other General Merchandise Stores-45299	18,844,314	24,776,720	-5,932,406
Miscellaneous Store Retailers-453	55,324,791	65,896,219	-10,571,428
Florists-4531	3,779,424	3,799,710	-20,286
Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532	22,407,605	28,869,476	-6,461,871
Office Supplies and Stationery Stores-45321	12,689,474	7,826,581	4,862,893
Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322	9,718,131	21,042,895	-11,324,764
Used Merchandise Stores-4533	5,000,150	2,965,152	2,034,998
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539	24,137,612	30,261,881	-6,124,269
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## RMP Opportunity Gap - Retail Stores 2008 Bloomington and Normal

Retail Stores	Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
Non-Store Retailers-454	140,821,125	36,933,793	103,887,332
Electronic Shopping, Mail-Order Houses-4541	102,397,732	22,236,264	80,161,468
Vending Machine Operators-4542	4,871,008	721,999	4,149,009
Direct Selling Establishments-4543	33,552,385	13,975,530	19,576,855
Foodservice and Drinking Places-722	205,992,431	240,571,121	-34,578,690
Full-Service Restaurants-7221	95,144,665	120,450,448	-25,305,783
Limited-Service Eating Places-7222	83,099,795	93,788,461	-10,688,666
Special Foodservices-7223	17,099,195	14,959,875	2,139,320
Drinking Places -Alcoholic Beverages-7224	10,648,776	11,372,337	-723,561
GAFO *	533,469,567	666,448,147	-132,978,580
General Merchandise Stores-452	253,983,083	319,535,649	-65,552,566
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448	104,945,426	144,745,522	-39,800,096
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442	51,658,105	65,260,272	-13,602,167
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	52,260,973	41,070,287	11,190,686
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451	48,214,375	66,966,941	-18,752,566
Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532	22,407,605	28,869,476	-6,461,871

\* GAFO (General merchandise, Apparel, Furniture and Other) represents sales at stores that sell merchandise normally sold in department stores. This category is not included in Total Retail Sales Including Eating and Drinking Places.

Claritas' RMP data is derived from two major sources of information. The demand data is derived from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE Survey), which is fielded by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The supply data is derived from the Census of Retail Trade (CRT), which is made available by the U.S. Census.

The difference between demand and supply represents the opportunity gap or surplus available for each retail outlet in the specified reporting geography. When the demand is greater than (less than) the supply, there is an opportunity gap (surplus) for that retail outlet. For example, a positive value signifies an opportunity gap, while a negative value signifies a surplus.

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# VII. Appendix

## Market Study

### Appendix C: Downtown Retail Map, Including Business Names and Categories



See next page for business listing

RETAIL		RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS		ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT		SERVICES		COMMUNITY	
1. A Gridley Antiques	217 E. Front	1. Bangkok Thai	105 W. Front	1. Artists Around the Corner	101 W. Monroe	1. Downtown Bloomington Assoc. / Downtown Information Center	106 W. Monroe	1. Bloomington Public Library	205 E. Olive
2. A Renée	304 N. Center	2. Blimpie	109 W. Jefferson	2. Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts	400 N. East	2. Flatlander/Business Builders	115 E. Monroe	2. City Hall	109 E. Olive
3. Abe on 66	402 1/2 N. Main	3. Boo Boo's Dawg House	116 W. Washington	3. Eaton Studio and Gallery	411 N. Center	3. Fox & Hounds Hair Studio and Day Spa at the Monroe Centre	200 W. Monroe	3. City East	102 S. East
4. About Books	221 E. Front	4. Central Station/The Loft	220 E. Front	4. Gregor Gallery	311 N. Main	4. Glitterati	405 N. Main	4. Canteen	107 W. Front
5. The Bead Parlor	318 N. Main	5. CoFee Hound	407 N. Main	5. Heartland Bank	205 N. Main	5. Hearland Bank	205 N. Main	5. Daddios	527 N. Main
6. Beck's Family Florist	312 N. Main	6. Crossroads Global Handcrafts	428 N. Main	6. Main Gallery 404	404 N. Main	6. Main Street Yoga	418 N. Main	6. Diggers Again	230 E. Front
7. Bedtime Boutique	616 N. Madison	7. Gryllia's Aerie	413 N. Main	7. Matt Erickson Art Studio	115 E. Monroe	7. Main Street Studio	418 N. Main	7. Elroy's	102 W. Washington
8. Bill's Key & Lock Shop	402 N. Main	8. Grand Café	615 N. Main	8. McLean County Arts Center	401 N. East	8. Monroe Building Studios	101 W. Monroe	8. Government Center	115 E. Washington
9. Bliss	418 N. Main	9. Kelly's Bakery and Café	113 N. Center	9. Michael Dubina & Thursday Gervais Art Studios	109 W. Front	9. National City	202 E. Washington	9. McLean County Museum of History	200 N. Main
10. Burpo's Boutique	106 W. Washington	10. LaBamba	108 W. Washington	10. Michael Lambrose Fine Art Studio	201 Suite 201	10. Osborn & DeLong	102 W. Market	10. Pepsil Ice Center	201 S. Roosevelt
11. CVS Pharmacy	210 N. Center	11. Lancaster's Fine Dining	513 N. Main	11. Monroe Building Studios	101 W. Monroe	11. The Pantagraph	321 W. Washington	11. Sie Strings	523 N. Center
12. Chocolatier	514 N. Main	12. Luca's Grill	110 E. Market	12. Angel Ambrose Fine Art Studio	202 E. Washington	12. Paul's Upholstery	618 N. Main	12. Fat Jack's	511 N. Main
13. Churchill's Formal Wear	422 N. Main	13. Michael's Restaurant / Chasers	110 E. Market	13. Darin Dawdy	301 Suite 203	13. Psychopathic Ink	507 N. Center	13. Illinois Brewing Company	102 N. Center
14. Circo 1912	409 N. Main	14. Mi Tierra Mercado Latino	411 N. Main	14. Jeff Little Studio	111 W. Monroe	14. Second Presbyterian Church	213 N. East	14. Killarney's Irish Pub	523 N. Main
15. City Consignments	426 N. Main	15. MusicCenter	417 N. Main	15. Joann Goetzinger Studio	210 Suite 210	15. Select Screen Prints	405 W. Washington	15. Maguire's Pub	102 N. Center
16. Clark & Barlow Hardware	503 N. East	16. Our Chinese Daughter's Foundation	109 W. Monroe	16. Kelly's Bakery and Café	113 N. Center	16. Studio J Photography	116 W. Washington (upper)	16. Mulligan's	530 9th Street
17. Colley's Chess Café	320 N. Main	17. Pars Rug Gallery	229 E. Front	17. The Copy Shop	202 E. Washington	17. THRIVE Fitness Studio	412 N. Main	17. Paule's	612 N. Main
18. Common Ground Grocery	516 N. Main	18. Penelope's	426 N. Main	18. Commerce Bank	120 N. Center	18. Vici Tilton, LLC	200 W. Monroe, Suite 309	18. Rhine's	602 N. Main
19. Crossroads Global Handcrafts	428 N. Main	19. Pouquette's	416 N. Main	19. The Copy Shop	202 E. Washington	19. Vicki Tilton, LLC	200 W. Monroe, Suite 309	19. Permanent Cosmetic Technician	523 N. Center
20. Gryllia's Aerie	413 N. Main	20. Timothy Kent Gallery & Framing	236 E. Front	20. Downtown Bloomington Assoc. / Downtown Information Center	106 W. Monroe	20. Vogel's Tailor Shop	103 W. Monroe	20. Sie Strings	523 N. Center
21. Heartland Guitars	614 N. Main	21. Smoker's Den	406 N. Main	21. Flatlander/Business Builders	115 E. Monroe	21. The Bistro	316 N. Main	21. Fat Jack's	511 N. Main

Source: Downtown Bloomington Association (map and business listing), May 29, 2008

**Appendix D: Retail Demand Methodology Notes**

Strategic Economics estimated current and future Downtown Bloomington retail demand by expanding upon previous analysis completed by ZHA, Inc. for the document *Main Street: A Call for Investment*. ZHA's work included a subarea analysis for Downtown, but ZHA was not tasked to provide in-depth analysis of local conditions in Downtown Bloomington or long-range estimates of retail demand in the Study Area.

Retail spending projections were generated by applying ZHA's sales expenditure capture rates for both regional residents and local Study Area residents. These capture rates were translated into Study Area sales per capita and per household, and then projected forward based on regional population growth estimates generated by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and local household demand estimates generated by Strategic Economics in the housing market study portion of this report. The same spending data was used to determine current unmet demand for local goods and services in the Study Area. These estimates of current and future retail demand were then translated into square footage estimates via sales per square foot multipliers.

**Appendix E: Hotels in the Bloomington-Normal Region**

Name	City	# of Rooms	Meeting Space (sq ft)	Low Rate	High Rate	Average of High/Low Rates	Notes
Crowne Plaza Bloomington-Normal	Normal	160	10,000	\$153.00	\$299.00	\$226.00	Under Renovation
Doubletree Hotel & Conference Center	Bloomington	197	15,000	\$129.00	\$209.82	\$169.41	
Marriott Hotel & Conference Center	Normal	230	23,000				Under Construction
Courtyard by Marriott	Normal	78	675	\$150.00	\$152.00	\$151.00	
Hampton Inn & Suites	Normal	128	1,000	\$139.00	\$159.00	\$149.00	
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites	Bloomington	126	5,000	\$129.00	\$137.00	\$133.00	
Eastland Suites Hotel & Conference Center	Bloomington	112	3,200	\$94.00	\$169.00	\$131.50	
Parke Hotel & Conference Center	Bloomington	70	11,500			\$122.00	
Hampton Inn West	Bloomington	73		\$103.55	\$132.05	\$117.80	
Chateau Hotel & Conference Center	Bloomington	180	8,000	\$89.00	\$139.00	\$114.00	
Hawthorn Bloomington Hotel & Suites	Bloomington	73	3,000	\$98.10	\$126.00	\$112.05	
Country Inn & Suites (Airport)	Bloomington	82	425	\$97.51	\$122.00	\$109.76	
Candlewood Suites Hotel	Normal	110	500	\$99.00	\$119.00	\$109.00	
La Quinta Inn	Bloomington	100	650	\$84.00	\$134.00	\$109.00	
Holiday Inn Express West	Bloomington	81	750	\$104.00	\$110.00	\$107.00	
Holiday Inn Express LeRoy	LeRoy	63		\$97.75	\$115.00	\$106.38	
Fairfield Inn & Suites	Bloomington	76		\$94.00	\$109.00	\$101.50	
Holiday Inn Express & Suites	Normal	85	3,000	\$96.00	\$99.00	\$97.50	
Quality Inn & Suites East	Bloomington	89		\$63.00	\$126.00	\$94.50	
Comfort Suites	Normal	60		\$89.95	\$89.95	\$89.95	
Comfort Suites West	Bloomington	68		\$80.06	\$99.00	\$89.53	
Signature Inn	Normal	124	1,000	\$79.99	\$94.99	\$87.49	
Best Western University Inn	Normal	100	650	\$72.00	\$94.49	\$83.25	
Baymont Inn & Suites	Bloomington	103	480	\$80.10	\$80.10	\$80.10	
Days Inn & Suites	Normal	108	1,100	\$69.99	\$89.59	\$79.79	
Country Inn & Suites (West)	Bloomington	6		\$74.01	\$74.01	\$74.01	
Days Inn	Bloomington	56		\$69.99	\$74.99	\$72.49	
Ramada Limited & Suites	Normal	64	250	\$67.00	\$74.00	\$70.50	
Quality Inn & Suites West	Bloomington	83	2,100	\$59.99	\$74.99	\$67.49	
Super 8-LeRoy	LeRoy	41		\$59.00	\$69.00	\$64.00	
Extended Stay America	Bloomington	101		\$57.00	\$66.49	\$61.75	
Super 8 -McLean	McLean	41		\$51.84	\$61.27	\$56.56	
Super 8-Normal	Normal	52		\$54.00	\$54.00	\$54.00	
Econolodge	Bloomington	30		\$47.69	\$53.09	\$50.39	
America's Best Inn	Bloomington	107		\$47.25	\$52.50	\$49.88	
Super 8-Bloomington	Bloomington	60		\$49.49	\$49.49	\$49.49	
Motel 6	Normal	97					
Super 8-Chenoa	Chenoa	38					
Burr House	Bloomington	6					Bed and Breakfast
Davis Rose Inn	Bloomington	3					Bed and Breakfast
Vrooman Mansion	Bloomington	5					Bed and Breakfast

Source: Bloomington-Normal Area Convention and Visitors Bureau 2009; American Automobile Association 2009; Strategic Economics 2009

# VII. Appendix

## Parking Inventory and Occupancy



**DOWNTOWN BLOOMINGTON PARKING ANALYSIS**  
REVISED JULY 1, 2009

### 1.0 Introduction

One of Downtown Bloomington's key assets is its supply of public parking, both on- and off-street. The result will be to establish a parking management framework for guiding the evolution of land uses and activities in Downtown Bloomington. The parking framework will include a summary description of existing parking facilities by type and location (utilization rates to be provided by the City of Bloomington); a review of best practice parking management systems and technologies; and a policy framework for public parking, including a 24-hour cycle of parking management goals in each context and how much to charge for parking in different areas. Recommendations will be made on how to allocate public parking revenues, how to integrate car share car parking, and how to modify off-street parking requirements in the Zoning Code. In support of this effort, Fish Transportation Group was commissioned by Farr Associates to collect parking usage data in the downtown area.

### 1.1 Study Area

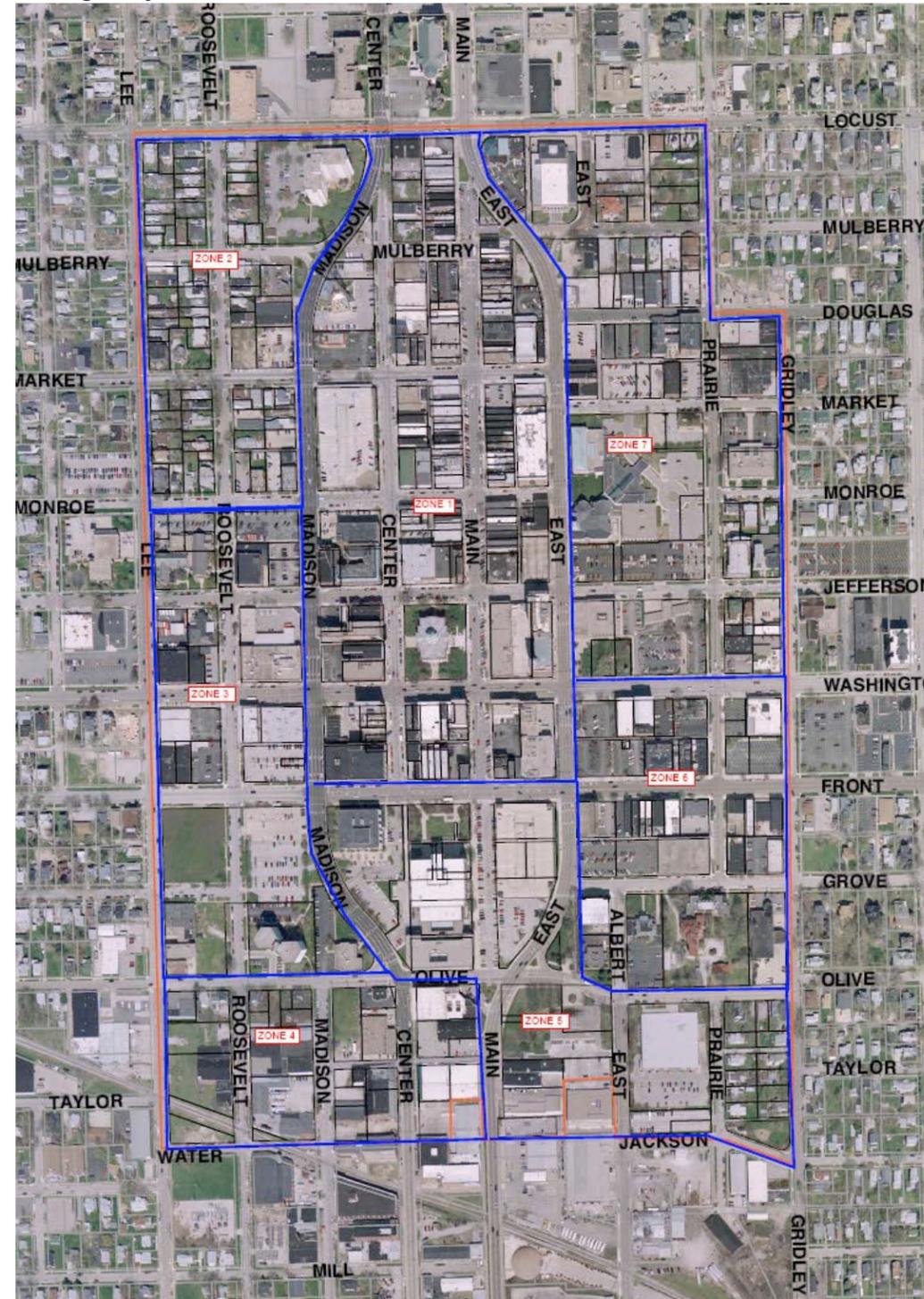
The downtown Bloomington parking study area is bounded by Locust Street on the north; Water/Jackson Streets on the south; Gridley/Prairie Streets on the east, and Lee Street on the west. Parking in downtown Bloomington is provided through on-street spaces (unmetered), public off-street spaces (garages and lots), and private off-street spaces (garages and lots). On-street spaces are not metered, but managed with time limits, generally 90-minute and 2-hour limits, with no peak period restrictions. There are numerous private off-street surface lots, generally designated for various retail, residential, and business uses.

The study area was divided into seven zones, based upon the general land uses. As shown in Figure 1, the zones include:

- Zone 1 – central downtown core, generally bounded by Locust, Front, East, and Madison Streets;
- Zone 2 – northwestern quadrant comprised primarily of residential uses; bounded by Locust, Monroe, Madison, and Lee Streets;
- Zone 3 – mid-western area generally comprised of industrial and warehouses; bounded by Monroe, Olive, Madison, and Lee Streets;

- Zone 4 – southwestern quadrant generally comprised of industrial uses; bounded by Olive, Water, Main, and Lee Streets;
- Zone 5 – southeastern quadrant primarily with civic uses; an “L” shaped zone generally bounded by Front and Olive on the north, Water/Jackson on the south, Gridley and East on the east, and Madison and Main on the west;
- Zone 6 – mid-eastern area primarily comprised of retail uses; bounded by Washington, Olive, Gridley, and East Streets; and,
- Zone 7 – northeastern quadrant comprised of a mix of land uses, bounded by Locust (and partially Douglas) on the north, Washington on the south, Gridley and Prairie on the east, and East St. on the west.

Figure 1  
 Parking Analysis Zones



2.0 Occupancy Counts

2.1 On-Street Parking

Inventory and occupancy counts of the on-street parking spaces were collected at various locations within the study area by City of Bloomington staff. The data was collected by the parking attendants that patrol the downtown area for parking violations. The attendants used a Casio 3000 handheld unit for chalking tires and writing tickets, which also has a feature for collecting parking utilization. Counts were taken on weekdays for the following general time periods:

- Thursday, October 31: 10am, 1pm, 3pm
- Friday, October 31: 8am, 1pm, 4pm
- Monday, November 3: 1pm, 2pm, 3pm
- Tuesday, November 4: 9am, 11am, 3pm
- Wednesday, November 5: 9am, 11am, 2pm

As shown in Table 1, 528 on-street spaces within the downtown study area were inventoried. These spaces are primarily 90-minute and 2-hour parking limits. Over the five days that were counted, the highest overall occupancy occurred in the afternoon, from about 3pm to 4pm, with a high of 63 percent at 3pm. For vehicular purposes, available parking is considered to be at capacity when about 85-90 percent of the available parking spaces are occupied.

Table 1  
 Summary of Parking Occupancy\*

Zone	INV	THURSDAY			FRIDAY			MONDAY			TUESDAY			WEDNESDAY		
		10a	1p	3p	8a	1p	4p	1p	2p	3p	9a	11a	3p	9a	11a	2p
1	344	88	209	243	109	219	184	166	229	96	146	219	194	112	234	196
3	53	7	19	18	6	13	24	17	20	20	16	27	24	6	37	19
5	34	7	13	17	6	13	21	7	29	8	9	12	19	2	19	16
6	53	12	23	17	15	24	29	12	12	11	15	15	25	12	13	13
7	44	19	30	38	25	22	21	17	25	22	26	30	28	26	25	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>% OCC</b>		<b>25%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>51</b>

\*No parking data was collected for blocks in zones 2 or 4.

Figure 2 presents a summary of parking occupancy for the peak period, Thursday, 3:00pm. During the peak time, there were several blocks in Zone 1 and Zone 7 that had occupancies of over 85 percent. The area bounded by Jefferson, Front, Madison, and Main Streets had the highest occupancies. In Zone 7, occupancies greater than 85 percent were experienced along Douglas Street and East Street.

# VII. Appendix

## Parking Inventory and Occupancy

**Figure 2**  
**Parking Occupancies during Peak Day/Time (Thursday, 3pm)**



While in total it appears that there is enough parking to meet current demand, there are a few blocks that experience higher parking use of on-street spaces. Most visitors desire to park as close to their destination as possible. Very few are willing to park more than about 500 feet from their destination. Employees, particularly in a downtown or more urban environment, are generally willing to park a bit further, but typically no more than about a 1/4 mile from their workplace. Therefore, while parking quantities could meet the “theoretical” demand, the location of the available parking could limit its use and effectiveness. Detailed inventory and occupancy information by zone are shown in tables 2 through 6. These tables show that some blocks experience occupancies of 85 percent or more during some portions of the day, particularly in Zone 1.

# VII. Appendix

## Parking Inventory and Occupancy

**Table 2**  
**Zone 1 Parking Inventory & Occupancy**

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study **ZONE 1** (rev 01/14/09)

Inventory & Occupancy - Absolute Numbers

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
1	100	Center St.	14	6	13	11	10	14	7	6	13	x	12	14	14	9	14	10
1	200	Center St.	17	9	13	15	8	14	13	11	15	x	17	16	13	5	15	11
1	300	Center St.	14	7	11	11	6	14	8	2	11	x	7	12	10	5	14	11
1	400	Center St.	18	1	7	11	0	8	6	9	10	7	6	4	9	2	12	8
1	500	Center St.	10	2	4	8	0	6	4	3	1	4	1	6	5	1	5	9
1	600	Center St.	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	0
1	100	Front St.	5	0	3	5	0	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	1	4	3	
1	200	Front St.	7	1	6	7	3	5	6	7	5	5	1	5	1	6	2	
1	100	Jefferson St.	13	3	12	12	2	12	11	11	12	x	6	11	12	6	11	10
1	200	Jefferson St.	12	3	12	12	6	11	11	10	10	11	8	12	8	7	11	10
1	100	Market St.	10	2	6	1	3	4	x	5	3	2	2	5	5	2	9	4
1	100	Monroe St.	11	2	8	7	2	8	8	5	8	3	3	2	6	5	9	6
1	100	N. Main St.	22	7	8	8	2	10	5	14	22	x	10	18	2	10	10	2
1	200	N. Main St.	24	9	23	21	18	22	10	9	21	x	16	14	19	6	23	21
1	300	N. Main St.	25	5	17	19	8	14	14	11	14	x	9	12	11	4	18	12
1	400	N. Main St.	39	13	27	33	23	27	31	35	26	24	22	38	36	29	26	25
1	500	N. Main St.	35	4	5	25	6	13	23	17	13	20	12	22	15	7	13	22
1	600	N. Main St.	35	5	14	18	11	15	19	x	27	x	7	8	8	9	16	13
1	100	W. Mulberry St.	10	4	4	4	0	3	0	2	1	1	0	1	4	1	2	1
1	100	W. Washington St.	7	3	7	7	0	5	2	x	7	6	0	6	6	1	7	6
1	200	W. Washington St.	12	2	9	8	1	8	0	x	4	9	4	9	3	0	7	10
		<b>Zone 1 TOTAL</b>	344	88	209	243	109	219	184	166	229	96	146	219	194	112	234	196
		peak day/time		26%	61%	71%	32%	64%	53%	48%	67%	28%	42%	64%	56%	33%	68%	57%

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study **ZONE 1** (rev 01/14/09)

Inventory & Occupancy - Percents

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
1	100	Center St.	14	43%	93%	79%	71%	100%	50%	43%	93%	n/a	86%	100%	100%	64%	100%	71%
1	200	Center St.	17	53%	76%	88%	47%	82%	76%	65%	88%	n/a	100%	94%	76%	29%	88%	65%
1	300	Center St.	14	50%	79%	79%	43%	100%	57%	14%	79%	n/a	50%	86%	71%	36%	100%	79%
1	400	Center St.	18	6%	39%	61%	0%	44%	33%	50%	56%	39%	33%	22%	50%	11%	67%	44%
1	500	Center St.	10	20%	40%	80%	0%	60%	40%	30%	10%	40%	10%	60%	50%	10%	50%	90%
1	600	Center St.	4	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	25%	100%	25%	25%	0%	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%
1	100	Front St.	5	0%	60%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	60%	60%	60%	60%	20%	80%	60%
1	200	Front St.	7	14%	86%	100%	43%	71%	86%	100%	71%	71%	14%	71%	71%	14%	86%	29%
1	100	Jefferson St.	13	23%	92%	92%	15%	92%	85%	85%	92%	n/a	46%	85%	92%	46%	85%	77%
1	200	Jefferson St.	12	25%	100%	100%	50%	92%	92%	83%	83%	92%	67%	100%	67%	58%	92%	83%
1	100	Market St.	10	20%	60%	10%	30%	40%	n/a	50%	30%	20%	20%	50%	50%	20%	90%	40%
1	100	Monroe St.	11	18%	73%	64%	18%	73%	73%	45%	73%	27%	27%	18%	55%	45%	82%	55%
1	100	N. Main St.	22	32%	36%	36%	9%	45%	23%	64%	100%	n/a	45%	82%	9%	45%	45%	9%
1	200	N. Main St.	24	38%	96%	88%	75%	92%	42%	38%	88%	n/a	67%	58%	79%	25%	96%	88%
1	300	N. Main St.	25	20%	68%	76%	32%	56%	56%	44%	56%	n/a	36%	48%	44%	16%	72%	48%
1	400	N. Main St.	39	33%	69%	85%	59%	69%	79%	90%	67%	62%	56%	97%	92%	74%	67%	64%
1	500	N. Main St.	35	11%	14%	71%	17%	37%	66%	49%	37%	57%	34%	63%	43%	20%	37%	63%
1	600	N. Main St.	35	14%	40%	51%	31%	43%	54%	n/a	77%	n/a	20%	23%	23%	26%	46%	37%
1	100	W. Mulberry St.	10	40%	40%	40%	0%	30%	0%	20%	10%	10%	0%	10%	40%	10%	20%	10%
1	100	W. Washington St.	7	43%	100%	100%	0%	71%	29%	n/a	100%	86%	0%	86%	86%	14%	100%	86%
1	200	W. Washington St.	12	17%	75%	67%	8%	67%	0%	n/a	33%	75%	33%	75%	25%	0%	58%	83%
		90%+ occupancy																

**Table 3**  
**Zone 3 Inventory & Occupancy**

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study **ZONE 3** (rev 01/14/09)

Inventory & Occupancy - Absolute Numbers

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
3	300	Front St.	5	0	1	1	0	2	2	3	3	1	0	3	2	0	5	2
3	300	Jefferson St.	4	3	4	2	2	3	4	3	4	4	1	4	3	3	2	4
3	100	N. Roosevelt St.	11	1	5	5	0	3	6	6	2	4	6	4	8	0	11	1
3	200	N. Roosevelt St.	14	2	7	7	2	1	5	5	3	5	5	6	6	2	9	6
3	300	W. Washington St.	14	1	2	3	2	4	7	x	7	6	4	10	5	1	10	5
3	400	W. Washington St.	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	x	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		<b>Zone 3 TOTAL</b>	53	7	19	18	6	13	24	17	20	20	16	27	24	6	37	19
		peak day/time		13%	36%	34%	11%	25%	45%	32%	38%	38%	30%	51%	45%	11%	70%	36%

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study

Inventory & Occupancy - Percents

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
3	300	Front St.	5	0%	20%	20%	0%	40%	40%	60%	60%	20%	0%	60%	40%	0%	100%	40%
3	300	Jefferson St.	4	75%	100%	50%	50%	75%	100%	75%	100%	100%	25%	100%	75%	75%	50%	100%
3	100	N. Roosevelt St.	11	9%	45%	45%	0%	27%	55%	55%	18%	36%	55%	36%	73%	0%	100%	9%
3	200	N. Roosevelt St.	14	14%	50%	50%	14%	7%	36%	36%	21%	36%	36%	43%	43%	14%	64%	43%
3	300	W. Washington St.	14	7%	14%	21%	14%	29%	50%	n/a	50%	43%	29%	71%	36%	7%	71%	36%
3	400	W. Washington St.	5	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%
		90%+ occupancy																

# VII. Appendix

## Parking Inventory and Occupancy

**Table 4**  
**Zone 5 Inventory & Occupancy**

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study **ZONE 5** (rev 01/14/09)  
Inventory & Occupancy - Absolute Numbers

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
5	100	E. Olive St.	7	0	1	1	0	1	3	x	7	x	0	1	2	1	1	0
5	200	E. Olive St.	20	0	10	12	4	11	11	0	20	8	5	9	11	1	11	11
5	100	W. Olive St.	7	7	2	4	2	1	7	7	2	x	4	2	6	0	7	5
		<b>Zone 5 TOTAL</b>	34	7	13	17	6	13	21	7	29	8	9	12	19	2	19	16
		peak day/time		21%	38%	50%	18%	38%	62%	21%	85%	24%	26%	35%	56%	6%	56%	47%

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study  
Inventory & Occupancy - Percents

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
5	100	E. Olive St.	7	0%	14%	14%	0%	14%	43%	n/a	100%	n/a	0%	14%	29%	14%	14%	0%
5	200	E. Olive St.	20	0%	50%	60%	20%	55%	55%	0%	100%	40%	25%	45%	55%	5%	55%	55%
5	100	W. Olive St.	7	100%	n/a	57%	29%	14%	100%	100%	29%	n/a	57%	29%	86%	0%	100%	71%
		90%+ occupancy																

**Table 5**  
**Zone 6 Inventory & Occupancy**

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study **ZONE 6** (rev 01/14/09)  
Inventory & Occupancy - Absolute Numbers

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
6	200	E. Grove St.	18	1	0	1	2	0	3	1	8	x	2	4	3	2	3	2
6	200	E. Washington St.	24	10	17	14	13	24	17	x	x	11	12	9	17	10	10	6
6	100	N. Prairie St.	11	1	6	2	0	0	9	11	4	x	1	2	5	0	0	5
		<b>Zone 6 TOTAL</b>	53	12	23	17	15	24	29	12	12	11	15	15	25	12	13	13
		peak day/time		23%	43%	32%	28%	45%	55%	23%	23%	21%	28%	28%	47%	23%	25%	25%

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study  
Inventory & Occupancy - Percents

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
6	200	E. Grove St.	18	6%	0%	6%	11%	0%	17%	6%	44%	n/a	11%	22%	17%	11%	17%	11%
6	200	E. Washington St.	24	42%	71%	58%	54%	100%	71%	n/a	n/a	46%	50%	38%	71%	42%	42%	25%
6	100	N. Prairie St.	11	9%	55%	18%	0%	0%	82%	100%	36%	n/a	9%	18%	45%	0%	0%	45%
		90%+ occupancy																

**Table 6**  
**Zone 7 Inventory & Occupancy**

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study **ZONE 7** (rev 01/14/09)  
 Inventory & Occupancy - Absolute Numbers

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
7	200	E. Market St.	10	1	4	7	5	1	1	3	5	2	2	5	3	1	5	5
7	200	E. Douglas St.	26	16	25	23	20	20	18	14	20	20	24	25	24	25	19	20
7	600	N. East St.	8	2	1	8	0	1	2	x	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
		<b>Zone 7 TOTAL</b>	44	19	30	38	25	22	21	17	25	22	26	30	28	26	25	25
		peak day/time		43%	68%	86%	57%	50%	48%	39%	57%	50%	59%	68%	64%	59%	57%	57%

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study  
 Inventory & Occupancy - Percents

Zone	Block	Street	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
7	200	E. Market St.	10	10%	40%	70%	50%	10%	10%	30%	50%	20%	20%	50%	30%	10%	50%	50%
7	200	E. Douglas St.	26	62%	n/a	88%	77%	77%	69%	54%	77%	n/a	92%	96%	92%	96%	73%	77%
7	600	N. East St.	8	25%	13%	100%	0%	13%	25%	n/a	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	13%	0%
		90%+ occupancy																

**2.2 Off-Street Parking**

**2.2.1 Public Garages/Lots**

Data was provided by the City of Bloomington for five public parking garages/lots in the downtown study area:

- Market Street Garage, Zone 1
- US Cellular Coliseum Garage, Zone 3.
- Butler Lot, Zone 3
- Lincoln Lot, Zone 1
- Snyder Garage, Zone 1

All facilities include both monthly and hourly parking spaces, as presented in Table 7. Monthly permits are available to be “oversold” by about 10 percent, although only the Market Street garage is fully sold. The general users of these spaces are downtown employees and residents. Rates at these facilities are \$40 for monthly permit and \$0.65 per hour for the hourly public parking. Gates are down for paid parking Monday – Friday, 7:00am – 5:30pm at the Lincoln garage and 7:00am – 3:30pm for all other facilities. Parking is free nights and weekends.

**Table 7**  
**Downtown Parking Garages/Lots**

Facility	Total Spaces	Hourly Spaces	Monthly Spaces	Rented Monthly Spaces
Market St. Garage	550	68	482	502 (101%)
Coliseum Garage	275	171	104	33 (32%)
Butler Lot	71	38	33	25 (76%)
Lincoln Lot	906	100	806	517 (64%)
Snyder Garage	139	36	103	98 (95%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,941</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>1,538</b>	<b>1,168 (76%)</b>

Source: City of Bloomington

There is a total of 1,941 spaces available in these five facilities. Of the total number of spaces, almost 80% (1,538 spaces) are sold as monthly spaces, leaving only 20% available on an hourly basis. While the available monthly spaces are sold out at the Market St. garage, according to the City of Bloomington, many of the rented spaces are

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## Parking Inventory and Occupancy

not being used. The hourly spaces available to the public are only about half utilized. The Snyder Lot has nearly 90% of the spaces designated for monthly parking, while only 64% is being used, indicating that a greater number could be used for hourly parking. The Coliseum garage has a greater number of hourly spaces available to the public, with only about ¼ utilized. Table 8 shows the hourly parking data for public parking during the peak period (Thursday, 3pm). During any of the weekdays counted, the highest usage of the Market Street garage was 54 percent. For the Coliseum garage, the highest usage was 26 percent. The hourly spaces are more typically used during events at the Coliseum.

**Table 8**  
**Public Garages Inventory & Occupancy of Hourly Spaces**

(rev 01/14/09)

City of Bloomington Downtown Parking Study Inventory & Occupancy - Public Garages																		
Zone	Block	Garage	Inventory (capacity)	10/30/2008			10/31/2008			11/3/2008			11/4/2008			11/5/2008		
				10am	1pm	3pm	8am	1pm	4pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	9am	11am	3pm	9am	11am	2pm
3	400	Coliseum	146	4	26	24	3	38	19	x	6	33	3	38	27	1	31	23
				3%	18%	16%	2%	26%	13%	n/a	4%	23%	2%	26%	18%	1%	21%	16%
1	200	Market St.	68	10	14	17	13	26	37	32	20	29	17	28	27	14	22	23
				15%	21%	25%	19%	38%	54%	47%	29%	43%	25%	41%	40%	21%	32%	34%
		TOTAL	214	14	40	41	16	64	56	32	26	62	20	66	54	15	53	46
				7%	19%	19%	7%	30%	26%	15%	12%	29%	9%	31%	25%	7%	25%	21%

 Peak day/time

**2.2.2 Surface Parking lots**

Occupancy counts were conducted in six surface parking lots located in Zone 7 – Northeast Sector. This zone was identified as having potential redevelopment opportunities. The lots included in this analysis are listed in Table 9 and shown in Figure 3.

**Table 9  
 Surface Lot Occupancy Count Locations**

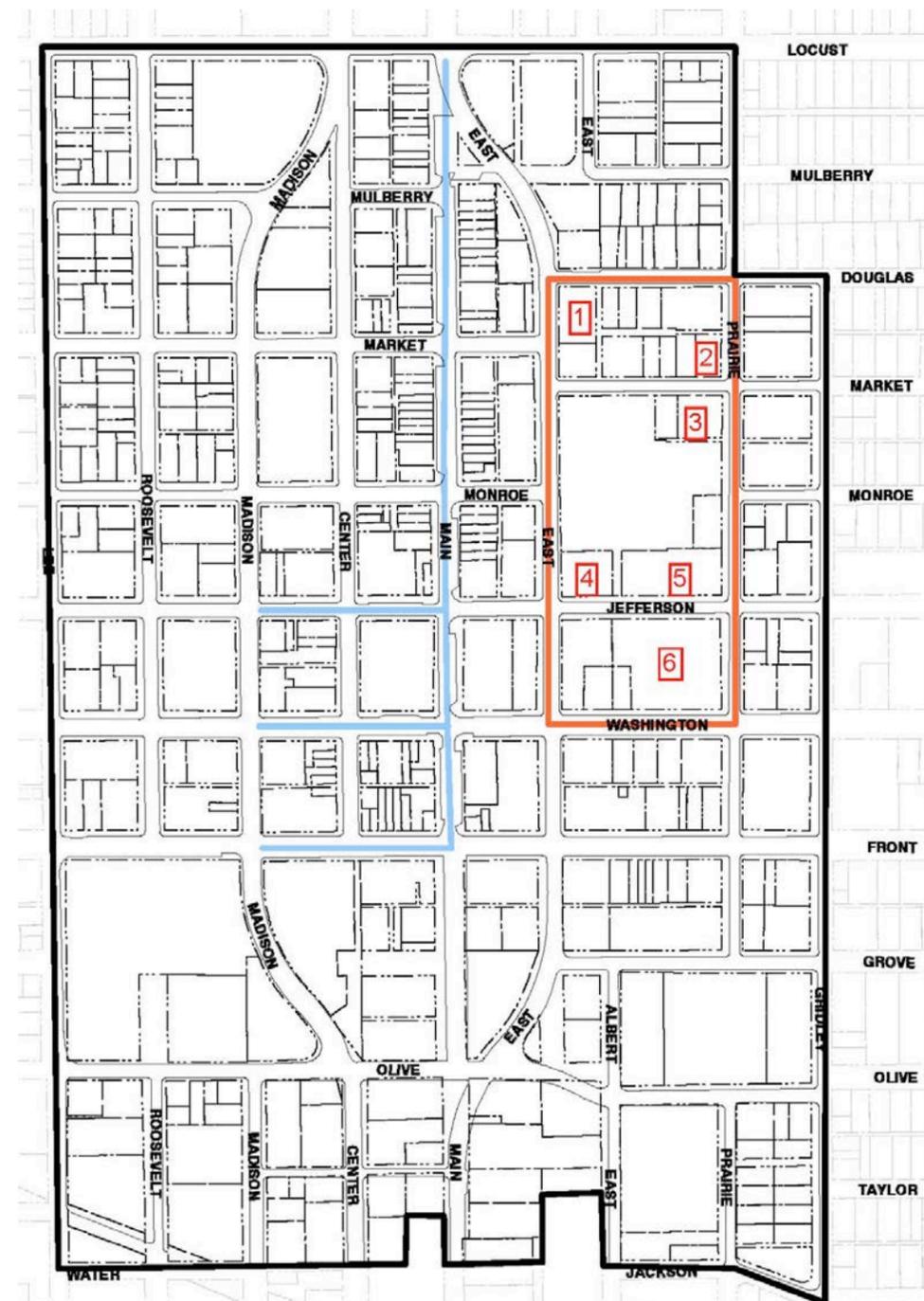
Lot No.	Name	Location	Inventory
1	Mixed Use 1	SE corner - Douglas & East	35
2	Mixed Use 2	NW corner – Prairie & Market	24
3	Church office lot	SW corner – Prairie & Market	40
4	Church parking lot	NE corner – Jefferson & East	37
5	State Farm/public	NW corner – Jefferson & Prairie	144
6	National City Bank	Prairie/Jefferson/Washington	96
Total			376

As shown in Table 9, there are a total of 376 spaces in the six lots counted. The largest lot is the State Farm lot/structure with 144 spaces. This lot is used for State Farm employees along with free public parking. All other lots are for private use with no general public parking available.

Occupancy counts were taken in May 2009 from 8am until 6pm. The State Farm/public lot had the highest occupancies, generally fully used from 8am until after 3pm. Mixed use lot 1 was considered full (over 85% occupied) during the mid-morning hours and mid-afternoon hours. Mixed use lot 2 was only about half used until after 4pm when its occupancy rate increased. All other lots were generally half full or less during most of the day.

Occupancy counts and percent occupancy for these lots are presented in Table 10.

**Figure 3  
 Turnover & Occupancy Count Locations**



Occupancy count locations = red highlighted area  
 Turnover locations = blue highlighted area

# VII. Appendix

## Parking Inventory and Occupancy

**Table 10**  
**Surface Lot Occupancy Counts**

City of Bloomington Parking Study  
Surface Lot Occupancy Counts - NE Sector

LOT	Name/Use	INV	OCCUPANCY (number)										
			8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	NOON	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM
1	Mixed use	35	22	33	30	28	26	31	30	27	17	9	4
2	Mixed use	24	10	9	9	11	11	13	14	15	17	17	17
3	Church office lot	40	5	31	34	28	24	23	22	26	23	14	10
4	Church Lot	37	5	3	2	4	4	6	6	5	4	4	11
5	State Farm/public	144	144	144	139	137	142	141	141	111	67	33	26
6	Nat'l City Banl	96	26	52	45	55	49	49	43	47	32	18	9
TOTAL		376	212	272	259	263	256	263	256	231	160	95	77

LOT	Name/Use	INV	OCCUPANCY (percent)										
			8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	NOON	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM
1	Mixed use	35	63%	94%	86%	80%	74%	89%	86%	77%	49%	26%	11%
2	Mixed use	24	42%	38%	38%	46%	46%	54%	58%	63%	71%	71%	71%
3	Church office lot	40	13%	78%	85%	70%	60%	58%	55%	65%	58%	35%	25%
4	Church Lot	37	14%	8%	5%	11%	11%	16%	16%	14%	11%	11%	30%
5	State Farm/public	144	100%	100%	97%	95%	99%	98%	98%	77%	47%	23%	18%
6	Nat'l City Banl	96	27%	54%	47%	57%	51%	51%	45%	49%	33%	19%	9%
TOTAL		376	56%	72%	69%	70%	68%	70%	68%	61%	43%	25%	20%

### 2.3 Turnover and Duration Analysis

In addition to inventory and occupancy studies, turnover/duration studies were also conducted. These studies tracked on-street parkers on selected blocks in the study area. Blocks identified for turnover studies were those in close proximity to the downtown core and were identified by the City as areas where parking is heavily used or had received complaints regarding parking. Twelve blocks were then selected for the turnover/duration analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to determine how often each parking space "turns over" (how many cars are parked in a space) during the day and the average length of time that a vehicle is parked in a space. This statistic is important to consider, as the longer that a vehicle is parked in an on-street space, the fewer spaces available.

Table 11 presents the turnover rates and average duration for on-street parking on a typical day in May, 2009. In the blocks selected for turnover studies, there were approximately 246 spaces that were occupied throughout the day by 999 different vehicles. Average turnover on the blocks studied was 4.1 and the average duration was 1.4 hours. This indicates that most of the on-street spaces in the area were being occupied by a vehicle for about 1 ½ hours, with about 4 vehicles occupied a parking space per day (during the study hours).

While a duration of 1.4 hours per vehicle appears to fit in with the posted time limits per space, it was observed that a number of the same vehicles were being moved from space to space throughout the day. Further analysis of the data showed that an, overall, an average of 20% - 30% of the spaces on each block were being occupied by the same vehicles being moved throughout the day. This finding was generally common across most of the blocks surveyed. This indicates that a number of people, most likely downtown employees, are moving their vehicles at the end of the time limit to avoid a parking ticket. The end result is that this action artificially lowers the duration length and increases the turnover rate. Should these vehicles be considered to be occupying a space for the entire day, the duration rates would actually be higher than the posted time limit.

The act of moving vehicles from parking space to parking space, while not illegal, does take up prime parking spaces during the day that could be used by downtown visitors and shoppers. However, this may not necessarily indicate a need for more employee parking, but also indicates some changes may be needed as to how parking resources are managed. While some employees may need their car accessible throughout the day, there appears to also be an unwillingness of some employees to walk from a lot further away, particularly when the on-street parking is free.

Table 11

**BLOOMINGTON DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY  
TURNOVER ANALYSIS SUMMARY**

BLOCK	DESCRIPTION	SPACE INVENTORY	VEH. PARKED	TOTAL ACCUMULATION	TURNOVER	DURATION
1	Main St (Mulberry-Locust)	35	102	153	2.9	1.5
2	Main St. (Market-Mulberry)	34	126	160	3.7	1.3
3	Main St. (Monroe-Market)	38	189	245	5.0	1.3
4	Main St. (Jerrerson-Monroe)	29	111	160	3.8	1.4
5	Jefferson (Main-Center)	15	50	84	3.3	1.7
6	Jefferson (Center-Madison)	12	51	77	4.3	1.5
7	Main St. (Washington-Jefferson)	24	117	167	4.7	1.4
8	Washington (Main-Center)	12	36	49	3.0	1.4
9	Washington (Center-Madison)	13	40	51	3.1	1.3
10	Main (Front-Washington)	20	105	140	5.3	1.3
11	Front (Main-Center; no. side)	6	33	39	5.5	1.2
12	Fron (Center-Madison; no.side)	8	39	51	4.9	1.3
	TOTAL	246	999	1376	4.1	1.4

Turnover - average number of vehicles using a parking space during study hours.

Duration - average length of time a vehicle occupies a parking space.

**2.4 Summary/Observations**

The parking analysis was based on data provided the City of Bloomington supplemented with an analysis of specific subareas. While the overall occupancy data did not include all public parking locations in the downtown, it does give an indication of how parking is being used, the locations that may warrant changes, and implications for future development/redevelopment. Several issues are identified relative to the demand for parking and location of parking.

- In total, there appears to be adequate parking to meet current (and potentially future) demand. There are, however, several blocks that experience higher parking use. The area bounded by Jefferson, Front, Main, and Madison Streets had the highest on-street occupancies.

- With occupancies of over 85-90 percent, visitors will drive around in search of available parking. Searching for available parking in close proximity to a preferred destination could lead to increased congestion and increased vehicular and pedestrian conflicts, along with potentially more occurrences of double parking.
- Public parking in some of the garages is underutilized. This is a relatively common occurrence in areas where free on-street parking is provided. The mix of monthly and hourly spaces should be revisited to determine the appropriate amount for each.
- In areas with higher occupancies, changes to the city’s parking pricing policies should be considered.
- Depending on surrounding land uses, a mix of time limits should be considered, such as 30-minute, 60-minute, and 2 hours.
- Continued opportunities for shared parking should be explored, particularly the use of private lots such as banks and churches, for evening/overnight parking.
- Future parking needs created by redevelopment activities, new businesses, or business expansions will need to be fulfilled by a combination of parking strategies, such as on-site parking, shared parking, a review of parking time limits, and a review of parking pricing.
- Turnover studies indicate that employees are moving vehicles throughout the day. A variety of options can be used to address the need that some employees may need their vehicle throughout the day, while “encourage” others to park in more appropriate locations. The use of a limited number of downtown parking permits could be available to employees who need to park near their work location. Adding meters or pay stations could “encourage” employees to park in lots further away. Having a mix of time limits could also encourage employees to park in less congested blocks and eliminate the need for them to move their vehicles throughout the day.

# VII. Appendix

## Parking Recommendations



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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kristin Ihnchak  
**From:** Nelson|Nygaard  
**Date:** March 10, 2009  
**Subject:** Parking Policy Framework Plan

### Parking Policy Framework Plan – Creating a Park-Once/ Shared-Parking Environment

The primary goal of any downtown Parking Policy should be to create an environment where very few downtown trips generate more than one parking action — converting drivers to pedestrians while they are downtown. Such an environment both relies upon and supports local streets that are lined with dense mixtures of interesting land uses and destinations. To achieve this, downtown needs an appealing, accessible supply of public parking spaces and an interesting and stimulating pedestrian environment that connects parking opportunities and downtown destinations.

We recommend a three-step Parking Management approach to move downtown Bloomington toward providing such an environment.

1. Emphasize the role of public parking in support of a vibrant downtown.
2. Use performance-targets to manage public spaces.
3. Convert parking revenues into downtown improvements.

### 1. Emphasize Public Parking

#### A. Update Parking Standards

When applied to downtown districts, a conventional approach to parking development — with a strong emphasis on accessory spaces reserved for individual destinations — dilutes the collective benefit of downtown attractions by spreading them further apart; reducing the visual and experiential quality of being downtown. Cities that have revised their downtown codes have sought to achieve more context-sensitive approaches that recognize these collective costs associated with applying conventional, suburban-oriented zoning standards in urban commercial centers.

These efforts have sought three, cross-supportive primary objectives: shifting to a collective emphasis on public, rather than private, supplies; increasing the effectiveness of existing supplies; and protecting the urban design virtues of traditional downtown forms — clustered uses linked by first-rate pedestrian networks. A set of best practices has emerged from these efforts that are worth considering for downtown Bloomington:

#### *Encourage Public Supplies*

- **In Lieu of Parking Fees** – Where there are no established minimum parking requirements, an In Lieu Fee can be instituted, based on the developed-area and the types of land uses for a proposed development. The fee should be strategically set low enough to appeal to developers (below the cost of on-site construction) while at the same time high enough to produce revenues sufficient to fund public supply construction or effective alternative mode investments.
- **Parking Maximums/ Moratoriums** – Set limits on on-site, accessory parking in areas where developable land is most constrained or to protect primary pedestrian zones.
- **Flexible Cap** – Allow developers to build beyond maximum parking standards in return for In Lieu Fee payment or investments in alternative modes — such as the provision of bicycle parking, the reservation of prime spaces for Carpool or Vanpool vehicles, or the provision of transit discounts, passes or reimbursements.

#### *Support Efficient Use of Supplies*

- **Unbundle Excess Parking** - Require that, where parking is constructed above the minimum standard, all parking be “unbundled” — the use or ownership of a parking space is identified as a separate, optional cost item for all building occupants. Typically, parking is “bundled” into the cost of leasing, renting, or purchasing office space or downtown condominiums. By requiring the separate, optional acquisition of parking access, cities can encourage more efficient private parking supplies by:
  - Creating a cost-incentive for tenants to reduce their parking consumption; and
  - Creating a cost-incentive for developers to only build as much parking as they can sell.
- **Demand Management** – Require or reward provision of commuter benefits designed to reduce on-site parking demand — transit vouchers, carpool spaces, cash for non-parking employees.
- **Car-Sharing** - Encourage car-sharing through requirements or incentives to offer spaces

to established car-sharing organizations.

**Protect Urban Design Virtues**

- **Wrap with Active Uses** - Require that all parking structures contain active, sidewalk-oriented, commercial or residential land uses at sidewalk level.
- **Disallow Surface Lot Development** – Prohibit new surface lots within the downtown. Or, at a minimum, require that they be located to the rear of active, sidewalk-oriented, commercial or residential land uses.
- **Minimize Width and Frequency of Curb Cuts** – Preserve more on-street spaces and minimize vehicle conflicts with pedestrian and transit movements.

**Figure 1 – Sidewalk-oriented uses can maintain pedestrian continuity in front of garages**



Photo: Payton Chung.

**B. Share Private Supplies**

*A walking customer is a shared customer.*

Encouraging the sharing of private, accessory parking lots within downtown is a means by which the effective public parking supply can be expanded without sacrificing developable land or paying high construction costs. Daytime uses such as banks, medical offices, dry cleaners, churches, and markets commonly have their own, dedicated parking facilities. These uses also frequently have well-defined peak-demand periods that neatly off-set similarly well-defined peak-use hours at evening-based downtown uses that typically struggle to provide on-site parking sufficient to their needs — i.e., restaurants, pubs and nightclubs, theaters, entertainment venues.

Downtown land constraints have long driven businesses to work out formal or informal arrangements to collectively meet parking needs through shared resources. The benefits of such arrangements, however, extend beyond the businesses directly involved. The use of off-site parking options generates walking traffic, adding to a sense of public vitality and exposing parking patrons to downtown uses beyond their primary destinations. Recognizing the shared benefits of this, many downtowns have explored means by which shared-parking can be publicly encouraged and supported.

**Valet-Parking**

Valet services can expand the effective-inventory serving downtown destinations by making parking facilities that would be either too inconvenient (remote) or off-limits (private) to self-parking customers. Valet operators typically make arrangements with owners of under-utilized parking facilities (public or private) that would otherwise be sit idle at times when parking-constrained uses typically experience peak demand. Additionally, valet operations can expand the effective-capacity of individual facilities by allowing efficient parking configurations such as tandem (bumper to bumper parking) and stacked (mechanical lifts) arrangements unavailable to self-parking operations.

**Shared-Parking Broker**

Creating a shared-parking broker is one popular means by which this can be done. Such a broker can help facilitate a higher volume of such arrangements by, among other things:

- Dealing with liability, insurance, and security issues;
- Tracking off-setting peaks to identify opportunities;
- Tracking constraints and opportunities, including terms under which surplus-holders would be willing to open up their inventories; and
- Impersonally connecting opportunities to constraints, rather than leaving it to individuals to take the initiative and negotiate with (go begging among) their neighbors.

Such a broker can typically be sought within the local Chambers of Commerce, existing business associations and improvement districts, or economic development agencies.

**2. Set Performance-Targets for Public Spaces**

**A. On-Street**

*Curbs that are too full are underpriced.*

Parking meters have been around for over 70 years, and are widely disparaged especially in smaller urban centers. The situation in Bloomington represents a common reaction to this history — turnover is encouraged through time limits rather than meters. Bloomington is also in good company in its struggles to enforce meter-less time limits. In fact the staffing commitments and/ or technology investments that would be necessary to effectively enforce existing limits would not only consume scarce public resources, they would engender tremendous resentment — without any conspicuous benefits.

The abandonment of pricing however is the direct result of the poor implementation of meters throughout most of their history. The meter was introduced specifically for the purpose of generating turnover among curb spaces for which demand would otherwise overwhelm supply. To work effectively in this manner, the price charged by the meters must be high enough to moderate parking stays; while not being so high that too many spaces remain empty. Political reluctance to set prices high enough to impact parking stays however has too often reduced

# VII. Appendix

## Parking Recommendations

meters to little more than tax-collection boxes – charging a fee for which there is no immediate, beneficial impact in terms of space availability.

Despite this history of mismanagement, pricing remains the most direct and most effective means for managing demand for, and thereby maintaining access to, public parking. What many downtown businesses and planners are now realizing is that ready-access is more valued by downtown patrons than is a low meter rate; and that it is in fact time limits, not specific meter rates, that create the most resentment and anxiety among downtown patrons.

Pricing that is demand-responsive and set to ensure availability even on the most popular blocks at the most popular times will provide at least two conspicuous benefits — spaces will be available for anyone willing to pay their market-price and time limits will become a thing of the past. Even more conspicuous benefits can accrue from this strategy by returning all meter revenues to fund local physical improvements, see below.

Following are recommended steps for establishing performance-targets for curb spaces:

1. Establish space availability – rather than supply, price, or turnover – as the primary performance measure for public parking resources.
2. Set an availability target of 15% for on-street spaces during peak hours —one or two open spaces on each block.
3. Install parking meters within the area between Madison and East streets, from Locust Street to Olive Street to allow better management of turnover and availability patterns among downtown’s most in-demand parking spaces.
4. Invest in meter technology that provides flexible, convenient payment options — credit cards, remote payment, cell phone payment, etc.
5. Invest in meter technology that provides strategic price management options including variable pricing by day, time-of-day, and length of stay.
6. Set parking fees based on demonstrated demand. After setting an initial parking rate of perhaps \$0.50 per hour, increase rates (in \$0.25 increments) along blocks with under-performing availability (less than 10%) and decrease rates along blocks with over-performing availability (more than 25%) every three months, based on observed availability patterns.
7. Use all parking revenues to fund payment of existing garage construction bonds, and to invest in conspicuous streetscape and/ or transportation improvements such as improved bus stops, downtown employee transit passes, crosswalk improvements, parking shuttles, and bicycle parking.

Figure 2 – Price to Re-Distribute Demand & Maintain Availability<sup>1</sup>



### B. Off-Street

Use pricing to address constraints as well as under-utilization.

Downtown's off-street garages also play a vital role in creating and supporting a park-once environment. Figure 3 below provides a summary of recent utilization data at two of the five current downtown public garages.

<sup>1</sup> 3:00 PM parking utilization measures from Thursday, October 30, 2008 provided by Fish Transportation Group.

**Figure 3 - Downtown Parking Garage Utilization**

Facility	Inventory	Monthly Spaces	Monthly Spaces Sold	Hourly Spaces	Peak Hourly Occupancy
Market St.	550	482	502	68	54%
Coliseum	275	104	33	171	26%
Combined	825	586	535	239	31%

Source: City of Bloomington

Spaces within downtown's two public garages accommodate both hourly and monthly parking, with each garage setting aside a portion of spaces for each. This is a common management practice that recognizes that off-street facilities are the preferable locations for commute-oriented parking, while at the same time acknowledging their role in supporting specific short-term and medium-term parking needs.

The recent occupancy patterns at these facilities, however, as assessed through data provided by the City of Bloomington, indicate an over-supply of short-term parking at each, while monthly parking is under-supplied at the Market Street garage. Under-supplying the monthly set-aside at this facility misses an opportunity to both increase public parking revenues and remove long-term parking pressure on nearby streets. Additionally, much of the short-term parking demand that exists today at these facilities is likely created as much by high curb-occupancies as by specific demand for garage parking.

Management of each facility should follow these basic guidelines:

1. Shift as much daylong parking demand away from curb spaces as possible.
2. Reserve garage spaces for short-term or long-term parking only to the extent that demand warrants.<sup>2</sup>
3. Reduce rates for short-term parking at each garage to half that of the lowest hourly-rate charged for on-street parking in downtown.
4. Use pricing to keep demand and supply in relative balance for monthly parking:
  - a. Leave the price for monthly permits for the Coliseum garage unchanged until any increased demand generated by the introduction of on-street meters can be assessed, after which adjust rates up or down in roughly 25% increments until demand reaches about 105% of the monthly space inventory.
  - b. Increase the monthly rate at the Market Street garage by 25%, and continue to adjust rates up or down to maintain demand at roughly 105% of the monthly space inventory, particularly after on-street metering is introduced.

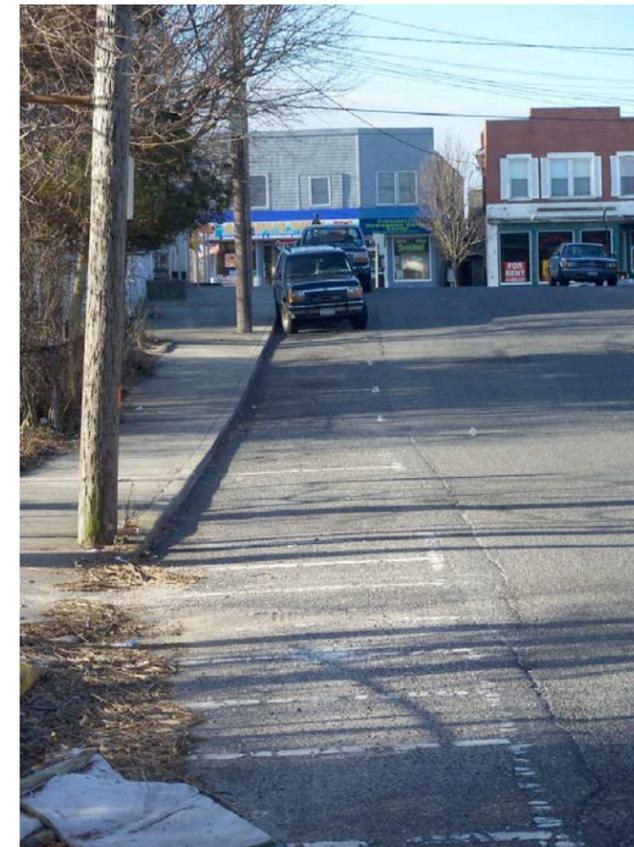
<sup>2</sup> Once on-street pricing is established to maintain space availability, demand for these spaces would be expected to fall even lower.

5. Make clear that the intent of the new pricing structure is to create a rational set of cost-convenience parking options by using demand-responsive rates to ensure availability among all parking options.
6. Use all parking revenues to fund payment of existing garage construction bonds, and to fund construction of new spaces if and when the City determines it is advisable to do so.

### 3. Use Parking Revenue to Improve Downtown

*Ensure that parking demand and public improvements are financially cross-supportive.*

**Figure 4—Under-investment can make parking feel more remote than it is**



Uptown, Port Jefferson, Long Island

Local parking consultants estimate that the distance people are willing to walk between parking and their downtown Bloomington destination ranges between 500 feet for visitors and one-quarter of a mile (1,320 feet) for employees.<sup>3</sup> Where the willingness-to-walk range is this limited — vibrant downtowns can count on walking ranges that begin at ¼-mile — it is difficult for downtown

<sup>3</sup> Fish Transportation Group, 2008.

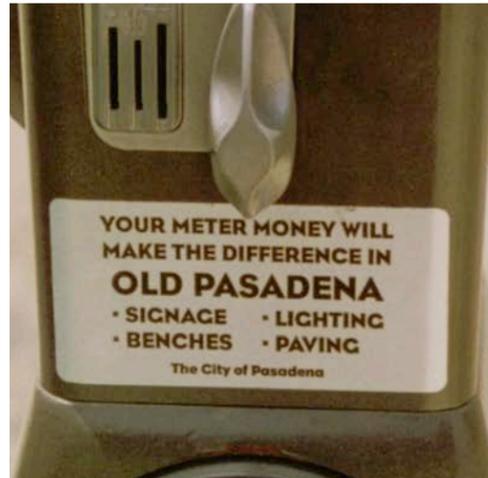
# VII. Appendix

## Parking Recommendations

destinations to rely on public parking supplies for their access needs. It is also a sign that parkers find the downtown environment less-stimulating than it should be.

Expanding the walking range of visitors and employees through physical improvements will allow public parking to absorb a greater share of existing and projected downtown parking demand. This symbiotic relationship can be enhanced by ensuring that parking revenues are used to fund downtown improvements— commonly referred to as a Parking Benefit District.

**Figure 5 - Return Parking Revenue for Downtown Improvements**



The Parking Benefit District approach has been used to combine price-based parking management with the creation of new revenue streams dedicated to improving the appearance and functionality of the areas generating parking demand. Keeping the revenue in the area where parking demand is created not only helps maintain and effective Park-Once environment, it is also typically a highly effective means for gaining the support for pricing strategies among local businesses. Creating a clear, conspicuous connection between money going into meters and the appearance of nearby improvements can also reduce resistance to meters among parking customers and keep people coming downtown.

## Appendix: Case Studies

Following are brief summaries of downtowns that have implemented some or most of the actions recommended above.

### Santa Monica, CA

Santa Monica is known for the lively pedestrian mall that anchors its downtown. Less known is the “Park Once” philosophy that allows the theaters, restaurants, offices and residences gathered along it to thrive with far less parking than conventional manuals predict is required for its constituent uses. Shared public lots and garages, strategically located, allow the downtown to function well with just 2.4 spaces per 1000 square feet of building space

### Davis, CA

The City's In Lieu Fees are set as "an amount equal to the value of the required parking on a per parking place basis" and must be expended by the City to "acquire and/or develop on-street or off-street parking and related facilities which are determined by the City Council to alleviate the need for parking spaces in the core area" (Municipal Code 40.25.060). In the downtown core area, commercial projects are prohibited from providing parking on-site parking unless it is "below grade or incorporated into the building in another way" in order to improve the cohesiveness of the commercial area.

### Redwood City, CA

For years planners provided two hours of free parking across downtown. At the same time planners were consistently asked by downtown businesses to do something about parking shortages. Planners determined that availability, not price, was the key goal for accommodating parking demand. Began a process to seek availability at a performance target:

- Installed pay-by-space meters
- Delegated rate-setting to city planning staff
- Directly pricing to seek occupancy goal of 85%
- Required quarterly utilization surveys
- Established differential pricing – higher rates on most popular blocks, lower rates on other blocks
- Captured revenue for construction of public garage that now fully supports a downtown movie theatre that has no dedicated parking of its own

The new pricing has allowed the City to maintain availability, even during peak hours, on the most popular downtown blocks. Another particularly instructive change that has improved conditions for local businesses is that the pricing has prodded local business owners and their employees to begin parking in the surface lots — lots originally developed for them in order to preserve curb parking for their customers. The combination of free parking, ineffective time limit enforcement, and the fact that owners and employees typically have first pick of spaces in the morning made it impossible to resist these spaces until they were priced appropriately.

### San Diego, CA

Beginning in 1997, 45% of meter revenue is returned to the districts that generate it. Referred to as “Parking Meter Districts” (PMDs), each must identify a governing body to identify investments

in which the funds will be spent. This must be a BID, a non-profit redevelopment corporation, or a community development corporation. The City Council appoints each PMD's advisory board and retains final approval of spending.

**Boulder, CO**

In the 1970's, the downtown of this university community was dying, saddled (among other problems) with a shortage of convenient customer parking and very little transit. Its economic revival has been catalyzed on the transportation side by several key policies: the complete abolition of parking requirements for all non-residential uses; charging for parking, with all revenues used to benefit the downtown; and a policy of funding the most cost-effective mix of transportation modes, instead of only parking garages. Recognizing that "the economics of parking garages are dismal", as one planner put it, the business-led downtown district now uses parking meter revenues to fund a range of demand reduction alternatives, including free transit passes for every downtown employee.

**Old Pasadena, CA**

In recent years, Old Pasadena has reemerged from its decline into Skid Row status. In 1993, the district's nascent revival was being hindered, as in Boulder, by a serious lack of convenient, available, front-door parking spots for customers. Old Pasadena then had no parking meters, and proposals to install them were opposed by local merchants, who feared charges would drive customers away. This opposition was reversed once it was agreed that all meter revenue would be set aside for public improvements within the Old Pasadena district.

To date, the \$1 per hour meters have funded the district's beautified alleys, street furniture, trees, tree grates and historic lighting fixtures, and fund its marketing, mounted police patrols, daily street sweeping and steam cleaning of sidewalks. Sales tax revenues quadrupled from 1992 to 1999, showing, perhaps counter-intuitively, that charging for parking can go hand-in-hand with remarkable revenue increases for local retailers.

The City's new garages have been wrapped in ground floor retail and restaurants, in order to minimize their impact on the pedestrian environment. Public garages are located one-half to one block from Colorado Boulevard, one of the main pedestrian corridors, while lots and structures are prohibited from facing this street.

**San Francisco, CA**

On August 2, 2005, the Board of Supervisors of San Francisco approved Planning Code amendments for Rincon Hill, a new mixed-use residential neighborhood adjacent to the downtown. Included in the amendments to the code were requirements for all parking to be underground, standards for residential parking up to a *maximum* of 1 space per 2 units "by right", no minimum parking requirements, required bicycle parking, car-share spaces, and the requirement that the cost of parking be unbundled from the cost of housing for both renters and homebuyers.<sup>4</sup>

Rincon Hill Area Plan amendments to the San Francisco Planning Code – Unbundled Parking

SECTION 167. PARKING COSTS SEPARATED FROM HOUSING COSTS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

(a) In DTR (downtown residential) Districts, all off-street parking spaces accessory to residential uses in new structures of 10 dwelling units or more, or in new conversions of non-residential buildings to residential use of 10 dwelling units or more, shall be leased or sold separately from the rental or purchase fees for dwelling units for the life of the dwelling units, such that potential renters or buyers have the option of renting or buying a residential unit at a price lower than would be the case if there were a single price for both the residential unit and the parking space. Renters or buyers of on-site inclusionary affordable units provided pursuant to Section 315 shall have an equal opportunity to rent or buy a parking space on the same terms and conditions as offered to renters or buyers of other dwelling units.

(b) Exception. The Planning Commission may grant an exception from this requirement for projects which include financing for affordable housing that requires that costs for parking and housing be bundled together.

<sup>4</sup> City and County of San Francisco, Planning Department, Rincon Hill Plan [http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning\\_index.asp?id=25076](http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning_index.asp?id=25076)



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**DRAFT**

**1. Bicycle Facilities**

Providing shared lane markings, such as a sharrow, will encourage greater bicycle use. A sharrow is a specific pavement marking and is used in each of the thoroughfare recommendations above. Sharrows indicate preferred routing and location for bicyclists within a thoroughfare travel lane and also indicate to motorists that cyclists are sharing the thoroughfare. Greater visibility of cyclists yields increased safety, especially in the vulnerable intersection turns area.

Sharrows are the preferred facility type for bicyclists on thoroughfares with posted speeds of 20 mph and 30 mph, particularly for streets with on-street parking. The sharrow pavement marking consists of a bicyclist or bicycle symbol with two chevrons on top, indicating the direction of travel (**Figure 5**). The sharrow should be located such that the center of the marking is along an imaginary line 5' away from the edge of the parking lane, if a parking lane is present, or 5' from the curb face if no parking lane is present. On multilane thoroughfares, the sharrow is located in the rightmost lane. The sharrow should be placed at the beginning and end of each block and at least once mid-block. If desired, a sign indicating "Share the Road" or "Bicyclists Sharing Road" may also be used in conjunction with the sharrow.



Figure 5: Sharrow Marking

Figures 6 and 7 below illustrate sharrows in use in Tallahassee, Florida. They are prevalent all over the country and are being included in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) next update.



Figure 6: Sharrow in Use in Tallahassee, FL



Figure 7: Sharrow in Use in Tallahassee, FL

More important than shared lane markings, from the perspective encouraging walkability and bikeability, is the provision of adequate bicycle parking at either end of the bicyclist's trip. Bicycle parking is often overlooked but critical to encouraging bicycle usage. Ideally, bicycle parking should be provided in the front of a store or building, in plain sight, easily visible from inside the store or building. HPE recommends the simple "U" rack for bicycle parking (See **Figure 8**). The "U" rack is simply 2" or 3" diameter pipe, bent into a "U" shape, and anchored into the sidewalk like an upside-down "U". A single rack can accommodate two bikes, one on either side, locked through the front wheel as well as the bike frame. Alternatively, the rack can accommodate up to four bikes if only the front wheels are locked to the rack, but the bikes will have no other support and will need kickstands to remain upright.



Figure 8: U-Racks Installed on a Sidewalk (Photo from Cycle Safe<sup>™</sup> Bike Racks)

HPE recommends installing a minimum of one bicycle rack, capable of supporting two bikes within the public frontage for every five vehicular parking space, oriented parallel to the street. This will allow the parked bicycles to take up space between the tree wells, rather than block the sidewalk.

## 2. Madison Street

Madison Street is currently 50' wide with four SB travel lanes and no on-street parking (see **Figure 9**).