



Planning Commission - Regular Session Agenda
Community Room 1, 2nd Floor, Bloomington Public Library
205 E. Olive St., Bloomington, IL 61701
Wednesday, November 5, 2025 - 4:00 PM

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Public Comment

Individuals wishing to provide emailed public comment must email comments to publiccomment@cityblm.org at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. Individuals wishing to speak in-person may register at cityblm.org/register at least 5 minutes before the start of the meeting.

4. Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda are listed and voted on separately.

- A. **Review and approval of the Minutes of the September 3, 2025 regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission, as requested by the Development Services Department.** (Recommended Motion: The proposed Consent Agenda be approved.)

5. Regular Agenda

- A. **HELD OVER - Z-08-25 - Public hearing, consideration, and action on a request submitted by McLean County Center for Human Services, for approval of a Zoning Map Amendment for the property commonly known as 1326 Sherman Street, from the R-1C (Single-Family Residential) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District. PIN: 14-32-429-030., as requested by the Development Services Department.** (Recommended Motion: Motion to establish findings of fact that the request for approval of a Zoning Map Amendment to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to recommend approval of the request.)
- B. **Z-09-25 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request initiated by the City of Bloomington, for the approval of text amendments, modifications and additions to the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington, Illinois (Chapter 44 of the Bloomington City Code, 1960), relating to (1) building characteristics in the D-1 (Central Business) zoning district, and (2) permitted encroachments in public rights-of-way, as requested by the Development Services Department.** (Recommended Motion: Motion to establish findings of fact that the proposed text amendments are or are not in the public interest, and a motion to recommend that City Council either approve or deny the proposed text amendments.)

6. New Business

7. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities planning to attend the meeting who require reasonable accommodations to observe and/or participate, or who have questions about the accessibility of the meeting, should contact the City's ADA Coordinator at 309-434-2468 or mhurt@cityblm.org.



Consent Agenda Item No. 4.A.

For Planning Commission: November 5, 2025

Ward Impacted: City Wide

Subject: Review and approval of the Minutes of the September 3, 2025 regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission, as requested by the Development Services Department.

Recommended Motion: The proposed Consent Agenda be approved.

Strategic Plan:

Goal 1. Financially Sound City Providing Quality Basic Services

Objective 1c. Engaged residents that are well informed and involved in an open governance process

Background: In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Commission Minutes must be approved thirty (30) days after the meeting or at the second subsequent regular meeting whichever is later.

Community Groups/Interested Persons Contacted: N/A

Financial Impact: N/A

Attachments:

1. PC Draft Minutes 2025-09-03



**DRAFT MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2025, 4:00 PM**

The Planning Commission convened in regular session at 4:01 PM, September 3, 2025. Chair Peradotti called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Anna Sochotsky	Commission Vice Chair	Absent
Jackie Beyer	Commissioner	Present
Goverdhan Galpalli	Commissioner	Present
Mary Ann Cullen	Commissioner	Present at 4:04pm
Mark Muehleck	Commissioner	Absent
David Lewis	Commissioner	Present
Rachael Mosley	Commissioner	Present
Thomas Krieger	Commissioner	Present
William Peradotti	Commission Chair	Present

City Staff present included: George Boyle, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Kelly Pfeifer, Director of Development Services; Jon Branham, Planner II; Marcus Ricci, Planner III; Alissa Pemberton, Planning Manager.

Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Mosley noted a correction on page 5 of the draft minutes, relating to comments attributed to Chair Peradotti that were actually provided by her.

Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, to approve the consent agenda as amended.

AYES: Lewis; Mosley; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Kreiger

Motion carried (viva voce).

Item 4.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the August 6, 2025, regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. **Z-07-25** - Public Hearing, review and action on a request submitted by WV Corner Holdings, LLC, for a **Zoning Map Amendment** from the B-1 (General Commercial) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District for the property commonly known as 2425 E. Lincoln Street, PIN 21-11-327-001.

Mr. Branham presented the staff report and a recommendation for approval. He noted the history of the property, most recently occupied as an Office Use, and the current vacant status. He noted the surrounding uses, including the adjacent Assisted Living Facility. He reviewed the Standards for the Zoning Map Amendment.

Commissioner Beyer inquired whether an Assisted Living Facility use would be permitted with the current zoning designation. Ms. Pemberton stated that it would not, but that Multi-Family Residential would be permitted. Commissioner Beyer inquired if the request could be considered an expansion of the adjacent R-3B zoning. Ms. Pemberton confirmed.

Chair Peradotti opened the public hearing.

Tim Higus, Representative for the Applicant, provided further background and stated a future site plan has not been developed for the property yet, but the idea is to develop it cohesively with the adjacent property.

Commissioner Galpalli inquired about the status of the existing building at the site. Mr. Higus stated it would likely be demolished, and the site would be redeveloped.

Joel Randalls, Resident, inquired about the public interest. Mr. Branham recited Standard #5 in the staff memo related to the relative gain to the public.

Chair Peradotti closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Beyer noted that the request would be an extension of the adjacent zoning and land use and would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.

Commissioner Beyer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, to establish findings of fact that the that the proposed Zoning Map Amendment is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant and recommend approval of the proposed Zoning Map Amendment.

AYES: Lewis; Mosley; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Cullen
Motion passed.

Mr. Branham stated the item would proceed to City Council on September 22nd.

Item 5.B. **Z-08-25** - Public Hearing, review and action on a request submitted by McLean County Center for Human Services, for a **Zoning Map Amendment** from the R-1C (Single-Family Residence) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District for the property commonly known as 1326 Sherman Street, PIN 14-32-429-030.

Ms. Pemberton requested a short recess to consult with Counsel.

Chair Peradotti called for a recess at 4:14pm.

Chair Peradotti called the meeting back to order at 4:23pm.

Ms. Pemberton requested the item be continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting, to address questions related to ownership of the subject property and whether sufficient evidence of approval to proceed exists.

Commissioner Beyer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Krieger, to continue the item to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

AYES: Lewis; Mosley; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Cullen

Motion passed.

Ms. Pemberton stated that staff would remain to answer any questions from members of the public, following the conclusion of the meeting and dispersal of the Commissioners.

New Business

Ms. Pemberton introduced Mr. Ricci as a new staff liaison of the Planning Commission starting in the near future.

Adjournment

Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sochotsky, to adjourn the meeting.

AYES: Lewis; Mosley; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Cullen

Motion carried (viva voce).

The Meeting Adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Bill Peradotti, Chair

Alissa Pemberton, Staff Liaison



City of Bloomington Planning Commission

September 3, 2025

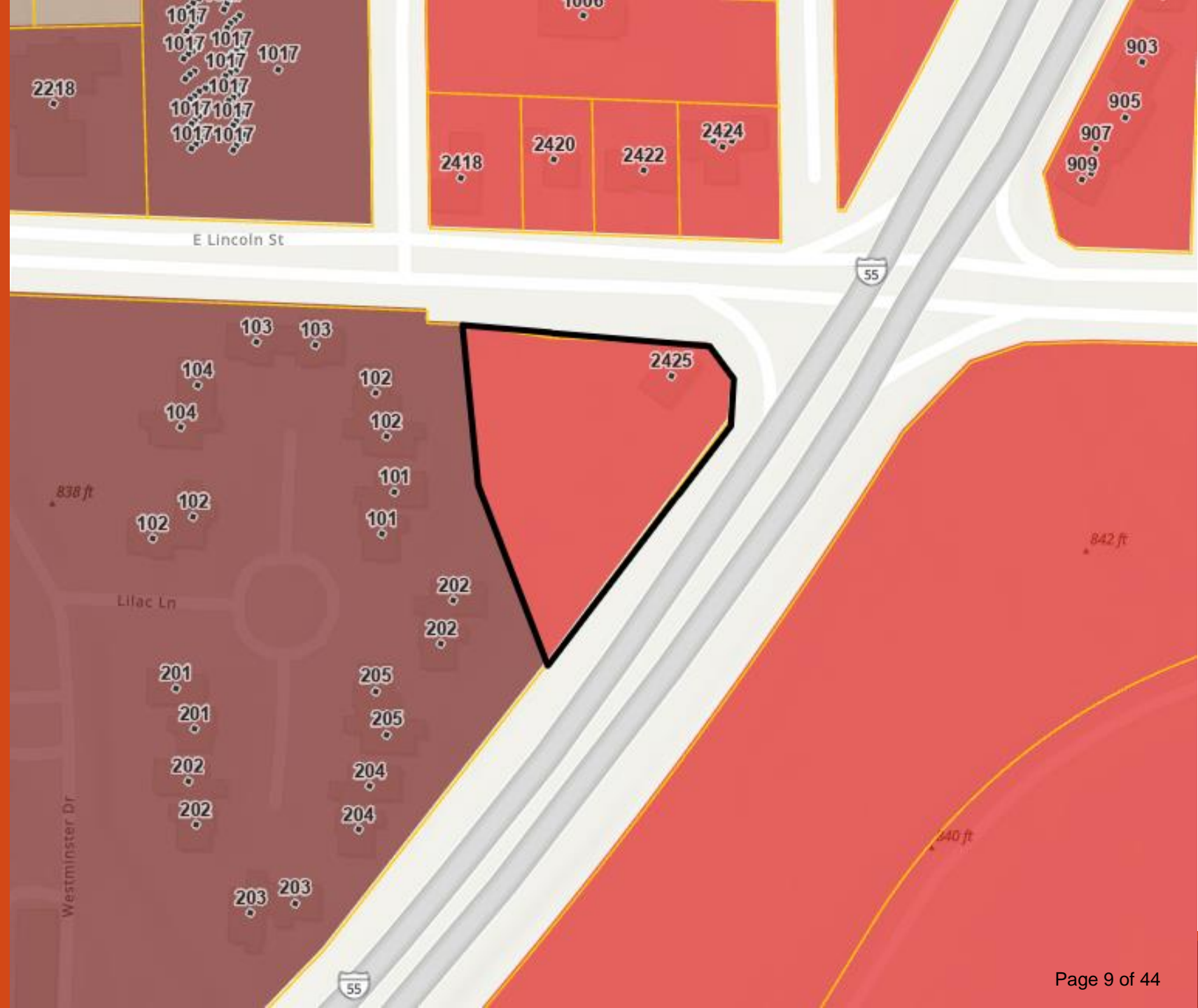


Regular Agenda

Item	Case Number	Description
4A	N/A	Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the August 6, 2025, regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission.
5A	Z-07-25	Public Hearing, review and action on a request submitted by WV Corner Holdings, LLC, for a Zoning Map Amendment for the property commonly known as 2425 E. Lincoln Street, from the B-1 (General Commercial) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District. PIN: 21-11-327-001.
5B	Z-08-25	Public Hearing, review and action on a request submitted by McLean County Center for Human Services with H.O.P.E. (Housing Our People Everywhere), requesting a Zoning Map Amendment for the property located at 1326 Sherman Street, from R-1C (Single-Family Residential) District to R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District. PIN: 14-32-429-030.
6	N/A	Any new business that may arise.

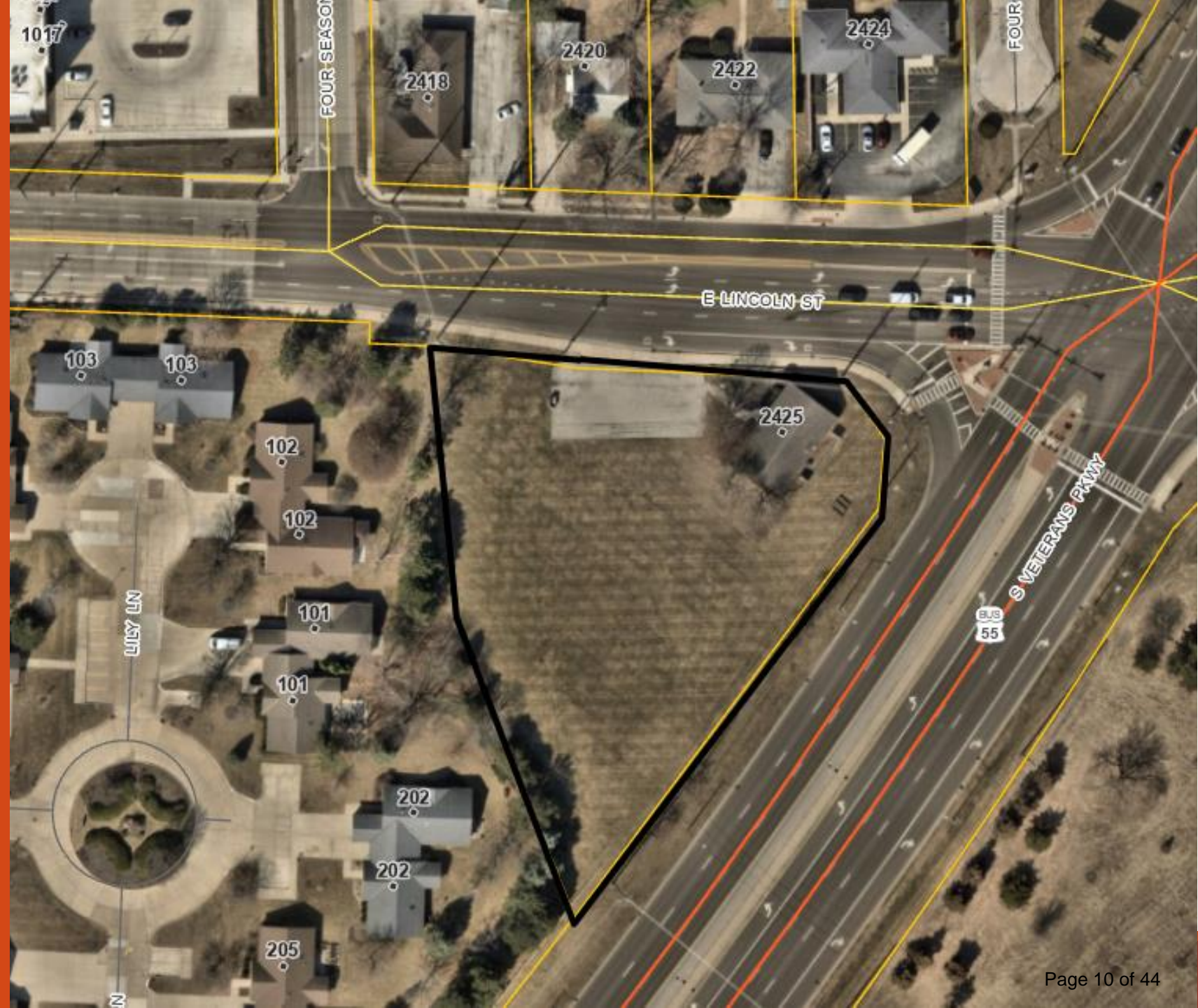
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Z-07-25

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Compliance with the 2035 Comprehensive Plan

The proposed Map Amendment contributes to:

- Goal H-1 (Ensure the availability of safe, attractive and high quality housing stock to meet the needs of all current and future residents of Bloomington),
 - Objective H-1.1 (Ensure that the housing to accommodate the new growth is a broad range (of types, sizes, ages, densities, tenancies and costs) equitably distributed throughout the City recognizing changing trends in age-group composition, income, and family living habits), and H-1.2 (Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing for low to moderate income households); and
- Goal ED-4 (Enhance the image of Bloomington as a business-friendly community), Objective ED-4.2 (Prioritize infill and redevelopment to spur growth and reinvestment in the City).

Standards for Review – Map Amendments

The suitability of the subject property for uses authorized by the existing zoning.

The length of time the property has remained vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the area.

The suitability of the subject property for uses authorized by the proposed zoning.

The existing land uses and zoning of nearby property.

Relative gain or hardship to the public as contrasted and compared to the hardship or gain of the individual property owner resulting from the approval or denial of the zoning amendment application.

The extent to which adequate streets are connected to the arterial street system and are available or can be reasonably supplied to serve the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification.

The extent to which the proposed amendment is inconsistent with the need to minimize flood damage and that the development of the subject property for the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification will not have a substantial detrimental effect on the drainage patterns in the area.

The extent to which adequate services (including but not limited to fire and police protection, schools, water supply, and sewage disposal facilities) are available or can be reasonably supplied to serve the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification

The extent to which property values are diminished by the restrictions of the proposed zoning.

Whether a Comprehensive Plan for land use and development exists, and whether the amendment is in harmony with it.

Whether the City needs more of the types of uses allowed in the proposed district.



Staff Recommendation

CASE Z-07-25

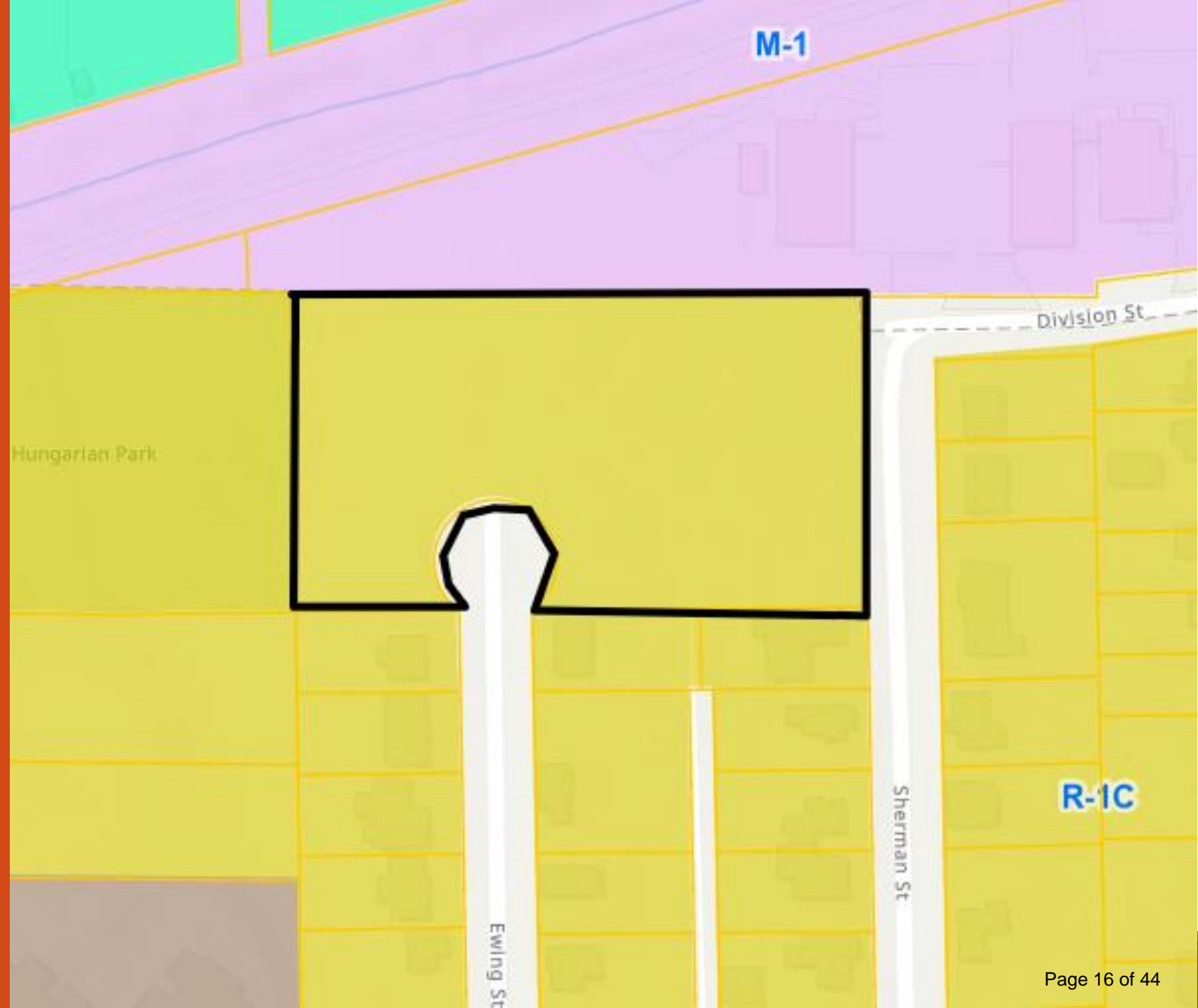
Staff finds that the standards for map amendments have been adequately addressed.

Recommended Actions:

Motion to establish **findings of fact, as stated in the Staff Report**, that the request for approval of the proposed **Zoning Map Amendment** to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to **recommend approval** of the request.

Z-08-25

Public hearing, consideration, and action on a request by McLean County Center for Human Services with H.O.P.E. (Housing Our People Everywhere), requesting a Zoning Map Amendment for the property located at 1326 Sherman Street, from R-1C (Single-Family Residential) District to R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District. PIN: 14-32-429-030.



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Compliance with the 2035 Comprehensive Plan

The proposed Map Amendment contributes to:

- Goal H-1 (Ensure the availability of safe, attractive and high quality housing stock to meet the needs of all current and future residents of Bloomington),
 - Objective H-1.1 (Ensure that the housing to accommodate the new growth is a broad range (of types, sizes, ages, densities, tenancies and costs) equitably distributed throughout the City recognizing changing trends in age-group composition, income, and family living habits), and H-1.2 (Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing for low to moderate income households); and
- Goal ED-4 (Enhance the image of Bloomington as a business-friendly community), Objective ED-4.2 (Prioritize infill and redevelopment to spur growth and reinvestment in the City).

Standards for Review – Map Amendments

The suitability of the subject property for uses authorized by the existing zoning.

The length of time the property has remained vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the area.

The suitability of the subject property for uses authorized by the proposed zoning.

The existing land uses and zoning of nearby property.

Relative gain or hardship to the public as contrasted and compared to the hardship or gain of the individual property owner resulting from the approval or denial of the zoning amendment application.

The extent to which adequate streets are connected to the arterial street system and are available or can be reasonably supplied to serve the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification.

The extent to which the proposed amendment is inconsistent with the need to minimize flood damage and that the development of the subject property for the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification will not have a substantial detrimental effect on the drainage patterns in the area.

The extent to which adequate services (including but not limited to fire and police protection, schools, water supply, and sewage disposal facilities) are available or can be reasonably supplied to serve the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification

The extent to which property values are diminished by the restrictions of the proposed zoning.

Whether a Comprehensive Plan for land use and development exists, and whether the amendment is in harmony with it.

Whether the City needs more of the types of uses allowed in the proposed district.



Staff Recommendation

CASE Z-08-25

Staff finds that the standards for map amendments have been adequately addressed.

Recommended Actions:

Motion to establish **findings of fact, as stated in the Staff Report**, that the request for approval of the proposed **Zoning Map Amendment** to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to **recommend approval** of the request.



Next Meeting

October 1, 2025



Regular Agenda Item No. 5.A.

For Planning Commission: November 5, 2025

Ward Impacted: Ward 1

Subject: HELD OVER - Z-08-25 - Public hearing, consideration, and action on a request submitted by McLean County Center for Human Services, for approval of a Zoning Map Amendment for the property commonly known as 1326 Sherman Street, from the R-1C (Single-Family Residential) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District. PIN: 14-32-429-030., as requested by the Development Services Department.

Recommended Motion: Motion to establish findings of fact that the request for approval of a Zoning Map Amendment to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to recommend approval of the request.

Strategic Plan:

Goal: **Goal 3.** Strong Neighborhoods

Objective: **Objective 3a.** Retention and growth of current local businesses

Background: The Applicant is requesting approval of a Zoning Map Amendment for the subject property from the B-1 (General Commercial) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District. The subject property currently holds a vacant one-story structure and surface parking. The site has been occupied by a variety of office uses since the late 1970s. It was previously occupied as an Office for an extended time, before being vacated in 2024. The Applicant is seeking to rezone the property for residential use to provide an opportunity to redevelop the site as senior housing.

On September 3, 2025, the Planning Commission voted to postpone the hearing of this item to the following Regular Meeting, due to questions related to the ownership status of the subject property. The October 1, 2025, Regular Meeting was subsequently canceled, deferring this item to the following Regular Meeting (November) of the Planning Commission.

Community Groups/Interested Persons Contacted: The application was filed in conformance with applicable procedural and public notice requirements. Notice was published in The Pantagraph on Monday, August 18, 2025. Courtesy notices were mailed to 11 property owners within 500 feet of the subject property.

Financial Impact: N/A

Attachments:

1. Z-08-25 - Staff Report - 1326 Sherman St



PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Development Services Department

DATE: November 5, 2025

CASE NO: Z-08-25, Zoning Map Amendment

REQUEST: Public hearing, consideration, and action on a request submitted by McLean County Center for Human Services, for approval of a Zoning Map Amendment for the property commonly known as 1326 Sherman Street, from the R-1C (Single-Family Residential) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District. PIN: 14-32-429-030.

BACKGROUND

Request

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Zoning Map Amendment for the subject property from the R-1C (Single-Family Residence) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District. The subject property is currently vacant and has been vacant since prior to 1964. The Applicant wants to rezone the property to allow for a 24-unit supportive housing apartment building (Multiple-Family Dwelling). A Special Use Permit will be required for the medical office components of the proposed development, following possible approval of the Map Amendment request.

Notice

The application was filed in conformance with applicable procedural and public notice requirements. Notice was published in *The Pantagraph* on Monday, August 18, 2025. Courtesy notices were mailed to 68 property owners within 500 feet of the subject property.

Property Characteristics

The subject property consists of approximately 2.58 acres (112,380 square feet) of land located near the intersection of Sherman Street and Division Street, and extending around the north end of a cul-de-sac at the north end of Ewing Street. Neighboring properties are zoned residentially and Restricted Manufacturing.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses

	Zoning	Land Use(s)
North	(Town) M-1 (Restricted Manufacturing) District	Comcast / Xfinity Service Site
South	R-1C (Single Family Residence) District	Single-Family Residential
East	R-1C (Single Family Residence) District	Right of Way / Single-Family Residential
West	R-1C (Single Family Residence) District	Vacant

ANALYSIS

Comparison of Existing and Proposed Districts

Existing Zoning: R-1C (Single-Family Residence) District

The R-1C Residence District is intended to provide primarily for the establishment of areas of higher

density single-family detached dwelling units while recognizing the potential compatibility of two-family dwelling units as special uses. Densities of approximately eight dwelling units per acre are allowed. This district may be applied to newly developing areas as well as the older residential areas of the City where larger houses have been or can be converted from single-family to two-family residences to extend the economic life of these structures and allow the owners to justify the expenditures for repairs and modernization (§ 44-401C).

Proposed Zoning: R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District

The R-3B Residence District is intended to allow for increased neighborhood density through the development of small-lot single-family housing, townhomes, duplexes, and multifamily complexes, while being supportive of the overall historic character of the neighborhoods to which it is applied and the preservation of historic structures. The district allows for a maximum density of 70 dwelling units per acre and may be applied to areas best suited for such intense residential usage, principally on the fringes of the Bloomington Central Business District. It may also be applied to other areas in the City where comparable physical arrangements of land uses are present (§ 44-401G).

Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan

Zoning Map Amendment requests should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The 2035 Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map identifies this area as Low Density Residential. The Land Use Priorities Map identifies this property as a Tier 1 Priority: "Vacant and under-utilized land for infill development within the City."

The proposed Zoning Map Amendment supports the following Comprehensive Plan goals:

- Goal H-1 (Ensure the availability of safe, attractive, and high quality housing stock to meet the needs of all current and future residents of Bloomington), Objectives H-1.1 (Ensure that the housing to accommodate the new growth is a broad range (of types, sizes, ages, densities, tenancies and costs) equitably distributed throughout the City recognizing changing trends in age-group composition, income, and family living habits), and H-1.2 (Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing for low to moderate income households); and
- Goal ED-4 (Enhance the image of Bloomington as a business-friendly community), Objective ED-4.2 (Prioritize infill and redevelopment to spur growth and reinvestment in the City).

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW FOR ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS

The Planning Commission shall hold at least one public hearing on any proposed Zoning Map Amendment and report to the Council its findings of fact and recommendations. Recommendations shall be made upon the determination that the Map Amendment is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the applicant, based upon considering the factors listed in § 44-1706E(2) and discussed below.

Request for Zoning Map Amendment to R-3B

1. The suitability of the subject property for uses authorized by the existing zoning.

The property as-is is too large for a single-family residence to be financially feasible, and multiple parties have reviewed the potential to subdivide it into smaller lots, but the complexity of the topography and underground infrastructure has made that either too complicated or too expensive to warrant development under the R-1C zoning. This property is more suitable for a zoning District that allows multiple principal structures, as well as concentration of the development in the buildable area with open space concentrated where surface development is not practical.

2. The length of time the property has remained vacant as zoned considered in the context of

land development in the area.

The property has been vacant since at least 1964, which indicates that this area is either not currently attractive to single-family residential development or the property has characteristics that have made it undevelopable under the regulations of the current District

3. The suitability of the subject property for uses authorized by the proposed zoning.

The subject property would be appropriate for most uses permitted in the R-3B District due to the dual street access and the proximity to public water and sewer, including water supply line sizing that could likely support fire suppression infrastructure if needed. The topography (slope) of the property lends itself to engineered gravity-fed stormwater management techniques that drain large contiguous impervious area. The clustering of existing underground infrastructure on the west (low) half of the property implies some of the same site design will be necessary from a utility easement and access perspective. Single-family structures that are clustered with shared open space may feasibly fit, but the more appropriate uses for this property are group living or very low intensity commercial uses due to their typical spatial layout.

4. The existing land uses and zoning of nearby property.

The property is surrounded by single-family residential properties on the east and south, unimproved land to the west, and manufacturing uses to the north.

5. Relative gain or hardship to the public as contrasted and compared to the hardship or gain of the individual property owner resulting from the approval or denial of the zoning amendment application.

The relative gain for both the Owner and the community from the Zoning Map Amendment appears positive. Zoning that is more appropriate for the types of development that are feasible, considering the site constraints, could result in active use at the property which would be more likely to positively impact the surrounding area than the current vacant state of the property. In addition, development of a moderately intense use between the low-intensity single-family dwellings to the south and the semi-industrial uses to the north may provide a visual buffer that would benefit the properties to the south.

6. The extent to which adequate streets are connected to the arterial street system and are available or can be reasonably supplied to serve the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification.

The existing street network adequately serves the subject property. Vehicle access would be provided via a new curb cut along Sherman Street and could connect (as a secondary access) to the cul-de-sac on Ewing Street; this would be reviewed and confirmed by the City's Traffic Engineer prior to any construction. The site is also in close proximity to an existing public transportation stop, which could reduce the impact any use has on the street system.

7. The extent to which the proposed amendment is inconsistent with the need to minimize flood damage and that the development of the subject property for the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification will not have a substantial detrimental effect on the drainage patterns in the area.

When the site is developed, stormwater management will be required according to the City's Manual of Practice. Any changes to drainage patterns would not be allowed to negatively impact surrounding properties.

8. The extent to which adequate services (including but not limited to fire and police protection, schools, water supply, and sewage disposal facilities) are available or can be reasonably supplied to serve the uses permitted in the proposed zoning classification.

Adequate services are already available to the property. Any development would need to ensure that water and sewer items meet current code requirements for the proposed use.

9. The extent to which property values are diminished by the restrictions of the proposed zoning.

Property values are unlikely to be diminished by the Zoning Map Amendment. Future development of the property with uses appropriate for the R-3B District should not negatively impact properties in this part of the community that includes substandard lots (R-1C), an Assisted-Living facility (R-3A), a Vehicle Repair use (M-1), rail yard (M-1), and utility servicing facility (P-2), all within a quarter mile of the subject property.

10. Whether a Comprehensive Plan for land use and development exists, and whether the amendment is in harmony with it.

See prior item “Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan” in this report.

11. Whether the City needs more of the types of uses allowed in the proposed district.

Multiple studies have identified the need for additional housing options in the City. The proposed multiple-family zoning would support this need and permit the further development of such housing.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing the relevant factors for consideration and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff finds that the proposed Zoning Map Amendment is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant, after reviewing the relevant factors for consideration, and recommends the Planning Commission take the following action:

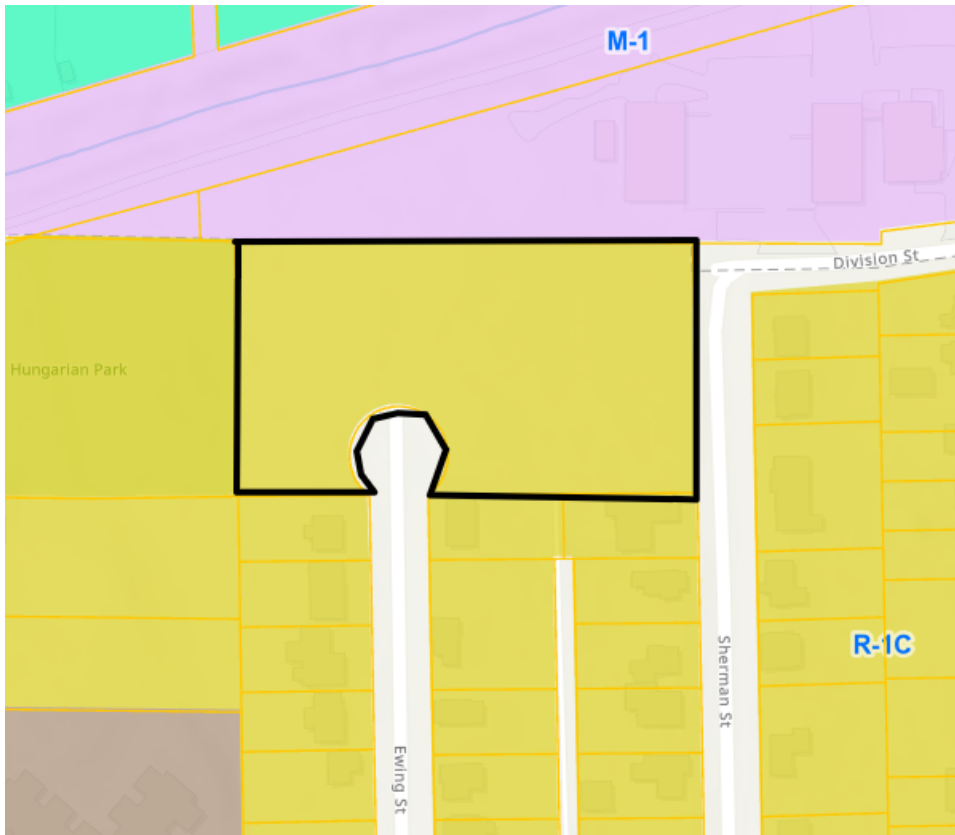
Motion to establish findings of fact that the request for approval of the proposed Zoning Map Amendment to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District ***is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner*** and to recommend ***approval*** of the request.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Branham
Planner II

Attachments:

1. Zoning Map
2. Aerial Image
3. Street Views
4. Utilities Map
5. Neighborhood notice map
6. Site Plan (separate attachment)

Attachment 1: Zoning Map



Attachment 2: Aerial Image



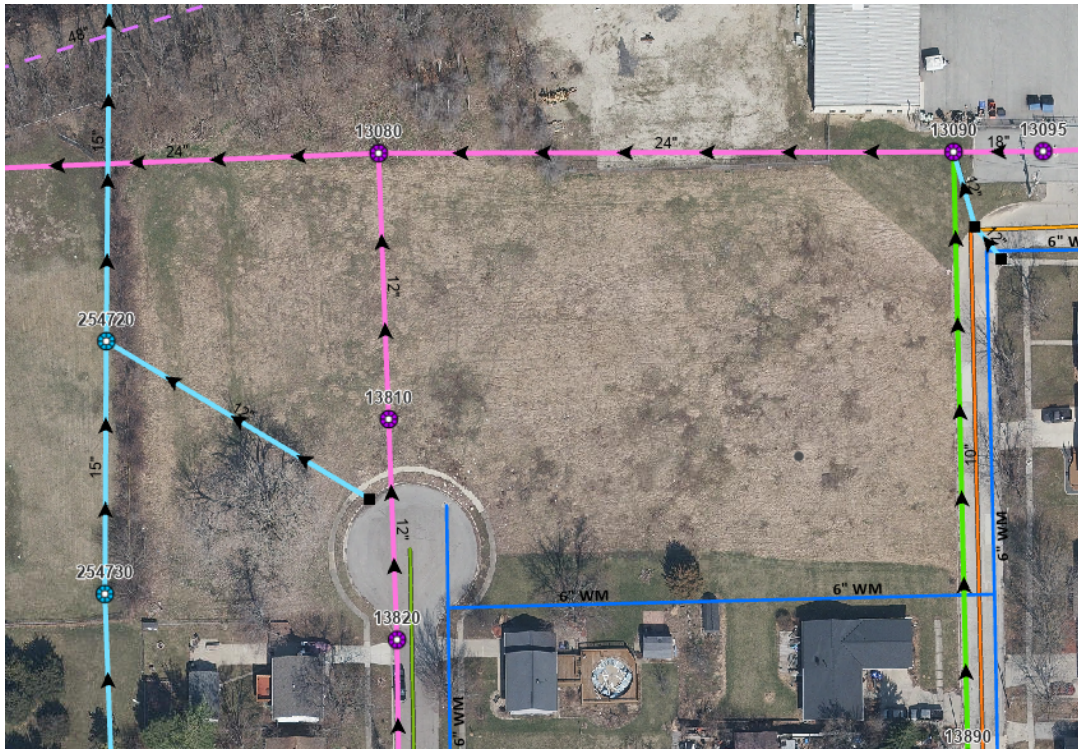
*Attachment 3: Street Views:
Looking west from Sherman Street*



Looking north from Ewing Street



Attachment 4: Utilities Map





Regular Agenda Item No. 5.B.

For Planning Commission: November 5, 2025

Ward Impacted: Ward 6

Subject: Z-09-25 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request initiated by the City of Bloomington, for the approval of text amendments, modifications and additions to the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington, Illinois (Chapter 44 of the Bloomington City Code, 1960), relating to (1) building characteristics in the D-1 (Central Business) zoning district, and (2) permitted encroachments in public rights-of-way, as requested by the Development Services Department.

Recommended Motion: Motion to establish findings of fact that the proposed text amendments are or are not in the public interest, and a motion to recommend that City Council either approve or deny the proposed text amendments.

Strategic Plan:

Goal 6. Prosperous Downtown Bloomington

Objective 6c. Downtown becoming a community and regional destination

Objective 6e. Preservation of historic buildings

Background: Per § 44-1706B, text amendments may be proposed by City Staff. The following are recommendations for improvements or additions to the existing Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington (Chapter 44). Two items have been proposed for amendment following the adoption of the Downtown for Everyone report and beginning implementation of the Streetscape project: 1) Removing the recessed entryway requirement in the D-1 (Central Business) District, and 2) removing governance of the encroachment into public right-of-ways from the Zoning Code (in favor of governance via City Code Chapter 38).

The D-1 (Central Business) District is currently regulated by Development Standards that govern design, including a requirement for recessed entryways (§ 44-505B(1)(d)). This particular criterion is beneficial for several purposes, including public safety, walkability, visual appeal, and historic preservation. Multiple requests for the enclosure of recessed entryways have been received since the adoption of the 2019 Zoning Code, and with the removal of the need for the public safety aspect of the standard due to the changes associated with the Streetscape project, the requirement is worth reconsidering. Should this change occur, multiple options for addressing the remaining concerns exist; three options have been provided for consideration.

Community Groups/Interested Persons Contacted: Notice was published in The Pantagraph on October 21, 2025.

Financial Impact: N/A

Attachments:

1. Staff Report with Attachments 1-4
2. Staff Report Attachment 4 - "Concrete Sidewalk" Specifications – Excerpt from Streetscape Program Report, Volume 2

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Development Services Department
DATE: November 5, 2025
CASE NO: Z-09-25, Text Amendments
REQUEST: Public hearing, review, and action on a request initiated by the City of Bloomington, for the approval of text amendments, modifications and additions to the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington, Illinois (Chapter 44 of the Bloomington City Code, 1960), relating to (1) building characteristics in the D-1 (Central Business) zoning district, and (2) permitted encroachments in public rights-of-way.

BACKGROUND

Per § 44-1706B, text amendments may be proposed by City Staff. The following are recommendations for improvements or additions to the existing Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington (Chapter 44). Two items have been proposed for amendment following the adoption of the Downtown for Everyone report and beginning implementation of the Streetscape project: 1) Removing the recessed entryway requirement in the D-1 (Central Business) District, and 2) removing governance of the encroachment into public rights-of-way from the Zoning Code (in favor of governance via City Code Chapter 38).

Notice

Notice was published in The Pantagraph on October 21, 2025.

ANALYSIS

1. Removing the recessed entryway requirement in the D-1 (Central Business) District.

The D-1 (Central Business) District is currently regulated by Development Standards that govern design, including a requirement for recessed entryways (§ 44-505B(1)(d)). This criterion is beneficial for several purposes, including public safety, walkability, visual appeal, and historic preservation.

By requiring recessed entryways, outswing egress doors are prevented from encroaching into the public right of way, stopping pedestrians from being injured by running into them when open. However, the City has recently embarked on an effort to reimagine the Downtown area, including significant redesign of the right-of-way areas (streets and sidewalks) that will reduce the potential danger of outswing doors. This effort—known as the “Downtown for Everyone” or “Streetscape” project—includes plans to re-program how public sidewalks are used by adjacent local businesses: the first three (3) feet of sidewalk will be reserved for private business sign boards, planters, furnishings, etc., with the outer five (5) feet reserved for unobstructed public access.¹ By requiring physical barriers, like planters, to bracket outswing egress doors at the private edge of the sidewalk, **pedestrian safety can still be assured without recessed entries under this new plan.** Multiple requests for the enclosure of recessed entryways have been received since the adoption of the 2019 Zoning Code, and with the removal of the need for the public

¹ City of Bloomington, Ill. *Concrete Sidewalk, Design Standards*. (2024.) Downtown for Everyone: a reimagined Downtown Bloomington Experience. Streetscape Program Report, vol. 2., pp 4.

safety aspect of the standard, the requirement is worth reconsidering (102 W. Market Street, 116 W. Washington Street).

Recessed entryways also have historic relevance. They were designed to increase the display space for retail establishments with limited frontage, and to provide coverage from weather while viewing wares or waiting for transportation.^{2,3} **Concerns related to the removal of this requirement are primarily related to the potential visual impacts and loss of historicity, should existing recessed entryways be enclosed.** All but one property in the D-1 (Central Business) District is also part of the National Register of Historic Places *Bloomington Central Business District*, listed in 1985.⁴ Many of the existing recessed entryways (see Attachment 2) are also Contributing Structures to that District (see Attachment 3).⁵ Additional Design Criteria exists that may offset the potential negative visual impact, but no trigger exists for historic review unless a proposed project includes City, State, or Federal funding.

Should this change occur, multiple options for addressing associated concerns exist; three options have been provided for consideration in Attachment 1.

Option A. Remove the requirement without any additional provisions, encouraging compliance instead.

Process-wise, the enclosure of recessed entryways will require Site Plan Review, per § 44-505A(2)(c), which includes "Exterior alterations that substantially modify a building's architectural appearance, including alteration of exterior building materials, rooflines or window openings," as a trigger for review in any Business District (including D-1). The assumption can be made that the additional existing requirement that "Any building that exceeds 25 feet in width along a public street shall be designed to appear as a series of two or more buildings no wider than 25 feet each" would require the enclosing of existing recessed entryways to result in alteration of other visual elements to compensate in the loss of depth variation (§ 44-505B(1)(e)).

- This option would result in administrative Zoning Code review, prior to building permit review, without specialized review related to historic appropriateness or impact. Review time is estimated at 2-3 weeks for all proposals.
- This option would likely have results that would be acceptable from a walkability standpoint, by reducing visual monotony and ensuring reasonable standards of transparency. The results may, or may not, be implemented in a way that is complementary to the scale and character of Historic Downtown.

Option B. Remove the general requirement and add a specific requirement for Historic Preservation review prior to approval.

Retain the requirement only for buildings listed in the National Register District and allow exemption with a Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

- This option would result in public review (not public *hearing*) of proposals by the HPC, prior to zoning code and building permit review. Review time is estimated at 4-5 weeks for all proposals.
- This option is likely to have results that would be acceptable from a walkability standpoint and is most likely to be implemented in a way that is complementary to the scale and character of Historic Downtown. This option would protect existing buildings listed in the National Register District, but

² Jackson, M., Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Division of Preservation Services. (1998). *Storefronts on Main Street: an architectural history*. [Springfield, IL]: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Div. of Preservation Services.

³ Jandl, H. Ward., United States. National Park Service. Technical Preservation Services Division. (1982). *Rehabilitating historic storefronts (Preservation Brief 11)*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, Technical Preservation Services.

⁴ Koos, Greg & William Walters. "Bloomington Central Business District." *National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form*. McLean County Historical Society, Bloomington, Ill., October 3, 1984.

⁵ A contributing structure in a National Register historic district is a building, site, structure, or object that adds to the historical or architectural significance of the district itself. These properties were present during the district's "period of significance" and maintain their historic integrity through their design, materials, and setting. A contributing structure retains enough of its original character to be an integral part of the district's historic character.

not protect any buildings not included in the District (zoned D-1 outside the District, constructed after nomination, or not included in the listing due to period of significance.)

Option C. Remove the requirement and add a requirement for Historic Preservation review prior to approval for Contributing Structures only.

Implement the change the same as in Option 2, but constrain the requirement to only buildings listed as Contributing Structures in the National Register district (see Attachment 3).

- This option would result in public review (not *hearing*) of proposals by the HPC, prior to zoning code and building permit review. Review time is estimated at 4-5 weeks for proposals related to Contributing Structures; all other reviews would be 2-3 weeks.
- This option is likely to have results that would be acceptable from a walkability standpoint and is likely to be implemented in a way that is complementary to the scale and character of Historic Downtown. This option would protect only Contributing Structures to the National Register District.

2. Removing governance of the encroachment into public rights-of-way from the Zoning Code

City Code § 44-904B, *Permitted encroachments in Public Rights-of-Way*, allows encroachment into the public right-of-way, to a maximum of 50% of the sidewalk, provided a minimum five feet wide clear path is maintained. However, the Zoning code is designed to regulate private property, not public property, so this section is not wholly appropriate for inclusion in the Code to start with, and is not inclusive of all of the items that may be identified as appropriate for encroachment as the Streetscape project progresses.

Staff proposes the following: 1) remove the content of this section, in favor of a reference to Chapter 38 (Streets, Sidewalks, and Other Public Ways), and 2) make the enacting ordinance contingent upon the adoption of similar or alternate appropriate content into Chapter 38.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Planning Commission (PC) shall hold at least one public hearing on any proposed text amendment and report to the Council its findings of fact and recommendations. Recommendations shall be made upon the determination that the text amendment is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the applicant, taking into consideration the standards listed in § 44-1706E and discussed below.

1. The extent to which the proposed amendments are consistent with the public interest, giving due consideration for the purpose and intent of this code as set forth in § 44-1701 herein.

The public interest is served by this proposal through the provision of flexibility for downtown businesses that wish to invest and support the economic development of Downtown Bloomington, while still protecting public safety and recognizing the generations of effort that have gone into protecting the history and character of the Downtown Central Business District.

The recessed entryway requirement was originally about safety as much as it was about aesthetics; now that an alternate pathway to protect public safety has been proposed, removing this requirement would not be detrimental to public safety (§ 44-102B(6)). If Option B or C, which include HPC review prior to approval of potentially significant changes to downtown historic buildings, are recommended for approval, then the intent to preserve and protect historic locations, structures, and groups of structures (§ 44-102B(11)) is supported, while meeting the intent of § 44-102B(5) as well. The remaining intent statements are not directly related to this proposal. The clear process outlined for allowing the enclosure of existing recessed entryways meets the intent of § 44-1701A, and no part of the proposal violates § 44-1701B-D.

2. The extent to which property values are diminished by the proposed particular zoning restriction.

By requiring recessed entryways, as is current Code, the total usable square footage of the premises is reduced, which results in a higher cost per square foot than the non-conforming buildings in the same District; this is a competitive and economic risk of allowing the current restriction to remain. Increasing flexibility improves the ability to make effective use of vacant Downtown spaces with existing recessed entries, as many of the original retail establishments have been replaced with restaurants, offices, or other uses that do not have the same requirement for display space.

By allowing the creation of non-recessed entryways and/or the enclosure of existing recessed entryways the visual and historic character that has made Downtown Bloomington a *National Register Historic District*, a *Main Street America* city, and a State-Designated *Downtown Cultural District* may be placed at risk. The positive impact of preserving historic buildings, downtowns, and districts include attracting heritage tourism, fostering community revitalization, creating business incubation locations, and increasing sustainability and value, so removing the current restriction could risk reducing property values as well.

It is not expected that property values would be significantly altered either way by removing the requirement; there are both potential risks and benefits. However, selecting an Option that allows exemption from the existing requirement – if historically and architecturally appropriate as determined by the HPC – may provide flexibility without placing the value of the Downtown character at risk.

3. The extent to which the destruction of property values promotes the health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the public.

No direct reduction of property values is expected to occur. The potential for significant visual alteration to the Downtown Historic District could result in a generalized decrease in local property values, but this can be mitigated through the requirement of HPC oversight. See criterion 2.

4. Whether a Comprehensive Plan for land use and development exists, and whether the amendment is in harmony with it.

The proposed amendments may be in harmony with the following Goals, Objectives, or Policies of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan:

- D-1.1h (Continue to develop, promote and provide incentives for property owners or developers to reinvest in Downtown); and,
- D-1.2b (Consider other Downtown needs during the expansion of community facilities currently located in Downtown, such as the BCPA/Creativity Center and the Bloomington Public Library); and,
- D-2.1a (Use City of Bloomington land or street r-o-w to create gateway features such as landscaping, artwork, pocket parks, etc.); and,
- D-2.5a (Ensure codes and regulations facilitate use of the area for retail locations).

The proposed amendments may not be in harmony with the following Goals, Objectives, or Policies of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan:

- D-3.1 (Protect the scale and character of historic Downtown and provide appropriate parameters for new development that complements its historic character); and,
- ACH-4.1 (Fully integrate considerations of historic and cultural resources as a major aspect of the City's planning, permitting and development activities); and,
- TAQ-1.4c (Provide pedestrians with safe access throughout the transportation network, facilitating access to facilities such as transit, businesses, parks and neighborhood centers).

5. Whether the City needs the additional types of uses or development allowed by the proposed amendment.

These amendments do not alter the uses or types of development allowed in the D-1 (Central Business) District and may provide a small amount of flexibility for which business models of the currently allowable uses can fit into the existing fabric of the Downtown built environment.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission take the following actions:

Motion to establish findings of fact that the proposed text amendments in (select: Option A, B, or C) are or are not in the public interest, and a motion to recommend that City Council either approve or deny the proposed text amendments.

Respectfully Submitted,
Planning Division Staff

Attachments:

1. Proposed Amendments to (Ch. 44) the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington, Illinois
2. Status of Existing Entryways in the D-1 (Central Business) District
3. Contributing Structures for the National Register Bloomington Central Business District zoned D-1 (Central Business) District (estimated)
4. "Concrete Sidewalk" Specifications – Excerpt from Streetscape Program Report, Volume 2 (separate document)

§ 44-904B. Permitted encroachments in Public Rights-of-Way. *

In the D-1, D-2, and D-3 zoning districts, ~~the following certain~~ items ~~may be are~~ permitted to encroach into the public right-of-way, ~~subject to the provisions of § 38-XXX~~. ~~Any permitted encroachment in the public right-of-way shall be permitted to occupy a maximum of 50% of the sidewalk directly fronting the building or use with which they are associated, provided a minimum five feet wide clear path be maintained within the sidewalk running parallel to the fronting street. Any permitted encroachment shall not inhibit the ingress and egress from buildings nor the free flow of pedestrian traffic.~~

- ~~(1) Planters.~~
- ~~(2) Hanging planters (attached to building, canopy, or awning).~~
- ~~(3) Sidewalk dining.~~
- ~~(4) Sidewalk sales (related merchandising and displays).~~
- ~~(5) Sandwich Board signs (as regulated in Article XIV of this code).~~
- ~~(6) Awnings and canopies (not more than four feet from the face of the building; eight feet min clearance above sidewalk).~~

* NOTE: This change would be made effective upon the adoption of alternate content into Ch. 38.

§ 44-505. [Ch. 44, 5-5] Development standards applicable to business districts.

Option A

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B. Regulations Applicable to the D-1, D-2 and D-3 Districts.

- (1) Building Characteristics in the D-1 District.
 - (a) The primary ground-floor entrance shall face a public street.
 - (b) A building facade shall occupy at least 95% of the front setback line.
 - (c) Clear, non-reflective windows shall comprise at least 75% of the front facade between two and eight feet above the sidewalk.
 - (d) All entries ~~shall be encouraged~~ to be recessed from the front building wall a minimum of three and a maximum of eight feet deep, and be no greater than eight feet in width.
 - (e) Any building that exceeds 25 feet in width along a public street shall be designed to appear as a series of two or more buildings no wider than 25 feet each.
 - (f) Loading docks, overhead doors and other service entry areas are prohibited on street-facing building facades.
 - (g) Exterior storage and refuse facilities shall not adjoin a public street or sidewalk. Such facilities shall be fully screened on all sides by an opaque enclosure.

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Option B

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B. Regulations Applicable to the D-1, D-2 and D-3 Districts.

(1) Building Characteristics in the D-1 District.

- (a) The primary ground-floor entrance shall face a public street.
- (b) A building facade shall occupy at least 95% of the front setback line.
- (c) Clear, non-reflective windows shall comprise at least 75% of the front facade between two and eight feet above the sidewalk.
- (d) All new entries ~~shall~~ are encouraged to be recessed from the front building wall a minimum of three and a maximum of eight feet deep, and be no greater than eight feet in width. Recessed entries on buildings listed in the National Register Historic Bloomington Central Business District shall require a Certificate of Appropriateness, per § 44-1710, prior to the issuance of any building permit related to the enclosure or alteration of such.
- (e) Any building that exceeds 25 feet in width along a public street shall be designed to appear as a series of two or more buildings no wider than 25 feet each.
- (f) Loading docks, overhead doors and other service entry areas are prohibited on street-facing building facades.
- (g) Exterior storage and refuse facilities shall not adjoin a public street or sidewalk. Such facilities shall be fully screened on all sides by an opaque enclosure.

...

Option C

...

B. Regulations Applicable to the D-1, D-2 and D-3 Districts.

(1) Building Characteristics in the D-1 District.

- (a) The primary ground-floor entrance shall face a public street.
- (b) A building facade shall occupy at least 95% of the front setback line.
- (c) Clear, non-reflective windows shall comprise at least 75% of the front facade between two and eight feet above the sidewalk.
- (d) All new entries ~~shall~~ are encouraged to be recessed from the front building wall a minimum of three and a maximum of eight feet deep, and be no greater than eight feet in width. Recessed entries on buildings listed as Contributing Structures in the National Register Historic Bloomington Central Business District shall require a Certificate of Appropriateness, per § 44-1710, prior to the issuance of any building permit related to the enclosure or alteration of such.
- (e) Any building that exceeds 25 feet in width along a public street shall be designed to appear as a series of two or more buildings no wider than 25 feet each.

...

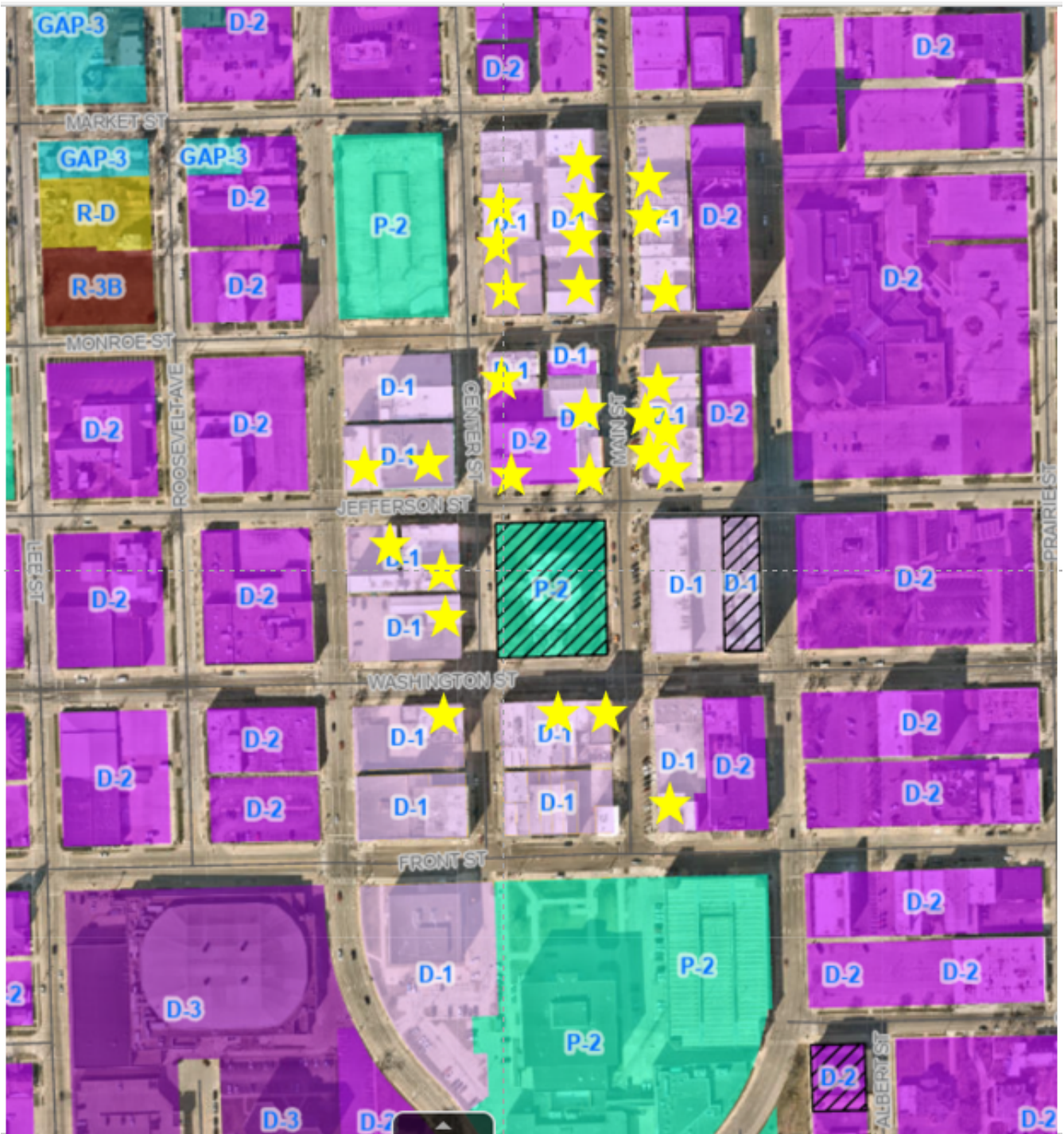
Attachment 2 – Status of Existing Entryways in the D-1 (Central Business) District

A green ✓ indicates an existing recessed entryway

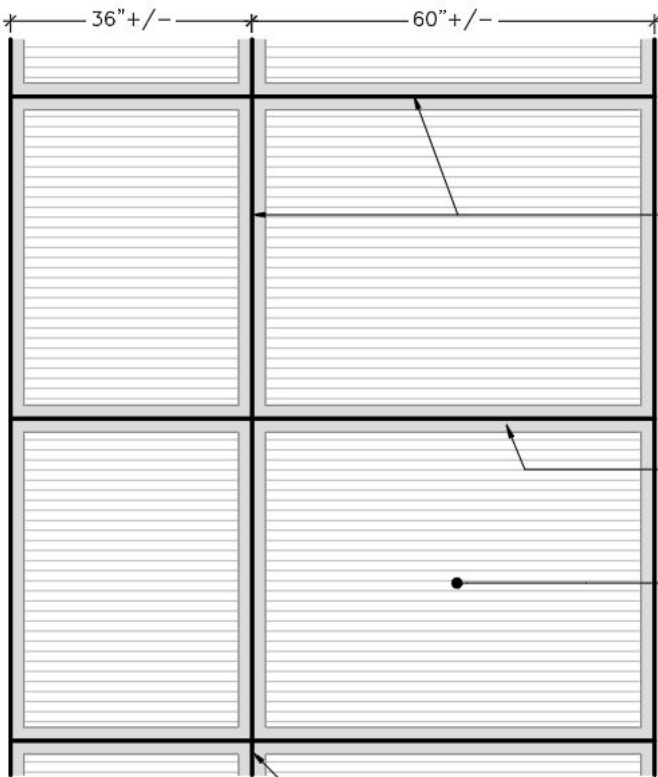
A red ✗ indicates an existing non-recessed entryway



Attachment 3 – Contributing Structures for the National Register Bloomington Central Business District zoned D-1 (Central Business) District (estimated)

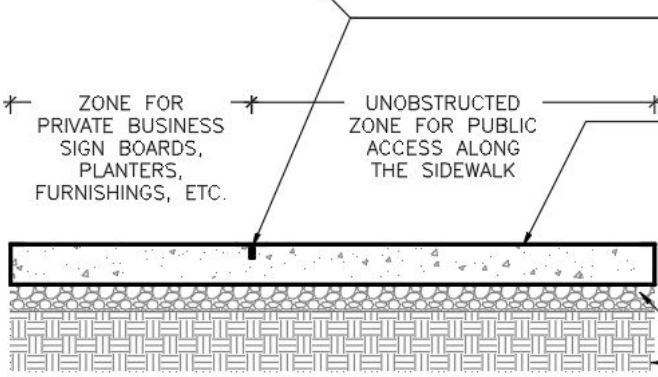


CONCRETE SIDEWALK



- TOOLED CONSTRUCTION JOINT
- EXPANSION JOINTS REQUIRED ALONG ALL ADJACENT STRUCTURES INCLUDING BUILDINGS AND FOOTINGS AND APPROXIMATELY EVERY 30' ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE SIDEWALK
- 2" WIDE SMOOTH "PICTURE FRAME" BORDER ON EACH SIDE OF JOINTS AND EDGE OF SIDEWALK (DOWNTOWN AREA ONLY)
- MEDIUM BROOM FINISH PERPENDICULAR TO PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC FLOW

SIDEWALK PLAN



- TOOLED CONSTRUCTION JOINT
- PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE SIDEWALK, 6" THICKNESS FOR PEDESTRIAN AREAS, 8" THICKNESS FOR VEHICULAR AREAS (ACROSS DRIVEWAYS), MEDIUM BROOM FINISH PERPENDICULAR TO PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC FLOW
- CA6 AGGREGATE, COMPACTED TO 95% DENSITY, 4" DEPTH
- UNDISTURBED OR COMPACTED SUB-GRADE

SIDEWALK SECTION

Description: Concrete pavement with tooled joints, 6" thick (pedestrian areas), 8" thick (across driveways) Portland Cement, Section 1001 of the IDOT Standard Specifications