



McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan




McLean County | City of Bloomington | Town of Normal

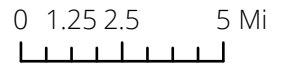
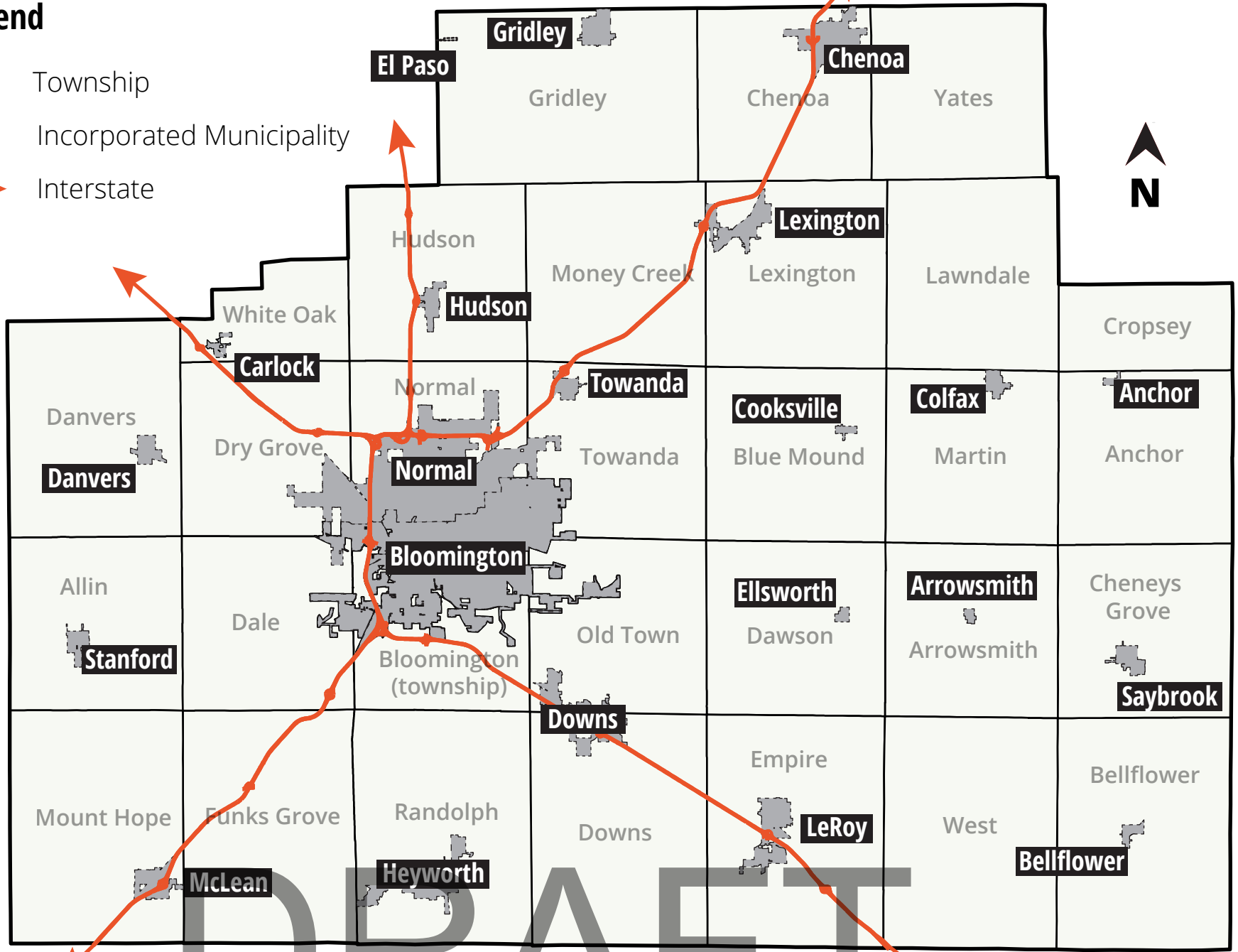
**[2nd Draft]
September
2025**

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Overview of McLean County, 2025

Legend

-  Township
-  Incorporated Municipality
-  Interstate



Source: McGIS Database

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McLean County
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The **McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP)** envisions a well-balanced, resilient community that respects the unique characteristics of both urban and rural environments. The plan promotes sustainable growth, smart land-use practices, and the preservation of natural resources to foster a vibrant quality of life for future generations.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan** aims to create a cohesive framework for the future development, conservation, and management of land in the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area and the unincorporated areas of McLean County. This plan is designed to guide growth, ensure the efficient use of resources, and maintain a balance between urban and rural areas for the years ahead.

What is a Strategic Land Use Plan? How do we use it?

A land use plan is a guiding document that outlines a municipality's long-term vision for how land could be used in the future. It does not alter existing zoning rules, which regulate what uses are allowed on specific parcels, but is one of many tools that are used by planning staff and elected officials to make educated decisions about development proposals.


To develop this plan, MCRPC examined existing conditions, identified future needs, and collaborated with local municipalities. Representatives from MCRPC, McLean County, the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District, and others evaluated options for future development based on goals outlined in existing Comprehensive Plans and other factors such as housing need and infrastructure availability. **All future land use changes in this plan, with input from public outreach, were determined by local municipalities.**

How does a Strategic Land Use Plan fit into the Comprehensive Plan framework?

A comprehensive plan is a long-term planning document that outlines the vision, goals, and strategies for the physical, economic, and social development of a community. Land use is one of many elements covered in a comprehensive plan. Comprehensive plans are intended to be used for decades and take years to update.

McLean County is currently facing significant development pressures, due in part to the expansion of Rivian and Fererro, the housing shortage in the region, and additional development. To address these development pressures, local municipalities determined that an updated land use map, including changes in our community that were not present during the development of existing comprehensive plans, was warranted.

As MCRPC works on the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan update, development pressure in Bloomington-Normal continues to grow. This Strategic Land Use Plan will allow Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County to address development pressures in the immediate future and the coming years. Additionally, this plan will assist the City and Town in addressing these development pressures until their individual comprehensive plan updates.



“To meet a target balance between local employment and housing, McLean County should add an **additional 8,134 livable housing units** to accommodate growth.”

- McLean County Regional Housing Recovery Plan, page 36

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HISTORY AND TIMELINE

The **McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan** fits into the larger picture of local comprehensive planning efforts.

The **McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan** was adopted by MCRPC, McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal. This plan is the most current comprehensive plan for McLean County with a planning horizon of 2035.

2009

The **City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan** was adopted by MCRPC and the City of Bloomington. This plan is the most current comprehensive plan for the City of Bloomington with a planning horizon of 2035.

2015

The **Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan** was adopted by MCRPC and the Town of Normal. This plan is the most current comprehensive plan for the Town of Normal with a planning horizon of 2040.

2017

The **McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan** was developed by MCRPC in collaboration with The City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, McLean County, and other local stakeholder groups.

2025

MCRPC will begin collaborating with **McLean County** to develop an update to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. This Strategic Land Use Plan will form the foundation for the land use section of the comprehensive plan.

**2025 /
2026**

The **City of Bloomington** will begin to develop an update to the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

Future

The **Town of Normal** will begin to develop and update to the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

Future

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What this Plan Can Do:

- Allow local planners to highlight potential new areas for development and open the door to additional consideration, planning, and public input.
- Provide advisory information to planners, elected officials, and members of the public to assist in making planning decisions that would still require additional consideration.
- Provide accurate Existing Land Use information for the entirety of McLean County.
- Provide an update to future land use proposals laid out in current comprehensive plans.
- Serve as a resource for other incorporated municipalities in McLean County to use when developing their own land use plans.
- Serve as an advisory planning tool to be utilized in conjunction with existing plans and information currently in effect in local jurisdictions.

What this Plan Cannot Do:

- Immediately change zoning regulations.
- Give the green light on construction/development projects to begin immediately.
- Allow for the immediate annexation of parcels.
- Forces residents to sell their properties.
- Completely replace the 2009, 2015, and 2017 comprehensive plans for McLean County, City of Bloomington, and Town of Normal.
- Completely replace the Bloomington-Normal Metropolitan Long-Range Transportation Plan (MLRTP) 2050

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Land Use Planning vs. Zoning:

When planners discuss land use planning or zoning ordinances, they are not necessarily referring to the same thing, nor are those two phrases interchangeable.

Land use planning is a visioning tool used by local government to identify what its built environment could look like in the future. These land use considerations are created by local planners, residents, elected officials, and key stakeholder groups. Land use planning takes into account multiple factors such as environmental conditions, transportation networks, housing stock, public safety, existing infrastructure, development trends, and the values of the local community. Land use plans do not change zoning districts or initiate development projects. Land use plans are simply a tool to visualize where potential development could take place. Additional planning is required for any actual development proposals. This includes permit applications, environmental impact studies, stormwater management plans, buffer and landscaping plans, and much more. These detailed applications, reports, and studies are a requirement before any actual development can occur.

Zoning is a legally binding regulatory tool used by local governments to govern how real property can and cannot be used. Zoning also helps dictate how exactly a property is developed through setbacks, height requirements, buffers, and requirements for landscaping, parking, building design, etc. Zoning is also a tool used to implement the land use vision outlined in local plans. Zoning ordinances and regulations are developed by the local governments and must go through a robust public approval process. This includes a public hearing, review by the zoning board of appeals or planning commission, and final approval from elected officials on the City or Town Council or County Board. The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) is a planning organization, but does not have zoning powers of any kind.

Zoning establishes the legal authority of a jurisdiction to regulate what types of development or activities are permitted on specific properties. While, in contrast, land use plans are long-term visions outlining how land use within a community could potentially develop over time.

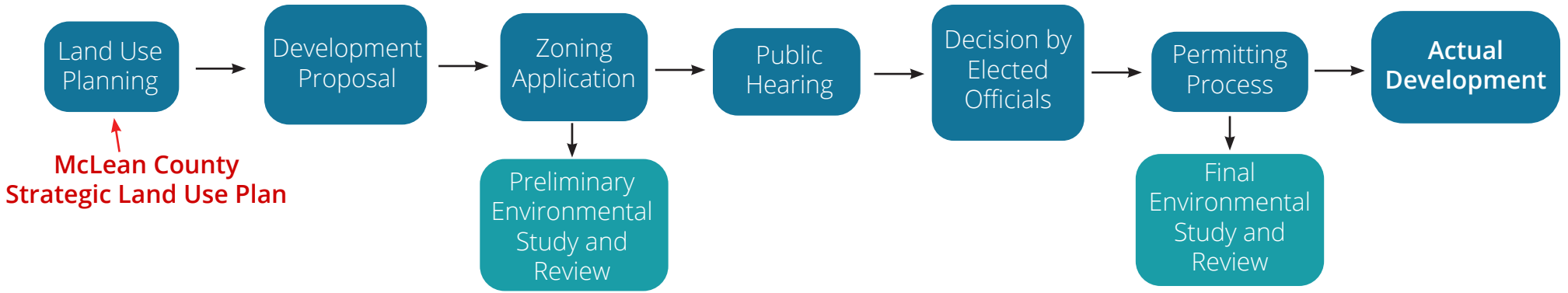
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Theoretical Development Timeline:

Below is a theoretical development timeline that outlines a simplified process of how a proposed development would go from the land use planning phase to actual construction. The timeline below reflects a theoretical project within a municipalities corporate limits that requires a zoning or special use application. At every step, all local, state, and federal requirements involving environmental review, public notice, and engineered drawings would be followed.

A property owner must initiate any development proposal. This includes deciding to develop their own property, selling the property to a developer, or authorizing a developer to develop their property under contract.



McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan

Property outside of a municipality's corporate limits must be annexed into the municipality through a public process before falling under that municipalities development standards.

Depending on the type of development and the regulations of the municipality, development proposals may be approved either through administrative means or through a full public review.

Every municipality has their own ordinances and development regulations. The development process may be slightly different between each municipality.

Land use plans, specifically future land use maps, are a first step in a long and detailed planning process. Future land use maps provide advisory information for early planning stages.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Municipal Authority:

Initial Drafting:

MCRPC has worked closely with the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and the McLean County Government to create the Draft Strategic Land Use Plan. During the first public outreach period, MCRPC also reached out and received input from all 20 of the rural municipalities in the county. MCRPC's role in this development was the initial data collection and integration. All Future Land Use changes shown in this plan have been provided by the local authority with jurisdiction.

MCRPC is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and a Regional Planning Commission (RPC). MCRPC does not have the same regulatory authority as local municipalities.

Official Adoption:

Once the final draft is complete and ready for official consideration and adoption, any municipality wishing to adopt and utilize the plan are able to do so. This process is outlined in the Illinois Compiled Statutes (ILCS), (65 ILCS 5/11-12-7), and states that corporate authority may adopt the plan as recommended or may modify or amend portions of the plan. It also states that corporate authority must provide notice and opportunity for a public hearing. The adoption process for this plan will be determined by the individual corporate authority and is explained in more detail in ILCS (65 ILCS 5/11-12-7).

Utilization:

Once a corporate authority adopts a land use plan, it does become an official document that is entirely advisory and, in and of itself, cannot be used to regulate or control the use of private property in any way. This is laid out in more detail in the Illinois Compiled Statutes (65 ILCS 5/11-12-6). This plan does, however, lay the groundwork for additional planning and consideration to be taken in areas described in the land use proposals. This will allow local staff and elected officials to begin the conversations around how to best implement the proposed plan.

Local governments, such as the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County will have the authority to implement this plan through zoning and subdivision regulations among other tools.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Illinois Compiled Statutes: 65 ILCS 5/ Illinois Municipal Code

Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan and its Use by Municipal Corporate Authorities

65 ILCS 5/11-12-6) (from Ch. 24, par. 11-12-6)

Sec. 11-12-6. An official comprehensive plan, or any amendment thereof, or addition thereto, proposed by a plan commission shall be effective in the municipality and contiguous area herein prescribed only after its formal adoption by the corporate authorities. Such plan shall be advisory and in and of itself shall not be construed to regulate or control the use of private property in any way, except as to such part thereof as has been implemented by ordinances duly enacted by the corporate authorities.

Adoption of Comprehensive Plans, or Parts Thereof

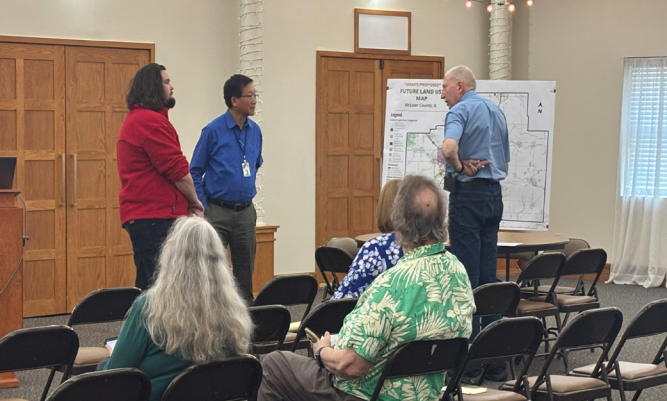
(65 ILCS 5/11-12-7) (from Ch. 24, par. 11-12-7) (paragraph 2)

The corporate authorities may adopt parts of a comprehensive plan recommended by a plan commission without adopting the entire comprehensive plan as recommended, or may modify or amend portions of a recommended comprehensive plan without a re-reference of same to the plan commission, and may adopt such comprehensive plan, as modified or amended. Such comprehensive plan, when adopted, shall be the official comprehensive plan, or part thereof, of that municipality.

Public Hearings on Adoption of Comprehensive Plans

(65 ILCS 5/11-12-7) (from Ch. 24, par. 11-12-7) (paragraph 4)

On and after the effective date of this amendatory act of 1961, an official comprehensive plan, or any amendment thereof, shall not be adopted by a municipality until notice and opportunity for public hearing have first been afforded in the manner herein provided. Upon submission of a comprehensive plan by the plan commission, or a proposed amendment to an existing comprehensive plan, the corporate authorities shall schedule a public hearing thereon, either before the plan commission or the corporate authorities. Not less than 15 days' notice of the proposed hearing, and the time and place thereof, shall be given by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the county or counties in which the municipality and contiguous unincorporated territory are located. The hearing shall be informal, but all persons desiring to be heard in support or opposition to the comprehensive plan or amendment shall be afforded such opportunity, and may submit their statements, orally, in writing, or both. The hearing may be recessed to another date if not concluded, if notice of the time and place thereof is publicly announced at the hearing or is given by newspaper publication not less than 5 days prior to the recessed hearing.



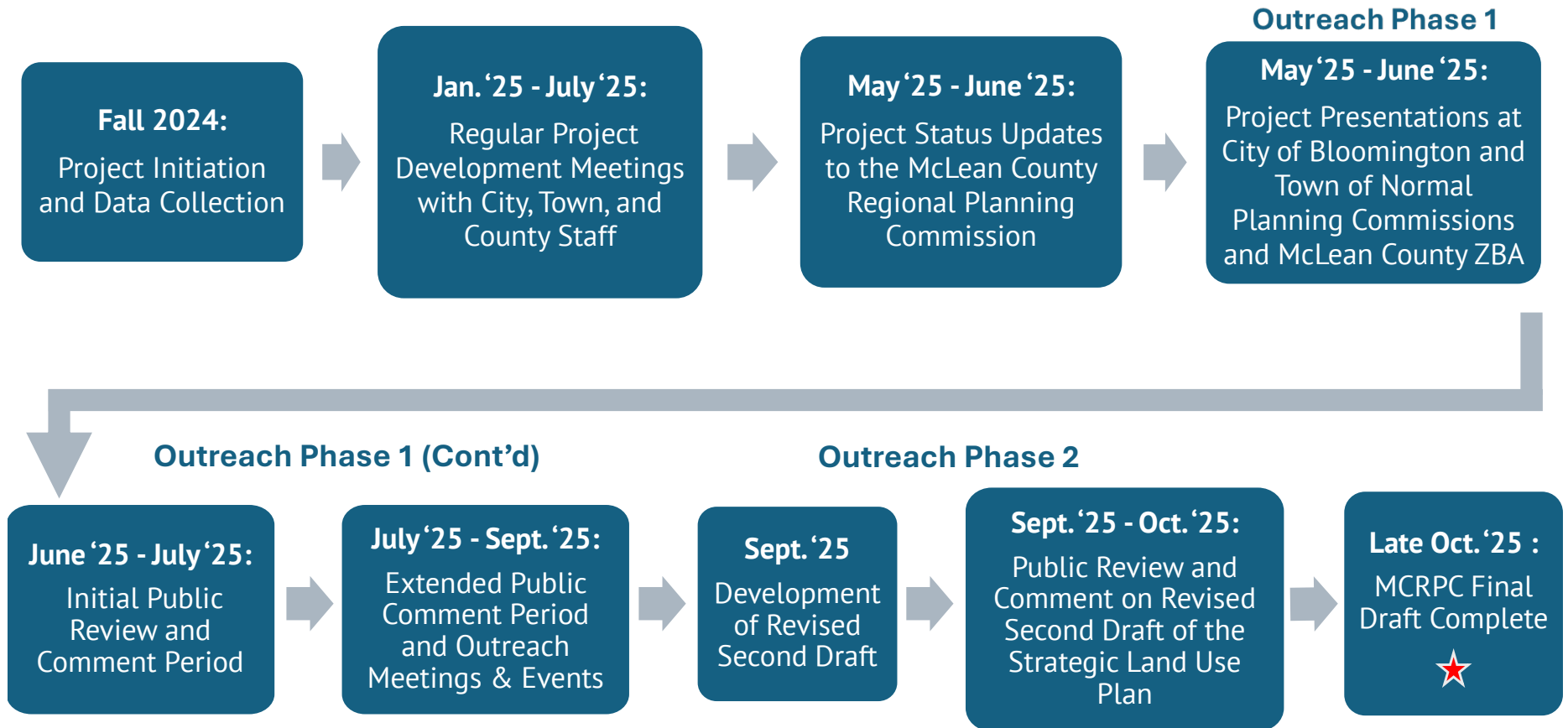
CHAPTER 2

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND PLANNING PROCESS

The public outreach process for the McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan was aimed at communicating our planning process, understanding resident concerns, and incorporating those concerns as revisions to the plan document.

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PROJECT TIMELINE



★ Local Government Entities Will Determine Their Own Review and Adoption Process.

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PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

Below is a summary of the public outreach process that MCRPC engaged in to gather community and stakeholder feedback for the first draft of the McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP).

A detailed outreach summary can be found in this plan's appendix.

Public Outreach Process

In June 2025, MCRPC released the draft SLUP for a month-long period of public comment. After responses from the community and local partners, the agency extended the comment period through the end of August and initiated an expanded public outreach campaign. Five open houses were held in urban and rural locations. Additionally, MCRPC met with township officials, the McLean County Mayors Association, and the McLean County Farm Bureau. In September, MCRPC staff reviewed public feedback and revised the draft SLUP. This revised second draft will be released for a second comment period including two additional open house events.

Top concerns from survey responses

- Public Engagement Process
- Southeast Bloomington Industrial/Employment Center
- Industrial/Employment Center Land Use combination
- East Side Highway

Revisions made to draft SLUP

- Inclusion of outreach report and frequently asked questions to address the planning process and utilization of the plan.
- East Side Highway alignment revised from interstate grade highway to a potential integration with Towanda Barnes Road.
- Added explanation of Conceptual Roadway Links map.
- Industrial/Employment Center land use split to distinguish industrial uses from employment center uses.
- Southeast Bloomington industrial/employment center area reduced with the preservation of agriculture and residential quality of life in mind.

**100+
RESIDENTS
ENGAGED**

**FIVE
OPEN HOUSE
EVENTS**

**95 SURVEY
RESPONSES**

**2000+ PEOPLE
CONTACTED VIA
MCRPC MAILING
LIST**

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CHAPTER 3

LAND USE PLANNING

Land use planning is an essential process for shaping the future of McLean County, guiding how land is developed, preserved, and utilized in ways that reflect the values and needs of its residents. This chapter outlines how the existing and future land use maps were developed, focusing on strategic growth, sustainability, and economic prosperity. Themes of smart growth, agricultural preservation, infill development, and infrastructure coordination guide every aspect of the plan.

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EXISTING LAND USE

The Existing Land Use Map, developed from tax assessor data and through collaboration between local partners, shows how land is currently being used throughout McLean County.

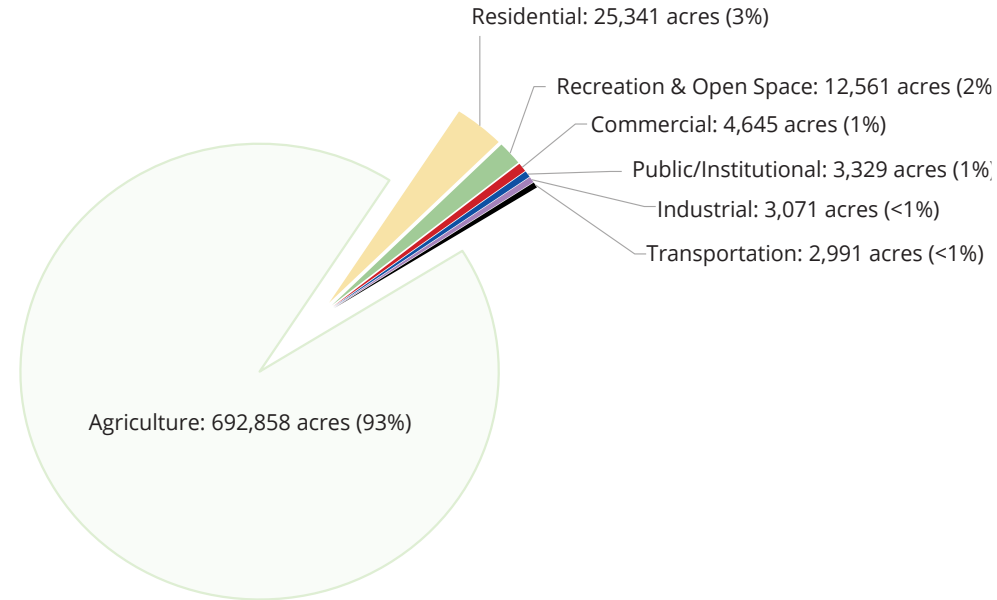
The Existing Land Use Map provides a snapshot of how McLean County's land is currently utilized. It highlights established land uses, such as agriculture, residential neighborhoods, commercial hubs, industrial centers, recreation areas, and public and institutional facilities. By comparing existing land use with proposed future land use, local governments can identify areas to encourage growth and where preservation efforts are necessary, fostering a balanced and strategic approach to development.

The development of the Existing Land Use Map involved a comprehensive analysis of multiple data sources to accurately capture the current distribution of land uses across the County. Data from the McLean County Supervisor of Assessments, the City of Bloomington Township Assessor, and the Normal Township Assessor formed the basis of identifying existing land use. This data provided detailed property and land use information, allowing for an accurate representation of real land uses.

Throughout the planning process, representatives from the Planning Departments of the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and McLean County, as well as additional stakeholders from rural incorporated municipalities were actively engaged in providing existing land use information. Their involvement ensured that the map would be as accurate as possible while fostering collaboration across jurisdictions. The feedback from these partners was used to refine the map and ensure that the existing land use patterns aligned with the municipalities' vision for future growth and development.

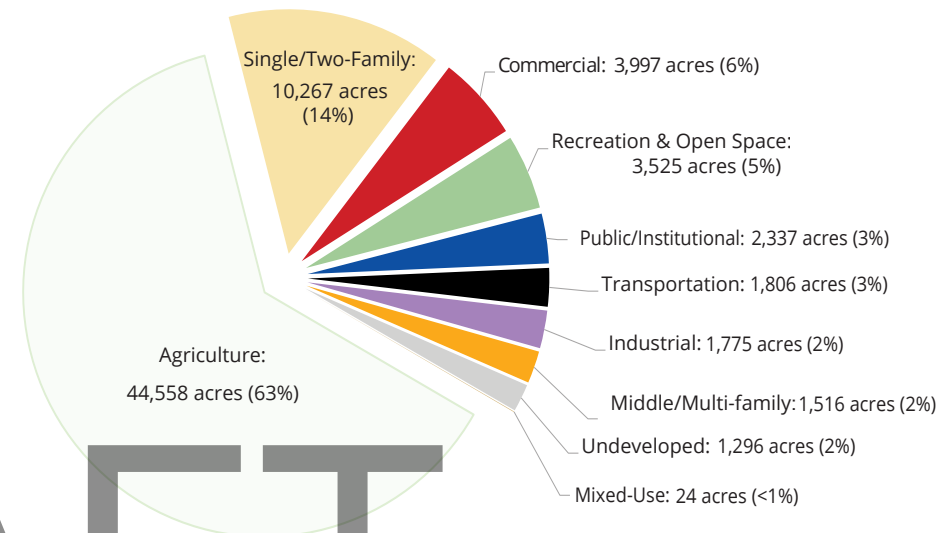
2025 Existing Land Use Distribution

McLean County, IL



2025 Existing Land Use Distribution

Bloomington-Normal 1.5 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction



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Assessor Use Codes & Existing Land Use Category Assignments

Existing Land Use Category	Use Code as Defined By McLean County Assessor	Use Code as Defined By COBT Assessor	Use Code as Defined By Normal Twp. Assessor
Agriculture/Undeveloped Recreation/Open Space	11 - Farmland with Buildings 21 - Farmland 26 - Solar Farm 27 - Wind Farm 28 - Conservation Stewardship	11 - Rural Improved 21 - Rural Not Improved	11 - Farmland with Buildings
Commercial	50 - Commercial Vacant Land 52 - 10-30 Subdivider Commercial Vacant 60 - Commercial with Buildings 62 - Subdivider Commercial Vacant Land 65 - Commercial Entity on Farm 8060 - Leasehold Commercial 70 - Commercial Office	60 - Commercial Business 20062 - Commercial Developers Rate 70 - Commercial Office	52 - Comm Vacant Land 60 - Commercial 70 - Commercial Office
Industrial	80 - Industrial	80 - Industrial	
Public/Institutional	90 - Tax Exempt	90 - Tax Exempt	0000 - Exempt
Residential – Lower Density	30 - Residential Vacant Land 32 - Subdivider Residential Vacant Land 40 - Residential with Buildings 41 - Residential Model Home	30 - Residential Vacant Land 40 - Single Family 44 - Zero Lot Line 20032 - Residential Developers Rate	40 - Residential
Residential – Higher Density	--	42 - Conversion 43 - Apartments <=6 Units 50 - Apartments > 6 Units	50 - Comm Res More than 6 Units
Transportation	4500 - State Assessed Railroad 5060 - Commercial Railroad	8021 - Airport Farmland Leased 8060 - Airport, Land Not Improved	

Normal Township use code information (described as "propclass" in the raw data) was discarded in favor model names instead (albeit residential high density only)

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EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (ETJ)

1.5 Mile Extra Territorial Jurisdiction Explanation:

- Extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) refers to an area of up to 1.5 miles from a municipality's corporate limits where limited planning authority is granted. ETJs can be established in several ways; the most common in McLean County is when an official Comprehensive Plan, or part thereof, including a subdivision or zoning ordinance, is adopted by the corporate authority and clearly defines an intention to regulate an area up to 1.5 miles from their corporate limits. The authority granted can differ based on several factors. The specific powers granted to corporate authorities are further defined in Illinois Compiled Statutes 65 ILCS 5- Municipalities.
- Within 1.5 miles of their corporate limits, the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal exercise an ETJ. Subdivisions within the City and Town's ETJ must comply with the City and Town's Subdivision Codes. The City and Town also have a statutory right to receive notice of special use applications and may protest certain proposed zoning changes within their ETJ. Additionally, the City and Town can adopt a resolution raising the threshold required to pass a county zoning map amendment from a simple majority to a 3/4 majority for zoning changes within the 1.5-mile ETJ.
- The rural incorporated municipalities in McLean County are also allowed the same extraterritorial jurisdiction authority. However, they too must meet the requirements outlined in the Illinois State Statutes to establish an ETJ. Please refer to the rural municipality's websites or contact information for further information. The ETJs shown in this document are the current ETJ limits for the corporate authorities. Once any property is annexed into the corporate limits, the ETJ is updated.
- For more information, please refer to the Illinois State Statutes (65 ILCS 5/), Illinois Municipal Code.

Extraterritorial Jurisdictions:

- **Bellflower**
- **Bloomington**
- **Carlock**
- **Chenoa**
- **Colfax**
- **Danvers**
- **Downs**
- **Ellsworth**
- **El Paso**
- **Gridley**
- **Heyworth**
- **Hudson**
- **Le Roy**
- **Lexington**
- **Normal**
- **Stanford**
- **Towanda**

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SECOND DRAFT

EXISTING LAND USE MAP (2025)

McLean County, IL



Legend

Existing Land Use Categories

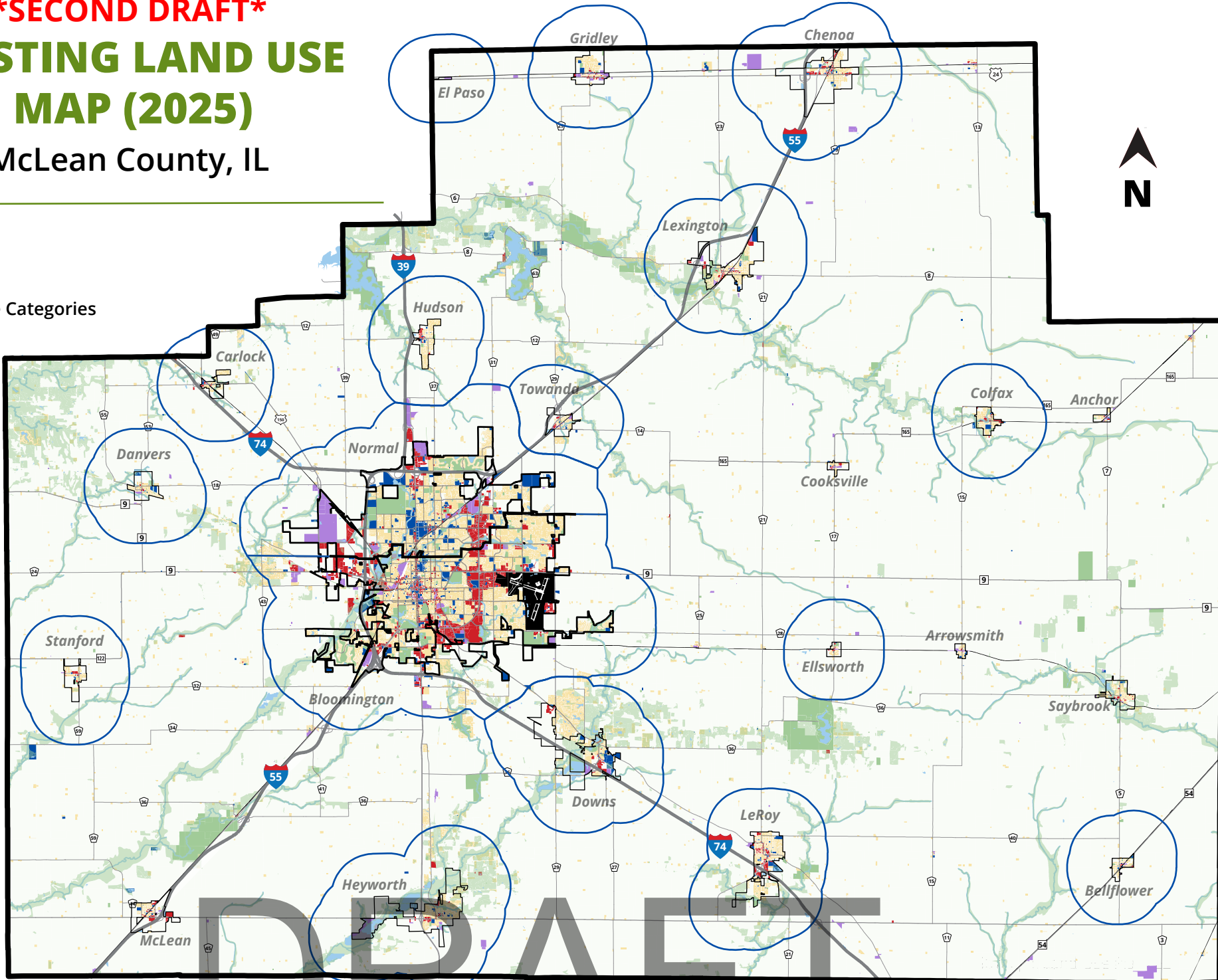
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Recreation/Open Space
- Residential
- Transportation

Roadways

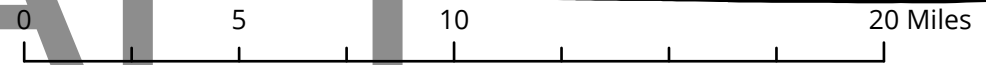
- Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- IL. State Route
- County Highway

Other Elements

- McLean County Border
- 2025 Municipal Corporate Limits
- 1.5 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Forests Overlay (NLCD)
- Water



Map Art: McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) Staff
Data Sources: McLean County Building & Zoning Staff; City of Bloomington - Development Services Staff;
Town of Normal - Planning & Zoning Staff



SECOND DRAFT
EXISTING LAND USE MAP (2025)

Bloomington-Normal, IL Urban Area

Legend

Existing Land Use Categories

Agriculture	Recreation & Open Space
Commercial	Residential (Single/Two-Family)
Industrial	Residential (Middle/Multi-Family)
Public/Institutional	Transportation
Mixed-Use	Undeveloped

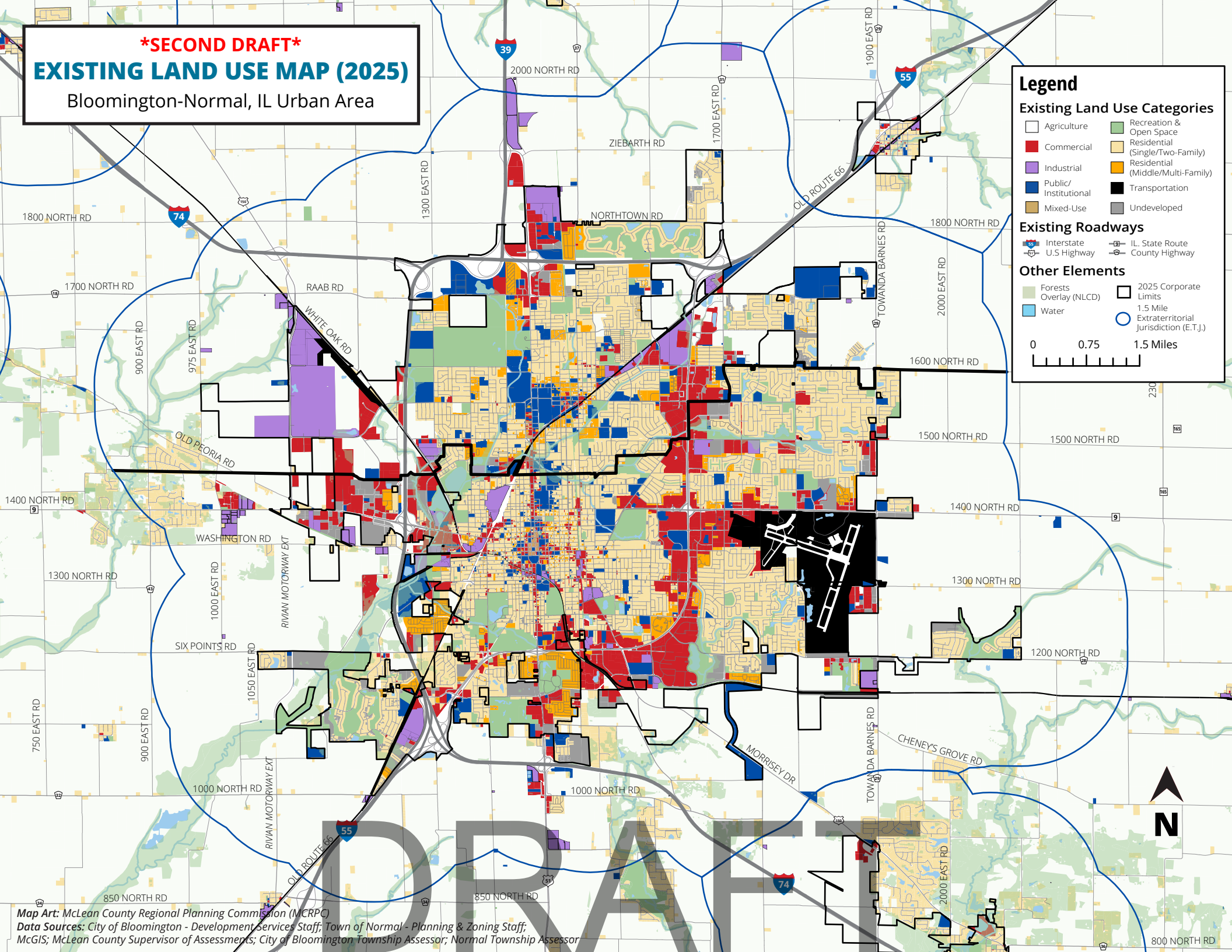
Existing Roadways

Interstate	IL State Route
U.S Highway	County Highway

Other Elements

Forests Overlay (NLCD)	2025 Corporate Limits
Water	1.5 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (E.T.J.)

0 0.75 1.5 Miles



FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map depicts what land use changes the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, McLean County, and certain rural municipalities envision will occur in the region in the future.

The map serves as a strategic guide for shaping development by identifying areas for growth, preservation, and infrastructure investment. The map will inform zoning decisions, ensuring that land use regulations encourage sustainable growth, economic development, and environmental protection. It will help prioritize infrastructure investments in areas designated for future development, support coordinated planning across municipalities, and provide a clear framework for developers and local governments to ensure that new projects align with the desired vision for the community.

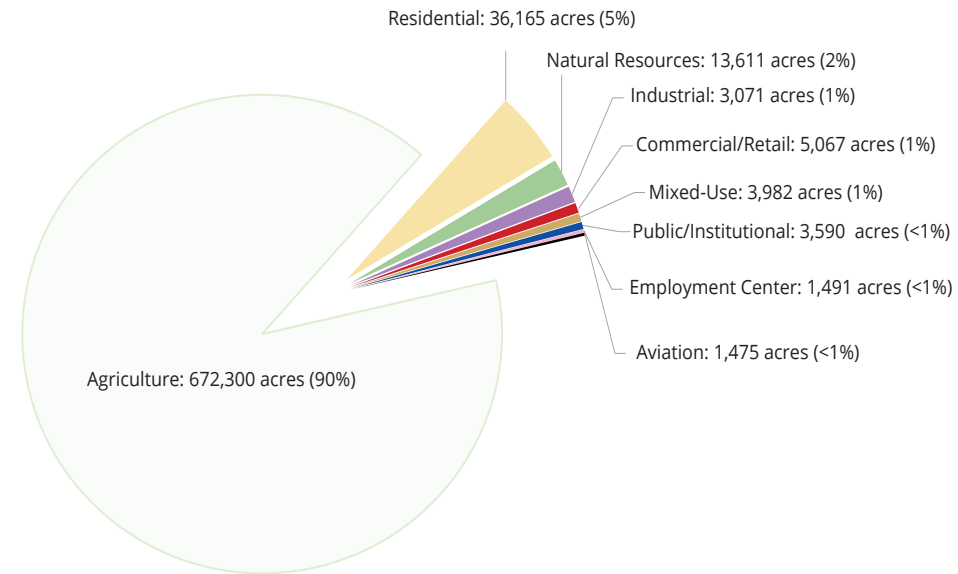
The development of the Future Land Use Map was a collaborative process that aimed to provide a long-term vision for land use patterns and development within the county.

Changes in land use from the Existing Land Use Map to the Future Land Use Map were determined by local municipalities who made their decisions based on existing comprehensive plans, existing infrastructure, projected growth, and environmental considerations. MCRPC collected the changes from each local partner and combined them into a cohesive map. **All future land use changes were determined by local municipalities with input from public comment.**

Infill development is a high priority for the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal. This future land use map does encompass all infill development parcels within the urban area. More detailed information regarding the specific infill properties can be found in existing comprehensive plans and on the City and Town websites.

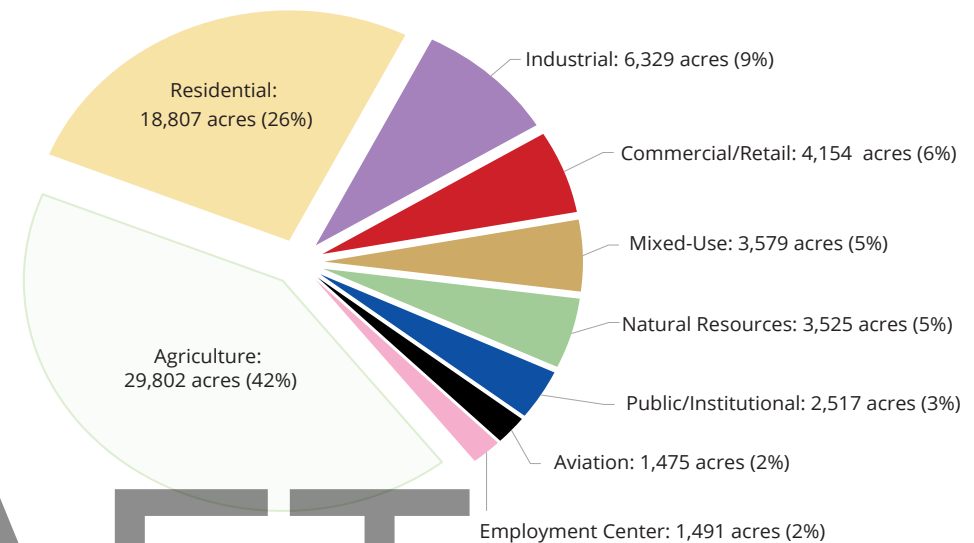
Future Land Use Distribution

McLean County, IL



Future Land Use Distribution

Bloomington-Normal 1.5 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction



SECOND DRAFT

FUTURE LAND USE MAP (2025)

McLean County, IL



Legend

Future Land Use Categories

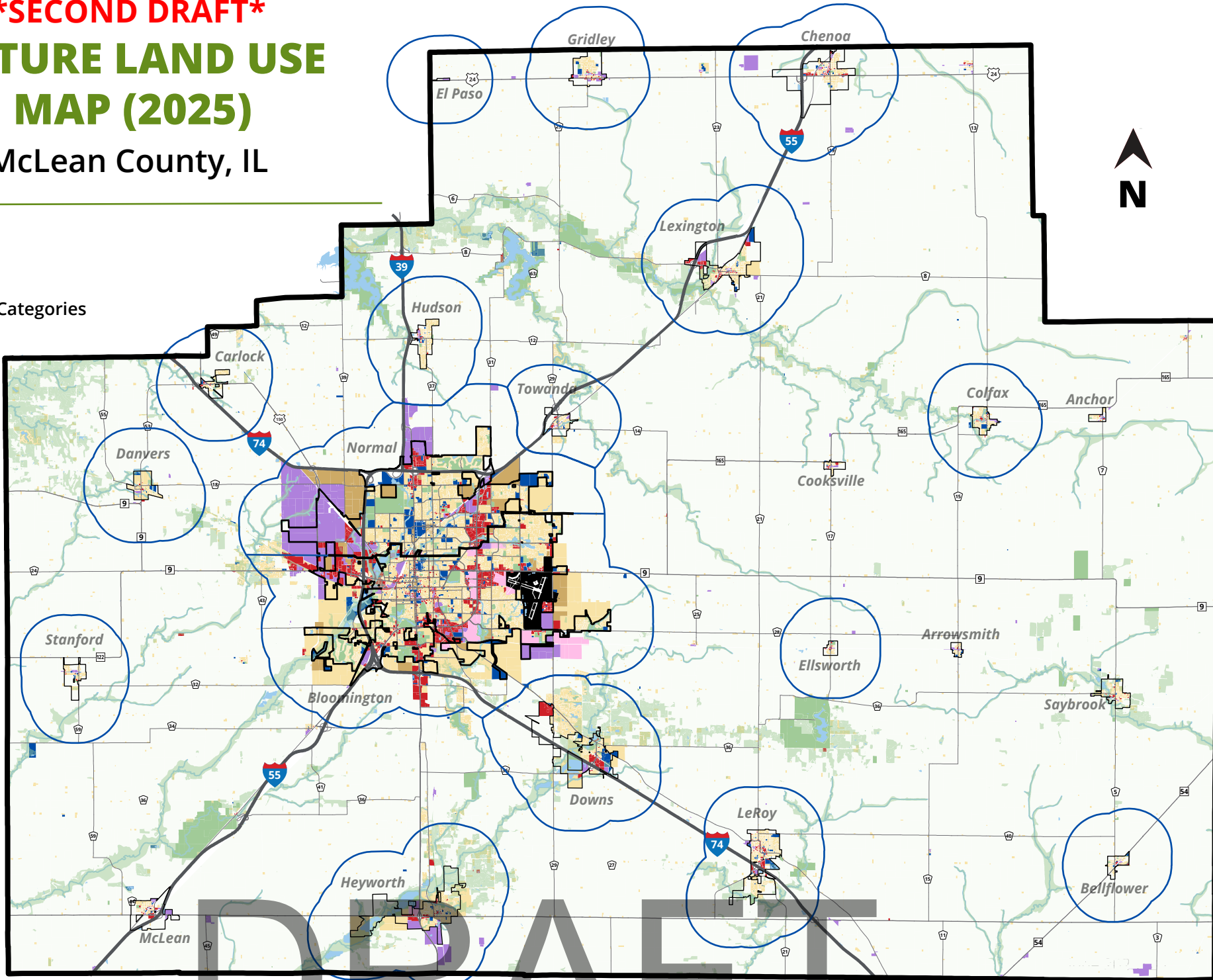
- Agriculture
- Aviation
- Commercial/ Retail
- Employment Center
- Industrial
- Public/ Institutional
- Mixed-Use
- Natural Resources
- Residential

Roadways

- Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- IL. State Route
- County Highway

Other Elements

- McLean County Border
- 2025 Municipal Corporate Limits
- 1.5 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Forests Overlay (NLCD)
- Water



Map Art: McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) Staff
Data Sources: McLean County Building & Zoning Staff; City of Bloomington - Development Services Staff;
Town of Normal - Planning & Zoning Staff

SECOND DRAFT
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
 Bloomington-Normal, IL Urban Area

Legend

Future Land Use Categories

- Agriculture
- Aviation
- Commercial/Retail
- Employment Center
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Mixed-Use
- Natural Resources
- Residential

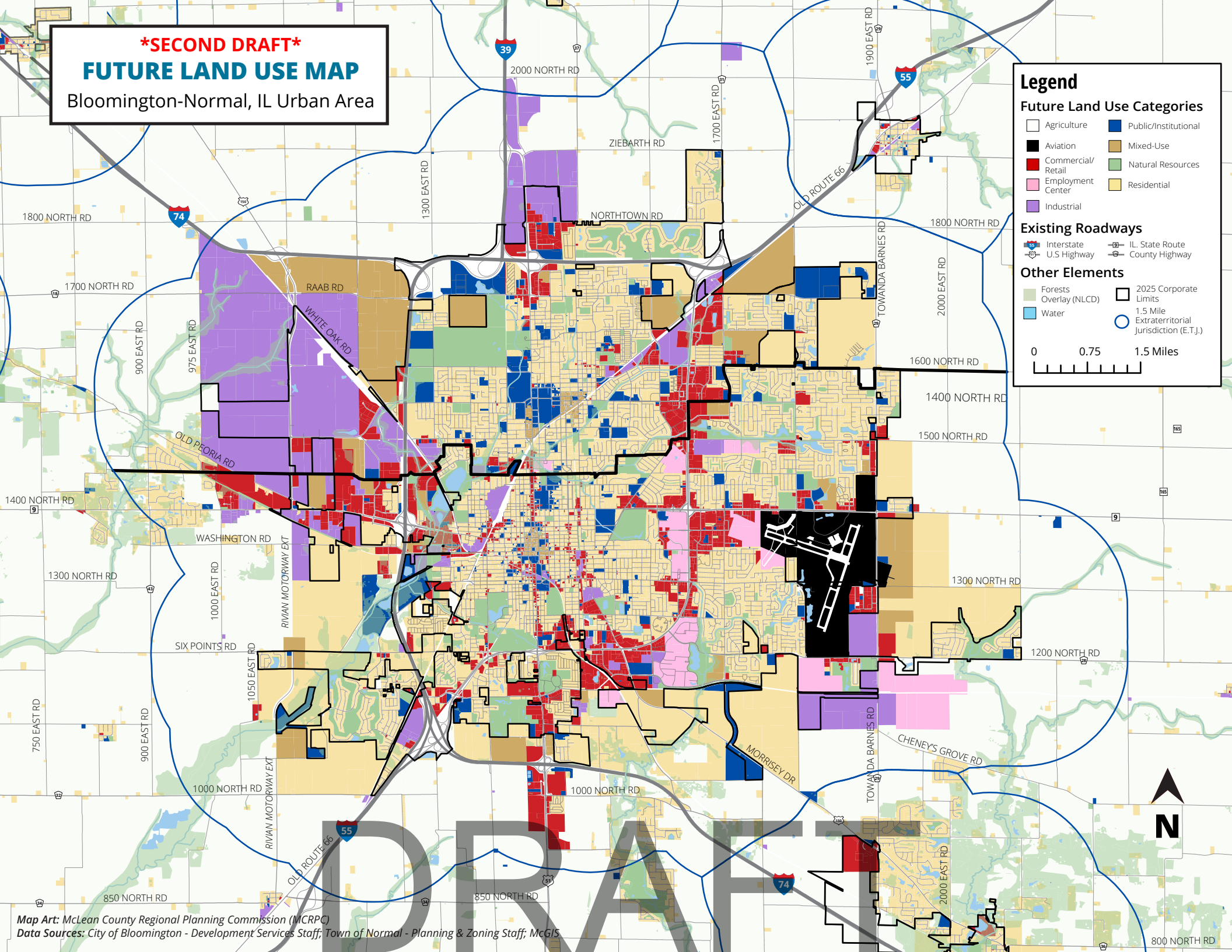
Existing Roadways

- Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- IL. State Route
- County Highway

Other Elements

- Forests Overlay (NLCD)
- Water
- 2025 Corporate Limits
- 1.5 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (E.T.J.)

0 0.75 1.5 Miles





Agriculture

This land use type primarily includes active row crop agriculture, pastureland, and related farm structures such as pole barns and livestock facilities. Compatible uses may also include renewable energy projects, which align with the area's agricultural character. Outside of Bloomington-Normal, the highest priority for the Agriculture land use is the preservation of prime farmland and the protection of the county's rural character. Limited single-family residential, small-scale commercial, light industrial, and institutional uses may also be present, typically on large lots with buildings set back from roadways. These areas are generally served by private wells and septic systems rather than municipal utilities. Land within the 1.5-mile municipal extraterritorial jurisdiction may experience greater development pressure, in turn, allowing for more flexibility in development decisions.

INTENT

- Support and preserve agricultural activities while minimizing incompatible land uses.
- Preserve and enhance natural resources and scenic areas.
- Encourage renewable energy development that aligns with agricultural character.
- Regulate non-agricultural development in areas less suitable for farming.

PRIMARY USES

- Agriculture
- Renewable Energy (wind, solar, etc.)
- Natural Preservation

SECONDARY USES

- Homestead Residential
- Small-scale commercial/retail
- Public and institutional uses

DRAFT



Residential

This land use designation encompasses a range of housing densities and typologies intended to support diverse community needs across both urban and unincorporated areas of McLean County. This category includes both low-density residential developments, such as detached single-family homes, and higher density housing options, including duplexes, townhomes, apartments, and multi-family buildings with three or more units. The intent of this generalized category is to promote the development of a variety of residential dwelling units in a time where the housing crisis is one of the biggest issues facing McLean County and the nation. This designation encourages development patterns that align with smart growth principles, supporting compact urban form while minimizing sprawl and infrastructure strain. In unincorporated areas, the Residential Development designation allows for carefully planned growth in proximity to existing infrastructure. It encourages clustered residential development that preserves surrounding farmland and open space, consistent with agricultural land conservation goals. Growth boundaries and rural design guidelines may be applied to maintain rural character and prevent unmanaged expansion.

INTENT

- Provide flexibility in housing options for future development.
- Encourage infill development to reduce the impacts of urban sprawl and infrastructure strain.
- Improve streetscape features such as consistent sidewalks, lighting, green space, and safety.
- Allow neighborhood-scale commercial or mixed-use development where appropriate.
- Regulate residential development in agriculturally productive areas of the county as well as areas with limited access to public water and sewer.

PRIMARY USES

- Single-family (attached & detached)
- Two-family residential
- Multi-family residential

SECONDARY USES

- Local-scale commercial/retail
- Parks and open space
- Public and institutional buildings

DRAFT



Mixed-Use

This land use designation is designed to blend residential, commercial, institutional, and sometimes light industrial uses in a compact, walkable environment. These areas are typically located near downtowns, major corridors, or transit hubs, and are intended to support vibrant, livable neighborhoods where people can live, work, and shop within the same area. Developments may include buildings with ground-floor retail or services and residential or office spaces above. This land use type encourages efficient use of infrastructure, reduces reliance on cars, and supports public transit. It also helps create dynamic community spaces and fosters economic growth by concentrating activity and investment. Mixed-use areas are essential for promoting infill development, supporting housing diversity, and building stronger, more resilient communities.

INTENT

- Encourage a blend of residential, commercial, and institutional uses within walkable, well-connected areas.
- Foster infill and redevelopment of underused or vacant properties in urban areas.
- Create flexibility that allows for evolving community needs and innovative development patterns.
- Align mixed-use development with existing transit corridors to reduce car dependency and improve mobility.

PRIMARY USES

- Residential development
- Neighborhood scale commercial/retail
- Public and institutional buildings
- Parks and open space
- Transit nodes

SECONDARY USES

- Light industrial
- Business/Office Park

DRAFT



Employment Center

This land use type is designed to support a diverse range of employment-generating uses, including office parks, corporate campuses, research and technology parks, light industry, warehousing, and supporting retail/commercial establishments. The Employment Center land use is intended to promote job creation and facilitate a strong local economy. It includes large land use facilities often located near major highways or transportation corridors to ensure efficient mobility and regional access. These areas may also accommodate light industrial uses, office space, and limited commercial support services that serve workers and businesses within the district. Site layouts typically include larger building footprints, outdoor storage or staging areas, and buffers to mitigate impacts on nearby residential or agricultural uses. Utility infrastructure, roadway capacity, and broadband access are critical to support continued growth in these areas. Thoughtful land use planning within the Employment Center land use ensures job creation, supports economic resilience, and balances development with environmental stewardship and community compatibility.

INTENT

- Support a diverse range of employment opportunities.
- Facilitate economic growth by providing flexible spaces for large-scale businesses.
- Promote efficient use of transportation infrastructure by locating employment centers near major highways and transportation corridors.
- Encourage development that is compatible with surrounding uses through buffering and proper site planning.

PRIMARY USES

- Business/Office Parks
- Hospitals//Large Medical Centers
- Light Industrial
- Transit Nodes

SECONDARY USES

- Supporting Commercial/Retail
- Parks and Open Space
- Public and Institutional

DRAFT



Industrial

This land use type is intended to support light and heavy industrial activities such as large-scale manufacturing, power production, waste management, warehousing and logistics, vehicle repair and sales, and product distribution and storage. This land use type also encompasses utility operations such as substations, telecommunication towers, and natural gas operations. These activities require substantial infrastructure support to function. The operation of these facilities generally involves high energy usage, transportation congestion, and noise, water, and air pollution. Due to these characteristics, industrial land use areas should be located away from residential areas and other land uses vulnerable to the anticipated impacts. Key location indicators include access to transportation corridors, such as existing improved roadways, railroads, and airports, to ensure efficient freight movement and regional access. Additional development review, including environmental impact studies, stormwater management plans, and site suitability reports, is of the utmost importance when a development proposal is presented within a proposed industrial land use area.

INTENT

- Support a diverse employer base to ensure economic resilience.
- Promote efficient use of existing infrastructure by locating industrial land uses near existing transportation corridors, sewer and water infrastructure, rail lines, and airport access.
- Carefully consider development that is compatible with surrounding uses through buffering and proper site planning.
- Ensure strict adherence to environmental impact assessments, stormwater management, and large buffer areas to mitigate adverse effects on surrounding areas.

PRIMARY USES

- Light industrial
- Heavy industrial
- Large-scale commercial
- Transit Nodes

SECONDARY USES

- Parks and open space
- Public and institutional buildings
- Business/Office Parks

DRAFT



Commercial / Retail

This land use designation focuses on areas intended for businesses that provide goods and services to the public, such as retail stores, restaurants, and offices. These areas are typically located along major roadways and serve as regional anchors that support the local economy while also being well-connected to the surrounding area. They may include pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, surface parking lots to accommodate customers, and public amenities. Integration into existing transit nodes is highly encouraged to ensure that commercial/retail centers can serve the entire community. Mixed-use developments combining commercial, retail, and residential spaces may be encouraged in appropriate locations to enhance walkability and reduce vehicle dependency. The primary goal is to create thriving commercial/retail hubs that serve both residents and visitors.

INTENT

- Support the development of retail, dining, and office spaces that meet the daily needs of residents and visitors.
- Prioritize placement of commercial centers along major transportation corridors for maximum visibility and access.
- Encourage pedestrian-friendly design elements, such as sidewalks, lighting, and streetscape amenities.
- Integrate commercial areas with existing and planned public transit routes to enhance connectivity.

PRIMARY USES

- Commercial/Retail
- Office
- Mixed-uses
- Transit Nodes

SECONDARY USES

- Parks and open space
- Public and institutional buildings
- Multi-Family Residential

DRAFT



Natural Resources

This land use designation is intended to protect and preserve areas with significant environmental, ecological, and recreational value. It includes forested lands, nature preserves, wetlands, flood hazard areas, public parks, cemeteries, golf courses, and campgrounds. These areas provide critical ecosystem services, contribute to the county's natural character, and offer important recreational and cultural amenities. Development within these zones should be limited and carefully managed to maintain natural features, minimize environmental impacts, and preserve open space. Future land use decisions in these areas should prioritize conservation, stormwater management, habitat protection, and opportunities for passive and active recreation, while also supporting public access where appropriate. Integrating these areas into a broader greenway or open space network will help enhance connectivity, ecological health, and overall community well-being.

INTENT

- Prioritize the long-term conservation of environmentally sensitive and ecologically valuable areas.
- Limit development in flood-prone or high-risk areas to reduce environmental hazards and property damage.
- Maintain and enhance public access to parks, trails, and open spaces for recreation.
- Integrate natural resource areas into a county-wide greenway network to promote environmental connectivity.
- Use natural areas for stormwater management and climate resilience, especially in flood hazard zones.

PRIMARY USES

- Parks and open space
- Recreation
- Trails
- Transit Nodes

SECONDARY USES

- Public and institutional uses
- Agriculture

DRAFT



Public & Institutional

This land use designation includes properties dedicated to civic, educational, religious, and governmental functions that serve the broader community. This category encompasses schools, college campuses, hospitals, government buildings, libraries, community centers, places of worship, and facilities operated by non-profit organizations. These uses are essential for supporting public services, fostering social interaction, and maintaining a high quality of life for residents. Public and institutional sites are often located within neighborhoods and along major transportation corridors to ensure accessibility for all populations, including underserved and rural communities. These areas may also include supporting infrastructure such as parking, open space, and pedestrian pathways. In some cases, shared-use facilities and adaptive reuse of existing structures are encouraged to maximize land efficiency and community benefit. Planning for this land use type prioritizes long-term community needs, equitable access, and integration with surrounding development.

INTENT

- Support the development and maintenance of essential community services such as education, government, and public safety.
- Ensure public and institutional uses are accessible to all residents, including those in underserved or rural areas.
- Preserve and expand civic spaces that foster community engagement and social well-being.
- Plan proactively to accommodate future growth in public services as the population increases.

PRIMARY USES

- Government Facilities
- Places of Worship
- Schools
- Community Centers

SECONDARY USES

- Right-of-Way
- Infrastructure

DRAFT

SECOND DRAFT
FUTURE LAND USE
CHANGES MAP
 Bloomington-Normal, IL Urban Area

Legend

Future Land Use Categories

Agriculture	Public/Institutional
Aviation	Mixed-Use
Commercial/Retail	Natural Resources
Employment Center	Residential
Industrial	

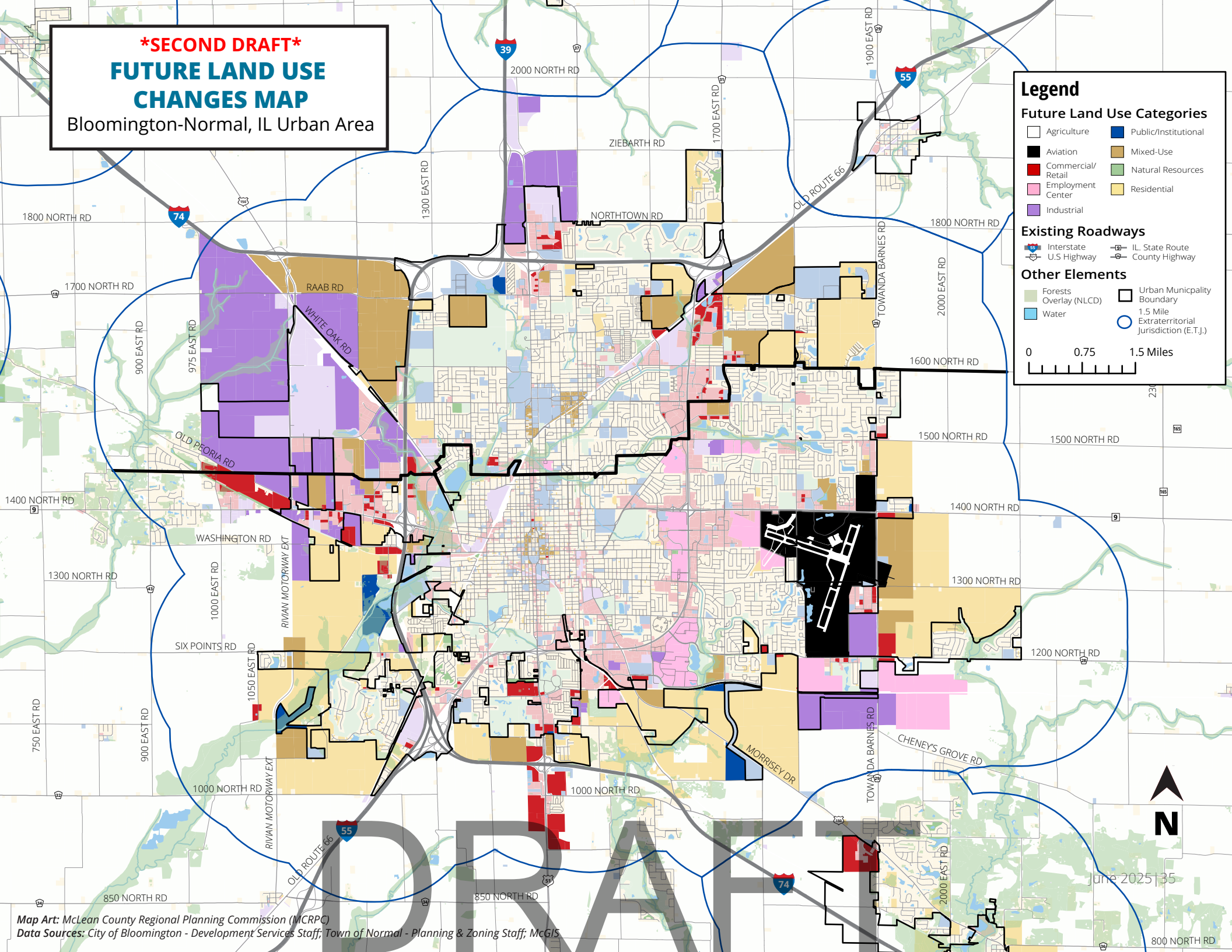
Existing Roadways

Interstate	IL State Route
U.S Highway	County Highway

Other Elements

Forests Overlay (NLCD)	Urban Municipality Boundary
Water	1.5 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (E.T.J.)

0 0.75 1.5 Miles



SECOND DRAFT
FUTURE GROWTH AREAS MAP

Bloomington-Normal, IL Urban Area

1. West Normal

2. North Normal

3. East Normal

4. West
Bloomington

5. Southwest
Bloomington

6. South Bloomington

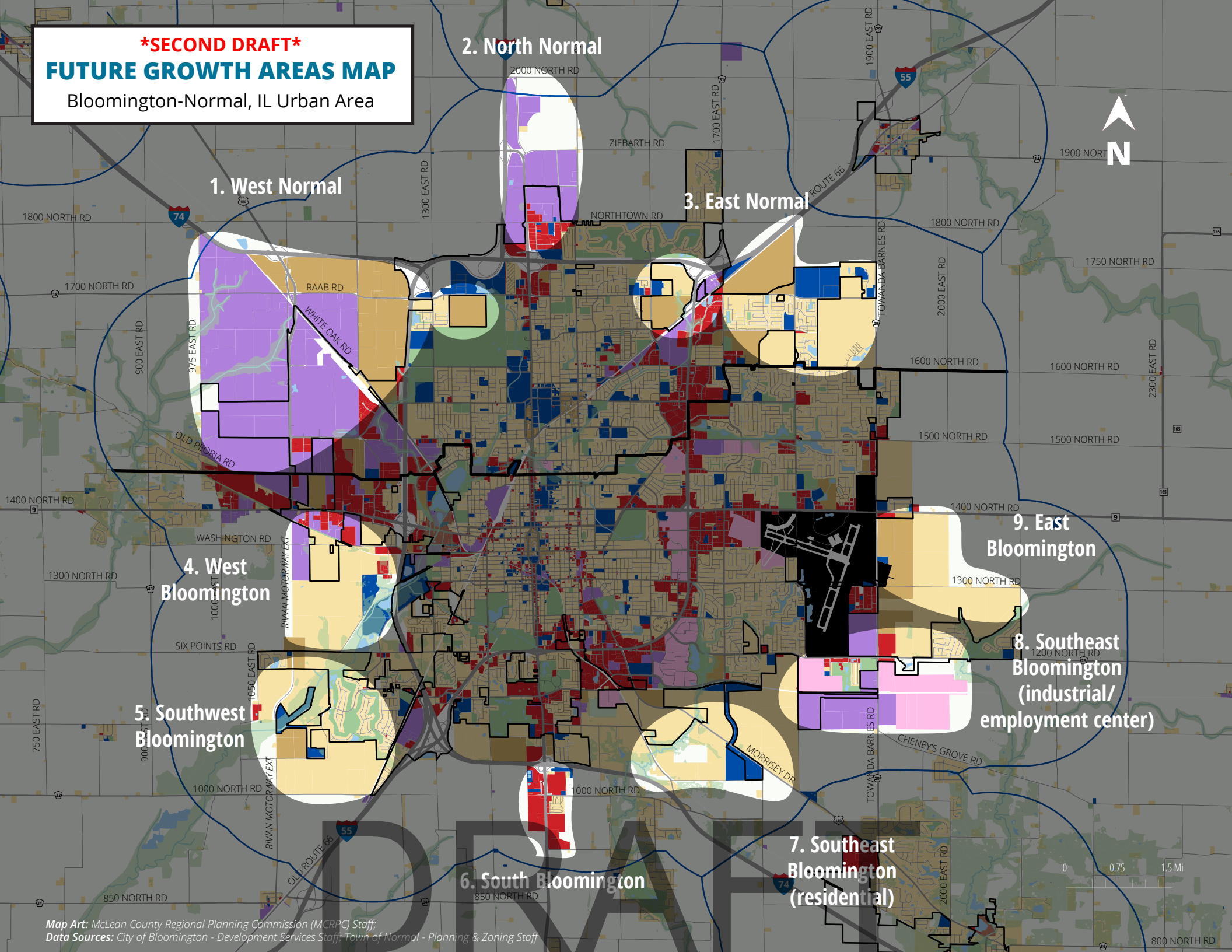
7. Southeast
Bloomington
(residential)

9. East
Bloomington

8. Southeast
Bloomington
(industrial/
employment center)



0 0.75 1.5 Mi



FUTURE GROWTH AREAS - TOWN OF NORMAL

The availability of public and private utilities is highly influential in determining the future growth areas in the Town of Normal and would impact the timeline for potential development. In many of these areas listed below, utilities are currently not present. If there are questions concerning the availability of utilities or the feasibility of extending utilities, please contact Town staff.

1. West Normal

Future Industrial/Employment Center

- West Normal has had industrial development since the Diamond Star/Mitsubishi Automobile Plant opened in the late 1980's. With Rivian taking over the plant in 2017, the future growth of industrial land uses in this area would make sense in this part of town and continue to diversify Normal's economy.
- The proximity to the interstate and rail support large shipments and vehicle traffic for industrial uses.

Mixed-Use

- Existing agro-tourism (Rader Farms), proximity to Heartland Community College, and the Rivian Manufacturing Plant would support commercial pockets for nearby residents and commuters to access. This also creates opportunities for mixed-housing for students and employees of nearby employment centers to reside.
- A well-connected transportation system with the Interstate, Raab Road, and White Oak Road also create opportunities for commercial corridors and mixed-density residential units, as well as an opportunity for regional destinations.

2. North Normal

Future Industrial/Employment Center

- North Normal currently has a mix of light industrial land uses and commercial businesses, and has room to accommodate more of these types of land uses.

- Access to Interstate and Main Street helps with large vehicles and shipments of large supplies.

3. East Normal

Future Residential

- The 2017 Comprehensive Plan points to these areas as future residential neighborhoods, which could be integrated into the fabric of the New Suburban Neighborhoods to make them more complete, connected, and compact.
- This land use would have an emphasis on mixed densities and typologies with a high-quality public realm with street trees, pedestrian connections, natural areas, public parks, and green infrastructure.

Future Mixed-Use (south of Raab, west of Veterans Parkway)

- The 2017 Comprehensive Plan shows this area as a Local Center and residential development.
- The development of a regional detention basin south of Raab Rd. and east of Towanda could incorporate natural areas and spur mixed development.

Future Mixed-Use (between Ft Jesse Rd. and Shepard Rd.)

- This area was identified as a Local Center in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.
- Current land use includes offices and Shepard Park, and is adjacent to a well-connected street network, which lends itself to being a neighborhood destination for commercial and recreational activities, as well as supporting multiple forms of housing.

Future Mixed-Use (between Raab Rd. & Old Route 66)

- This area is in close proximity to a mix of land uses including institutional, industrial, commercial, and residential.
- Connectivity of roadways including Old Rt 66, Veterans Parkway, and Interstate 55, and Rt. 66/Constitution Trail line offers an opportunity for commercial, light industrial/employment center, and a variety of residential typologies.

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS - CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

4. West Bloomington

Comprehensive Plan: The comprehensive plan points to these areas as “Future.” This classification is no longer appropriate. Many of these areas are now incorporated or immediately adjacent (contiguous) to City limits, and significant current development pressure exists due to the distinctly different and physically separated nature of this part of the City because of the I-55/I-74 corridor. Connecting the residential population to the south with the large commercial and industrial area to the north is of paramount importance for the integrated, long-term success of both areas.

Public Utility Servicing: Public water and sewer services are not yet available for large portions of this area, but it sits in a “pocket” of surrounding utilities that run the Constitution Trail/W. Washington St. and Six Points Road, as well as planned and proposed improvements along the north, east, and southern boundaries of this area. Many of the existing utilities have been oversized to accommodate future growth, making this area a practical option for expansion that still holds many of the characteristics and benefits of infill. A newer fire station, with currently low use, has already been constructed nearby.

Future Considerations: The extension/connection of Rivian/Mitsubishi Motorway will be the primary generator of commercial development in this area. It is important to note that this area will never have connectivity across I-55, between W. Market St. and Six Points Rd.

Future Residential (approximately bounded by W. Washington St. (N), Rabbit Hill Rd. (E), Six Points Road (S), and future Rivian/Mitsubishi Motorway (W):

Emphasis: Short-to-mid-term uses that do not require significant infrastructure access (Utilities, Agricultural, Storage). Long-term low-to-moderate density, primarily automobile-based residential uses and development patterns, surrounding more moderate-to-high density, connected and/or mixed-use neighborhoods near primary road network components.

Growth Restriction: A transportation project as significant as connecting Rivian and Mitsubishi Motorways can typically not be constructed via relying upon private development.

Future Industrial/Employment Center and Mixed Use (approximately surrounding future Rivian/Mitsubishi Motorway Extension from W. Market St. (N) to Six Points Rd. (S):

Emphasis: Large lot industrial uses and/or employment centers supportive of the more intensive industrial/commercial uses northeast of Rivian/W. Market St. Mixed Use with “Neighborhood Commercial” type uses with focus on serving the immediate needs of the nearby residential population could be supported near Six Points Road and possibly near W. Washington St.

Growth Restriction: The future alignment of Rivian-Mitsubishi Motorway is at a “high point” that may result in splitting sewer sheds, with the east side becoming quickly serviceable and the west side servicing potential not yet evaluated.

DRAFT

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS - CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

5. Southwest Bloomington

Comprehensive Plan: The comprehensive plan points to these areas as “New Neighborhood” and “Conservation Neighborhood,” with everything west of the future Mitsubishi Motorway alignment not assigned to a type. This classification is still somewhat appropriate but does not reflect the full extent of existing infrastructure investment and need for commercial uses in this area.

Public Utility Servicing: Public water and sewer services are already installed in much of this area, and are oversized to accommodate future growth, making this area a practical option for expansion that still holds many of the characteristics and benefits of infill. A newer fire station, with currently low use, has already been constructed to serve the surrounding area. Park space has been allocated and an Elementary School has been constructed on the outer edge of this area.

Future Considerations: Development of this area could result in the creation of a western access point for the Fox Creek subdivision, improving the connectivity and safety of this entire section of the City, particularly once Mitsubishi Mtwy has been connected to Rivian Mtwy to the north.

Future Residential (approximately bounded by Six Points Rd. (N), Carrington Ln./Fox Creek Rd. (E), Scottsdale Ave. (S), and Timberwolf Tr./Bloomingdale Rd. (W):

Emphasis: Low-to-moderate density, primarily automobile-based residential uses and development patterns, surrounding more moderate-to-high density, connected and/or mixed-use neighborhoods near primary road network components.

Growth Restriction: Without connecting this area to W. Market St., via Rivian and Mitsubishi Mtwy, sales tax from residents in this area may be lost to other nearby communities that are easier to reach, despite being physically further away. Development of the proposed Mixed Use area with an appropriate diversity of uses may help alleviate this potential issue.

Future Mixed Use (approximately surrounding future Rivian/Mitsubishi Motorway Extension from Sugar Creek (N), Timberwolf Tr. (E), Scottsdale Ave. (S), and Bloomingdale Rd. (W):

Emphasis: Medium-to-high density residential types and moderate commercial intensity, including anchor retail and grocery. Structured to integrate with the long-term development of the regional park planned just to the north of this area, could become a vibrant hub for southwest Bloomington, the way that the McGraw Park or Tipton Trails Park areas have become for the northeast.

Growth Restriction: A transportation project as significant as connecting Rivian and Mitsubishi Motorways can typically not be constructed via relying upon private development, and this segment includes a large expanse of bridgework to cross Sugar Creek.

DRAFT

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS - CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

6a. South Bloomington (West of Main)

Comprehensive Plan: The comprehensive plan points to these areas as “Future”. This classification is no longer appropriate. These areas are now incorporated or immediately adjacent (contiguous) to Bloomington’s corporate limits, and current development pressure exists.

Public Utility Servicing: Public water and sewer services are not yet available for large portions of this area. Water can be extended reasonably, but public sewer access would require the use of lift station(s).

Future Considerations: Installation of a proposed interceptor sewer along I-74 to the south would drastically alter the financial viability of utility servicing in these areas.

Future Residential (approximately bounded by Lutz Rd. (N), S. Morris Ave. (E), I-74 (S), and Veterans Parkway (W)):

Emphasis: Short-to-mid-term uses that do not require significant infrastructure access (Utilities, Agricultural, Storage). Long-term low-density, automobile-based residential uses and development patterns, once utility servicing becomes financially feasible.

Growth Restriction: Transportation network is permanently restricted due to bounding by I-74 and Veterans Parkway, without direct access to either. All access to this area will be from the north and (primarily) east, preventing successful implementation of most commercial and/or mixed uses.

Future Mixed Use (approximately bounded by Brigham School Rd. (N), US HWY 51/Main St. (E), I-74 (S), and S. Morris Ave. (W)):

Emphasis: Short-to-mid-term uses that do not require significant infrastructure access (Utilities, Agricultural, Storage). Long-term Mixed Use with “Neighborhood Commercial” type uses with focus on serving the large residential population expected in the immediate area, long-term.

Growth Restriction: Drainage pattern is somewhat restrictive in the northwest but could be transitioned to lower-density residential uses in this specific area or conserved as part of a Conservation focused master planned development.

6b. South Bloomington (East of Main)

Comprehensive Plan: The comprehensive plan points to these areas as “Commercial Activity Center” and “New Neighborhood.” This expectation is still reasonable today.

Public Utility Servicing: Public water and sewer services are in the vicinity but not extended to the point of encouraging incremental development. Water is easily extended from the west in both areas, but quite a distance from the northeast.

Future Considerations: Public sewer main extension north (~0.4 miles) and west (~0.5 miles) from an existing point near I-74 and Bunn St. would likely accelerate both commercial and residential growth in this area.

Future Residential (approximately bounded by Woodrig Rd. (N), Hendrix Dr. (E), I-74 (S), and Breezewood Blvd. (W)):

Emphasis: Moderate-to-medium density residential neighborhoods with a combination of automobile-based neighborhoods and more walkable neighborhoods with connectivity when near schools/parks and areas of “neighborhood commercial” character.

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FUTURE GROWTH AREAS - CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

6b. South Bloomington (East of Main) Cont.

Growth Restriction: Sewer access (N-S run of public main just west of Bunn St.) and the improvement of Bunn Street to “City Collector” standards are the restrictions in this area.

Future Commercial (approximately bounded by Woodrig Rd. (N), Breezewood Blvd. (E), I-74 (S), and S. Main St/US HWY 51. (W):

Emphasis: Tractor Lane access properties can expect “Neighborhood Commercial” type uses, with focus on serving the residential population in the immediate area, which will continue to grow. Larger commercial uses/anchors may be successful at the northern portion of this area, accessing from Woodrig.

Growth Restriction: Sewer access will be the primary restriction in this area; it falls from north to south so gravity feeds would be toward the public main that is still 0.5 mile to the southeast. The feasibility of installing a public lift station at the south end of this area should be studied.

7. Southeast Bloomington (residential)

Comprehensive Plan: The comprehensive plan points to these areas as “New Neighborhood” and “Conservation Neighborhood,” with limited “Commercial Activity Center” uses along the Abraham Road corridor. This expectation is still reasonable today.

Public Utility Servicing: Public water and sewer services are relatively available; public mains surround most of this area and have been oversized to accommodate significant future growth. Future Considerations: Land acquisition and funding for an above-

grade railroad crossing that would extend Hershey Rd. into this area could significantly alter the future character of this area to reasonably include Commercial and Mixed Use areas surrounding the Hershey Road extension corridor, between Hamilton Rd. and US HWY 150, as well as southwest of that intersection.

Future Residential E (approximately bounded by Hamilton Rd./RR (N), Abraham Rd. (E), and US HWY 150/Morrissey. (S, W):

Emphasis: Low-density, automobile-based residential uses and development patterns. Possible higher residential density and minor commercial/mixed use adjacent to Morrissey Dr. and/or near Long Lane Rd/George Evans High School.

Growth Restriction: Transportation network is severely restricted without a railroad crossing at the southern end of Hershey Rd. With restricted access this area will likely grow slowly, at low density that does not take full advantage of the installed and oversized water and sewer infrastructure.

Future Residential (approximately bounded by Hamilton Rd. (N), US HWY 150/Morrissey Dr. and Long Lane Rd (E), Harvest Hill Ave. (S), and Capodice Rd. (W):

Emphasis: Low-density, automobile-based residential uses and development patterns, significant potential for conservation neighborhood areas due to topography and natural resources present.

Growth Restriction: Single, long-term landowner for much of the area between existing development and the public school in the southeast part of this growth area may prohibit contiguous infill development.

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS - CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

8a. Southeast Bloomington (industrial/employment center) West of Towanda Barnes

Comprehensive Plan: The comprehensive plan points to these areas as “Employment Center” (north of RR only) and “Future” south of the RR, with a small area of “Commercial Activity Center” in an area at Ireland Grove and Abraham that is—in all practicality—not developable. These expectations are no longer accurate.

Public Utility Servicing: Public trunk lines for water and sewer services have been installed along and oversized in this area, to accommodate significant future growth on both side of Abraham.

Future Considerations: A new east-west transportation corridor must be identified and constructed before the area south of the RR can be significantly developed; the long-term vacation of Brokaw Road and the existing substandard road status is restrictive. The northern portion of Abraham is also planned for vacation or privatization in the long-term, restricting access from the north.

Future Industrial/Employment Center (approximately bounded by Ireland Grove/Brokaw Rd. (N), Towanda Barnes (E), Little Kickapoo Creek (S), and Abraham Rd. (W):

Emphasis: Large lot, light-to-moderate (north of RR) and moderate-to-intensive (south of RR) industrial, and large-scale employment center uses, in an “Industrial Park” or “Business Park” setting. Connectivity to rail is a potential consideration here, unlike elsewhere in the City.

Growth Restriction: The portion of this area north of the RR has extremely limited access to public roads, and therefore limited development potential, until Hamilton Rd. is extended to Abraham.

8b. Southeast Bloomington (industrial/employment center) East of Towanda Barnes

Comprehensive Plan: The comprehensive plan points to these areas as “Employment Center,” “New Neighborhood,” “Future,” and undesignated. These designations could be appropriate if the Eastside Highway is eventually realized but are not reflective of the current status of installed or committed infrastructure and today’s development pressure(s).

Public Utility Servicing: Public water and sewer has been extended along Ireland Grove Rd., all the way to N. 2100 E. Rd., including a public lift station past Kickapoo Creek Rd. to allow private development to implement gravity feed systems in most areas.

Future Considerations: The future trajectory of the Eastside Highway project will significantly impact whether and how this area can develop. Construction of a large-scale transportation corridor could result in the same segmentation of this part of the City—and the same long-term issues—that have resulted from expansion of the City on the west side of the I-74/55 corridor.

Future Industrial/Employment Center (approximately bounded by Ireland Grove Rd. (N), N. 2100 East Rd. (E), Cheney’s Grove Rd. (S), and Towanda Barnes (W):

Emphasis: Large lot, light-to-moderate (north of RR) and moderate-to-intensive (south of RR) industrial, and large-scale employment center uses, in an “Industrial Park” or “Business Park” setting. Some Mixed Use could be integrated, depending upon the preferences of the dominant development parties and financial feasibility.

Growth Restriction: North-south connectivity between Towanda Barnes and N. 2100 East Rd. is severely restricted by the Norfolk Southern Rail line that spans the entire area, from west to east.

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS - CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

9. East Bloomington

Comprehensive Plan: The comprehensive plan points to these areas as “Employment Center” and “Conservation Neighborhood.” This expectation is still reasonable today, with slight modification.

Public Utility Servicing: Public water and sewer services are relatively available; public mains surround most of this area and have been oversized to accommodate significant future growth.

Future Considerations: The future trajectory of the Eastside Highway project will significantly impact whether and how this area can develop. Construction of a large-scale transportation corridor could result in the same segmentation of this part of the City—and the same long-term issues—that have resulted from expansion of the City on the west side of the I-74/55 corridor.

Future Commercial/Mixed Use (approximately bounded by E. Empire St. (N), Prairie Commercial Park (E), Ireland Grove Rd. (S), and Towanda Barnes (W):

Emphasis: Moderate-to-high intensity commercial park and retail uses near the Towanda Barnes corridor, accessing primarily from the developments to the east. Mixed Use transitioning from the commercial area into higher density residential, and suburban neighborhoods to the east.

Growth Restriction: Without the Eastside Highway a linear, connected pattern of development is feasible, relying heavily on existing oversized public infrastructure; with it, the neighborhoods that would support the commercial development appropriate for proximity to Towanda Barnes will be located further from the borders of existing development and separated from that commercial use.

Future Residential (approximately bounded by E. Empire St. (N), N. 2100 East Rd. (E), Ireland Grove Rd. (S), and Prairie Commercial Park (W):

Emphasis: Low-density, automobile-based residential uses and development patterns. Possible higher residential density as you approach the Mixed Use area further toward Towanda Barnes.

Growth Restriction: Without the Eastside Highway a linear, connected pattern of development is feasible, relying heavily on existing oversized public infrastructure; with it, the neighborhoods that would support the commercial development appropriate for proximity to Towanda Barnes will be located further from the borders of existing development and separated from that commercial use.

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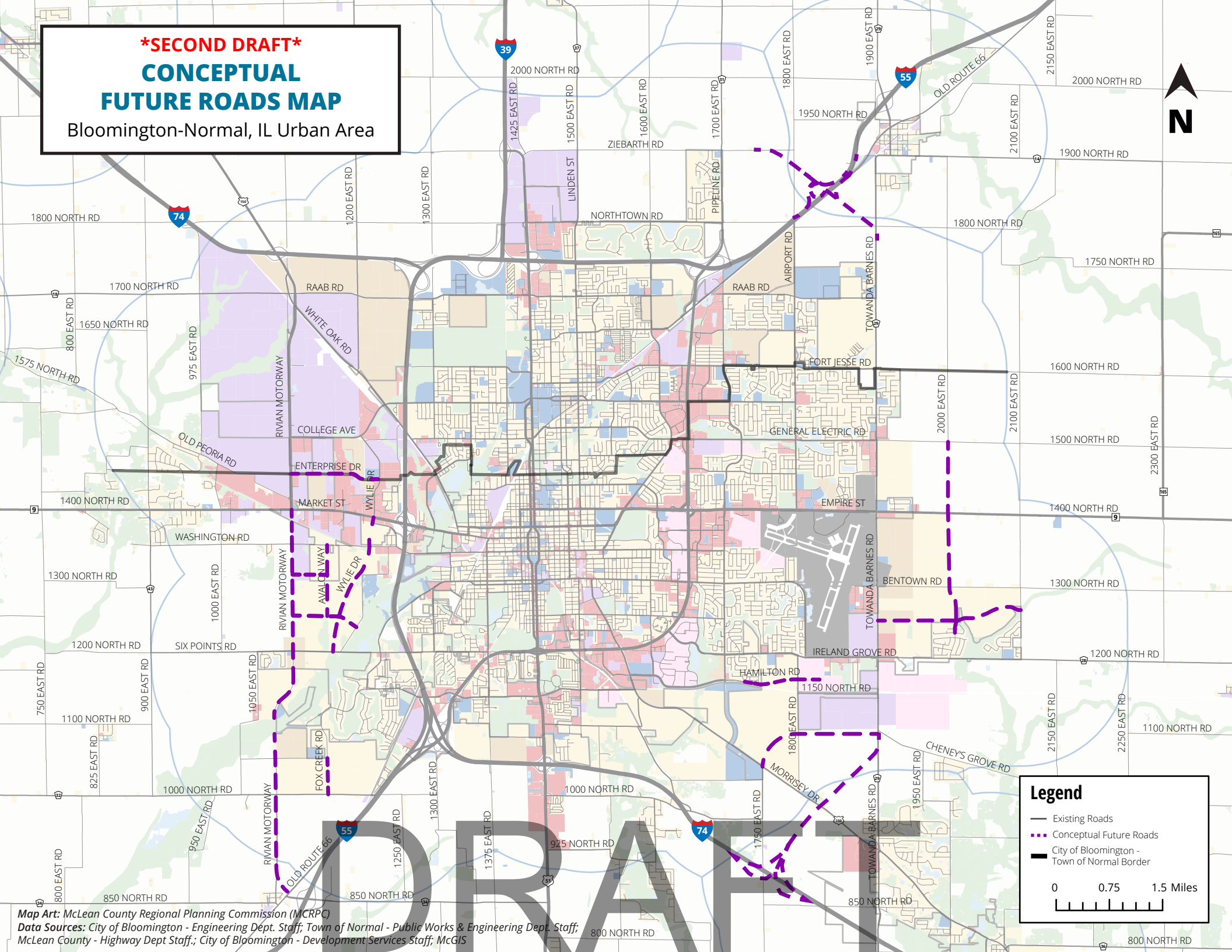
Conceptual Future Roads Explanation:

- The relationship between land use and transportation cannot be overlooked. As such, the land use planning process considers the existing transportation network, highlighting what enhancements and/or additions may be needed to support the vision outlined in future land use proposals.
- Existing comprehensive plans for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal include transportation maps that illustrate additions and enhancements of their transportation networks in order to support the existing proposals laid out in those plans. Since the Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP) aims to be a supporting tool for the existing comprehensive plans, local engineers and planners from the three aforementioned entities have utilized the information present in those plans to help inform what future roads to include in this document. The majority of the proposed future roads included in the Strategic Land Use Plan are taken directly from existing comprehensive plans, with a few new proposals that show an approximation of where new roadway links may be needed. Engineers and planners provided these approximations for their respective Jurisdictions.
- As with the proposed transportation network maps laid out in existing comprehensive plans, the content in the Conceptual Future Roads Map includes potential roadway links that would require additional research and planning. The intent of incorporating proposed future roads into this plan is to inform planners, elected officials, and members of the public on potential new roadway links that may need to be studied. All of the conceptual future roads, if committed to, would have to undergo additional studies, funding, and public engagement. These conceptual roadway links would then be listed in both the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the regional Long-Range Transportation Plan in order to be eligible for state and federal funding. Conversations with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) would also need to occur for any large-scale conceptual links.
- Proposals for other forms of transportation, such as bicycles, pedestrian, public transit, rail, and aviation, are outlined in more detail in all of the existing plans.

East Side Corridor:

- It is important to note that the Eastside Highway is no longer illustrated east of Towanda Barnes Road. This adjustment reflects two primary considerations. First, during Phase 1 of the Strategic Land Use Plan process, extensive public feedback was received expressing concern with extending the Eastside Highway in this area. Second, current traffic projections and population growth data do not support the inclusion of this roadway segment within the Strategic Land Use Plan.

SECOND DRAFT
CONCEPTUAL
FUTURE ROADS MAP
 Bloomington-Normal, IL Urban Area



Legend

- Existing Roads
- - - Conceptual Future Roads
- ▬ City of Bloomington - Town of Normal Border

0 0.75 1.5 Miles

Map Art: McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC)
 Data Sources: City of Bloomington - Engineering Dept. Staff; Town of Normal - Public Works & Engineering Dept. Staff;
 McLean County - Highway Dept Staff; City of Bloomington - Development Services Staff; McGIS



CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this Strategic Land Use Plan is more than an advisory document, it is a shared vision and collective commitment to shaping a prosperous and sustainable future for all of McLean County.

DRAFT



CONCLUSION

The McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan represents a critical step forward in proactively guiding the county's growth and development amid rapid economic changes and growing population demands. Rooted in collaboration, data analysis, and a commitment to sustainability, the plan serves as a living document that reflects the shared vision of regional stakeholders. By balancing the needs of both urban and rural areas, the plan provides a flexible yet strategic framework to address immediate development pressures while laying the groundwork for future comprehensive planning efforts.

As Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County continue to evolve, this Strategic Land Use Plan will be instrumental in shaping policies and decisions that protect natural resources, preserve agricultural land, and support vibrant, well-connected communities. It ensures that growth is managed thoughtfully, with an eye toward long-term resiliency, economic prosperity, and quality of life for all residents. Ultimately, this plan is not the end point, but the beginning of a dynamic planning process that will adapt over time to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Continued collaboration between municipalities, regional agencies, and community members will be essential to the plan's success. As conditions change and new opportunities arise, open communication and public input will help ensure that the Strategic Land Use Plan remains a responsive and inclusive tool for shaping the future of McLean County. The next major planning process will be the development of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan update. This update will set the stage for a more in-depth analysis of the region using the information developed in the Strategic Land Use Plan seen here. It will also allow for expansion on certain planning topics and the ability to begin the development of individual comprehensive plan updates for local municipalities.

DRAFT

APPENDIX

The Appendix will include all supplemental information relating to the McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan.

DRAFT

Public Outreach Report

A public-facing summary of community engagement, authored in collaboration with the YWCA McLean County, is currently under internal review and will be added to this document as soon as it is finalized. While the report itself is not yet included in this second draft, it is in the final stages of preparation and will be submitted for inclusion by shortly after the initial release date of the second draft.

It is important to note that community input gathered during the extended public comment period and throughout the five open houses already played a direct role in shaping this updated second draft. All feedback collected was reviewed and discussed by staff and partners following each open house, and key themes and concerns were incorporated into the changes reflected in this second draft. The formal write-up of the engagement process has followed in a slightly later phase, leading to a brief delay in its inclusion here. In an effort to provide the public with a greater amount of time to review the updated draft Strategic Land Use Plan, the decision was made to release the second draft as it stands today.

The Community Engagement Report will document the methods of outreach, participation data, key feedback themes, and how public input informed the evolution of the plan. It will be appended promptly once review is complete.

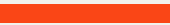
DRAFT



THE EVANS

DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

APPENDIX A



eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

McLean County

PREPARED BY

Juliana Vidal
Director of Mission and Equity Consulting
YWCA McLean County

PREPARED FOR

McLean County Regional Planning Commission





1. BACKGROUND

A Call for Increased Community Engagement

On June 24, 2025, the McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) opened a public review period for its draft Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP). As community members became more familiar with the draft, a number began to voice concerns about proposed land use changes and designated future growth areas—particularly in locations where those changes were associated with perceived impacts to their homes, property, and neighborhoods. In addition, stakeholders raised objections to the planning process itself, citing a lack of early engagement and limited opportunities for public and rural municipal input prior to the release of the draft. Of those that provided comments, many felt that key decisions had been made in advance, without sufficient community consultation, leading to questions about transparency and representation^[1].

In response to this wave of feedback, MCRPC committed to expanding opportunities for stakeholder input. The initial public comment period was extended by approximately one month (from July 24th to September 1st, 2025), and five open houses were scheduled in strategic locations across McLean County to provide dedicated opportunities for public dialogue with planners and key staff from MCRPC, the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and McLean County. These initiatives complemented the public outreach efforts already in progress, as described in Section 2.

[1]Here, it is important to note that the initial tone and focus of public feedback was largely shaped by the widespread misconception that land use planning is equivalent to zoning. This conflation was evident in many public comments, which explicitly referred to areas as having been re-zoned in the Future Land Use Map, even though the Strategic Land Use Plan does not, in itself, enact zoning changes.

The MCRPC and YWCA McLean County Partnership

Alongside these expanded outreach efforts, MCRPC welcomed a collaboration with the YWCA McLean County (YW) to bring additional transparency and expertise to the engagement process. Known for its long-standing presence in the community and a broad focus on racial justice, civil rights, and socioeconomic advancement for systems-impacted individuals, the YWCA McLean County's mission to eliminate racism and empower women while promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all positioned the organization as a trusted partner to support MCRPC during the expanded public engagement process. While the YW is best known for its direct services—from early childhood education to crisis response and reentry support—it also advances its mission through programs and partnerships shaped by the community's needs.



Included within these initiatives is the Mission and Equity Consulting program which extends the YW's work into the civic and institutional landscape by applying robust social science methodology to support equity-informed community engagement and outreach efforts. It was within this context that the Director of Mission and Equity Consulting was brought into the community engagement process to serve in an independent, non-contracted role. The Director attended each open house session to document community feedback and key themes that emerged from public input. Following each open house, the Director collaborated with planning staff to identify common community concerns, misunderstandings, and opportunities to directly incorporate feedback within the Strategic Land Use Plan. These debriefs, in combination with the following summary document, informed the iterative revision process for the second draft of the plan, further equipping MCRPC to address issues raised by the public while remaining grounded in the goals and constraints of the Strategic Land Use Plan.

This partnership reflected a shared effort to listen, learn, and strengthen public trust through more inclusive and transparent planning. It also provided a constructive mechanism for community concerns to be observed, synthesized, and relayed by a neutral, mission-aligned partner, reinforcing MCRPC's ongoing work to make the planning process more responsive to the community it serves.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC LAND USE PLAN OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Between May and September 2025, MCRPC undertook a multi-faceted public outreach campaign to promote awareness of the draft Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP) and solicit meaningful feedback from residents, stakeholders, and local officials. Engagement efforts were designed to be accessible and to reach community members across all of McLean County.

Original outreach activities included print and digital media coverage, targeted email communications, a series of in-person presentations and, later, open house events. To support broader public awareness, press releases announcing the launch of the draft plan and public review period were distributed to the following media outlets: 25 News/WEEK TV Newsroom, Illinois State University, The Herald Review, The Pantagraph Newsroom, WCIA Newsroom, WJBC Newsroom, WGLT Newsroom, WMBD Newsroom, and the WTVP Newsroom.

Email and social media campaigns were used to reach residents who more regularly engage with digital platforms. MCRPC distributed updates to its Constant Contact mailing list of 2,025 subscribers, and regularly posted content on its Facebook page (842 followers) and Instagram account

(108 followers) to share and repost (i) requests for community feedback on the SLUP, (ii) media releases, (iii) the QR code and link to the public comment website, and (iv) links to an interactive mapping tool. To ensure the document was accessible to residents who preferred or required a physical format, hard copies of the draft SLUP were distributed to all McLean County libraries. Each public-facing communication also included the Community Planner's phone number and email address, which provided community members with a direct, responsive channel to provide feedback, ask questions, or request additional information.

To meet residents where they were, MCRPC staff established a physical presence at community events such as the McLean County Fair, the McLean County Road Commissioners Picnic, and the Sweet Corn Circus. Staff also conducted presentations to and gathered feedback from local boards, commissions, and elected officials. While the initial development of the draft SLUP involved a limited set of stakeholders from the city, town, and county, these later outreach efforts aimed to broaden participation and provide opportunities for rural communities and smaller municipalities to engage in the planning process as well (see DRAFT Figure 1).



MAY
2025

May 5th, 2025
In-person presentation to and feedback collection with the **McLean County Zoning Board of Appeals**

1

May 6th, 2025
In-person presentation to and feedback collection during the **McLean County Regional Planning Commission Meeting**

2

June 4th, 2025
In-person presentation to and feedback collection with **Bloomington Planning Commission** and during the **McLean County Regional Planning Commission Meeting**

3

JUNE
2025

June 5th, 2025
In-person presentation to and feedback collection with the **Normal Planning Commission**

4

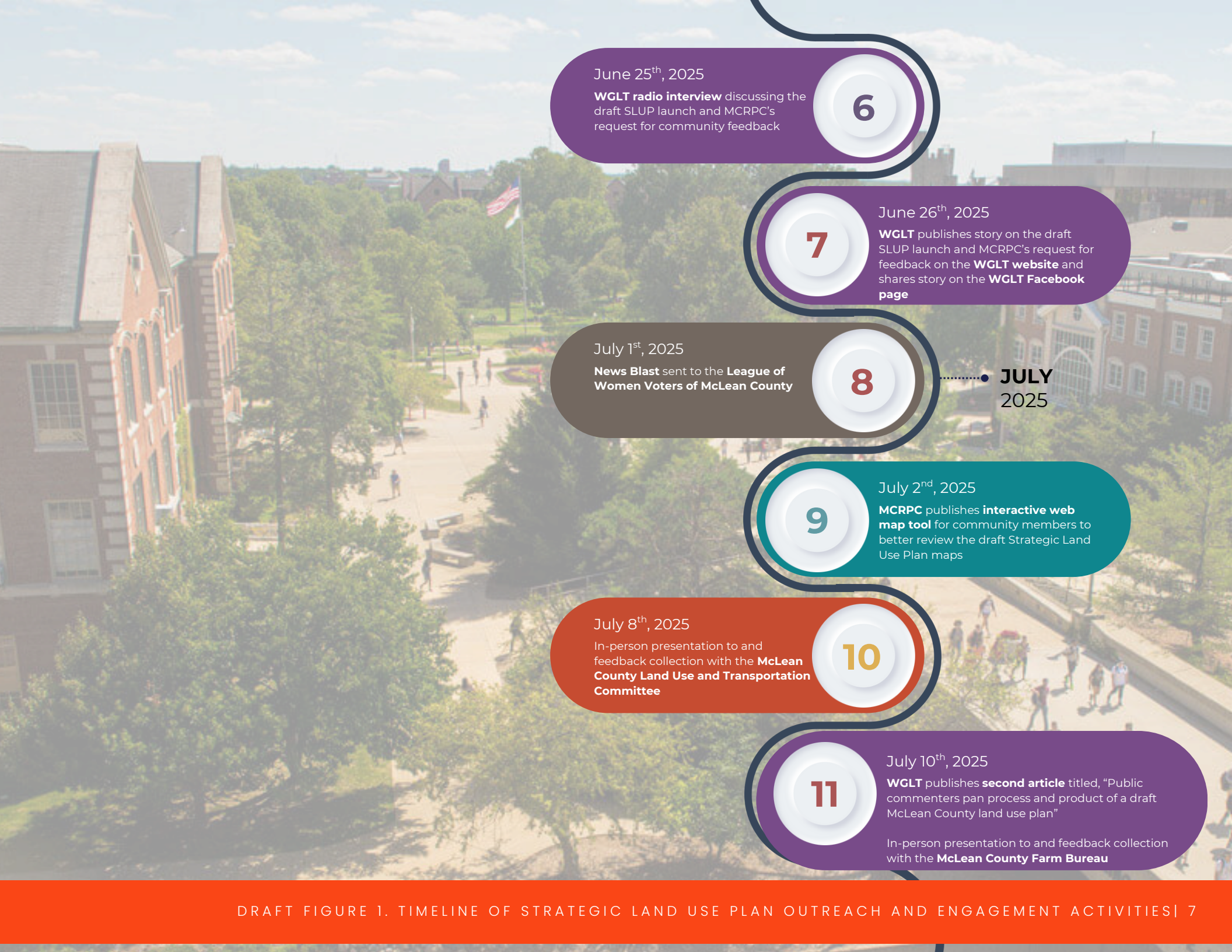
June 24th, 2025
MCRPC 1st Press Release - Draft Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP) Public Review Initial Launch

McLean County Government Facebook page posts about the draft SLUP initial launch

McLean County Regional Planning Commission Facebook & Instagram pages post about draft SLUP initial launch

5

June 24th, 2025 CONT.
MCRPC Constant Contact Mailing List email with information on the draft SLUP sent to **2,025 subscribers**



June 25th, 2025

WGLT radio interview discussing the draft SLUP launch and MCRPC's request for community feedback

6

June 26th, 2025

WGLT publishes story on the draft SLUP launch and MCRPC's request for feedback on the **WGLT website** and shares story on the **WGLT Facebook page**

7

July 1st, 2025

News Blast sent to the **League of Women Voters of McLean County**

8

JULY 2025

July 2nd, 2025

MCRPC publishes **interactive web map tool** for community members to better review the draft Strategic Land Use Plan maps

9

July 8th, 2025

In-person presentation to and feedback collection with the **McLean County Land Use and Transportation Committee**

10

July 10th, 2025

WGLT publishes **second article** titled, "Public commenters pan process and product of a draft McLean County land use plan"

11

In-person presentation to and feedback collection with the **McLean County Farm Bureau**

July 23rd, 2025

MCRPC 2nd Press Release - Draft Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP) **Extended Public Comment Period**

MCRPC Facebook and Instagram posts about the **Extended Public Comment Period**

12

July 23rd, 2025 CONT.

MCRPC Constant Contact Mailing List email with information on the **Extended Public Comment Period** sent to **2,025 subscribers**

WGLT publishes **third article** titled, "McLean County Regional Planning Commission revises land use plan review process"

July 23rd - 27th, 2025

MCRPC tables at the **McLean County Fair** in Bloomington to share information about the draft SLUP and gather feedback

13

14

July 25th, 2025

Draft SLUP Documentation distributed to **all McLean County libraries**

15

July 31st, 2025

In-person presentation to and feedback collection during the **McLean County Mayors Association Quarterly Meeting**

16

August 5th, 2025

In-person presentation to and feedback collection with the **McLean County Land Use and Transportation Committee**

AUGUST
2025

August 5th, 2025 CONT.

MCRPC hosts **Open House 1** at Heartland Community College in **Normal**

17

18

August 6th, 2025

In-person presentation to and feedback collection during the **McLean County Regional Planning Commission meeting**

August 7th, 2025

In-person presentation to and feedback collection during the **McLean County Road Commissioners Meeting**

19

20

August 7th, 2025 CONT.

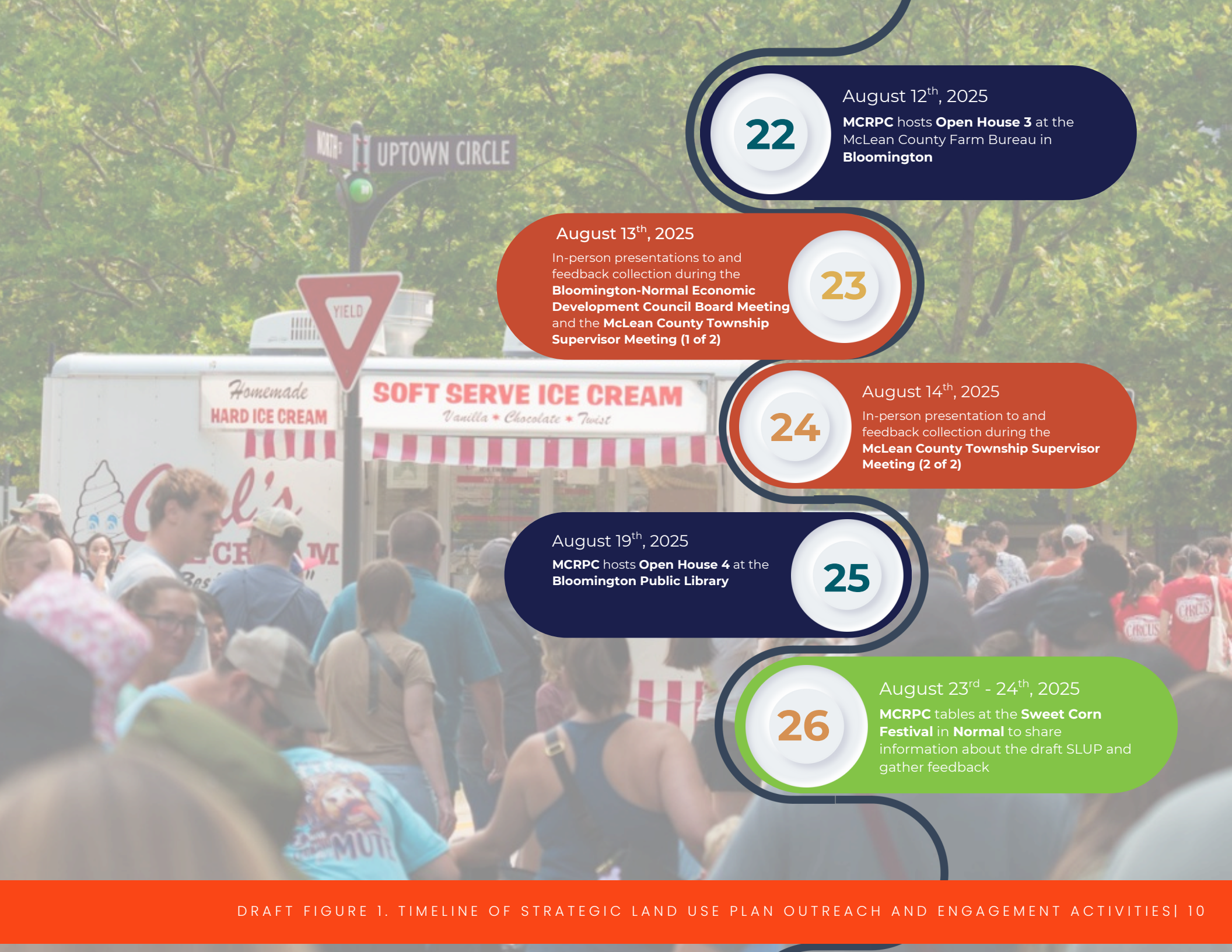
WGLT publishes **fourth article** titled, "First of 5 public meetings shows worry about outward expansion in McLean County's draft land use plan"

August 8th, 2025

MCRPC hosts **Open House 2** at Lexington Community Center in **Lexington**

21





22 August 12th, 2025
MCRPC hosts **Open House 3** at the McLean County Farm Bureau in **Bloomington**

August 13th, 2025
In-person presentations to and feedback collection during the **Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council Board Meeting** and the **McLean County Township Supervisor Meeting (1 of 2)**

23

August 14th, 2025
In-person presentation to and feedback collection during the **McLean County Township Supervisor Meeting (2 of 2)**

24

August 19th, 2025
MCRPC hosts **Open House 4** at the **Bloomington Public Library**

25

August 23rd - 24th, 2025
MCRPC tables at the **Sweet Corn Festival** in **Normal** to share information about the draft SLUP and gather feedback

26

August 27th, 2025

MCRPC hosts **Open House 5** at the Living Well United Senior Center in Le Roy

27

SEPTEMBER
2025

28

September 1st, 2025

Extended Public Comment Period closes

September 2nd, 2025

In-person presentation to and feedback collection with the **McLean County Land Use and Transportation Committee**

29

September 3rd, 2025

In-person presentation to and feedback collection during the **McLean County Regional Planning Commission Meeting**

30

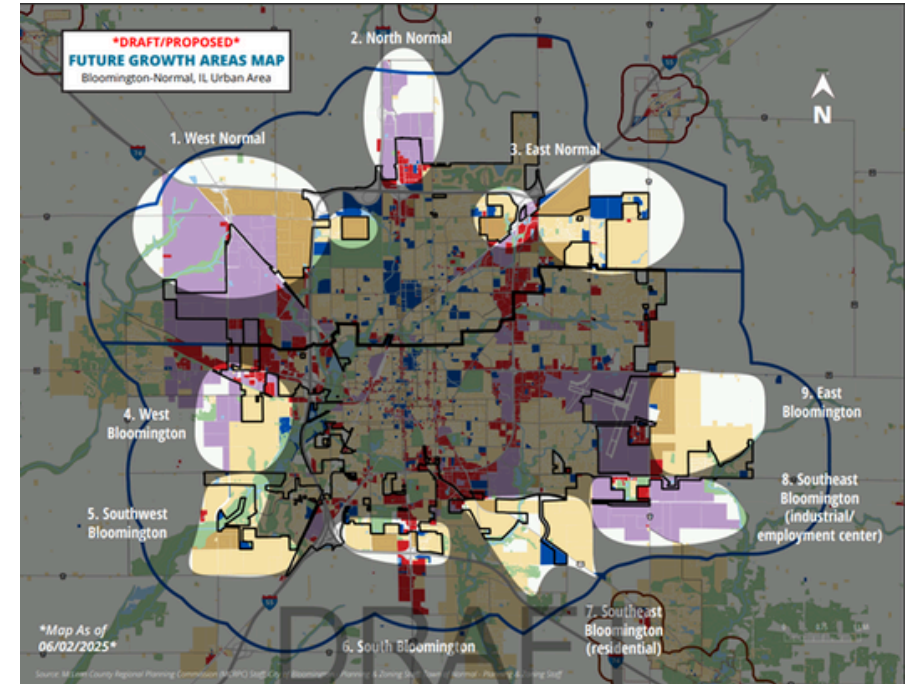
3. A QUANTITATIVE SNAPSHOT OF OPEN HOUSE ENGAGEMENT

Open House Design and Format

In response to public concern over limited early engagement, MCRPC expanded its outreach strategy to include a dedicated series of five open house events held throughout August 2025. Open house locations were strategically selected to correspond with each of the major quadrants in McLean County as well as with the logical groupings of the nine designated future growth areas found in the draft Strategic Land Use Plan (see DRAFT Figure 2). These sessions were designed to provide residents from across McLean County with a more direct and accessible opportunity to learn about the draft Strategic Land Use Plan, ask questions, and share public comment.

To broaden geographic reach and accommodate residents' availability outside of standard working hours, the open houses were scheduled in Le Roy, Lexington, Normal, and Bloomington, Illinois and held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Each open house was divided into two sessions, with a brief 15-minute educational presentation on the SLUP scheduled at the beginning of each hour followed by public comment and dialogue. If no new community members arrived for the second hour, the public comment period continued uninterrupted. If new attendees did arrive, those who had attended the first session were invited to stay while the presentation was repeated for newcomers, after which public comment session resumed with all present.

Each open house offered an informal setting where participants could engage directly with planning staff and representatives from MCRPC, the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and McLean County government. This offered a level of dialogue beyond what was available through the online public comment form.



DRAFT Figure 2. Future Growth Areas Map from the Strategic Land Use Plan (first draft).



Open House Attendance, Demographics, and Geographic Reach

In total, **74 attendees** were counted across the five open house events, though only 60 individuals signed in. Five written comments were submitted during the open house sessions, and seven additional comments were submitted via email. These attendance figures exclude MCRPC and partner staff and may underrepresent actual participation as not all attendees chose to sign in.

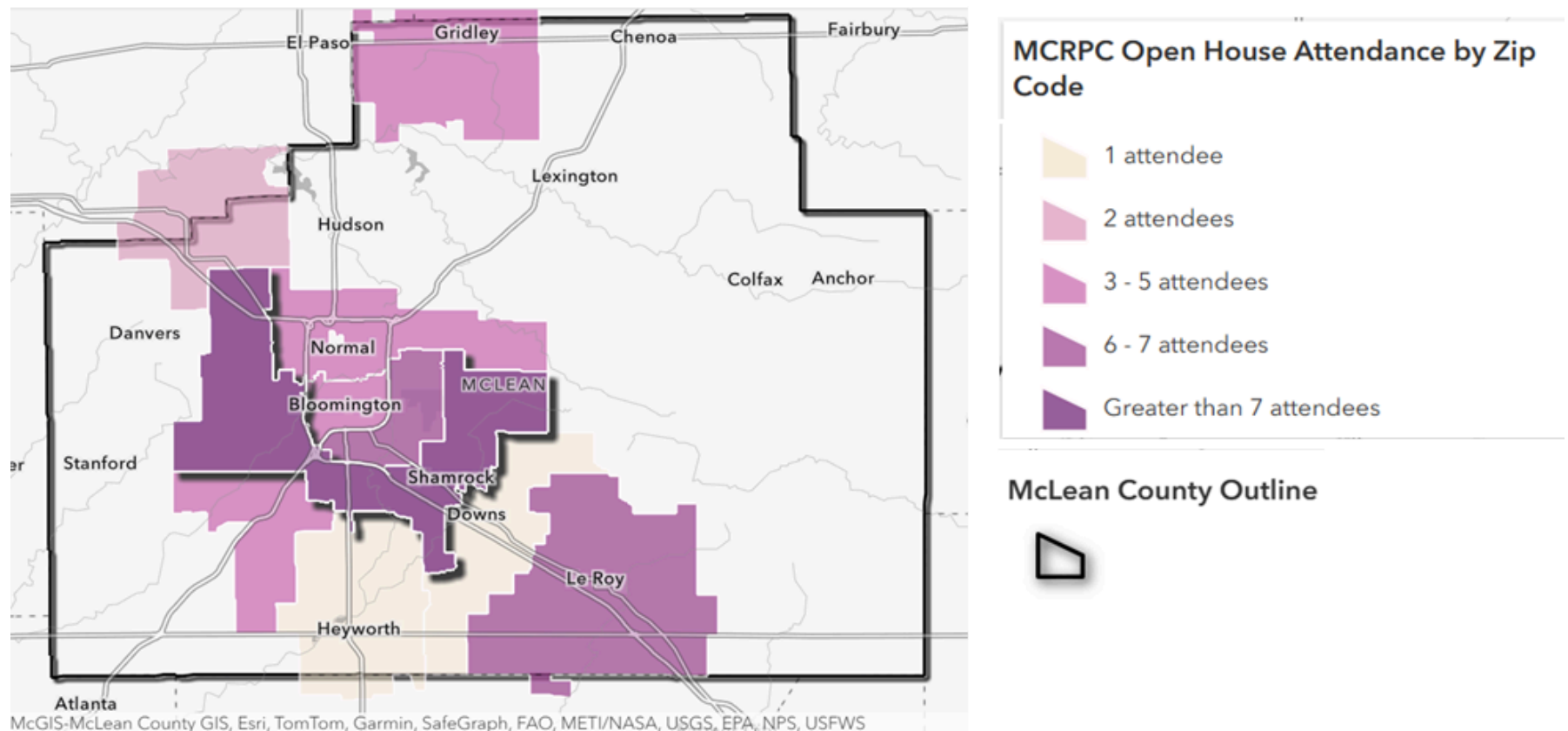
Demographic observations suggest that open house attendees were predominantly white, aged 40 years and above on average, and included a sizable number of individuals who self-identified as residents of rural areas in McLean County. Based on only visual observation, the perceived gender representation was relatively balanced across the five open houses (see Draft Table 1).

Open House 4 had the highest turnout, with 22 community members in attendance, whereas Open House 2 had the lowest, with only 2 attendees. Given that attendance at the other open houses ranged from 15 to 22 participants, the discrepancy in attendance during Open House 2 could be partially attributed to its scheduling on a Friday evening.



Open House	Location	Week-day	Female attendance	Male attendance	TOTAL
1	Heartland Community College <i>Normal, IL</i>	Tuesday	6	9	15
2	Lexington Community Center <i>Lexington, IL</i>	Friday	1	1	2
3	McLean County Farm Bureau <i>Bloomington, IL</i>	Tuesday	11	9	20
4	Bloomington Public Library <i>Bloomington, IL</i>	Tuesday	12	10	22
5	Living Well United Senior Center <i>Le Roy, IL</i>	Wednesday	8	7	15
TOTAL			38	36	74

In addition to headcounts, MCRPC collected ZIP code data at each of the open houses to better understand where participants were coming from. Zip code data collected at the open house events reflects participation from a geographically diverse cross-section of McLean County. **The most represented ZIP code was 61705 (24 attendees)**, followed by 61704 (7 attendees), 61752 (6 attendees), 61701 (5 attendees), 61761 (5 attendees), and 61772 (5 attendees). Additional participation came from 61744 (4 attendees), 61725 (2 attendees), 61736 (1 attendee), and 61745 (1 attendee). Refer to Draft Figure 3.



Complimentary to Open Houses: Online Public Comment Submissions

While the open house sessions captured in-depth, place-based feedback, online submissions through the Strategic Land Use Plan public comment form provided an additional channel for residents across the county to engage with the planning process.

The public comment website received a total of 83 electronic submissions via an online form which included a range of questions regarding the first draft of the plan. Among these, respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction on a Likert scale from 1 (not very satisfied) to 5 (very much satisfied). **The first-round survey results showed that the majority of respondents (58%) rated their satisfaction with the first draft as 1 - not very satisfied.** Together, scores of 1 and 2 accounted for 68% of the responses, indicating general dissatisfaction with the draft. About 19% of participants selected a neutral score of 3, while 10% and 4% rated their satisfaction as 4 and 5, respectively, reflecting a smaller portion of more positive feedback (see Draft Table 2). The average satisfaction score across the 83 submissions was 1.92 out of 5. **Overall, these results suggest that most community members were not satisfied with the initial draft, highlighting areas for improvement in subsequent revisions.**

The feedback submitted through the online public comment form, as well as through the five written comment forms collected during open houses and seven emailed comments, reinforced key themes raised during the in-person sessions. All feedback collected through these various input channels played a critical role in shaping revisions to the second draft of the SLUP.

Draft 1 Strategic Land Use Plan Overall Satisfaction Score	Response Frequency	Percent
1 – not very satisfied	48	58%
2	8	10%
3	16	19%
4	8	10%
5 – very much satisfied	3	4%
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>100%</i>

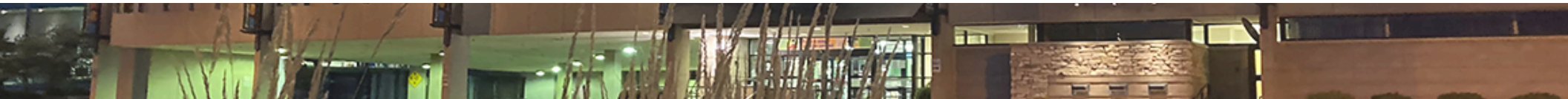


4. EMERGING THEMES FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Community engagement is important because it serves as both a channel for participation and as a critical source of qualitative insight into the values, priorities, and concerns held by residents. This section synthesizes the major themes that emerged across the multiple forms of engagement during the draft Strategic Land Use Plan Community Engagement process, including that feedback shared during in-person open houses, online public comment submissions, emails, and written submissions. Rather than treating each comment in isolation, responses were comprehensively analyzed for recurring sentiments and ideas, offering a grounded understanding of how the subset of community members engaged in this planning process collectively interpreted and responded to the first draft of the Strategic Land Use Plan.

Bearing in mind that no community is a monolith and that individuals and groups often hold differing or even conflicting values and priorities, it is also important to recognize that the following themes are drawn from a relatively small sample size of participants when compared to the total population of McLean County.

The following analysis emphasizes the significance, consistency, and context of the themes that emerged across various forms of input. Taken together, these themes reflect a wide spectrum of local perspectives and provide a foundation for responsive, community-informed planning. This section begins with an overview of the methodology, then provides a reference to the maps and figures included in the first draft of the SLUP, followed by a breakdown of the key themes. Where applicable, notes are included on how MCRPC incorporated community feedback into the second draft of the Strategic Land Use Plan.



Methodology

The analysis presented in this section draws from qualitative data collected through multiple engagement channels conducted between June and September 2025. These channels included five in-person open house sessions, 83 anonymized online public comment form submissions, seven anonymized email communications from community members, and five anonymized handwritten feedback forms submitted during the open house events. Together, these sources captured a mix of structured and unstructured input, offering both direct responses to targeted prompts and more open-ended reflections.

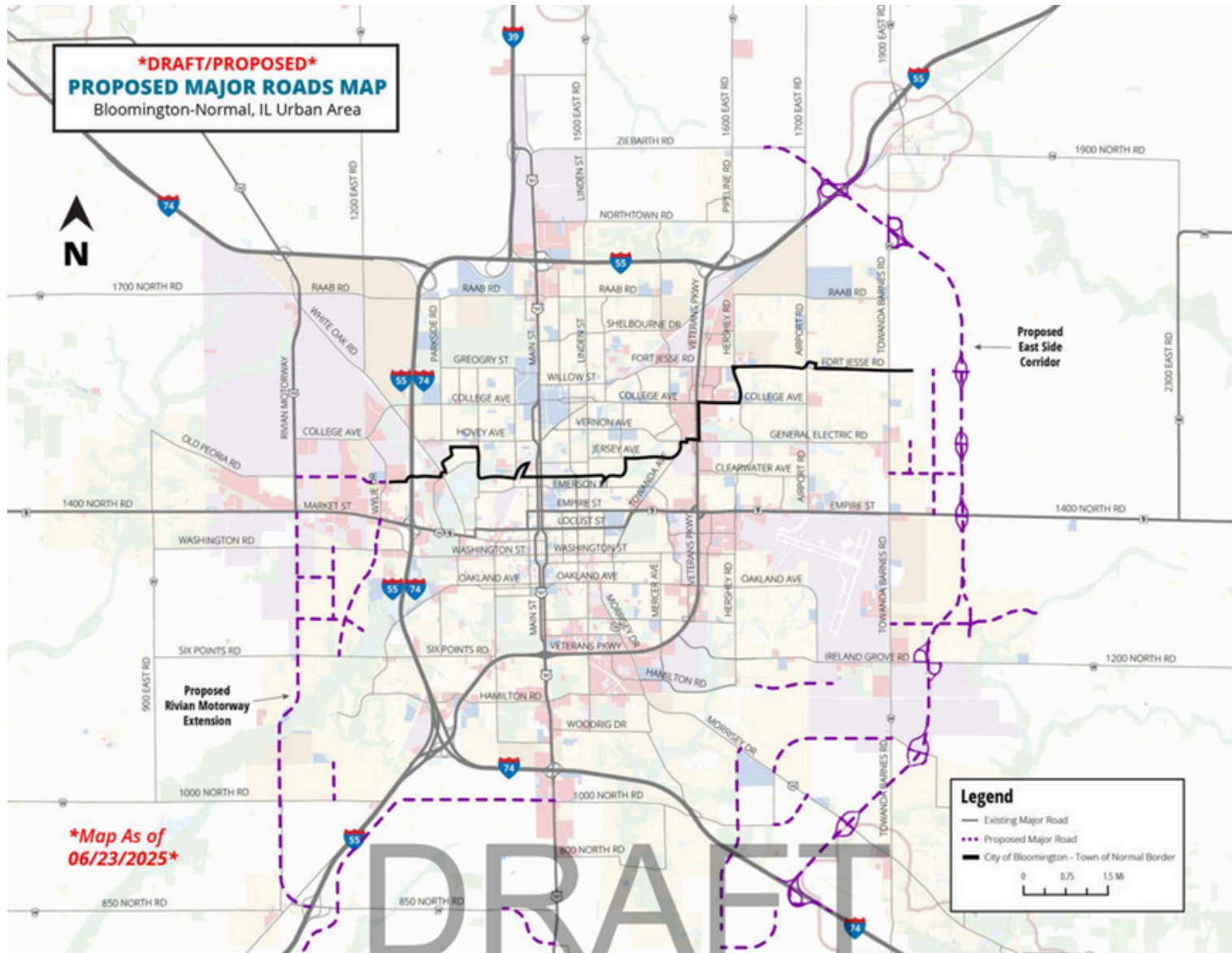
For all written feedback, personally identifying information was redacted before being shared for analysis. To collect data during the open house sessions, the YWCA's Director of Mission and Equity Consulting took detailed notes on the feedback provided. As with the written submissions, no personally identifying information was included in these notes.

After the public comment period closed, all community input was gathered, and an inductive coding approach was used to identify emerging themes across the data. Rather than applying a predefined framework, codes were developed organically through close, iterative readings of the responses. Comments were reviewed in their original

context to preserve the perspectives and language of participants and sorted into key thematic groupings based on recurring and shared concerns. As codes took shape, they were refined and cross-checked across the full dataset to ensure internal consistency and clarity. When relevant, input was also analyzed for geographic specificity (e.g., references to particular municipalities or communities).

What the Public Saw: Maps and Materials from the SLUP Draft 1

This subsection includes key maps and figures from the first draft of the Strategic Land Use Plan to provide visual context for the public feedback summarized in this report. Because many of the concerns, questions, and suggestions raised during community engagement referenced specific land use designations, growth areas, or planning boundaries, it is important to include the original materials that informed those responses. These visuals help illustrate what community members were reacting to during the review period and serve as a reference point for understanding the basis of public input.



DRAFT/PROPOSED

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

McLean County, IL

Legend







Future Land Use Categories

-  Agriculture/
Undeveloped
-  Commercial/
Retail
-  Industrial/
Employment
Center
-  Public &
Institutional
Development
-  Mixed-Use
Development
-  Natural
Resources
-  Residential
Development

Roadways

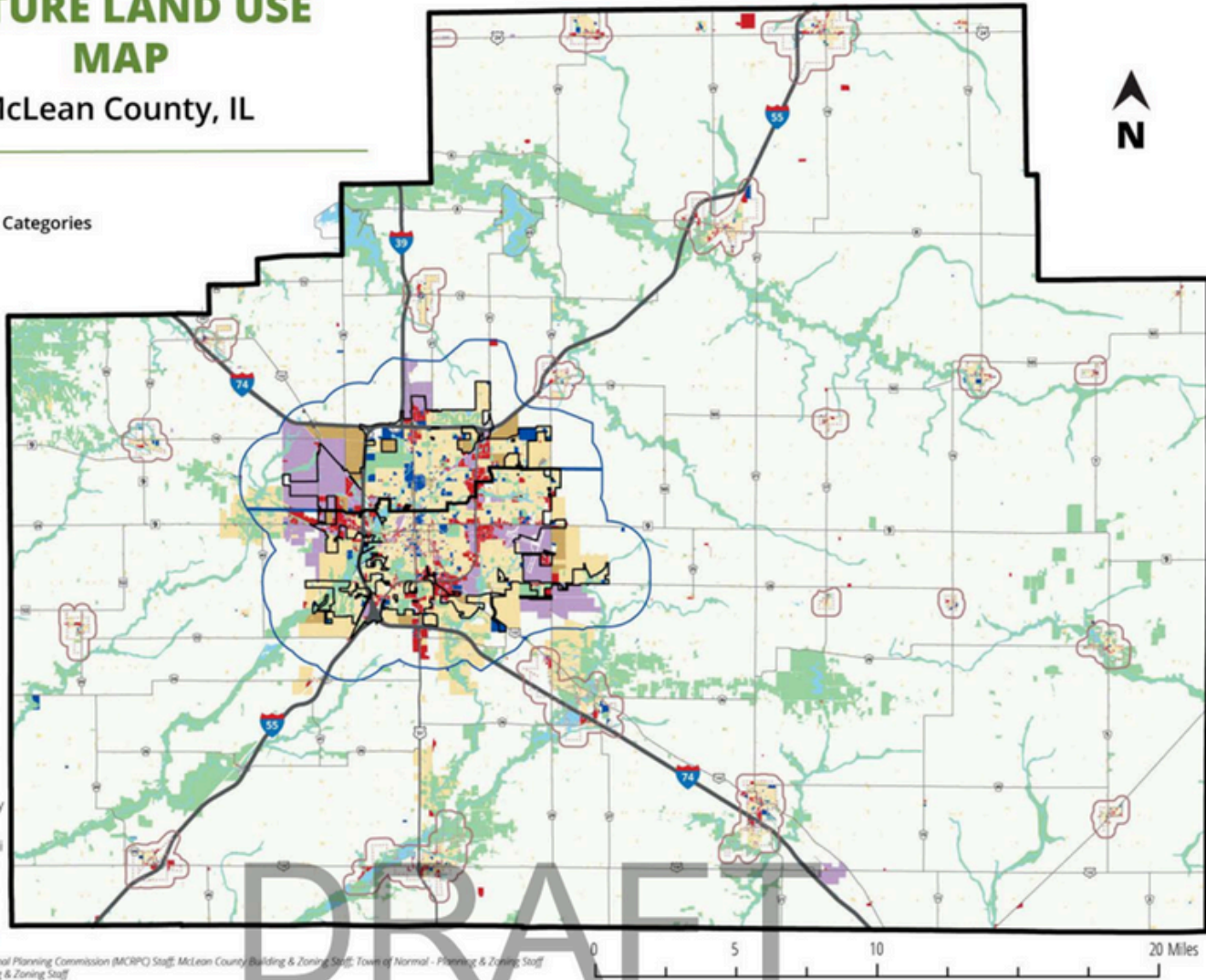
-  Interstate
-  U.S Highway
-  IL State Route
-  County Highway

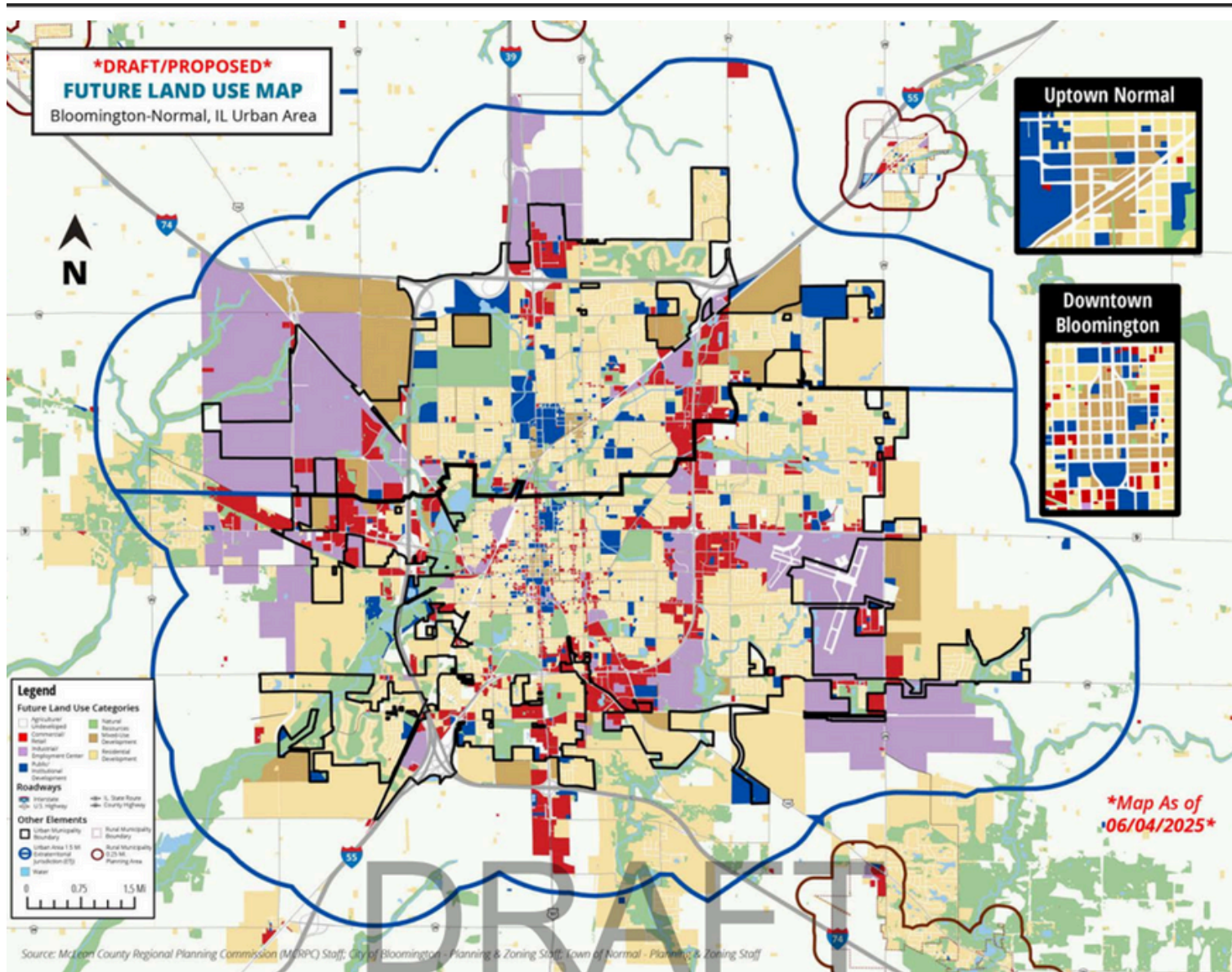
Other Elements

-  McLean County
Border
-  Rural Municipality
Boundary
-  Rural Municipality
0.25 Mile
Planning Area
-  Urban Municipality
Boundary
-  Urban Area 1.5 Mi
Extraterritorial
Jurisdiction
-  Water

**Map As of
06/11/2025**

Source: McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) Staff; McLean County Building & Zoning Staff; Town of Normal - Planning & Zoning Staff; City of Bloomington - Planning & Zoning Staff





Theme 1 – Contextualizing the Disconnect: Community Perception and the Function of the Strategic Land Use Plan

One of the most consistent themes to emerge from public feedback was strong dissatisfaction with what was described as a “top-down” process that lacked early communication, meaningful consultation, or inclusive outreach.

Community members criticized the absence of clear planning values as well as errors in the draft SLUP, which some viewed as further evidence of insufficient public consultation. Many called for a more transparent, collaborative process that begins with shared values and includes rural communities, landowners, school districts, and township governments from the outset as the basis for a planning framework that reflects the needs and priorities of the entire county.

“What is the rationale of beginning the comprehensive plan with a land use plan? As a concerned citizen, it’s very distressing that this is being made without a statement of values and a mission statement. So, if there is development pressure and the method is to work with the landowners, why doesn’t the city planner go talk to the landowners?”

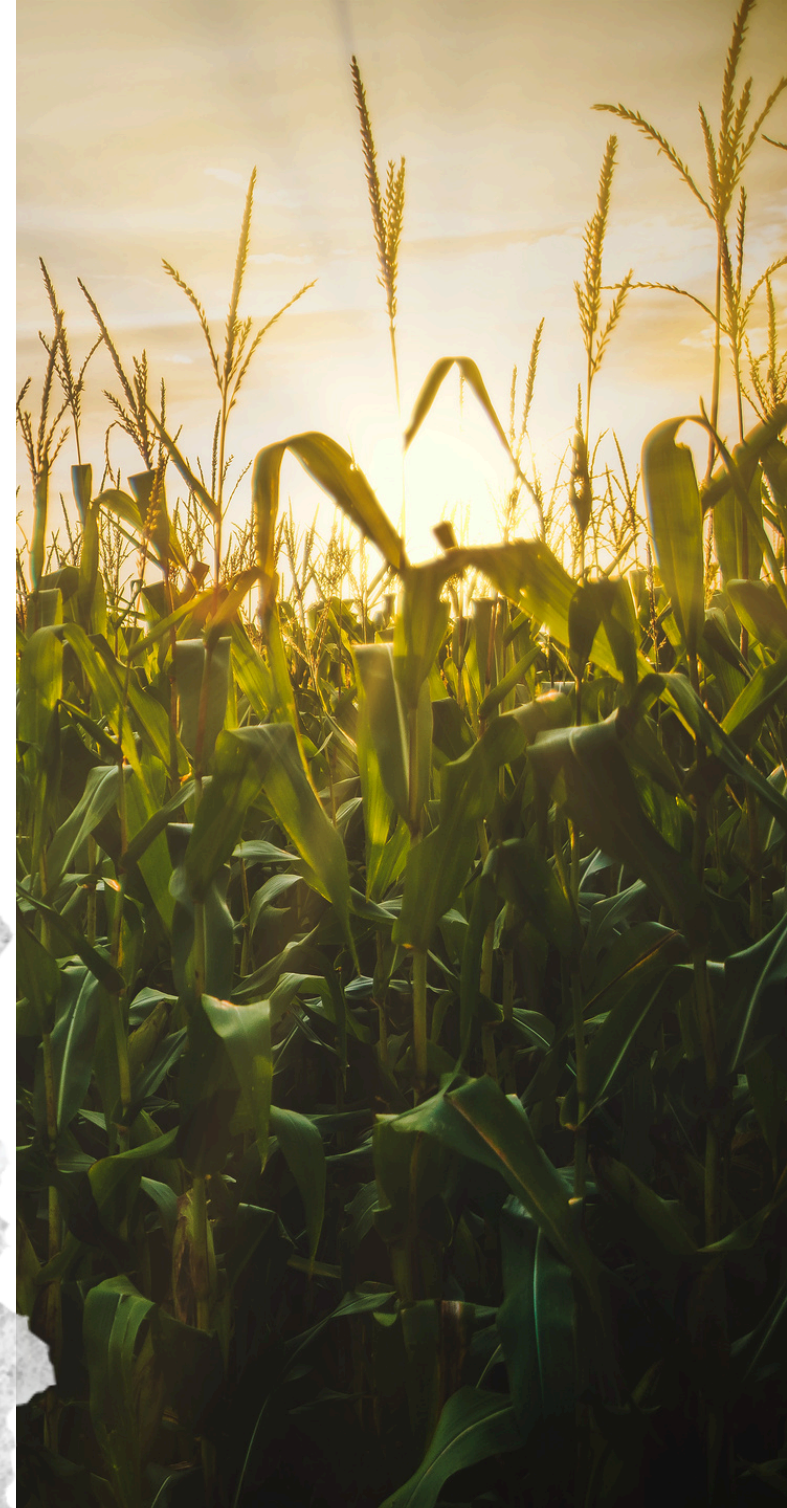
Open House 4

“You get buy-in when you include people in the process.”

Open House 5

“We encourage open dialogue and active participation from residents, school district representatives, and local government officials as this plan moves forward. Community input is critical to ensure growth is balanced, equitable, and sustainable for families, students, and taxpayers alike”

Online Public Comment Submission



While valid concerns were raised about the early phases of the planning process, much of the public dissatisfaction appeared to be rooted in an initial misunderstanding of what the Strategic Land Use Plan is and what it does. Many assumed the proposed land use changes reflected immediate rezoning decisions, which may have significantly contributed to the concern, frustration, and opposition that followed. This misconception was especially evident in the language used to express alarm about the long-term impacts of perceived development decisions:

“Rezoning agricultural land for industrial use, particularly to support Rivian’s expansion in McLean County, presents a complex issue with significant long-term implications that warrant careful consideration. While economic development is often a desirable goal, the proposed rezone needs to be scrutinized through the lens of sustainability, environmental protection, and community well-being, especially given the current financial state of Rivian and the inherent environmental risks associated with its products.”

Online Public Comment
Submission

“The zoning maps are not helpful.”

Online Public Comment
Submission

“And why rezone some of the most rich farmland in the entire world to industrial?”

Online Public Comment
Submission

This misconception fueled anxiety among community members who expressed concern about the broader implications of the proposed changes. Many believed that once a land use designation was changed, it would immediately and exclusively dictate what could—and invariably would—happen on the land, leaving no flexibility or possibility for other uses. Residents worried about potential disruptions to their daily lives and uncertainty about what the future might hold for their neighborhoods. They expressed fear that these changes could fundamentally alter the character of their communities and undermine their sense of place. Alongside these concerns, there was confusion about the procedural mechanism through which any changes might occur:

“The Eastside Highway goes through my house, and it would take out four houses and one business. Would the county come in and condemn properties? How would it work?”

Open House 4

“My biggest concern is with the southeast industrial/employment center proposal. My family lives near that area, and it would be devastating for us to have our home area turned into a hub of manufacturing and commercial buildings.”

Online Public Comment
Submission

Addressing this disconnect will be essential for building trust and fostering meaningful engagement as the planning process continues. Clear communication about the purpose, scope, and limitations of the Strategic Land Use Plan can help alleviate misunderstandings and encourage constructive dialogue. By aligning community perceptions with the plan's actual function, future outreach efforts can better support collaborative, informed decision-making that reflects the values and priorities of all McLean County residents.



MCRPC RESPONSE

- **Expanded intentional community outreach efforts**
- **Revised the Executive Summary in *Chapter 1: Introduction* in the second draft of the SLUP to more clearly define the plan's intent, function, and relationship to zoning**
- **Added the following sections to *Chapter 1: Introduction* in the second draft of the SLUP**
 - What is a Strategic Land Use Plan? How do we use it?
 - How does a Strategic Land Use Plan fit into the Comprehensive Plan framework?
 - Comprehensive Plan History and Timeline
 - Frequently Asked Questions – What this Plan Can Do
 - Frequently Asked Questions – What this Plan Cannot Do
 - Frequently Asked Questions – Land Use Planning vs Zoning
 - Frequently Asked Questions – Theoretical Development Timeline
- **Added *Chapter 2: Public Outreach and Planning Process***

Theme 2 – Municipal Concerns and Tensions

While the Strategic Land Use Plan was developed with regional coordination in mind, the lack of robust involvement from rural municipalities, townships, and the agricultural community during the development of the initial draft shaped much of the tensions and concerns voiced by rural neighbors. Questions arose as to why municipalities were not directly consulted during the initial stages of draft development, especially when proposed land uses fell within or near their corporate limits. Many cited procedural issues, including around the 1.5-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), insufficient coordination with township supervisors, and lack of recognition for existing local land use designations and plans.

A few township officials and local leaders reported not being notified of the plan until after its public release, raising concerns about the adequacy of early stakeholder engagement and involvement. In addition, select township leaders and community members voiced strong objections to the draft plan's treatment of municipal boundaries, planning authority, and governance roles. A recurring concern was the perception that the plan disproportionately privileged the City of Bloomington's and the Town of Normal's interests while sidelining smaller municipalities and rural communities' priorities.

"Looking at this map and hearing what you're talking about, this is not a McLean County map. This is a 'Bloomington-Normal and land it may annex in the next years' map. So it appears this is a Bloomington-Normal map and then county land that may be affected by the Bloomington-Normal land use. Sitting on the city council of Le Roy, I would argue it's because we are not included in the conversations. [...] It's not surprising to me that the weight of the effort is being focused on Bloomington-Normal. But it is disappointing."

Open House 5





“If the plan is intended to cover the entire county, why were Bloomington and Normal given the exclusive opportunity among municipalities to participate in creating the initial draft?”

Emailed Public Comment

“It is my understanding that this plan was being driven primarily by the City of Bloomington through the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, with no involvement from any of the smaller McLean County communities other than the Town of Normal, as any information that those communities have on file regarding land planning was ignored or assumed to not exist, even when publicly recorded. If Bloomington wants to prepare a land use plan for themselves and their 1.5-mile extraterritorial authority, they can, today, without involving the county or trying to make a county plan that cedes everybody’s authority to them.”

Online Public Comment Submission

These concerns reflected not only a broader desire among rural communities for more equitable participation in countywide planning efforts, but they also echoed the historical tension between urban cores and rural peripheries. Systemic and structural issues of unequal influence, uneven resource distribution, and development priorities have historically contributed to rural skepticism toward regional planning processes. These perceptions have alienated many rural communities, who often feel their voices are not heard or prioritized in planning processes dominated by urban interests. Within this context, the draft plan was perceived by some as continuing a pattern in which decision-making is driven by the needs and goals of larger urban centers. This feedback highlights the importance of future planning efforts that emphasize early, transparent, and inclusive engagement with all communities to ensure the process reflects the full diversity of needs and priorities across McLean County.



MCRPC RESPONSE

- **During the first public outreach period, MCRPC reached out to and received input from all 20 of the rural municipalities in the county**
- **Presentations were given to and direct feedback was collected during two McLean County Township Supervisor Meetings, which saw representation from the following townships:**
 - Anchor Township (61720)
 - Dale Township (61705)
 - Downs Township (61736)
 - Funks Grove Township (61754)
 - Lawndale Township (61728)
 - Lexington Township (61753)
 - Martin Township (61728)
 - Money Creek Township (61776)
 - Old Town Township (61705)
 - Randolph Township (61745)
 - West Township (61842)
- **Integration and correction of errors on the Existing and Future Land Use Maps throughout the entire county (including specific collaboration with all rural municipalities)**
- **Addition of the following sections to *Chapter 1: Introduction* in the second draft of the SLUP**
 - Frequently Asked Questions – Municipal Authority
 - Frequently Asked Questions – Illinois Compiled Statutes: 65 ILCS 5/ Illinois Municipal Code
- **A rewritten explanation of Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) to differentiate between the advisory, nonbinding nature of a planning document and regulatory authority, as advised by the McLean County Farm Bureau (refer to page 21 in the second draft of the SLUP)**
- **Removal of the 0.25-mile Rural Municipal Planning Buffer for additional clarity, as advised by the McLean County Farm Bureau**
- **Addition of an ETJ boundary for those rural communities that have one in both the Existing and Future Land Use maps, as advised by the McLean County Farm Bureau**

Theme 3 – Build In Better: Anti-Sprawl Sentiments and the Question of Growth

Public comment revealed widespread concern over what was perceived to be an emphasis on outward expansion and low-density sprawl, particularly on the outskirts of the Bloomington–Normal area. Many residents criticized the proposal for what was perceived to be encouragement of unsustainable growth patterns that would strain existing infrastructure, lead to higher long-term costs, and require the development of valuable agricultural land. There was a clear call for prioritizing infill development, with suggestions to revitalize underutilized or vacant urban spaces, enhance walkability, and increase medium-to-high density housing within city limits.

“We need infill and more density, not more sprawl.”

Online Public Comment Submission

“Many of the proposed future growth areas seem to be in low-density areas on the margins of the existing municipalities, rather than focusing development on high-density areas which have greater economic impact and require less expenditure on new infrastructure and infrastructure upkeep. Instead, why not focus on making Bloomington a more walkable community and revitalizing the downtown area?”

Online Public Comment Submission



“The current draft ignores opportunities for growth in the central parts of Bloomington Normal, focusing almost exclusively on the outskirts. This is unwise ecologically, it’s less financially stable in the long run, and doesn’t [sic] not encourage the development of a people-friendly community.”

Online Public Comment Submission

Residents also expressed frustration that the proposed growth areas failed to comprehensively address the pressures of the current housing crisis. While acknowledging the need for more housing, many believed the plan overlooked smarter, more sustainable strategies such as redeveloping central areas, ensuring school and utility capacity, and aligning land use with actual demand and affordability. The community emphasized the importance of planning that strengthens existing investments rather than unnecessarily expanding its geographic footprint outward.

“Both the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal have a concerning issue with the urban sprawl they have created in the past 30 years. Both communities have spread out into the rural sector with far-flung neighborhoods and subdivisions, but have [left] vast tracts of farm ground and undeveloped acreage in amongst this development. This map does nothing but promote this sort of sprawl and waste that is eventually going to become costly. The roads will need rebuilt, utilities will need to be updated, and how are we to justify paying for it?”

Online Public Comment Submission

“I would love a focus on cleaning up and properly using existing parts of Bloomington. It seems the focus is so much on growing outward where transportation is limited.”

Online Public Comment Submission

MCRPC Response

- **Addition of “Undeveloped” Land Use Classification for the Existing Land Use Map to highlight specific Infill-ready parcels.**
- **Addition of the following callout on page 24 of the second draft SLUP:**
 - Infill development is a high priority for the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal. This future land use map does encompass all infill development parcels within the urban area. More detailed information regarding the specific infill properties can be found in existing comprehensive plans and on the City and Town websites.
- **Overall reduction in the new land areas assigned in the Future Land Use Maps.**



Theme 4 – Centering Green Space, Mobility, and Access

In addition to concerns about outward growth, community members provided feedback on the design and character of the built environment. Many highlighted the draft SLUP’s limited focus on creating new green spaces, trail networks, and nature preserves, prompting questions about whether the current growth vision effectively supports expanded access to open spaces and outdoor recreational opportunities.

“When I describe Bloomington–Normal to friends and family, I always say that it’s great, with one exception. There is a total lack of preserved and natural areas nearby. There are virtually no significant forests or prairie within at least 30 minutes in any direction. I can’t hike or ride a bike in a natural area without coming to the other side in a matter of minutes. In the document, you mention habitat preservation and natural areas, but then don’t include that whatsoever in your future plans.”

Online Public Comment Submission

“Our parks and educational institutions are vital to this community; let’s prioritize them. When we do, we see community health benefits.”

Online Public Comment Submission

Commenters also raised concerns about car dependency and the absence of infrastructure that supports walking, biking, and other alternative modes of transportation. Some emphasized how a lack of nearby natural areas and limited pedestrian connectivity can impact residents without access to a vehicle, particularly outside the core of Bloomington–Normal.



“If we want this community to be healthy, engaged, etc., we have to consider de-centering the car.”

Online Public Comment Submission

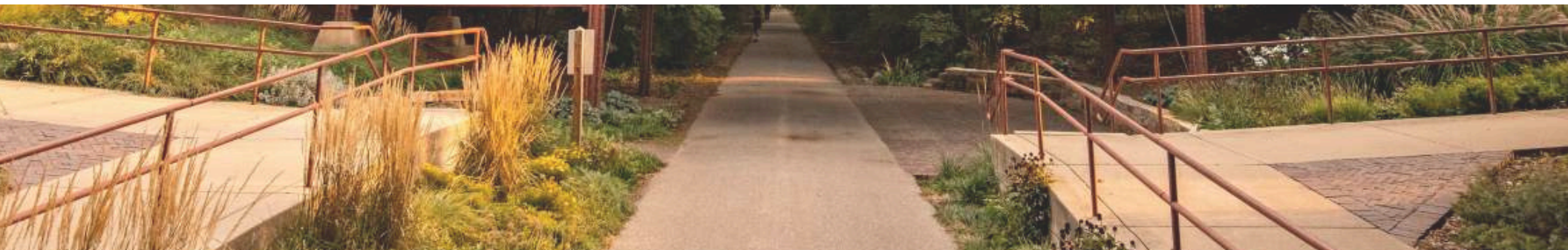
“Instead, why not focus on making Bloomington a more walkable community [...]?”

Online Public Comment Submission

“The future plan looks as though it continues the same trends of prioritizing large residential areas and industrial areas. This makes the city less accessible to people who rely on walking, bike-riding, and other modes of transportation besides motor vehicles, as it creates a bigger divide to cross for basic needs such as grocery shopping if you live anywhere besides the heart of uptown/downtown. There also doesn’t appear to be much, if any, new green spaces being developed. This worsens our air quality and quality of life for people who don’t have the ability to go ‘out of town’ to places like Comlara Park. Our town needs more green space for citizens to enjoy the nature of Illinois, and we already severely lack green space relative to other types of infrastructure.”

Online Public Comment Submission

Taken together, this input pointed to a general public interest in a land use vision that plans for growth while supporting a healthier and more accessible environment—one where residents can move freely, connect with nature, and enjoy a high quality of life regardless of transportation access or geographic location.



Theme 5 – West Bloomington and the Proposed Rivian Motorway Expansion

Community input on West Bloomington revealed both support for and opposition to future development, particularly around the proposed extension of Rivian Motorway and related infrastructure improvements. A minority of participants voiced strong enthusiasm for west-side growth, viewing it as a key economic opportunity and advocating for job creation and development.

“The west side of Bloomington is really the future of the area.”

Online Public Comment Submission

“I love to see more job growth in the west side of Bloomington. Keep it up.”

Online Public Comment Submission

“West Bloomington can't be developed soon enough!”

Online Public Comment Submission

However, many others expressed concerns about the broader impacts of the proposed land use changes, such as the designation for industrial land use in formerly agricultural areas near the Rivian site.

Comments reflected skepticism about Rivian’s long-term viability, opposition to the loss of high-quality farmland, and unease about the environmental risks associated with lithium-ion battery production, including the potential for groundwater contamination.

“Prioritizing short-term industrial gains over long-term environmental and community well-being would be a disservice to the county’s future. There may be alternative locations or strategies for supporting Rivian’s growth that do not necessitate sacrificing prime agricultural land and exposing the community to such significant risks.”

Online Public Comment Submission

Quality of life concerns were also raised, including fears of declining property values, increased industrial traffic, and the erosion of rural character in adjacent neighborhoods. Several residents noted frustrations with existing infrastructure upkeep and questioned whether further expansion would exacerbate those challenges.



Theme 6 – Loud Rumbings against the Eastside Corridor

The proposed Eastside Bypass generated overwhelming community opposition, with the vast majority of public comments expressing strong concerns about its necessity, location, and long-term implications. Of all comments received, only one was favorable:

“Although I heard this morning (7/9) on WGLT that you got pushback on the idea of a circle road or highway bypass east of Towanda Barnes, I actually think it is a good idea. It has worked in places like Madison, Wisconsin. It may need to be moved a little further east than where you have it, but it looked like the approximate distance between the future siting currently proposed and high-end residential areas is at least as much as between the current west side highway and the center of Bloomington. This implies that road noise for those areas would not be an issue. I would like to see a full circle road that helps form a highway bypass around the twin cities and allows reasonable, controlled growth and development.”

Online Public Comment Submission

Opponents, on the other hand, questioned the need for another major road on the east side, particularly given current population levels and the existing capacity of Towanda Barnes Road, which several commenters suggested could be expanded instead. Many saw the bypass as a catalyst for unwanted suburban sprawl, unnecessary infrastructure spending, and the industrialization of residential and agricultural areas. There was also concern that the corridor could bring noise, pollution, and lower property values to nearby neighborhoods.

“We do NOT need the proposed Eastside corridor, a road which will forever continue the suburban expansion of our community into placelessness.”

Online Public Comment Submission



"It doesn't make sense now or make sense in the future."

Open House 4

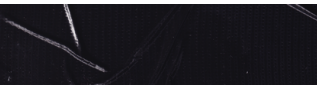
Multiple residents referenced past planning efforts, expressing frustration that the Eastside Corridor continues to appear in maps and proposals despite the local history of prior public resistance. Its inclusion was felt to be disconnected from current community needs.

"From seeing comments elsewhere, I'm unclear whether the east side bypass is still something that is being looked into, but since it is included within these maps, this doubles my concern as this appears to be a major limited access highway that would also bring noise and pollution to these neighborhoods."

Online Public Comment Submission

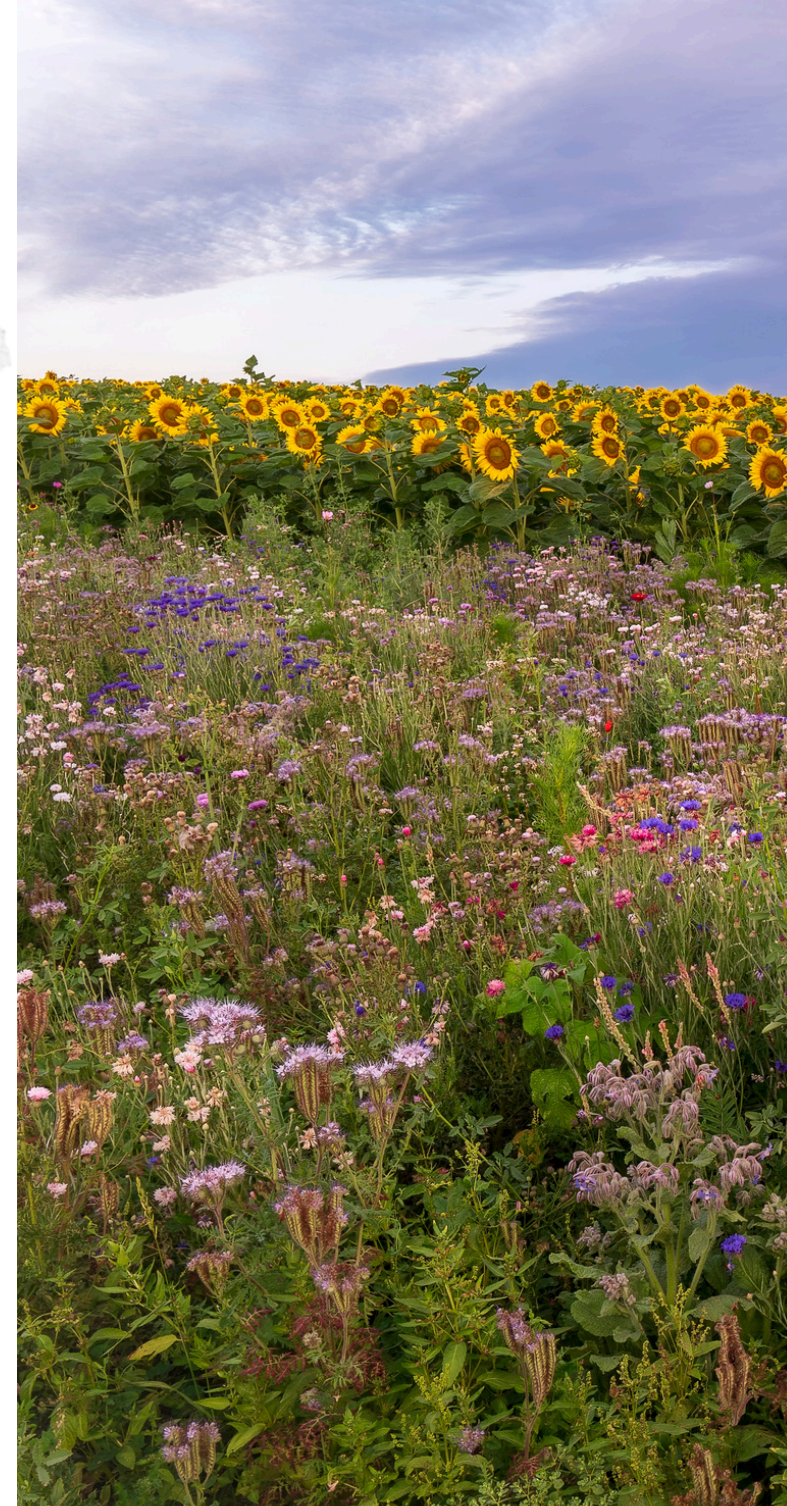
"I think the concern is, you have this on the map, you're going to spend more time and money to study something no one wants."

Open House 4



MCRPC Response

- **Removal of the Eastside Corridor from the Conceptual Future Roads Map**
- **Addition of a *Conceptual Future Roads Explanation* section (refer to page 44 in the second draft of the SLUP)**





Theme 7 – Seeing Purple: Industrial Development Concerns

Designated as purple on the maps in the SLUP, the industrial/employment center land use category was met with widespread opposition. While some community members acknowledged the economic rationale for expanding these zones:

“While I recognize the economic goals behind creating employment-generating zones, the proximity of this development to our neighborhood raises serious concerns about its impact on the environment, health, safety, and overall quality of life for residents.”

Online Public Comment Submission

“While supporting industrial growth and job creation is a legitimate government function, it must be balanced against the irreversible loss of agricultural land, the tangible environmental risks associated with lithium battery technology, and the potential negative impacts on existing residents' property values and quality of life.”

Online Public Comment Submission

The overwhelming majority of public comments expressed concern about placement and potential impacts. Residents objected to industrial designations near established neighborhoods, schools, and productive farmland due to risks such as air and water pollution, increased truck traffic, noise, and declining property values. Many also questioned the long-term need for such extensive industrial zoning, warning that over-allocation could result in underutilized land and missed opportunities for more compatible or adaptable uses. Put most succinctly:

“What I want to see different is less purple.”

Open House 5

Others urged planners to avoid industrial expansion into environmentally sensitive areas, emphasizing the potential loss of prime agricultural land, green space, and biodiversity.

“I am concerned that the land use proposal includes excessive proposed areas for industrial use (including heavy industry) that are in sensitive areas. On both the east and west side of town they cover heritage farms and the watershed for creeks like Kickapoo Creek. The sorts of industry this would allow, according to existing statutes, are things like AI data centers, landfills, asphalt production. I do not want any of these kinds of businesses using water and polluting our environment.”

Online Public Comment Submission

“The visual of the proposed expansions made me very nervous. There is a good deal of industrial/red zone expansion that creeps into natural/green spaces. We already have to deal with agricultural chemicals in these spaces & now we will have the added burden of industrial waste. As the federal government continues to removal EPA regulations to protect land and air quality, we must pay attention to how we steward our community land. Will the industrial expansions be ‘clean’ industries or ones that deplete resources, such as an AI center?”

Online Public Comment Submission

“We have some of the most fertile and productive soil in the entire country and McLean County regularly ranks among the top producing counties in the nation for corn and soybeans. McLean County plays a significant role in feeding, fueling, and clothing the world. We should take pride in that not take land out of production.”

Online Public Comment Submission

MCRPC Response

- Industrial/Employment Center land use split to distinguish industrial uses from employment center uses.
- Southeast Bloomington industrial/employment center area reduced with the preservation of agriculture and residential quality of life in mind.



5. NEXT STEPS

The second round of community feedback is now underway, providing additional opportunities for residents to share their perspectives both via online public comment submissions and through two additional Open Houses. The open house events are scheduled for October 14th from 5 pm – 7 pm at the Downs Community Fire Department and October 16th from 5 pm – 7 pm at Heartland Community College.

This report will be updated to reflect new input and evolving insights as the planning process continues. New comments and suggested revisions will be considered, and any additional revisions will be incorporated into the final draft of the McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan, anticipated for completion by October 31st.