



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

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FINDINGS AND KEY QUESTIONS

Findings

- Over 40 stakeholders, including apartment managers, the development community, social service agencies, utilities and Town staff, were interviewed during this process. These one-on-one and small group meetings allowed for honest and detailed discussions about the critical work they do for the community and what they see as their greatest needs and challenges. All interviewees were generally complimentary of the Town and its way of conducting business.
- A lack of public awareness of issues facing vulnerable populations and a dwindling supply of reliable funding are two of the systematic issues raised by the social service agencies. More specifically, the agencies raised a number of concerns regarding the built environment, including a dearth of affordable housing; supportive housing for people with disabilities and mental illnesses; housing solutions for homeless individuals; increased access and frequency of public transit; a connected network of trails and sidewalks; recreational spaces for people with special needs; a framework to support seniors and people with disabilities (e.g., universal accessibility, closing transit gaps and municipal policies that support aging in place).
- Representatives of local builders, realtors, and engineering consultants discussed various issues impacting development activity within the community. There was a general agreement that regulations and other costs of doing business should be lowered, where possible. All interviewees believe that large homes are a thing of the past, and that the future is in smaller homes and denser neighborhoods, which also reduce development costs. Key development challenges include the slower economy and landowners holding large quantities of vacant land within the core of the community, forcing development to “leapfrog” to the outskirts.
- There was a general agreement, among interviewees that discussed infrastructure issues, that the accelerating cost of maintenance and expansion is and will remain a key challenge. One way to mitigate the rising costs is to avoid sprawling development and to encourage infill. Other challenges include increasingly congested easements and street patterns not conducive to emergency or transit vehicles. All agreed that interagency and intergovernmental cooperation will be critical to navigating many of these challenges.
- A group of high school students were asked to describe their ideal community. Echoing national demographic preferences, most of them named characteristics of urban areas: walkability and bikeability; the ability to attract businesses and support startups; diversity; and the presence of art in public places. They also want to have access to higher education opportunities and to be close to larger cities.

Key Questions

- Social service agencies represent the voices of the most vulnerable, typically not heard during traditional public outreach. How can we ensure that these voices are heard and effectively address the issues brought forward by their advocates in the comprehensive plan?
- How can the Town overcome barriers to contiguous growth? How can we ensure quality developments in new neighborhoods while keeping the costs down?

MCRPC staff conducted over 40 interviews with representatives from government agencies and local not-for-profit organizations as part of the PlanIt Normal community outreach process. The purpose of these interviews was to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to identify major issues and concerns facing the Town of Normal and share their ideas about how to address them. The individual/small group nature of these interviews enabled participants to be more candid and in-depth than they otherwise might be in a larger community forum. Moreover, discussions were focused on the topics relevant and important to each agency. These key stakeholder interviews also helped MCRPC target social service agencies whose clientele are typically underrepresented in community surveys and other outreach efforts.

This chapter summarizes these interviews, conducted from September 2015 to February 2016. Highlights are summarized in Tables 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. All information here is presented as stated by the stakeholders themselves, and neither MCRPC nor Town staff has verified any figures or claims made by the interviewees.

APARTMENT MANAGEMENT

Managers of student housing operations (both large and small) and low-income/non-student multi-family housing were interviewed separately. Topics of discussion ranged from ages of properties; rents; parking; recycling (on-site and off); tenant/resident concerns; crime; future expansion plans; transportation (public and private); zoning issues; and relationships with the Town, particularly law enforcement.

STUDENT APARTMENT OPERATIONS

Interviewees in this area included First Site, SAMI, The Edge Apartments, Walk2Class and Young America. Most of these companies' apartments are located within easy walking distance of ISU, generally bounded by Adelaide on the West, Linden on the East, Hovey to the South, and Willow Street to the North.

All interviewees were pleased with the safety and other quality of life amenities in the B-N Metro area. Many noted that the redeveloped Uptown attracts positive comments from both students and their parents.

STUDENT APARTMENT OPERATIONS

Note: Rent ranges are expressed as per bedroom per month (except Walk2Class). Per-bedroom rents in one- and two-BR apartments are at the high end, while per-bedroom rents for the three- and four-BR apartments are at the low end.

Young America Realty rents to both student and non-student residents, mostly near ISU, IWU, or Heartland.

- Approximate number of students served: Not available
- Rent range: \$340 to \$1,100/BR/Mo.; most range from \$400 to \$600/BR/mo
- Inventory: 1,091 student housing units (105 one-BR, 226 two-BR, 114 three-BR, 609 four-BR) (Total - 3,400 beds)
- Occupancy: not available

SAMI owns and manages many high-end student apartments close to the ISU and Heartland campuses.

- Approximate number of students served: 2,500
- Rent ranges: \$375 to \$750/BR/Mo. w/ utilities and Internet
- Inventory: 961 total units; 300 one-BR; 496 2-BR; 66 three-BR and 99 four-BR.
- Occupancy: nearly 100%

First Site Apartments manages numerous off-campus apartments in Normal geared towards ISU and IWU students.

- Approximate number of students served: 1,600
- Rent range: \$395 to \$700/BR/Mo. including utilities

- Inventory: not available
- Occupancy: over 95%

The Edge Apartments is located at the intersection of Main Street & Hovey Avenue near the ISU campus. It features apartments with various floor plans, high end amenities and fully furnished living spaces.

- Approximate number of students served: <500
- Rent range: \$640 to \$830/BR/Mo. including utilities
- Inventory: 125 units; 12-two-BR; 21 three-BR; 448 four-BR (Total - 481 Beds)
- Occupancy: not available

Walk2Class Rentals primarily targets ISU and IWU students. All rentals are located within a half mile of ISU campus. Locations feature both older and newer student housing options.

- Approximate number of students served: not available
- Rent ranges: \$525-\$670 a month for one- and two-bedroom units; \$50/Mo. utility allowance for each renter
- Inventory: 111 units (36 one-BR, 2 two-BR, 30 three-BR, and 43 four bedroom)
- Occupancy: over 90%

Representatives of the larger student apartment operations expressed a great deal of satisfaction with Town staff and reported positive relations with the Police Department.

Unlike regular apartments, student apartments reported rents in terms of dollars per bedroom per month. Figures ranged from \$340/BR/Mo. to \$830/BR/Mo., with the typical range being \$440 to \$600/BR/Mo. Also in contrast to regular apartments, bedrooms in the single bedroom units were much higher than those in three- or four-bedroom units. These high rents are reportedly due to student demand for high-end, comfortable apartments with security features, proximity to “action,” and interactive spaces that provide technology and opportunities for socialization. Despite the high prices, these locations operate at 90% to 100% capacities, a clear indication of the demand for high-end student housing within walking distance of ISU’s campus.

Identified needs: Interviewees reported a strong desire on their tenants’ parts to see the curbside recycling program expanded to large apartment complexes. This is further substantiated by the survey results, in which a significant number of respondents aged 18-24 requested recycling services at their apartment complexes.

APARTMENTS THAT ACCEPT SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

Interviewees in this area included Kauffman Apartments, Lancaster Heights, Orlando Northbrook Estates and Summer Tree rentals. All the complexes interviewed accept Section 8 vouchers, some more than others depending on the number they have available. Relationships with Town staff were consistently characterized as positive. Lancaster Heights management was very complimentary of the police department, citing an officer who lives in their complex whose presence they believe reduces crime. Apartment managers in the “Orlando area” (the apartments on Orlando Avenue in north Normal) saw room for improvement in terms of relations with the police department, though they said relations are much better now than a decade ago.

The Orlando area is where the highest concentration of low-income housing is located. Apartment managers in this area described the demographic make-up of their clientele as financially-challenged/low income families, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Many of the tenants of these complexes work in service industries and are transit-dependent. Tenant concerns include domestic violence and, for those who work second or third shift, a lack of overnight childcare and access to public transit during off hours.



APARTMENTS THAT ACCEPT SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

What is Section 8? The Housing Choice Voucher Program, authorized under Section 8 of the federal Housing Act of 1937, provides vouchers to low-income families to assist them in paying for housing. These vouchers are managed locally by the Bloomington Housing Authority.

Bloomington Housing Authority (BHA) The Bloomington Housing Authority (BHA) was established in 1947 with the mission to provide low income families decent, safe, sanitary housing and to empower them to build self-sufficiency and pride. Today, BHA has over 600 households in the public housing units and manages upwards of 600 housing choice vouchers (commonly known as Section 8 vouchers).

Kauffman Apartments manages nearly 180 non-student apartment complexes in both Normal and Bloomington. They usually have 30-40 vouchers. Rents range from \$485 to \$645 per month plus utilities.

Lancaster Heights Apartments is a multi-family apartment

complex located along College and Towanda Avenues in Normal. It features one- to three-bedroom apartments for non-students. Section 8 vouchers are accepted on an availability basis (currently accepting 30 vouchers). Rents range from \$610 per month for a one-BR apartment to \$925 per month for a three-BR apartment.

Orlando Northbrook Estates is one of the few HUD-sponsored Low Income Housing (LIH) operations in the B-N area, located on Orlando Avenue in north Normal. Residents of the complex pay 30% or less of their gross income towards housing and receive assistance paying their utility bills. There are 115 units in all (39 one-BR; 59 two-BR; and 18 three-BR).

Summertree Rentals (also located in the Orlando area) features “row homes” with one to three bedrooms. This 136-unit apartment complex is a Section 8-approved housing development. Rents range from \$595 a month to \$735 a month plus utilities. They also have seven accessible units for persons with disabilities.

TABLE 2.2.1- STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Group	Observations	Identified Challenges	Identified Needs
<p>Student Apartment Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally happy about the high quality of life amenities • Uptown redevelopment a magnet for positive comments from students and parents • Greatly satisfied with Town staff (particularly police) • Students are demanding higher end housing and are willing to pay the price 	<p>None; many explicitly mention that the Town is doing a great job</p>	<p>Curbside recycling program for apartments</p>
<p>Apartments That Accept Section 8 Vouchers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate safety and the quality of life aspects in the Town; some mixed reviews in working with police dept • Section 8 vouchers not widely accepted in Normal • Lack of affordable and accessible housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in low income families and individuals since the recession • Widening gap between need (high) and availability (low) of affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more apartment complexes accepting Section 8 vouchers in Normal • Increase public transit in the Orlando Area to service residents who predominantly work 2nd and 3rd shifts • Increase affordable and accessible housing options, particularly 3 or 4 bedrooms to accommodate families • Increase cooperation between the Normal Police Department and the apartment managers (particularly in the Orlando Area in North Normal) • Increase coordination between Town’s rental inspections and Section 8 inspections
<p>Builders, Realtors & Engineers (Development Community)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town is very “functional” in comparison to the surrounding communities • Slower economy at the local and state levels dampened building activity; expected to do so for at least another decade • "McMansions" a thing of the past; future is in 1500-1800 sq. ft. homes • Millennials: not buying new homes, but entering the housing market at a decent pace • Cost of code compliance in new house construction in BN metro: ~\$28K • Infrastructure expansion should be curbed; existing infrastructure should be maintained in good shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slower economy at state and local levels • Unmotivated landowners holding vast acreages of undeveloped property, forcing developments to “leapfrog” to the outskirts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No particular needs were identified. However, there was a general sentiment that lowered regulations and costs of doing business in the area will improve the local economy
<p>Social Services or Local Not-for-Profit Agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town staff easy to work with • Normal more expensive than Bloomington for their clients • “Living wage” jobs hard to find for people with lower education levels and disabilities; disproportionately affects minorities • Lack of affordable and accessible housing • Homelessness in general and youth in particular is an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to obtain state and federal grants due to relative affluence of the community. • State budget impasse 	<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency shelter to address homelessness • Incentives to encourage landlords to accept Section 8 vouchers and support social service agencies' activities <p>Transportation/Mobility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to public transit (particularly off hours and weekends) • Connected and accessible sidewalks clear of snow and debris, especially for clients with disabilities • Ride-share arrangements (including door-to-door and door-through-door) • Universal design standards <p>Health and support services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health centers and caregivers to treat mental health issues • Increased support of home therapy and social service in-home for autism treatment • Outdoor recreational and therapeutic spaces for children and adults with disabilities • Employment opportunities for persons with disabilities <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter school arrangements for at-risk youths • Expanding social services into local schools <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependable local funding streams
<p>Senior Service Agencies</p>	<p>Health care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic health care pretty good; health education a concern <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased longevity + loss of driver's licenses = increased demand for transit, ride-share, walkability features <p>Senior-friendly housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively wide range of senior-friendly housing options in Normal • High wait times for assisted living operations • Shortage of affordable housing with universal design features (accessibility) • Most important features for senior-friendly housing: safety and universal access. Other key features: proximity to amenities, relaxed pet policies, zoning changes to make it easier to retrofit homes, in-home assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of community education on senior issues; Seniors unaware of the local support services (or lack of senior education) • Lackluster coordination among agencies and health service providers • Shortage of qualified staff and aging of volunteers assisting with senior agencies 	<p>Policy issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal support on policy matters that help keep seniors in their homes longer (age in place) • Financial support for agencies providing senior services <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for transportation gap services such as door-through-door and door-to-door services • Accessible sidewalks in good condition <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable and accessible housing with supportive services <p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of seniors for part-time/ seasonal employment or volunteer opportunities <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education on senior issues to the broader community

TABLE 2.2.2 - STAKE HOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY: INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Group	Observations	Identified Challenges	Key Planning Considerations
TOWN STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water: Current usage is well below the capacity: No technical barriers for expansion of water infrastructure, but it is expensive to cross interstate highway R-O-W • Stormwater : Public works department favors increased use of regional-scale detention facilities: reduces the number of ongoing maintenance locations and reduces the use of smaller and less-effective detention areas • Sewer: Long-term sewer plan in progress: Current sewer capacity will remain adequate even if population density increases: Future expansion of the sewer system will likely be expensive to install and create higher long-term maintenance costs: Service expansion north of Town and around Mitsubishi plant constrained by pump station capacity: expansion possible without additional pump stations northeast, northwest, and west of Town: extra capacity available around Franklin Heights • Streets, trails, and sidewalks: Town foresees more street improvements than new construction: want to reduce congestion without increasing facility size: Bridges and roads in good repair: Staff favor the use of complete streets concepts, including lane reduction and narrowing: Would like ISU to adopt complete streets approach in its own master plan: Town, ISU, IDOT have discussed plans to update Main St. corridor, especially pedestrian traffic through campus • Information technology: Concerns about service availability in new developments: waiting until areas are built out to install service would create development delays: staff say developers should provide high-speed internet access in new developments: Staff also expressed concern on R-O-W utility demand. <p>General observations: Town is well-equipped to assimilate new development and higher residential densities--within existing corporate limits: Community facility planning is targeted toward the existing corporate boundaries and not for expansion: Coordination with ISU, IDOT, and other entities essential for sustainable and affordable development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerating costs for infrastructure maintenance and expansion, when needed • Dependence on other jurisdictions or agencies to complete projects; e.g., reliance on IDOT to relay data and project specifications 	
CONNECT TRANSIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect is transitioning to larger, fixed-route vehicles (40ft.) to achieve efficiencies • Route changes to take effect late summer 2016; will reduce service in some places, especially Northeast Normal • Service changes: stops being overhauled--signage, locations, accessibility; service to be confined to areas with wide streets (to accommodate larger vehicles) and areas with on-street stops (no more stops in parking lots) • Connect's Redbird Express service for ISU unaffected by route changes • Paratransit services provided by Connect throughout the B-N community • Access for larger vehicles a concern in compact Uptown area • One-way couplet streets (e.g. Main-Kingsley and College-Mulberry): hindrance to efficient route design and stop placement • Higher-density development (especially residential) -> more ridership opportunities • Would like information in advance about pending development and redevelopment, especially along major corridors or arterials • Needs Town's assistance in improving walking/biking access to bus stop locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprawl development: limits efficiency and timely transit services due to limited routing options and longer travel times • Small residential streets and narrow turning radii: difficult for larger fixed-route vehicles to navigate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure and community facilities play a key role in the future growth of the community. The Town's recent plans addressing community facility and capital improvement needs (such as the recently adopted Fire Department Plan and the sewer master plan currently under development) should be carefully integrated into the comprehensive plan. • Future land use planning should aim for compact physical growth and development to improve service efficiencies and achieve long-term fiscal and environmental sustainability. • Street functions should be examined more comprehensively to accommodate multiple modes of transportation. • Street patterns such as cul-de-sacs that limit the serviceability of emergency and other service vehicles should be limited. • Easements in R-O-W's should be managed efficiently to accommodate current and future utility provision. • Recognizing the importance of information technology to the 21st century economy, facilitating broadband access should be a key consideration in the overall planning framework. • Emphasize regional (interagency, intergovernmental) cooperation for effective infrastructure, public safety, and natural resource planning and utilization.
AMEREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towanda-Barnes substation: part of national grid, vital to power supply in central IL; service loop connecting substation to North Normal to be completed in 5-10 years • Service loop, once completed will reduce outages and provide redundancies in North Normal • Normal joined the residential municipal aggregation program to cut costs for residents; opted for 100% green energy • Eco-friendly street lighting provided by Ameren 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal constraints for infrastructure expansion (underground more expensive than overhead) • Utilities competing for easements • Sequestration of electrical lines from water lines • Spot loads created by major redevelopment projects such as Uptown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize regional (interagency, intergovernmental) cooperation for effective infrastructure, public safety, and natural resource planning and utilization.
CIRBN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiber-optic cable installation is very expensive in developed areas; cost-prohibitive for small businesses and residential customers • Expansion of datacenters in Central IL recommended by CIRBN to leverage existing bandwidth • CIRBN provides broadband in student housing in Normal through other partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easement access is increasingly difficult and costly • CIRBN not as well-capitalized for expansion as private-sector competitors • Lifespan of installed fiber optic cable: estimated at 20 years, replacement cost has to be included in business model while the competition is driving the prices down 	
FIRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally fire response times should be within 6 minutes; most parts of Normal are within 4.5-6 minute response time zone; Fringe development in NE Normal -> low response times (about 9.5 minutes) • Currently three stations in Normal. Fourth was explored but proved cost-prohibitive. Decision was made to rearrange the existing 3 stations for optimal coverage: If corporate limits expand significantly, a fourth station will eventually be needed • Bloomington and Normal fire departments communicate and cooperate a great deal • IL legislature recently passed a bill requiring counties with populations > 200,000 to have a single dispatch center; may be difficult and costly to implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street patterns not a huge concern in Normal at this time, but developments with cul-de-sac streets can be challenging • Materials used in some newer structures (e.g. glued particle board) are especially dangerous in the event of a fire 	
POLICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Community policing" a key departmental principle (this includes proactive patrolling of known problem areas and community education) • Department works closely with apartment managers (including annual meetings with all apartment managers) • NPDP works closely with Bloomington Police Department and ISU police • Neighborhood Action Team (NAT) (NPD + ISU officers and Town staff); addresses issues specific to address issues neighborhoods adjacent to the university • Dept. uses GIS (mapping and geospatial analysis) and other analytical tools to conduct hot-spot analysis on a daily basis. • Problem-Oriented Policing Unit (POP) identifies unresolved community issues that cause crime and attempts to address them • Dept. is accredited by the national Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), which publishes best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National negative attention on police and racial issues 	

Observations: Some apartment managers indicated that the availability of low-income housing does not meet the existing need. There was a consensus that low-income populations are increasing in the B-N metro area. In a break from past experience, they are seeing an increase in low-income families that need three- or four-bedroom apartments. They also are seeing an increase in demand for low-income housing that is accessible by wheelchair. Currently very few apartment complexes in Normal accept Section 8 vouchers. Some managers would like the Town to encourage other apartment managers to accept Section 8 vouchers.

One apartment manager pointed out that Section 8 inspections and the Town’s rental inspections are conducted at different times, sometimes back-to-back within the same month. Pointing to the redundancies in these inspections, he questioned why these efforts are not coordinated with each other. He argued that such coordination could be an efficient use of tax resources and save the Section 8 apartment managers some hassle.

One landlord who rents single family homes around campus, including some to students, advocated a change in the definition of the household size in the zoning ordinance and increased tolerance for the student presence in the surrounding neighborhoods. Based on the responses to the broader community survey, he is likely in the minority among non-student residents.

Identified challenges:

- Increase in low-income populations in B-N area; since the recession, there are more families in the lower income bracket than before
- A widening gap between the need and availability of affordable housing in the community

Identified needs:

- More apartment complexes in Normal accepting Section 8 vouchers
- Increased access to public transit in the Orlando area to service residents who predominantly work second and third shift
- More affordable and accessible housing options, especially three- or four-bedroom units that can accommodate families
- Increased collaboration between the apartment managers and the police department

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

MCRPC staff interviewed the Bloomington-Normal Home Builders Association (“Home Builders Association”); the Bloomington-Normal Association of Realtors (“Realtors Association”); and Farnsworth Group, an engineering firm. Interviewees discussed general market trends; the current status of local development; taxes and fees; governmental relationships; the local economy; zoning and code issues; the costs of doing business; the regulatory environment; and local infrastructure.

Generally, housing groups reported very positive relationships with the Town. They described Town government as “functional” and “easy to work with” in comparison to the surrounding local government units. While some members within these groups quibbled about minor aspects of the Uptown planning and redevelopment, they generally had positive comments about Uptown and complimented the Town’s improvements to the underlying infrastructure as part of this project.

Observations: All three groups stated that the dampened local economy, due to State Farm’s restructuring and the Mitsubishi closure, has signifi-



DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Bloomington-Normal Area Homebuilders Association (BNHA) is the professional association for area homebuilders that serves as a professional information clearinghouse and advocate organization. The Association also sponsors community projects such as the Easter Seals Camp and the Miller Park Zoo and provides shelters along the Constitution Trail.

Bloomington-Normal Association of Realtors (BNAR) provides services that ensure the professionalism and success of

its members while promoting real property ownership and protecting property rights in the area.

The Farnsworth Group is a private firm offering engineering, architectural, survey, asset management and community sustainability services to its clients. It is one of the primary private engineering firms serving the Bloomington-Normal/McLean County area.

cantly changed the housing landscape. They are convinced that homebuilding activity will be flat for the next 10 years. The Home Builders Association has seen a steep decline in their membership, from 198 members in its heyday to 108 in 2015.

All three agreed that the demand for large single family residential units is a thing of the past, though developers are still looking to finish the subdivisions they started prior to the recession. There was a general consensus that the local development community will no longer take the risks it did 15 to 20 years ago when the economy was booming, partly because the banks are not supporting speculative building activity. All three agreed that the future is in smaller houses (1,500 to 1,800 sq. ft.) and compact developments (neo-traditional neighborhood designs) that might reduce infrastructure and overall development costs.

The Home Builders Association and the Realtors Association, both of whom track construction costs closely, argued that rising development fees and compliance with new building codes have made new construction less affordable. They were also generally in favor of lowering taxes and fees; however, the Realtors Association acknowledged the need for public improvements to facilitate newer developments and suggested that taxing options such as special assessments, geared towards making the “right” end user pay the price

of such development, would be preferable to a universal property or sales tax increase.

Identified challenges: Farnsworth’s representative noted that the relatively slow projected growth in population (compared to the last several decades) may lead to slower expansion of the Town’s corporate boundaries, which in turn may facilitate compact growth. However, finding the necessary land for residential development within or adjacent to the corporate limits may be difficult, as some owners of vacant or underutilized land feel unmotivated to sell or develop those properties. This forces development to leapfrog.

The Home Builders Association stated that Millennials (age 34 and under) not buying homes is a challenge. However, the Realtors Association felt that Millennials are entering the market at a decent rate. This difference of opinion may be an indication that Millennials are currently in the market for existing homes rather than new ones.

Both groups commented on increased out-migration of homeowners from Bloomington-Normal to the surrounding bedroom communities. The Realtors Association suggested that taxes for seniors may need to be lowered to encourage them to stay in the area.

Both the Realtors and Homebuilders were concerned about statewide economic issues that



SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

AMBUCS (Cornbelt Chapter), chartered in 1982, is a community service organization that helps improve mobility for people with disabilities. Most of its local work involves building wheelchair ramps, distributing free AmTrykes (therapeutic tricycles) and promoting scholarships for therapists.

The Baby Fold provides a gamut of services, including specialized education, adoption assistance, and residential treatment care for children facing abuse and neglect, struggling with physical or mental challenges, or otherwise at risk.

Habitat for Humanity (of McLean County) is the local chapter of a global, non-profit housing organization that is dedicated to eliminating substandard housing by constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes through a volunteer network. The organization also advocates for fair and just housing policies and provides training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions. The local chapter has averaged five to six new single-family home constructions in recent years.

Homes of Hope supports and serves adults with intellectual disabilities. The organization provides both transportation and residential assistance for people with disabilities through its Community Integrated Living Arrangement.

The Immigration Project provides access to quality legal services in central and southern Illinois for immigrants documented and non-documented. The Project provides consultations on immigration issues including citizenship; assistance for victims of crimes; family unifications; removal defense; and legal assistance on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

Life Center for Independent Living (Life-CIL) is an advocacy organization encouraging independent living for people with physical and mental challenges. Individual advocacy is done by teaching individual self-advocacy skills, while system-wide advocacy is promoted by LIFE-CIL staff who strive for a positive change in the community and work to create awareness and limit barriers for their clients.

are beginning to have significant negative effects locally.

All three groups agreed that responsible infrastructure upgrades and maintenance are important for future growth in the B-N real estate sector.

SOCIAL SERVICE AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCIES

Nearly a dozen of these agencies that serve the residents of Normal (and the B-N Metro area) were interviewed. Discussion topics were geared toward each individual agency's work. Areas of emphasis included community affordability; local economics; government relationships; social service issues; crime; local support services; community partnerships; affordable housing; public transportation; schools; government funding; and community safety and welfare, among others. As with other groups, there was a general consensus that the Town of Normal is easy to work with and is generally very supportive of local social service initiatives. One group said, "When Normal has a vision, they stay with it and complete tasks to achieve that vision."

Observations: Citing the concentration of their

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Marcfirst McLean County connects families and people with developmental disabilities to their community through a lifetime of meaningful supports. Marcfirst programs include Services for Parent, Infant and Child Education (SPICE), an early intervention pediatric therapy center; the Transition Program, which provides a variety of services to assist students in planning for a smooth transition from high school to adulthood; the Supported Employment Program (SEP), which helps people with developmental disabilities find and keep viable jobs in the community; developmental training; residential services; and many more.

Project Oz has been serving youth and families in McLean County for over 35 years. The agency focuses on preventing drug abuse; empowering youth and young adults on a variety of issues; assisting homeless and runaway youth; and helping teens stay in school.

SHOW BUS is a nonprofit organization that has provided public transportation to residents of rural central Illinois since 1979. The organization grew out of a study group on aging in McLean and Livingston Counties. The initial transit program, which was restricted to those two counties, focused on ser-

cliente in West Bloomington, many groups perceived Normal to be slightly more expensive than Bloomington. They noted that this may be a result of lower concentrations of old (or depressed) housing stock in Normal.

- **Jobs:** Several agencies said there are not enough low-skilled jobs in the community that provide a "living wage." Demographic groups that are particularly affected by this include minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons with lower education levels. Agencies urged advocacy of such jobs as part of BN Advantage and other economic development initiatives.
- **Transportation:** Many people taking advantage of local social services do not have their own vehicles. All agencies were complimentary of local public transit, but several said they would like to see increased services to better serve second- and third-shift workers, a major portion of their clientele. Others noted that better education is needed on how to ride the bus. Some suggested ride-sharing as an option to be explored further. A few local organizations, such as Faith in Action and YWCA, attempt to address transportation gaps through their programming, but funding issues have made this task difficult for those organizations to contin-

vice to seniors. Services were later expanded as more federal funding became available, first to people with disabilities and other special populations and then to rural residents more generally. The service area has also expanded over time as agencies in several neighboring counties saw the benefit of combining forces. SHOW Bus is now the primary rural transit provider in seven counties: McLean, Livingston, Ford, Iroquois, Kankakee, DeWitt, and Macon.

YouthBuild McLean County offers the following programs to youth ages 17 to 24: education assistance (attainment of high school diploma/GED); affordable housing "youth build" program and training; job training programs; the AmeriCorps Program; and youth leadership and empowerment.

YWCA of McLean County, founded in 1908, provides a huge variety of services for women, children, seniors, and families in McLean County. Services include early childhood education, a food bank, various adult services including medical transportation, transportation to work on Sundays, home care services, assistance for victims of sexual assault, and many more.

ue offering those services.

- *Youth problems:* Major youth problems identified were truancy, homelessness, domestic violence, and drug-related problems in the home. These problems are most prevalent among minority youth.
- *Homelessness:* Youth and military veterans make up a significant portion of the homeless population. Runaway youth are a persistent problem. Several agencies also pointed to increased instances of “couch-surfing” and overcrowding under one roof as a rising challenge.
- *Housing:* Agencies that deal with housing pointed out that affordable housing, particularly affordable and accessible housing, is not adequate in Normal (or the B-N metro area). They reiterated the need for affordable housing to be intermingled with other housing in safe neighborhoods, not kept in segregated clusters. Agencies also highlighted the need to take youth sheltering and accessibility for populations with special needs into account while planning for affordable housing.

Many agencies said they gravitate toward Bloomington for such accommodations, partly due to available older housing stock. Agencies also echoed the apartment managers’ concerns that not as many apartments in Normal accept of Section 8 vouchers as those in Bloomington. Habitat for Humanity indicated that inflexible apartment leases prevent some low-income people from upgrading into a habitat (single family) residence when that housing becomes available. One agency commented on the growing economic divide around the ISU cam-

pus. They stated that students with money are becoming more demanding in housing amenities, which in turn affects the cost of student housing for others.

Identified challenges: A key challenge identified by many agencies is their ability to obtain state and federal grants. The affluence of the B-N metro area makes it very difficult for these agencies to prove the need for financial support for their line of work in this community. The current budget impasse at the state level has also created problems for many agencies. Several called for more local support to overcome these funding challenges.

Identified needs:

- *Housing*
 - An emergency youth shelter
 - Emergency housing to accommodate the homeless population
 - Incentives to encourage landlords to accept Section 8 vouchers and support the activities of social service agencies (for example, as the ability for a social service agency to retrofit an apartment to suit their client needs with the assurance that they may be able to use that apartment for a longer term)
- *Transportation/Mobility*
 - Increased access to public transportation
 - Connected and accessible sidewalks clear of snow and debris, particularly for their clients with disabilities
 - Ride-share transportation arrangements
 - Universal Design Standards that afford all



SENIOR SERVICE AGENCIES

Community Care Systems, Inc. (CCS) is a multi-purpose social service organization that provides in-home care, adult day care, individualized care and employment opportunities with a concentration on seniors and adult populations.

East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA) was founded in 1972 and authorized under the Older Americans Act to plan and administer services for older adults, persons with disabilities, caregivers and grandparents. The mission of ECIAAA is to empower seniors to live long and strong and in their own homes.

Evergreen Village Senior Supportive Living is a senior-as-

sistance housing complex featuring various living arrangements that include on-site living quarters in addition to on-site condos, duplexes and cottage-style living. It offers an affordable assisted lifestyle for seniors. Both Medicaid and private pay arrangements are available.

Faith In Action provides spiritual, physical, and emotional support to seniors age 60 and over and their senior caregivers to maintain independence, dignity and an improved quality of life. This is accomplished through an interfaith network of volunteers, congregations and community organizations. Senior transportation assistance is a primary service of this organization.

- individuals the mobility they deserve
- *Health and support services*
 - Health centers and caregivers to treat mental health issues
 - Increased support for home therapy and other in-home services for people with autism
 - Outdoor recreational and therapeutic spaces for children and adults with disabilities
 - Employment opportunities for persons with disabilities
- *Education*
 - Charter school arrangements for at-risk youth
 - Expanding social services into local schools
- *Funding:* Dependable (local) funding streams for social service agencies

SENIOR SERVICE AGENCIES

In addition to comments from all the social service agencies, four different agencies and individuals were interviewed specifically regarding senior issues. Topics discussed included clientele needs; health care; transportation; community partnerships; local policies; housing; local service coordination; employment; and other issues.

Agencies report that seniors range in age from 60 into the mid-90s with diverse financial and, in a recent development for this community, racial and ethnic backgrounds (minorities now comprise about 10% of the local senior population, a number which has increased in recent years). Seniors' needs are much more varied than typically understood. Although most seniors prefer to live in their homes as long as they can ("age in place"), many face serious obstacles to doing so. Transportation and mobility, affordable housing, health care, and support services are particular areas of concern for seniors.

The growing and evolving senior population is placing a new level of demand for the type of services offered by the social service agencies. Agencies are seeing an increased demand for transit and meals sites, particularly from seniors around age 70. Seniors between the ages of 60 and 65 are less prepared for retirement than those in their 70s and above. Some lack sufficient retirement savings

to take care of themselves long-term, especially given that many are living into their 80s and 90s. Many are in danger of outliving their finances, thus increasing the need for senior services.

Many local, state and regional agencies provide support services to help seniors age in place, including transportation/ mobility, affordable housing, job opportunities, social interactions, and exploitation issues (fraud, domestic violence, age indifference). Some of these agencies include Faith In Action, PATH, YWCA, Life-CIL, East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA), and Illinois Department of Aging.

Observations: Many senior service agencies are hurting financially. All agree that there should be increased collaboration amongst agencies serving seniors to achieve efficiencies, but they also want to see increased support from the broader community. Staffing is a major concern as well. There are not enough competently trained and experienced workers in social service careers locally, and many of the volunteers who provide necessary support are "aging out."

- *Health care:* Basic health care services are generally good, according to the interviewees. Most seniors deal solely with Medicare and Medicaid, though some are served by managed care companies or "fee for service" arrangements. There are limited options for home health care that provides meals and medication assistance. Health education for seniors such as medication management is the main point of concern in this area.
- *Transportation:* While many seniors are living longer, their driver's licenses are being taken away at earlier ages at the suggestion of medical staff. This forces them to depend on transit or ride-share services. Agencies that fill the gaps in public transportation reported that senior trips are usually for outpatient medical (about 80% of trips), grocery shopping, and leisure, in that order. While many agencies reported that Connect Transit service is dependable, they noted its limitations in serving elderly patrons with accessibility issues. Door-through-door^(2.1) and door-to-door^(2.2) transportation services are a major need today, and

this need will increase as the population ages. There is also an increased need for senior transportation on the weekends. Local agencies that provide senior transportation service expressed interest in establishing partnerships or increasing their current levels of collaboration with local healthcare operations and hospitals, though they acknowledged that such efforts have sometimes proved difficult in the past.

Seniors also need amenities like good sidewalks and trails that are in good condition for recreational purposes. Agencies agreed that seniors should be more involved in infrastructure decisions related to accessibility.

- *Housing:* Agencies said that Normal offers a wider range of opportunities for senior-friendly housing and more affordable senior assisted living facilities than surrounding communities. Unfortunately, there are still gaps in affordable senior housing. According to the Evergreen Assisted Living facility, the average wait time for entry into their affordable senior assisted living operations is two years. Interviewees also pointed to a shortage of affordable housing with universal design features to accommodate seniors.

Looking to the future, the agencies agreed that condos and apartments with on-site living assistance would better serve seniors. Safety and universal access should be a primary consideration in any senior housing planning. Proximity to amenities would make it easier for seniors to remain healthy and active even without a car. Some suggested that relaxed pet policies would be beneficial, as pets are vital companions for many seniors. Several agencies advocated zoning changes to make it easier for seniors to age in place--for instance, by permitting the construction of accessory units on existing single-family lots, making it easier for

seniors to live with their families. In-home assistance with maintenance and other physically demanding tasks can also help seniors stay in their homes.

- *Employment:* Many physically capable seniors would love opportunities at part-time work. Unfortunately, local businesses typically hire young adults or college students for such jobs. Many seniors are also willing to volunteer under a variety of circumstances.

Identified challenges:

- A lack of community education on senior issues
- Seniors unaware of the local support services
- Lackluster cooperation among agencies and health service providers
- Shortage of qualified staff and aging of volunteers assisting with senior agencies

Identified needs:

- *Policy issues*
 - Municipal support on policy matters that help keep seniors in their homes longer (age in place)
 - Financial support for agencies providing senior services
- *Transportation*
 - Support for transportation gap services such as door-to-door and door-through-door services
 - Accessible sidewalks in good condition
- *Housing:* Affordable and accessible housing with supportive services
- *Employment:* Consideration of seniors for part-time/ seasonal employment or volunteer opportunities
- *Education:* Raising awareness on senior issues to the broader community

RELATED DEFINITIONS

2.1 Door-through-door transportation services offer a high level of physical support such as opening doors, helping users in and out of vehicles, and helping them move to and from the front door. This type of service is critical for people with significant mobility limitations. Door-through-door transportation services allow seniors and individuals with disabilities to continue living in their own homes and still stay connected to the services and activities that they need

for health and happiness.

2.2 Door-to-door services provide transportation for people with mobility restrictions to and from the front door. These services are a step above the curb-to-curb transit services provided by most transit agencies as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

installation in undeveloped areas. Current installation economics render fiber optic service cost-prohibitive for small business or residential customers. Providing “last mile” connections can cost from \$8,000 to \$80,000, depending on access and available connections.

- CIRBN encourages the expansion of data centers in central Illinois to properly leverage the available fiber optic bandwidth already installed. CIRBN currently provides service through partners to provide broadband to student housing in Normal.

Identified challenges:

- CIRBN, like other providers, finds easement access increasingly difficult and costly.
- CIRBN is not as well capitalized for expansion as its private sector competitors.
- The lifespan of installed fiber optic cable is estimated at 20 years; the replacement cost must be included in CIRBN’s business model even if future technology offers lower-cost options.

ENERGY: Ameren’s representative discussed \$3.5 billion in system upgrades in Illinois over the next five years, involving new technologies and capacity expansion. This work will begin in Bloomington-Normal in three to five years.

Observations:

- The Towanda-Barnes substation on the south side of Bloomington is part of the national electric grid and is vital to electric power supply in central Illinois. A sub-transmission study for the area was completed in 2014. Some of its recommendations will be implemented within the next decade and will improve electrical redundancy and reduce the incidence of electric outages in Normal.
- Normal is part of the residential municipal electric aggregation program that provides cost savings to its residents. As part of this project, the Town opted for 100% green energy.
- The Town’s street lighting is provided by Ameren – Normal opts for eco-friendly choices in lighting.

Identified challenges:

- Utilities competing for space in easements or on utility poles
- Separation of electrical lines from the Town’s water lines
- Underground electrical transmission is far more expensive than overhead transmission
- Spot loads created by major redevelopment projects such as Uptown

NATURAL GAS: Nicor is a natural gas utility serving the BN metro area and most of the northern half of



INFRASTRUCTURE AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

AMEREN Illinois is a gas and electric delivery company that services a portion of Bloomington-Normal and McLean County. Ameren’s service area in Illinois spans 43,700 square miles. Their delivery system includes 4,500 miles of electric transmission lines and 45,400 miles of gas distribution lines.

CIRBN is an advanced business service broadband provider, bringing high-speed fiber-optic-based internet and intranet services to local governments, institutions, schools, and other large-scale data users. A nonprofit consortium funded through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, CIRBN is overseen by a Board of Managers drawn from community stakeholders.

Connect Transit provides public transit service to the Twin Cities through 11 main service routes (plus three express routes during the academic year), 56 vehicles, and over 115

employees. It also provides curb-to-curb paratransit services for seniors and people with disabilities that qualify under the ADA. Connect is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal. In 2015, the American Public Transit Association named it the best public transit system in North America among systems providing fewer than four million annual trips.

Bloomington and Normal Water Reclamation District (BNWRD) is a regional sanitary district that collects and treats wastewater from the Town of Normal, the City of Bloomington, the Bloomington Township Public Water District (BTPWD), and the Village of Downs.

Nicor Gas provides natural gas to more than 2.2 million customers in Illinois, including the Bloomington-Normal area. Natural gas is stored underground in aquifers to the north of Normal and transported by pipeline to B-N area homes.

Illinois. Much of its critical infrastructure is located on the north side of Normal, some on its own property and some on private property owned by third parties and protected by easements.

Nicor's Manager for Community Relations and Economic Development was interviewed.

Observations:

- Given the location of its critical infrastructure and potential for conflict with their operations, Nicor would prefer if the private development was confined to the south side of Northtown Road. However, if developments are proposed on the north side, Nicor will work closely with all involved to help minimize any potential conflicts.
- Nicor is unwilling to lay down infrastructure prior to identifying billable customers. This policy may sometimes inconvenience developers looking for "shovel-ready" sites, but Nicor considers it an essential part of their fiscal sustainability.

Identified challenges:

- Like other utilities, Nicor has identified crowded utility easements under public right-of-way as a significant challenge.
- Nicor also identified urban sprawl as a point of concern. In the interest of increasing customer density per square mile, Nicor fully supports infill, higher density developments, and mixed use environments.

TRANSIT: Connect Transit was represented by its General Manager and Planner.

Observations:

- Connect is transitioning to larger, fixed-route vehicles (40 feet long).
- Route changes will be introduced in late summer 2016, reducing transit access to some portions of Normal (particularly the northeast section of the Town).
- Connect has begun to implement a system of transit stops with identifying signs. Adjustments to stop locations and modifications to improve access to stops are in progress. As the system is shifting to larger vehicles, service will be largely confined to areas with wider streets

and room for buses to maneuver. Connect will be moving stops off private property (such as mall and store parking lots) and emphasizing transit access points at on-street stops.

- Connect Transit provides extensive service at ISU through the Redbird Express campus bus routes, which will not be affected by the upcoming route changes.
- Connect also provides paratransit service through much of Normal and Bloomington.
- There is continued concern regarding access for large transit vehicles in the compact street network of Uptown.
- One-way couplet streets, such as Main-Kingsley and College-Mulberry, make efficient route design and proper stop locations more difficult to design.
- Higher-density development, especially residential development, will improve ridership opportunities.
- Connect would like to receive advance information about both pending development and redevelopment, particularly along major corridors or arterials.
- Improving walking/biking access to bus stop locations is a key goal for Connect, which expressed a desire to work with the Town to accomplish this.

Identified challenges:

- Sprawl development that limits efficiency and timely transit services. Development expected to generate heavy transit usage should be discouraged at the edge of the community, where routing options are more limited and travel times are longer.
- Small residential streets and narrow turning radii are difficult to negotiate in the larger transit vehicles now becoming the standard on Connect Transit fixed routes.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

MCRPC staff interviewed the Director and Chief Operator of the Bloomington and Normal Water Reclamation District (BNWRD). BNWRD is a municipal sanitary district that provides wastewater treatment to Bloomington and Normal. BNWRD operates two treatment plants, one on Bloomington's West Side (the "West Plant") that treats wastewater

from western Normal and Bloomington, and one to the southeast of Bloomington (the “SE Plant”) that treats wastewater from east of Veterans’ Parkway and part of Ironwood Subdivision. BNWRD’s primary service area is defined by the boundaries of the sanitary district, which encompasses Bloomington and Normal and some outlying areas.

Observations:

- Overall, BNWRD was fairly satisfied with the Town of Normal’s efforts on wastewater issues. They noted that Normal’s code enforcement, sustainability efforts, and lack of combined sewers have reduced the amount of stormwater entering the treatment plant. They did note, however, that improvements can still be made, particularly to the leaky sewers that are part of the Town’s older infrastructure.
- When requested to respond to the Home Builders Association’s claim that BNWRD’s tap-on fees were significantly increasing the cost of new construction, BNWRD clarified that their connection fees are only a portion of the tap-on fee structure. However, they also acknowledged that tap-on fees are higher than they used to be and noted the increase was necessary to finance the new SE Plant that was built in 2005 to accommodate growth east of Veterans’ Parkway. They explained that tap-on fees are one of the district’s three sources of revenue, along with property taxes and user fees. The property tax levy is maxed, which leaves user fees and tap-on fees to account for

any future spending increases. Tap-on fees are by definition tied to growth, so the revenue through this source was at a maximum during the rapid growth period. Now that east side growth has slowed down, revenue from these fees has been decreasing, and user fees will become the primary mechanism to pay for the infrastructure upgrades.

- BNWRD expressed concern over the amount of stormwater that is discharged into the SE Plant. This increased volume of non-polluted water coming into the treatment plant (inflow and infiltration, or “I & I”)^(2,3) exceeds the peak hydraulic capacity during extreme wet weather and may one day necessitate plant expansions. The misdirected stormwater comes from sources such as old, leaky pipes; malfunctioning manhole covers; and sump pumps and footing drains in people’s homes being illegally connected to the sanitary sewer system rather than the storm sewer system. BNWRD stressed that reducing these inputs at their sources will be far cheaper than expanding capacity at the SE Plant (an estimated construction cost of \$14-16 per gallon of capacity), which will be necessary if I & I are not reduced. They also pointed out that point source reduction of I & I is a major USEPA goal and that the last permit they obtained from the IEPA for the West Plant recommended that they establish intergovernmental agreements with contributing jurisdictions to achieve these reductions.
- A number of proposed regulatory changes at



RELATED DEFINITIONS

2.3 Inflow and Infiltration (I & I) is the dilution of wastewater in sanitary sewers by unpolluted stormwater. “inflow” is water that comes from the deliberate (and illegal) connection of sump pumps, footing drains, and other sources of stormwater to the sanitary sewer system. “Infiltration” is the accidental entry of stormwater through leaks, cracks, malfunctioning manhole covers, etc.. I & I increases operating costs by forcing treatment plants to treat water that was never meant for the sanitary sewer system. If left unchecked, it can require expensive infrastructure upgrades to increase capacity.

2.4 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES): According to USEPA, the NPDES permit program addresses water pollution by regulating point sources that

discharge pollutants to waters of the United States. Created in 1972 by the Clean Water Act, the NPDES permit program is authorized to state governments by EPA to perform many permitting, administrative, and enforcement aspects of the program.

2.5 Impaired Waters list: Under the federal Clean Water Act, impaired waters are rivers, lakes, or streams that do not meet one or more water-quality standards and are considered too polluted for their intended uses. The IEPA prepares a list of impaired waters to fulfill the requirements set forth in Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act and the Water Quality Planning and Management regulation at 40 CFR Part 130.

the national and state levels—for example, mandates to remove a greater percentage of phosphorous, ammonium nitrates, and chlorides—may bring new NPDES permit^(2.4) requirements necessitating major system upgrades. As a result, BNWRD anticipates having to “gut and rebuild” the West Plant within the next 20 years at an estimated cost of \$150-160 million. New permit requirements could come as early as 2017 if certain issues are not addressed (see below about Sugar Creek). Even if that does not happen, pending ammonium nitrate regulations, expected to take effect by the following permit renewal in 2022, will likely force an upgrade; however, by that point the loan on the SE Plant will be nearly paid off, making a West Plant upgrade more financially feasible.

- Sugar Creek, one of the two streams into which BNWRD discharges treated water, has been placed on the IEPA’s Impaired Waters list^(2.5) due to elevated levels of phosphorous. Failing to get Sugar Creek removed from that list could trigger stringent phosphorous limits on the West Plant when its permit is renewed in 2017. BNWRD maintains that infrastructure upgrades resulting from these limits would not necessarily benefit aquatic life in the creek because of other anthropogenic impacts downstream from the West Plant (most notably farm runoff and debris), which BNWRD believes is causing the bulk of the impairment. The new limits would also likely require the development of a watershed plan, a time- and resource-intensive process that would also introduce further monitoring and limits. BNWRD is working with the IEPA to reevaluate the impairment designation.
- When asked about the proposed bike trail extension along the south bank of Sugar Creek at the Bloomington-Normal border, BNWRD expressed strong opposition. Such a trail would present liability concerns for BNWRD, which owns the land in question, and would also risk damage to pipes buried underground at that location. BNWRD is slightly more open to the possibility of a trail along the north bank, which is narrower than the south bank but does not have as much buried infrastructure to contend with.

- Looking ahead, BNWRD noted that the USEPA wants to establish “satellite communities” (i.e., communities served by sanitary districts) to have permits to operate their sewer systems, which would make it easier for USEPA to regulate those communities’ treatment efforts and ensure that its goals are achieved. Normal, Bloomington, and the other communities BNWRD serves would have to obtain these permits and meet increased reporting requirements. The time horizon for this change is unknown, but BNWRD expects it to happen in the near future. In preparation for this change, BNWRD suggested that the communities start benchmarking their environmental footprints and carefully tracking the savings realized by their green infrastructure improvements.
- While they noted good relations with the Town of Normal and City of Bloomington engineering staff, they expressed a need for better communications with the consultants retained by the Town or the City for long term sewer and stormwater planning projects.

Identified challenges

- Pending regulatory changes will, if implemented, likely force BNWRD to abide by stricter water quality limits, forcing the replacement of the West Plant within the next 15 years. The cost of this replacement is currently estimated by BNWRD at over \$150 million. Given that BNWRD’s revenue is drawn from local sources such as property taxes, user fees and tap-on fees, the community must be prepared to meet these costs in the near future.
- Unpolluted stormwater entering the SE treatment plant poses treatment and capacity challenges and in turn increases the cost burden. These I & I issues, if not kept to a minimum, will force either the expansion of the SE Plant or the restriction of new service by the IEPA if expansion does not happen in a timely fashion. Greater levels of community education and intergovernmental cooperation are needed to address these issues.

TOWN OF NORMAL STAFF: Interview subjects included the Public Works Director, the Water Director, the Town Engineer, the Director of Inspections

and the Town Planner.

Water: The Water Director advised that the current water system has considerable excess capacity; current usage is about 4 million gallons per day (mgd), and system capacity is up to 12 mgd.

Most barriers to expanding the water system further are financial, not technical. For example, it will be difficult and expensive for water lines to cross interstate highway rights-of-way.

The Town currently spends on the order of \$2 million annually in pipe replacement.

Denser development and associated water demand may reverse Normal's trend of water use reduction, but there are no technical constraints on serving higher densities. The Treatment Plant Plan provides additional guidance in this regard.

Stormwater: Although today's stormwater management system works well, the Public Works department favors increased use of regional-scale detention facilities as a matter of policy. This approach offers more efficient stormwater management by concentrating the locations requiring continuing maintenance, and reducing the use of smaller and less effective detention areas.

Sanitary sewer: A long-term sewer plan is in progress. The plan will include a 5-year sewer project program addressing current needs, to be completed in mid-February 2016, as well as a map of sections of Normal that can and cannot be sewered. Later work will consider rate changes and future growth issues.

Town staff members believe the current sewer capacity is adequate for the areas served even if population density increases. Development in areas where gravity flow will not suffice, and where pump stations are required, will be very expensive both for installation and maintenance. More generally, any future expansion of the sewer system will create higher long-term maintenance costs.

Staff members noted that some land outside of the current incorporated area can be sewered without requiring additional pump stations, including areas northeast, northwest and west of the corporate boundary. Growth in areas north of the Town is constrained by pump station capacity.

There are also sewer constraints in the area surrounding the Mitsubishi plant. Extra capacity is available in the Franklin Heights area.

Streets, trails and sidewalks: Staff anticipate more existing street improvement rather than new construction, and Town staff members favor innovative congestion management that does not rely on increased facility size. They noted that bridges and streets are generally in good repair.

Town staff want to use complete streets^(2.6) concepts to facilitate multimodal transportation, including narrowing and reduction of lanes. The Town, ISU and IDOT have discussed plans for the Main Street corridor, especially management of pedestrian traffic through the campus area. The Town would like ISU to incorporate complete streets and design for pedestrian traffic management into the ISU master plan.

Information technology: Town staff members have little direct knowledge in this area, aside from the right-of-way demands for installation along with other utilities. There are concerns about service availability in new development, as some providers are already suggesting that service will be held until areas are built out; according to Town staff, this will create delays for new development. At this juncture, staff believes developers should provide high speed internet access in new developments.

Observations:

- The Town is well-equipped to assimilate new development and higher residential densities within the existing Town limits.



RELATED DEFINITIONS

2.6. "Complete Streets," as defined by Smart Growth America, are streets that allow safe and comfortable access for users of all modes of transportation and people of all ages and abilities. "Incomplete streets," by contrast, are designed primarily or solely for automotive traffic, making other modes of travel inconvenient or dangerous. Complete streets may include any or all of a diverse array of features that make them safer and more versatile, including sidewalks, bike lanes, bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, etc.

- Facility planning is targeted towards the existing annexed area.
- Ongoing coordination and cooperation with ISU, IDOT, and other entities is essential for sustainable development and minimizing new infrastructure costs.

Identified challenges:

- Accelerating costs for infrastructure maintenance and expansion, if and when needed
- Reliance on other agencies, such as IDOT, to relay data and project specifications; generally, dependence on other jurisdictions or agencies to accomplish projects

Fire: Normal’s fire chief discussed a number of issues facing his department, including response times, potential station relocations and upgrades, and how development and the built environment affect fire service.

Response times: One of the most important considerations for any fire department is response time; i.e., how long it takes responders to arrive at a location after receiving a call. While most of Normal is well within the recommended response time range of 4.5-6 minutes, decades of development on the fringes of the Town—especially on the east side—have extended the range some of Normal’s fire stations have to cover. Northeast Normal, for example, is relatively far away from the nearest station; Normal Community High School, which is in that area, has an average response time of about 9.5 minutes, well outside the acceptable range.

Location of Fire Stations: There are currently three stations in Normal. A fourth was explored but proved cost-prohibitive. Instead, the Town has decided to reconfigure the locations and staff composition of the three existing stations. Plans have been made to move Station #1 (Headquarters) eastward from College Avenue to N. Hershey Avenue; Station #2 eastward from Gregory and Adelaide to Main and Osage; and Station #3 westward from Raab and Henry to Bradford Ln. In the case of Station #2, this move will come with a major upgrade in the quality of the facility, as it is over 40 years old and has significant maintenance issues.

There is currently no specific timeline for

the station relocations; however, the plans are in the works, and the Town agreed in 2015 to a land swap with ISU that frees up land for the Station #2 relocation. These reconfigurations should result in a more consistent distribution of response times. However, the chief noted that these moves alone will be insufficient if the Town continues to grow outward at its current pace.

Intergovernmental cooperation: There is a great deal of cooperation between the Bloomington and Normal fire departments. Both Normal and Bloomington are part of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), which provides mutual aid to other member agencies. Other cooperative efforts with Bloomington discussed in the recent past included a joint fire station on the east side of the community, which did not materialize. More intergovernmental cooperation will be required in the near future, as Illinois recently passed a bill requiring counties with populations under 200,000 to have a single joint police/fire dispatch center. In the short term, the chief indicated that the transition to a single dispatch center may be difficult and costly.

Identified challenges:

- While street patterns are not a huge concern in most parts of Normal today, the chief did note that cul-de-sacs can present challenges.
- Some apartment buildings also present complications due to height (the fire department’s ladder trucks only go up three stories, which makes it difficult to fight fires in taller structures) or being too close together.
- Newer structures are built with materials, such as glued particle board, that are particularly unsafe in the event of a fire.

Police: Normal’s Chief of Police met with MCRPC staff to discuss issues relevant to his department, including community relations; policing policies; cooperation with other agencies and private entities; crime data and mapping; and internal planning and reporting.

Community Relations: According to the chief, one of the department’s key principles is “community policing,” meaning that officers stay engaged with communities and work together with citizens to

solve problems. This includes activities such as:

- Proactively patrolling known problem areas (as identified by number of citizen- or officer-initiated calls from that area)
- Making three community contacts per day (e.g., walking beats, liquor checks, and business checks)
- Community education
- Keeping abreast of public attitudes and perceptions regarding police activity by performing surveys

In response to some of the apartment managers' concerns, the chief specifically detailed some of the ways in which the department coordinates with apartment managers to ensure safety in their complexes:

- Some apartment complexes produce more calls than others, and NPD officers patrol those areas preventively.
- Officers have annual meetings with all apartment complex managers in the Town. These meetings are sometimes followed up with one-on-one meetings to identify or discuss specific complex-specific issues.
- The department shares appropriate crime information with apartment managers and works with them to write leases or suggest "sample leases" that allow police to intervene in eviction cases.
- The department also partners with apartment managers on measures to increase safety such as video surveillance.
- Although there is no official "Cop on the Block" program, NPD facilitates a similar program. This voluntary program is typically initiated by an apartment manager contacting the chief. The chief sends out an email to all the officers to gauge their interest in living in that apartment complex and doing informal walking beats on off-hours. When an officer expresses interest, he or she then works out a living arrangement with the apartment manager. The management at the Lancaster Heights complex, which has such an arrangement, told MCRPC staff that having a police car parked in the parking lot and an officer walking around in uniform has helped make their complex much safer.

Intergovernmental and interagency cooperation:

The chief stated that NPD and ISU police work very closely. They communicate periodically and work together on issues such as crowd control, hostage negotiating and SWAT teams. He noted that the college students are "better behaved" than they used to be, perhaps in part because of the school's expulsion policy for students who commit serious crimes.

He characterized NPD's relationship with the Bloomington Police Department as "the best it has ever been," as the two forces communicate and coordinate on a variety of issues and tasks.

The chief highlighted the efforts of the Neighborhood Action Team (NAT), consisting of NPD officers, ISU officers and staff from other Town of Normal departments, such as planning and zoning. This team was formed to collaboratively and proactively address issues specific to the neighborhoods around the university.

Crime data and analysis: NPD tracks and reports crimes beyond what is typically required by state and federal agencies. They use variety of tools, including GIS. The department does not wait until the year end to do a hot spot analysis. Data are analyzed daily to help shape the enforcement patterns for that day.

The Town has recently increased enforcement of pedestrian and bicycle infractions, with areas of emphasis based partly on crash data. In some cases, NPD uses targeted enforcement increases not only to directly improve public safety, but also to achieve "compliance through education"—discouraging future unsafe behavior by making the traffic laws clear.

The chief noted that sexual assault cases have spiked in the last few years. He believes that these higher numbers are not only due to the prevalence of such crimes, but also the department's educational efforts. Sexual assault has long been notoriously underreported, both here and elsewhere, but the chief believes his department has made progress in encouraging people to come forward.

Planning and reporting: A general multi-year plan establishes high-level goals and objectives, while more specific plans such as the Officer Recruitment Plan and Work-Assessment Load Plan guide the

department on those issues. Hotspot mapping shapes the department's decision-making about where to deploy resources. The Problem-Oriented Policing Unit (POP) identifies unresolved community issues that cause crime and develops strategies to address them. The department is nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), which means the department's policies, procedures and operations meet national best practice standards for progressive law enforcement.

The department's annual report, which is posted on the Town's website at the end of each year, details the department's core activities and new initiatives. The "citizen complaint grid," published on the Town's website, lists types and frequencies of complaints by Normal residents

Identified challenges:

- The chief stated that the national attention on police and racial issues has negatively affected local perceptions of the NPD.

**KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS
(INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SAFETY)**

- Infrastructure and community facilities play a key role in the future growth of the community. The Town's recent plans addressing the community facilities and capital investments (such as the recently adopted Fire Department Plan and the sewer plan that is currently under development) should be integrated into the comprehensive plan efforts.
- Future land use planning should aim for compact physical growth and development to improve service efficiencies and achieve long-term fiscal and environmental sustainability.
- Street functions should be examined more comprehensively to accommodate multiple modes of transportation.
- Street patterns such as cul-de-sacs that limit the serviceability of emergency and other service vehicles should be limited.
- Easements in rights-of-way should be managed efficiently to accommodate current and future utility provision.
- The community's ability to effectively manage its sewer and stormwater infrastructure not only impacts the health and safety of its resi-

dents but also dictates the future growth and economic development of the area. Given the costs of treatment and the construction of a new treatment facility, communities should seriously consider sustainable stormwater management techniques in all aspects of planning, including green infrastructure improvements, promoting net-zero water in parks and buildings, and other approaches to help reduce I & I for long-term fiscal and environmental sustainability.

- Recognizing the importance of information technology in the 21st century economy, facilitating broadband access should be a key consideration in the overall planning framework.
- Emphasis should continue to be placed on regional (interagency and intergovernmental) cooperation for effective infrastructure, public safety, and natural resource planning and utilization.