Community-Wide Sustainability Plan and 2035 Report:
Plans for a Sustainable Normal
Final Report
August 2010

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- Julie Elzanati
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September 2010
The Honorable Chris Koos
And Members of the City Council
Town of Normal
Normal, Illinois

Dear Mayor and Council:

The Town of Normal Community-Wide Sustainability Task Force is proud to present you with Community-Wide Sustainability Plan and the 2035 Report: Plans for a Sustainable Normal. We want to thank you for the opportunity to engage in this work on the Town’s behalf. The following document envisions the Town’s sustainability priorities and actions over the course of the next twenty-five years and offers strategies to achieve that vision as a natural extension of its efforts to redefine “Normal.”

Purpose
The Town of Normal has enjoyed a strategic and incremental relationship with sustainable practices for many years, an overview of which you will find early in our report. Public support for these initiatives has been strong and our successes significant. We currently benefit from considerable momentum in the sustainability arena, with redevelopment of our town center making real progress in keeping with the 2001 Uptown Redevelopment Plan. Notably, the method of development for this plan was itself rooted in sustainable practices employed by Farr & Associates, national leaders in new urban design, who consulted with the Town on the project. The Farr team listened intently during numerous public gatherings as citizens told them what we yearn for as a community and the values we wish to stand for before turning those dreams into a blueprint for the bricks and mortar, the green spaces and flowing water destined to become our Uptown.

In keeping with this participative approach, you, the Mayor and City Council, convened our Task Force in February 2009, and charged us with expanding the vision of a sustainable Normal. Specifically, we were charged with creating “a vision of Normal as a community that stewards all resources responsibly, so that our town can continue to thrive and grow for generations to come.” There are 28 of us, and together with our 111 colleagues on project work groups, we comprise a cross-section of the community’s demographics related to race, age, gender, class, ethnicity, vocation, avocation, political persuasion, personal and professional expertise, and more.

Midway through our project, the Mayor amended our charge. Having learned about the positive response we got to our requests for participation on Sustainability Plan work groups (a stunning 90% of those asked agreed to serve), and also about the quality of the work emerging from those efforts and its alignment with the 2030 Report created by citizens in 2005, he saw that we could also function as the Town’s 2035 Visioning Committee. So added to our purpose was “a comprehensive re-evaluation of a vision for the Town of Normal.” The consistency and efficiency created for the Town through this conflation of responsibilities infused our efforts with an early touch of the sustainable practices embraced by the governments of cities we were studying.
One important outcome of this project has been already achieved: as a direct result of our shared visioning of a thriving, growing, future Normal, we collectively endorse the Town’s explicit reach for sustainability as a community value, leaving us eager to support the accomplishment of the recommendations which follow.

**Process**

Please note that we provide a fuller explanation of our process for developing the *Community-Wide Sustainability Plan/2035 Report* in the opening section of our report. Here, however, we want to lay out the general shape of the project and the sequence of our project activities.

**January 2009: Project begins**
- Town Council representatives to Task Force appointed
- Town Planner and project facilitator roles confirmed
- Task Force members named
- Subject Matter Expert (SME) Team named

**February-July 2009: Task Force begins work**
- Confirm charge
- Review working definition of sustainability
- Identify what we like among current Town sustainability practices
- Select and research sustainability practices employed by “Cool Cities” comparable to Normal
- Benchmark against best sustainability plan development processes
- Review 2030 Plan
- Learn from local sustainability SMEs

**August 2009: Task Force identifies 14 sustainability topics for further study**

**September 2009-May 2010: Sustainability Work Groups are configured, linked to Task Force leaders, and begin work**
- Review charge and check sustainability definition
- Identify community strengths in topic areas
- Consult with Town Planner, project facilitators, and Sustainability SMEs, as needed
- Create and negotiate topic opportunities
- Establish synergies and prospective points of tension among work group topics
- Identify recommendation alignments with 2030 Plan
- Draft topic area Quick Starts
- Submit drafts to project facilitators
June-September 2010: Consolidate draft recommendations and Quick Starts
- Project facilitators and Town Planner bring all Work Group drafts together, noting points of synergy and tension, distilling draft into whole
- Task Force comes to agreement on recommendations and Quick Starts
- Task Force presents final report to Mayor and Town Council

September 2009 - May 2010  June - September 2010

We were excited to discover, as we visually sketched this process, that it exactly matches the water feature that sits in the heart of Uptown Normal. The correlation seems to us just right.

Using the Plan

Starting on page 11 you will find introductory information about our charge, our definition of sustainability, and a narrative describing our process. Pages 14-15 talk briefly about principles which emerged to guide our work. Next you will find an important acknowledgement of the substantial body of sustainability strengths already in play within the Town and its environs,
with an equally important call for immediate attention to four sustainability areas about which we are collectively concerned:

- Air quality,
- Energy generation and management,
- Human services, and
- Water.

These sustainability areas merit the Town’s immediate and sustained attention as a means of preventing loss of opportunity and maintaining our proactive status relative to all remaining sustainability areas.

Pages 20-22 lay out five “Framework” opportunities whose effective implementation will enhance work done on the Work Group-specific opportunities listed subsequently on pages 22-54. In every instance, Work Group recommendations touch on more than one Work Group topic, and they often refer back to the 2030 Report. For example, creating a local food innovation center impacts the Work Groups focusing on Local Food, Health & Wellness, and Economic Development. It also ties directly to the 2030 Report goal of developing new economic engines through business incubators. The following icons, listed at the top of each section, denote these synergies.

We call your attention to our “Quick Starts,” a convention first used by the 2030 Visioning Committee. These begin on page 55.

We have evolved the Quick Starts from 2030, with ours still designed to underscore the need for immediate action but more focused on likely long-term return on the Town’s investment than on short-term time and cost required. Our Quick Starts include actions which have the potential to make the most of momentum already underway, resources currently available which may be less available in future, and some which undertaken together could catalyze faster, better results for longer.

Finally, Appendices A-B provide information on how Community-Wide Sustainability Plan/2035 Report extends the 2030 Report.

Many thanks to the 2030 Visioning Committee, whose work laid an essential foundation for ours. Though the committee’s charge did not point them toward sustainability explicitly, the values 2030 espouses and the ideas the group advanced acknowledge that the meeting of current needs without compromising future generations’ ability to do the same is a fundamental precept of the notion of “community.”

In conclusion, we are proud to live in a town whose elected officials look to its citizens to examine and weigh in on serious questions related to our quality of life now and into the future. It is reassuring to have considered these questions and made hard decisions about how the Town might best engage with them going forward. Our study of the Town’s good faith implementation of 2030 recommendations gives us reason to believe that you will treat our work with similar integrity with the understanding that the Plan has a 25-year horizon. For that we thank you in advance.
Respectfully submitted by the 2010 Town of Normal Community-Wide Sustainability Plan Task Force,

Rachel Angus         Ariana Jahiel         Rebecca Rossi
Delaney Auth         Rick Jebb           Chuck Scott
Susan Baller-Shepard Rob Martin         Mary Beth Trakinat
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                      Rich Veitengruber
                      Wes Walker
                      Erin Yancy

With support from Mercy Davison, Town Planner, and Julie Hile and John Bowen, Hile Group.
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INTRODUCTION
During a February 2010 visit to Bloomington/Normal, United States Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood acknowledged Bloomington/Normal as “truly a livable community.” Secretary LaHood’s assessment was carefully considered: he and his staff were at that time designing Livability Principles which would shortly thereafter inform his unprecedented, joint press release with the Secretaries of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding targeted stimulus funding that would support communities across the land. The Livability Principles include:

- Provide more transportation choices.
- Promote equitable, affordable housing.
- Enhance economic competitiveness.
- Support existing communities.
- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
- Value communities and neighborhoods.

Like the Mayor and Council of the Town of Normal, Secretary LaHood and his colleagues see the value in connecting housing and transportation options, increasing economic opportunities, and promoting environmental sustainability to improving a community’s overall quality of life.

Local initiatives promoting what we call “sustainability” today are as old as the Town itself. The 2030 Report recalls founder Jesse Fell’s vision of Normal as “an ‘intellectual city on a hill’ characterized by lovingly tended trees ... wrapped around a campus of higher learning” (2030, p.7). Other pioneering, if more conventional, projects have included citizen’s saving and reuse of materials with the rest of the country during World Wars I and II and the start of recycling at Illinois State University as early as 1968. The creation in 1970 of Operation Recycle, a community-wide recycling not-for-profit, led to the Town’s funding of the Ecology Action Center (EAC) in the early 1990s—and its installation of the center in the landmark Edwin C. Hewett house on College Avenue. In that same time period, the Town Council committed to the visionary projects that converted an unused rail line into the Constitution Trail system and painstakingly restored and reopened the historic Normal Theater.

The Council formalized its commitment to sustainability in 2001 with its approval of the sweeping Uptown Redevelopment Plan, a major goal of which was to position the Town as a national leader in sustainable planning and development. Indeed, Normal gained prominence as the first city in the United States to require private developers to build to LEED standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Today the Uptown plan is largely complete, and the area offers:

- Three LEED buildings;
- The highly energy-efficient, centrally located Marriott Hotel and Conference Center;
- Pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly walkways, including the popular, tree-lined Constitution Trail; and

A major goal of the Uptown Plan was to establish the Town of Normal as leader in sustainable planning and development. The vision for Uptown Normal was very much one that aimed to create a pedestrian friendly environment that featured open public spaces and healthy buildings. The Town has aggressively worked to ensure that this goal continues to be met as implementation of the Uptown Plan continues.

- Town of Normal website
A circular feature located in the interior of a traffic roundabout whose natural grasses and gently running water collect, naturally filter, and return storm water for use in the irrigation system that maintains the area’s street trees and public plantings.

In fact, the Uptown as a whole has achieved LEED ND Silver designation, which indicates that the project is sustainable when measured against a diverse set of guidelines, from building green-ness to livability to site sustainability. In Summer 2010, ground was broken for the area’s Multimodal Transportation Center, a LEED Silver, state-of-the-art facility designed to enhance the region’s transportation network and to position the community as a leader in the move to embrace transportation alternatives. The dogged effort required of the Town Council and other community leaders in bringing the Multimodal Center to fruition can hardly be overstated: the impact of this effort will be felt for generations.

The Town has also wisely used its political leverage to partner with local institutions on sustainability initiatives of regional significance. A prime example is the recent securing of federal funds for an expanded composting system at the Illinois State University farm. The effort was a collaboration facilitated by the Economic Development Council’s “One Voice” process, by which community leaders unite to support significant projects that require federal assistance. Such efforts have also benefitted the local Route 66 bike trail and the Constitution Trail.

**THE CHARGE**

In February 2009, the Town of Normal convened a task force to create a vision for its future as a sustainable community. Specifically, Mayor Chris Koos charged the Community-Wide Sustainability Plan Task Force with creating “a vision of Normal as a community that stewards all resources responsibly, so that our Town can continue to thrive and grow for generations to come.”

The Mayor sought a conceptual plan for community-wide sustainability to be presented to the Normal Town Council for review and approval, with further development and phased implementation by Town staff and other community stakeholders to follow. Recommendations were to include means of ensuring the sustainability of the resources and systems on which Town of Normal citizens rely, as well as recommendations for ensuring that the Town meets its responsibilities to global sustainability.
HOW WE DEFINE SUSTAINABILITY
We understand that sustainability is a politically charged and unwieldy term, perhaps surprisingly so for a concept seen everywhere one turns today. For the purposes of this project, we have used the widely accepted United Nations Bruntland Commission’s definition (1983):

Sustainability: (n) Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

We have also, on occasion, invoked the universally-known obligation to “leave-no-trace,” in which we leave a forest in the same or better shape than it was in when we came there.

THE PROCESS
The Town’s Community-Wide Sustainability Plan Task Force convened in February 2009 and reviewed our charge with the Mayor, Council Members appointed to the Task Force, Town Planner Mercy Davison, and project facilitators from the Hile Group. We got to know one another in part by working through current Town sustainability efforts that we like and want to see continued. Meeting throughout the spring and summer of 2009, we broadly defined the scope of the sustainability effort and benchmarked with best sustainability planning processes and plans from across the country, especially those of Santa Monica, California and Corvallis, Oregon. We went on to compare the baseline information we had gathered with local sustainability-oriented documents, including the Town’s Environmental Stewardship Policy and 2030 Report and plans from Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, and State Farm Insurance.

Of course, a community's sustainability cannot be measured in a single dimension. A sustainable community must have reliable, lasting systems that serve all of its citizens' most important needs. So, we identified lessons learned from communities across the country and world which we perceive to be leaders in sustainable practices and populated a first cut of sustainability topics which most of our “Cool Cities” had addressed in their efforts. Further study of highly regarded sustainability plans in other communities like ours during the autumn of 2009 refined our earlier work into the second cut of sustainability topics which are listed alphabetically below:

1. Arts & Culture
2. Continuous Learning & Community Building
3. Economic Development
4. Educational Institutions
5. Energy in the Built Environment/Energy Generation
6. Food Systems
7. Government: Planning, Public Safety, Public Services
8. Health & Wellness
9. Human Services & Spirituality
10. Resource & Carbon Management: Air
11. Resource & Carbon Management: Land
12. Resource & Carbon Management: Water
13. Transportation & Mobility
14. Technology
At this point we reached out to the community for insights and subject matter expertise. We configured fourteen theme-based Sustainability Plan Work Groups to be led by pairs of Task Force members, this time ensuring a combination of demographic representation and local subject matter expertise. Response to our requests for help was uniformly enthusiastic: people were excited to hear that the Town had engaged the project and were eager to help. Looking back, we see this energetic participation as a preview the Town’s thriving sustainability culture. Work Groups shortly thereafter identified dozens (and dozens) of activities that the Mayor and Council have supported, as identified in our report among the Town’s sustainability strengths.

Concurrent with forming project Work Groups, we named a four-person panel of local Sustainability Experts whose job it was to serve as resources and to check our work periodically for quality, completeness, and “rightness.” We positioned the Task Force’s differently-abled representative to assess all Work Groups drafts’ effectiveness in meeting the needs of that community.

Work Groups were assigned, and they went to work. The enthusiasm at first a boon to the project constrained our progress slightly as Task Force leads struggled to schedule meetings across their members’ full calendars and competing commitments.

We began our work in November 2009 with a preference for open-ended discussion and brainstorming that served to democratize our team. We dug into documents, public policy and varied resources and information to further our understanding of sustainable food system issues and strategies and develop and support our recommendations. As a result, this Food System Sustainability Plan, 2010, represents consensus-driven dialogue, a range of interpretations of the term “sustainable” and “local food system,” and trust that the Town of Normal will implement not just this plan but the many related good ideas that have already been generated to improve the life of community members.

— ToN Sustainability Plan Food Supply Work Group

Sustainability Plan model. Following review and feedback from the Sustainability Experts, Work Groups finalized their now substantial recommendation documents and passed them back to the project Task Force for consideration.

This summer the Task Force has reconvened to distill Work Group recommendations into the report we offer you now. Please note that individual Work Group documents have not been fully endorsed by the Task Force; however, the Work Group reports include more comprehensive treatment of all recommendations and will be made available to Town staff in order to assist with implementation.

What follows is a summary of the lessons learned by these groups as they worked, as well as by the Community-Wide Sustainability Task Force which distilled their reports.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES
The following principles have guided our work.

Integrated Systems
As a Task Force, we agree that sustainable practices are:

- An integrated system impacted by environmental, economic and social factors, as illustrated in Figure 1.
- A key component of “the early stages of an historic transformation of [our] region, which will have profound effects on our economy for decades to come” as observed by the International Economic Development Council in its Sustainability Round Table Summary Paper published late in 2009.
- A collection of practices to be undertaken in a spirit of conservation which considers how new initiatives can be woven into actions already in motion to optimize impact and value.
- An occasion for complementarity, extension, and collaboration.

This systems orientation has been reinforced at several junctures over the course of the project. For example, though our Work Groups met independently of one another, they identified recommendations in eight areas which turn out to overlap substantially from group to group. These areas of overlap are presented in Figure 2 below.

These areas of overlap, taken together, comprise a collection of values to which the Sustainability Plan Task Force and its Work Groups aspire on the community’s behalf. The unanimity of work group agreement about these areas establishes them as critical paths. We take them very seriously, and we ask that you do the same.

Consider, as an example of this, “Link to Youth,” which we’ve highlighted in Figure 2. Link to Youth cuts across all Work Group areas. This leads us to recognize partnerships with young people as an essential strategy for creating a sustainable Normal. Deep integration of our youth into initiatives we have recommended will position the Town’s next generation to understand
and live to sustainability in the broadest sense of the word, in contexts from Arts & Culture to Transportation & Mobility. Inclusion of the youth contingent, then, becomes an essential, high-impact strategy for ensuring the Town’s sustainability success, today and ultimately to the 25-year horizon set for this report.

As informed by other overlap areas, we want to:

- Take a hard look at our current performance and practices in any given area before we invest precious resources into new initiatives, and pay attention to whether and how the investments we’re making are paying off.
- Link current and future actions closely in order to prevent redundancy and to ensure solid payback in as many areas as possible.
- Build and retrofit green wherever and whenever it is possible to do so. Note that this overlap links further with sprawl-reducing in-filling that is a means to farmland preservation.
- Encourage citizens to step up to sustainable practices willingly rather than because they are forced to do so. A consistent strategy used by our selected Cool Cities to build momentum for sustainable practice has been to make those practices easier than conventional behavior. Likewise, we can think of many kinds of incentives that will nurture people’s shift toward sustainability.
- Be more intentional about preserving the invaluable farmland which surrounds us. As we protect this space be innovative and fair-minded.
- Apply lessons learned in developing the Constitution Trail and Uptown Normal to continue greening up the community with well-designed vegetation.
- Use local. By this we mean local goods and services, local skill sets, more. Normal is fortunate to have a wealth of local resources, and the Town, as shown in its sponsoring of this project, is increasingly adept at drawing upon people of all stripes to work for the betterment of the community.
- Manage waste, recycle, compost, conserve. The importance of these long-standing, more conventional approaches to sustainability cannot be overlooked. We have continued work to do in these areas according to the majority of our Work Groups.

Finally, although the Town has sponsored the development of this Sustainability Plan and is designated to take the lead in many of our recommendations, the Plan calls upon other community stakeholders to play substantial roles in bringing the recommendations to fruition. Unless specified within the recommendation, designation of the stakeholder best suited to lead the called-for action is left for coordination at a later date.

**ALIGNMENT**

The Sustainability Plan is aligned with the 2030 Report to reinforce and extend citizens’ recommendations, ensure consistency, and maximize return on resources already being invested. Further, we have identified points of complementarity between the values espoused in the 2030 Report and those embodied in Sustainability Plan recommendations.

**TOWN OF NORMAL SUSTAINABILITY STRENGTHS**

As a community, Normal enjoys a wide spectrum of initiatives related to sustainability. Some of these activities are Town-sponsored and even more exist independent of Town government. Predictably, many of them extend to systems beyond the porous Town borders to the City of
Bloomington, McLean County, and the region beyond. We see this as evidence of the Town’s very promising systems thinking, its understanding that Normal’s health and well being are conjoined with that of our neighbors all around.

Another positive dynamic as we have worked the project has been our regular delight in learning from one another about opportunities we had no idea were available to us here in Normal, opportunities like:

- ISU’s nationally known Renewable Energy major
- Dentistry for low income populations
- Central Illinois Farm Beginnings’ course for aspiring small-scale farmers
- The Jacob’s Well congregation’s effort to get healthy, fresh food from the church’s large community garden to the Clare House
- The ability to use “net metering” for household renewable energy generation

Work Groups’ lists of Town sustainability strengths in the form of current groups and activities are voluminous. In particular, the following five strengths provide a solid base for making significant strides in sustainability.

1. Great collaborative potential exists between the Town, the Ecology Action Center (EAC), and the institutes of higher learning. The Town has many sustainability initiatives well underway. The EAC has a proven track record of managing sustainability initiatives. In just the last few years, Heartland Community College has co-founded the Illinois Community College Sustainability Network in addition to creating its own Green Institute. Combined, these two entities are attracting significant grant funding in the area of green workforce development. ISU’s recent creation of the Renewable Energy major and Center for Renewable Energy is a national model in promoting the renewable energy sector and preparing students for the new green economy. ISU also has an Office of Sustainability, whose coordinator’s job is to not only make ISU greener but to find local partnership opportunities to advance common sustainability goals.

2. The momentum of the Uptown project and resulting national attention make it easier to connect sustainability with economic development. Recent economic development trends across the nation suggest that communities that comprehensively focus on sustainability and livability are more competitive when attempting to attract and retain businesses and their employees.

3. The community has many attributes that support the development of a thriving system of alternative transportation. The Multimodal Transportation Center will be a hub for alternatives such as rail, local and regional bus, and bicycle and pedestrian travel. The Constitution Trail system is well-established. Our local street and sidewalk system is well-connected and maintained. Our moderate topography facilitates the ease of people-powered travel. And the Town has an excellent Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan providing all of the guidance required to get more people to travel by bike or by foot.

4. Greatly increased renewable energy generation is achievable based on the region’s strong wind and solar resources. There are several state and federal grant programs to support renewable energy, and there are an ever-increasing number of renewable energy products on the market. Furthermore, renewable energy programming at ISU and Heartland
Community College is already working to spur the local renewable energy market by training designers, managers, and installers of renewable energy technology.

5. The quality of the region’s farmland coupled with the efforts of the Heartland Local Food Network put the community at the forefront of the food security movement in Illinois.

Tying it all together are the people of the Normal area, people who are uniformly generous with their talents, their time, and their resources. They participate in making Normal a genuinely livable city.

**TOWN OF NORMAL SUSTAINABILITY OPPORTUNITIES**

We begin this section with discussion of four sustainability areas which need immediate and sustained attention in order for the Town to protect its current quality of life and position itself to reach for a healthful future. Interestingly, all four of the topics are outside of our community’s mainstream concerns. All four seem like problems for other communities. We don’t have air quality alerts. We flip a light switch, and the light comes on. Turn on the tap, and out comes the water. Our human service agencies seem to be dealing with their clientele. But things are changing. The combination of community growth, increasing environmental regulations, and decreasing state and federal support is making the issues of Air, Energy, Human Services, and Water far more challenging. Fortunately, we are at a point in time where these issues can be addressed before becoming “problems” that we automatically associate with our community.

**Top Areas of Potential Vulnerability**

**Air Quality**

Local air quality is a timely issue. Our local air quality is good—not great: the current level of air quality surprisingly lies below the national average (low is bad). Our air quality registers at 40 vs. the national average of 48 based on an index derived from EPA data by “Sperling’s Best Places”: [http://www.bestplaces.net/metro/Bloomington-Normal-Illinois.aspx](http://www.bestplaces.net/metro/Bloomington-Normal-Illinois.aspx). The Illinois EPA’s Air Quality Index provides real time air quality data with a different scale than Sperling’s, [http://www.epa.state.il.us/air/aqi/index.html](http://www.epa.state.il.us/air/aqi/index.html). According to the recent IEPA data our local air quality is generally good to moderate.

While we are not subject to heavy industry or substantial coal fired power generation, we have issues with particulates and other airborne byproducts from agriculture and auto emissions, with the latter probably the leading contributor to our air quality rating. Populations most impacted by air quality issues are small children, the elderly, and anyone with respiratory issues. Low-income populations are disproportionately impacted by these medical issues. That’s a lot of people, and it’s a very real impact.

Federal Clean Air Act legislation will impact our community sometime in the not-too-distant future. We’ve gotten a pass thus far based on our size and our current air quality in relation to federal standards. The US EPA is working on making the standards stricter, and we will likely soon end up in a “nonattainment” situation.
Energy in the Built Environment/Energy Generation

It is emphatically in the best interests of the citizens of the Town of Normal that we embrace new ways of thinking about and behaving in relation to energy in all its dimensions—and soon. The generation of energy is highly resource intensive. Energy shortages and instability are known threats to the quality of life worldwide. And the global impact of our collective use of energy has been brought home as never before by the April 2010 BP oil spill and its aftermath in the Gulf of Mexico. Despite a range of opinions within our Task Force on the causes of global warming, we agree that the availability of the finite resources most commonly used to generate energy (primarily fossil fuels) falls disturbingly short in the face of ever-increasing global demand. We believe our community’s engagement with energy to be among the most important and time-sensitive issues driving the Town’s ability to sustain itself now and into the future.

The speed with which the energy issue is heating up is reflected locally in its evolution in Town practices. The issue is given relatively oblique treatment in the 2030 Report, with Section 8, “Sustain Our Environment,” calling only for investigation of viable alternative energy options. However, since the report was published, the redevelopment of the Uptown has been deeply informed by energy innovation, and the Town’s Environmental Stewardship Policy sets aggressive “Energy and Atmosphere” goals. These include the purchase and use of energy efficient equipment, purchase and use of renewables for 25% of its energy by 2010, and increased acquisition and use of the wind power and biofuel energy resources produced in McLean County and elsewhere in the state. In addition, Mayor Koos has signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Furthermore, the economics of renewable energy and availability of electric vehicles – expected to be on the market in 2011 – make the transition to wiser energy choices that much more possible.

So, the Town of Normal has built some important momentum around energy generation and use in the natural and built environments, and we have much more to do quickly in order to meet current energy needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

Human Services

The Town of Normal’s human services support system is wound tightly into that of the City of Bloomington and McLean County beyond. The system is characterized by the generosity and responsiveness of our citizens in the face of known local, national, and even international need. We provide resources so that no one here at home need go hungry or sleep on the street. Our sense of welcoming even in the face of population growth has the “small town atmosphere” of friendliness invoked in the 2030 Report. Citizens of McLean County share a commitment to the provision of high-quality human services as an essential tenet of sustainable living.

The 2030 Report reflects this commitment directly in a section entitled “Provide Comprehensive Human Services, “ which calls for the Town to become a national model for positive collaboration with community human service organizations. The Town, its regional partners, and the citizenry rely in and day out upon a strategic web of local human service organizations with tight budgets which complement and collaborate with one another to build efficiencies and eliminate redundancy of services.
But this spirit of collaboration is a small step. Though the Town’s infrastructure for conventional health care is well supported and primarily needs coordination of many available resources, our mental health system is at risk. Our community is home to a silent population of good people whose human service needs are being met only marginally with too-great reliance on last-resort safety nets like our homeless shelters and jails. Funding for human service agencies and programs has been cut back drastically with catastrophic results during the recent State budget crisis. The most poignant recent example of this is the shuttering of the heavily-used Occupational Development Center (ODC) in late 2009. Patrons of ODC, vulnerable citizens with developmental and mental health impairments, have lost an entire system that placed them in safe, relatively independent jobs through which they made positive contributions to the community. Their livelihoods have been compromised, and they and their families have been left to pick up the pieces. To its credit, the Town and its partners have supported the landmark PATH 211 Help Line to help mitigate these losses independent of shaky State funding.

Finally, like many communities across the nation, Normal is a rapidly aging community. Between 2000 and 2030, McLean County is projected to have experienced a 141% increase in the number of residents aged 60 and older. This significant demographic shift will impact all areas of sustainable community planning from the provision of human services to alternative forms of transportation and entertainment. Fortunately, much of the planning required for the aging population will also have a positive impact on the provision of human services for physically and mentally disabled community members. For example, universally accessible housing units will serve all residents with mobility restrictions, whether elderly or not.

The 2010 Sustainability Plan’s inclusion of human services as a component of the Town’s ability to survive and thrive into the future holds great promise. And until we decide our citizens deserve a mental health system on par with the quality of our parks, our roads, our schools, and our churches—and take action to ensure those standards are met—our Town’s ability to sustain itself will be at risk.

**Water**

For residents of the Town of Normal, the potable water supply does not appear to be an issue. We have access to a steady stream of water from deep wells tapping the Mahomet Aquifer. No boil orders, no lawn watering restrictions, no obvious system failures. Not so for the residents of Bloomington, who rely on the surface waters of Lake Bloomington and Evergreen Lake. The City routinely contends with surface water contamination issues and has in recent years faced water shortages during droughts. In addition, the EPA has declared both lakes to be out of compliance with Clean Water Act standards. Should these contrasting set of circumstances comfort or concern Normal residents? Perhaps both. Up to this point, Normal has wisely invested in a safe, generally secure water system. However, the water picture nationally—and particularly internationally—suggests that all communities need to plan for a future of more limited water availability. After all, even the seemingly vast aquifer is a finite resource. As more communities choose to tap it, the amount of available water will decrease.

The need to be proactive in conserving water resources featured prominently in the recommendations of the 2030 Report. Specifically, the report called for immediate planning for “a viable, long-term water supply that is adequate in quality and quantity for our growing
community and is available without adversely affecting our neighbors.” When talking about water resources, words like “quality,” “quantity,” and “neighbors” take on a more complex meaning. The standards for quality will change as environmental regulations are ratcheted upward. A reasonable quantity will change with decreasing availability. And a neighbor is not of the next-door or even community-wide variety. Rather, a neighbor is at the very least any user of the Mahomet Aquifer, which ranges across most of the state’s midsection.

The flip side of the water conservation coin is water quality protection. If we hope to continue drawing clean water from the aquifer and enjoying surface waters for recreation, we must decrease water pollution. Storm water runoff is a significant conveyor of pollutants into the natural water system—a soup of untreated oils, grease, animal waste, synthetic lawn chemicals, trash and debris. Fortunately, improving storm water runoff management also presents an opportunity to celebrate water with design features such as landscaped islands and lush greenways.

Framing Opportunities

As the Work Groups analyzed community strengths and generated ideas for further improvement, several of them applied to the Town’s means of process for implementing sustainability initiatives and assessing its progress toward sustainability goals. We open our discussion of sustainability opportunities with these.

FRAME 1. Preserve the Town’s status as a Home Rule municipality.

The 2030 Plan considered the preservation of home rule authority as a precondition for all other opportunities. This was not an overstatement. Home rule authority provides the Town an immense amount of flexibility in how it taxes, how it incurs debt, and how it otherwise chooses to protect the public health, safety and welfare. Without home rule, the Town’s authority would be greatly constrained to only that which the State legislature has specifically permitted. Thus, without home rule authority or specific authorization from the State, the Town could not enter into development agreements, incur debt beyond a certain point, or legislate against problems unique to this community.

FRAME 2. Create a full-time Sustainability Coordinator position funded jointly by the Economic Development Council, the Ecology Action Center, Illinois State University’s Stevenson Center, Heartland Community College’s Green Institute, and the Town of Normal. Encourage the City of Bloomington and McLean County to join the funding consortium, as obvious stakeholders in the position’s success and beneficiaries of its services.

The history and breadth of Normal’s sustainability efforts have already established the need for a relatively mature approach to the discipline. As we have noted, local activities that fall into the sustainability arena are numerous and diverse. Lack of coordination among them produces redundancy, sluggish use of willing volunteers, needless competition for limited resources, and stymieing of the sharing of important information about sustainability efforts and opportunities. It is clear that not having our sustainability act together leaves precious resources on the table, a gap that is itself short-sighted and wasteful.

FRAME 2.1: Exploit the position’s shared funding to force regular and timely sustainability-related coordination across sponsoring entities. Design the position into organization charts of said entities to ensure the Coordinator ready access to
decision makers and authority to coordinate sustainability planning and implementation across traditional “stovepipes” within Town government and the community.

Use this position to elevate sponsoring entities’ bias for action and commitment to holding themselves and one another accountable for achievement of agreed-upon sustainability results.

FRAME 2.2: Connect the Sustainability Coordinator to the Community Education Clearinghouse (See CLCB 1.1) to ensure community ownership and smart design of sustainability initiatives for successful implementation the first time. Continuously involve educated and EAC’s proven programs, processes, and educational skill set as a ready resource to promote early position efficacy.

FRAME 3. Develop a unified Community-Wide Sustainability Statement across a coalition of the Town and other local organizations and associations.

Many entities throughout the Town are heavily engaged in a variety of sustainability efforts. While collaboration and communication between institutions is strong, formalized partnerships specifically relating to sustainability could increase productivity, capture synergies, and avoid unnecessary duplication. For example, the Town co-sponsored three Green Team Symposia held during the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo at Illinois Wesleyan University. The event brought together, for the first time, facilities managers and representatives of Green Teams from the area’s largest employers in order to foster the sharing of successful sustainability initiatives and lessons learned. From these events, a smaller group of large employers began to meet quarterly to discuss sustainability initiatives and potential points of collaboration.

FRAME 3.1: Build upon and broaden quarterly meetings currently held by large employers to include a more comprehensive swath of the Town.

FRAME 3.2: Gain efficiencies and synergy by formalizing collaborations which create and organize opportunities for members of the coalition to field test new technologies and techniques by putting them into practice (i.e., as pilot projects).

FRAME 4. In keeping with the 2030 Report Quick Start 2, create a Town of Normal Quality of Life (QoL) Indicator, which captures and communicates baseline and subsequent community performance on agreed-upon essential markers of quality of life in the Town.

Sustainability Plan Working Groups agree that baseline data collection is needed to ensure that clear knowledge of existing practices informs our planning for the future. Once we have a baseline, regular, annual assessment and documentation of community performance toward agreed-upon sustainability goals will help us measure and analyze our efforts to ensure maximum return on our sustainability investments—and communicate those results tangibly to community residents.

FRAME 4.1: Anchor baseline data in 2010 by introducing the Town QoL Indicator in the form of a community-wide survey. Document results and disseminate them widely, including on the Town website, to increase community awareness and serve as examples for others.

FRAME 4.2: Administer the QoL Indicator survey annually to engage the public and to track, document, and communicate community progress to goals.
Can you imagine a person who doesn’t want to spend money on gas taking the train, getting off in Normal of all places, and walking into our multimodal transportation center, a large Mecca of original, creative activity? She sees musicians playing, art classes taking place, places to buy fine art, kids performing original or holiday plays or songs; suddenly her day is inspired, she has a bounce in her step, the humdrum vision for her day has taken a turn, and now when she goes to her meeting, her mind is opened, excited, and primed to do better work. When we consider the individuality and creativity of a people, each individual is necessary and shines out through his or her expression. We are no longer disparate hospitals, schools, independent artists, insurance companies, banks, but instead there is a feeling of shared experience through creative expression that connects us. That woman who gets off at our transit system won’t leave on the train the same way she came in. In fact, she may not want to leave at all.

— ToN Sustainability Plan Arts & Culture Work Group

**SUSTAINABILITY OPPORTUNITIES**

The sustainability opportunities included in the body of the Sustainability Plan are selected from a wider body of recommendations included in Work Group reports. We have also pared down the significant rationale and research language found in the original Work Group reports, but we encourage those taking our recommendations forward to draw upon the Work Group reports as a substantial implementation resource.

Readers will note that synergies across topic areas are denoted by the following icons for each Work Group:

**Arts & Culture**

**A&C 1.** Extend federal and state “Percent for Art” programs to the Town level in order to incorporate local art permanently into major public (i.e. Multi-Modal Transportation Center, Children’s Museum) or quasi-public (i.e. Advocate BroMenn expansion) spaces.

Following established programs in like-sized cities, this program would set 1½ % of all public construction and development project budgets aside for the acquisition through purchase and/or commissioning of specific artworks to be installed as permanent and integral parts of buildings, parks, and public spaces. The Central Illinois Regional Airport serves as a splendid example of what is possible here. The new transportation center for Uptown Normal is another imminent opportunity for Percent for the Arts-sponsored public art in a high-profile location for citizens and visitors to the community to learn from and enjoy.

**A&C 2.** Re-fund the Harmon Arts Program. Since 1995 the Town has funded the Harmon Arts Program, which gives grants to a variety of local arts and culture organizations. The program was cut from the Town’s 2010-2011 budget as a result of significant overall fiscal concerns. As
the economy improves and budgets stabilize, the Town should re-fund the Harmon Arts Program at an appropriate level.

A&C 3. Embed strengths of current arts and culture resources into the vision of the Bloomington Cultural District Creativity Center to lay the groundwork for a publicly funded arts education institution, a public school of the arts (grades 6-12).

The artistic act helps us discover and transform habitual ways of seeing and being, deepening our capacity to envision and enact innovation, to expose and bridge social inequities, and to believe in ourselves as agents of change. Such characteristics are essential to a thriving “creative class,” a model espoused as ideal in the 2030 Report. As we commit seriously to creating a dynamic, sustainable community for generations to come, this essential link between artistic endeavor and human potential needs to be experienced and reinforced—indeed, even taken for granted—in citizens’ daily lives.

A public school of the arts, conceptualized in the context of the unique talents of area arts and culture professionals, would:

- Announce and enact our dedication as a community to innovative thinking, visionary living, diversity, and leadership—characteristics espoused as “What We Stand For” in the 2030 Report (items 3, 4, 10- through 15, & 21)
- Improve academic performance and reduce dropout rates among our at-risk children
- Enable lively, “pathways” collaborations between students, faculty, and their counterparts at regional colleges and universities such as ISU, IWU, Lincoln College, and Heartland
- Enhance the viability of our community as a home beyond graduation for talents who might otherwise seek employment and cultural life elsewhere
- Allow us to compete with places like Bloomington, Indiana or Madison, Wisconsin in the recruitment of the sort of people identified by Richard Florida in Rise of the Creative Class as the crux of the “creative class”—entrepreneurs, educators, forward-thinking public servants who thrive in self-defined lives located outside the bounds of conventional economic and social systems
- Serve as the downstate complement to the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) in Aurora.

Finally, a public school of the arts could serve as a key vehicle through which to realize and sustain a truly diverse, integrated city, a central goal of the 2030 Report and perhaps the most essential requirement for the Town’s long-term sustainability and growth.

Continuous Learning & Community Building

CLCB 1. The Sustainability Task Force should establish a Community Education Clearinghouse that addresses ongoing community-building and learning needs for the Town.

In the clearinghouse, include the Sustainability Coordinator along with volunteer representatives from ISU, IWU, Heartland Community College, Lincoln College, Unit 5, and other entities as appropriate. Use the group to support education and community building efforts related to Sustainability Plan projects.
CLCB 1.1 Use the Community Education Clearinghouse when a Sustainability Plan recommendation is developed and implemented. It is the Clearinghouse’s job to identify knowledge, skills, and abilities that the community needs to develop to ensure that the recommendation is effectively launched. The Clearinghouse should always identify measures of success for the project in advance of implementation, including what measures will be used to determine whether the project has met its interim and final goals, and what revisions are necessary.

CLCB 1.2 Link the Community Education Clearinghouse with development of learning modules and educational materials, providing resources to and coordinating them with local curricula.

CLCB 1.3 Provide leaders assigned to implement Sustainability Plan recommendations with project management support and with development of educational materials needed through the Community Education Clearinghouse.

CLCB 2. Translate sustainability materials into non-English languages.
Accomplish Spanish-language translation with the aid of The Hispanic Families Work Group, La Palabra, and/or IWU/ISU Hispanic Studies departments. Expand to other non-English-speaking communities the translation of all materials relevant to effective citizenship.

CLCB 3. Publicize the “greening” of the Normal area.
Use large community events (including colleges, congregations, retirement communities, professional associations, etc; example: Sweet Corn and Blues Festival) as an opportunity for outreach and education pertaining to Sustainability initiatives starting in 2010. Develop mixed media on sustainability and the goals of the Town of Normal, and promote their use by educators at local schools, colleges, and universities for courses and for orientation of incoming students.

CLCB 4. Promote individual and family sustainability initiatives at large institutions with high visibility and high visitor traffic (such as Children’s Discovery Museum, pools at Parks & Recreation or Unit 5).
Identify initiatives in the Sustainability Plan that are the easiest for an individual or individual family to adopt, and provide outreach to a large number of people through an existing institution.

CLCB 5. Ensure that Town departments (Administration, Police and Fire, Parks and Recreation, and others) are now or begin to go green.
Engage departments in an active learning process to achieve this goal over time. Address pesticide use and recycling in parks as important initiatives.

CLCB 6. Develop Green Hour programs on WGLT and/or WJBC, presenting a radio show similar to WJBC’s former program “Problems and Solutions.”

Economic Development

ED 1: Facilitate sustainable and green company expansions, retention, and transformation.
Existing businesses are at various levels of understanding and utilization of available technologies for resource conservation, carbon management, waste stream management, and storm water management. Emerging compliance issues, energy costs, and other bottom-line pressures create an opportunity for existing business to become stronger through better environmental management practices.

Numerous opportunities exist for enhancing the vitality of existing businesses. Groups such as the Normal Green Team and organizations such as the EAC and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association seek to disseminate best practices regarding environmental and energy management. The EDC’s efforts to establish sustainable economic development includes strategies such as the revolving energy fund for retrofitting facilities, continued support for a green business certification program, and the establishment of marketing materials.

Training and educational emphasis in the areas of renewable energy, energy audits, environmental audits and energy retrofitting are already established locally. Fostering the creation of “new economy” or “green” service jobs presents itself as a timely opportunity. Spreading best practices either by the formation of new enterprise and/or expanding the outreach of existing organizations clearly serves to enhance the sustainability of existing businesses.

ED1.1: Expand the awareness and availability of the EDC’s revolving Energy Fund, and continue capitalization from existing and new funding sources. To date, the Energy Fund has procured $100,000 for existing businesses to access when considering a green retrofit.

ED 1.2: Facilitate the incubation of businesses within existing manufacturing districts and from the proposed McLean County Business incubator.

ED 1.3: Develop a regional Medical Green Plan potentially using the already established Regional Healthcare Advisory Committee (established by the EDC under a DCEO grant), that would look at everything from purchasing to disposal of material.

ED 1.4: Create a Sustainable Business Council (SBC) to support businesses that would like to pursue more environmentally and socially sustainable practices and encourage local businesses and other organizations to explore the economic impacts of going green. This may be a logical extension of the work being done by the EAC. Discussions between EDC and EAC and the Town of Normal to determine the feasibility of and development of strategy and implementation of an SBC program might be warranted.

ED 1.5: Work with the arts community to analyze and document in various media used by the EDC and Chamber of Commerce the resources local artists generate and the value they add to the local economy.

**ED 2: Promote regional products and services.**

An important element of a green and sustainable economy is the procurement of material manufactured in whole or in part within close proximity of the community. Development of these products and opportunities for entrepreneurs, existing businesses and funding partners is critical.
Fostering the expansion of our local knowledge networks is also an essential component of sustainable economic development. Increased opportunity for interaction and diffusion of innovation throughout the community fosters collaboration, which promotes opportunity. Much of this can be converted into enterprise within the local economy as it furthers the opportunity for development of new products and/or services.

**ED 2.1:** Evaluate opportunities to enhance and expand existing transportation services and systems in order to more strategically target areas with economic development potential.

**ED 2.2:** Document “knowledge networks,” which promote collaboration and information sharing in a manner that promotes creative thinking and problem solving. Map out historical and existing collaborations between colleges, universities, and the business community—local and otherwise. Map out university departmental research initiatives, starting with ISU, within the context of further developing support for Business Incubator.

**ED 2.3:** Prepare a directory of Green Businesses — companies that reach certain green operational criteria and/or provide green products, activities and services (i.e. wind power, carbon management, LEED design, etc). This will help to establish a foundation of an emerging local “new economy” which, among other benefits, may illuminate business development opportunities.

**ED 2.4:** Create Town of Normal procurement policies to encourage the use of local and green businesses, including percentage goals for appropriate departments/functions to meet on an annual or quarterly basis.

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We see a genuine opportunity to become an intellectual property engine/catalyst within the region especially in areas of computer science, financial services, information services, digital media, risk management, web-based business development, material sciences, agriculture research, alternative energy, new generation manufacturing, construction services, health care, as well as in the area of emerging new economy green practices.

— ToN Sustainability Plan Economic Development Work Group Report

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**ED 3: Educate and train a green workforce.**

Numerous local initiatives directed at entrepreneurship, tech transfer, training and workforce development are in place among local colleges and universities. Coupled with ongoing research and development at the university and enterprise level, these initiatives present tremendous opportunities for collaboration, training, and education.

Training students young and old and providing new opportunities to the underemployed, unemployed, and disadvantaged worker in green/sustainable, clean tech industries can open new opportunities for them.

**ED 3.1:** Develop and document green career-track maps for renewable energy, construction management, and other relevant career-track curricula in local secondary schools and institutions of higher education.

**ED 3.2:** Demonstrate green technologies and practices.
Use the Underwood House property as a demonstration project, a testing facility, and community learning opportunity for green practices and technology, including landscape design, rain gardens, water saving technologies, and more. This could serve as a center for public education to create awareness as well as a training facility involving ISU’s Renewable Energy and Construction Management majors, Heartland College’s green workforce training program, and Normal’s Green Team.

Extend this idea outdoors, as well, with a sustainable agriculture demonstration site for local (organic and non-organic) food production.

ED 3.3: Survey local businesses involved in green or sustainable industries, and determine their workforce needs. In collaboration with the Workforce Investment Board, determine what current workforce areas are experiencing gaps and develop strategies with existing workforce resources to train and retrain workers.

ED 4: Encourage green innovation.

Innovation can spark new business opportunities, creating jobs and capital investment. How to capture this innovation and turn it into businesses, product manufacturing opportunities, and opportunities for jobs is the dilemma all communities face.

There is no shortage of local and regional research, innovation and collaboration between university colleagues, universities, colleges and the business community. However, the assumption that there is significant potential to expand on such collaborations has been an ongoing premise of the Town, local Chamber, and EDC among other forward-looking local organizations. The challenge that presents itself is how might we stimulate the acceleration of these relationships in a way that fosters creation of new enterprise? Knowledge networks are an important component of the intellectual infrastructure of our community and region.

ED 4.1: Review local land planning policies, zoning ordinances, and implementation plans to ensure:

- Brownfield development
- Efficient overlap between green space/parks/art initiatives
- Storm water management
- Urban forestry, including sustainable landscaping

Weave existing and new ordinances and regulations together with a premium value on systems integration to ensure maximally efficient allocation and use of public resources—thereby positioning the Town on the leading edge of Sustainability innovation. Implement said framework with local knowledge, skill, and ability, developing intellectual property that is exportable and accretive to the local economy.

Our first example of this is Uptown Normal’s brown field redevelopment threaded through with the Town’s linear park, storm water management strategy, and nationally acclaimed LEED requirements, which can all relate to the same policy and regulatory framework.
Our second example is the perhaps unintended consequence of farmland that is being preserved by recent wind energy developments. Wind farms currently exist as a natural occurrence of the free-market which simultaneously facilitates control of urban sprawl.

**ED 4.2: Provide business incubation services to enhance the economic, environmental, and social viability of existing businesses.**

The EDC-created McLean County Incubator will provide green programming to capture ideas and innovation in the community and centers of higher learning and research. For example, the EDC is currently working with stakeholders on a local food innovation center which would include processing and distribution of local food, incubation of food-related businesses, and opportunities for consumers to purchase and learn about local food.

**ED 4.3: Create networking opportunities.**

In congruence with the mapping of existing and historical collaborations, identify and develop new networking models that will enhance discussion and opportunity. Current examples include the “Green Drinks” group that meets the first Tuesday of the month, social networking opportunities, and development of the “New Innovation Network” or “NINe.” NINe is a networking concept that allows innovators, artists, scientists and capitalists to enjoy each other’s ideas, discussions and develop new business activities.

**Educational Institutions**

**EI 1. Foster communication/information sharing/collaboration among educational institutions.**

Educational institutions in the Normal area are heavily engaged in a variety of sustainability efforts. While collaboration and communication between institutions is strong, we would benefit from more formal communication as it relates specifically to sustainability. More deliberate coordination around sustainability could increase productivity, capture synergies, and avoid unnecessary duplication. Such collaboration might provide opportunities for educational institutions and the Town to field test new technologies and techniques by putting them into practice (i.e., as pilot projects).

**EI 1.1: Establish and support a regular event to foster dialogue across all interested stakeholders with a focus on addressing sustainability in education issues.** One model might be GreenTown in Lake County, Illinois (www.greentownconference.com).

**EI 2. Systematically involve area youth in sustainability efforts to capitalize on their interest and energy.**

A sustainable future requires today’s youth to make good decisions based on a solid understanding of their ecological and environmental impact. When principles and practices of sustainable living are introduced to young students, they are more likely to adopt and value
such mores as they grow. Evidence suggests that many of today’s young students have already embraced these principles and are quite eager to effect change in their community.

The Town can foster this energy and give students of various ages opportunities to innovatively engage. Involving young students in shaping their environment will nurture valuable skills in collaboration as well as the confidence that their efforts can have an impact. How can the schools and Town collaborate to directly involve students in a sustainable future?

EI 2.1: Recognize the symbiosis in sustainability initiatives particularly well served by the involvement of primary/junior high/high school and postsecondary students. Partner with area educational institutions to recruit students into these community service-oriented, collaborative experiences. For example, educational institutions might provide interns to assist in identifying measures of sustainability, gathering data and disseminating results. Recommendations of several Working Groups offer other areas of focus for advisory groups/committees that involve young students from area educational institutions:

- **Food Systems**: Adopt a Farm-to-School program which includes nutrition education for students and integrating local sustainably produced food products into food service programs.

- **Resource and Carbon Management - Land**: Continue to emphasize neighborhood and community-wide recycling, including that in the schools. A related effort should focus on neighborhood composting programs, as well as neighborhood school composting, to the extent feasible.

- **Transportation and Mobility**: Work with Unit 5 to promote the Walking School Bus concept among the parents and students of Unit 5 schools.

EI 2.2: Identify local facilities/families/homes that have successfully implemented sustainable elements, and showcase them as “real life” examples. Perhaps dashboard technology—systems that graphically display energy consumption and cost savings—displayed on municipal or Uptown Normal buildings is a way to accomplish this.

EI 2.3: Provide internship opportunities for students to work within the Town’s efforts toward sustainability. Such an arrangement would prove beneficial to students, while tightening ties between the Town and area faculty.

**EI 3. Explore initiatives in which economies of scale might help educational and governmental agencies achieve sustainability together.**

At present, sustainable practices and technology often suffer from lack of critical mass. Market forces are not yet strong enough to make costs and risks manageable for the individual or single organization. Coordinated efforts can reduce the cost and risk, compared to acting alone. Normal’s educational institutions are significant buyers and consumers of services and goods. Acting in coordination, they have much more market leverage than each would alone. They can use this leverage to their advantage with Town support.

EI 3.1: Form a consortium of local institutions and the Town to leverage combined interests in order to negotiate collectively on sustainability-related contracts.
Energy in the Built Environment/Energy Generation

As mentioned at the beginning of the Sustainability Plan, energy generation and use is a sustainability area in which considerable work lies ahead of us.

In order to create a sustainable energy use and generation system for the community, we will need to combine a range of energy sources and distribute them differently than we do now. We will also need to use less energy and be more efficient when we do use it. The distributed energy system will need a combination of large scale renewable energy—wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, and biomass—and smaller installations. Nonrenewable energy sources will also be used, though much more sparingly than at present. And the community must make substantial cuts in energy usage, through both increased efficiency in buildings and infrastructure and decreased consumption resulting from individual behavioral changes and larger operational changes.

In increasing its proactivity in the area of energy generation and use, the Town should use a graduated combination of incentives and requirements to encourage energy conservation and generation in the community. Heavy reliance on incentives is likely to get programs off the ground, with required participation more doable as programs grow and state and federal requirements come on line. Further, the Town should encourage businesses, community groups, and individual citizens to exceed municipal expectations whenever possible, taking a permissive stance when presented with innovative projects and practices. Finally, we encourage the Town to think beyond LEED for energy design rating systems that best align with the projects seeking certification and the Town’s goals, exploring other rating system options as they are released and/or improved.

EBE/EG 1. Encourage distributed energy generation in both residential and commercial applications through the use of building-tied and free-standing generation systems.

EBE/EG 1.1 Create ordinances to encourage appropriate installation of building-tied and in-town systems.

EBE/EG 1.2 Investigate and promote financial incentives for renewable energy systems like tax rebates, low cost loans, and photovoltaic leasing options.

EBE/EG 2. Promote existing energy conservation and performance programs like Energy Star, green building rating systems and energy provider incentive programs.

EBE/EG 3. Establish and promote the Town as a model organization related to energy use and generation through policies and practice.

EBE/EG 3.1 Use the State of Illinois procurement policy as a guide for proportional increases in municipal energy to be purchased from renewable energy sources.

EBE/EG 3.2 Target and gather baseline data for municipal energy use. Use baseline data to plan aggressive energy use and greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies and implement a strategy for communicating this information to the community.
EBE/EG 3.3 Install high performance infrastructure on all municipal projects (e.g., street lights, stop lights, water and wastewater pumps, district heating/cooling) and use passive strategies (those that require little or no generated energy) when feasible.

EBE/EG 3.4 Establish a high performance (LEED Platinum and/or Living Building Challenge rated) Green Model Home and Education Center at the Underwood House to provide examples of applied energy efficient design through incentive programs, as well as municipal conservation/generation technologies and workforce training opportunities.

EBE/EG 3.5 Undertake a comprehensive community awareness and efficiency campaign informed by municipal energy policies and practices.

**EBE/EG 4. Encourage energy efficient design and operation of developments and buildings through incentive programs and municipal codes.**

EBE/EG 4.1 Develop requirements for effective solar orientation of streets and buildings in all subdivision development.

EBE/EG 4.2 Incentivize in-fill and building reuse/renovation projects.

EBE/EG 4.3 Increase incentives for Traditional Neighborhood or pedestrian-focused design, including an incentive for projects seeking LEED ND certification.

EBE/EG 4.4 Continue LEED certification requirements and require commercial buildings not covered under LEED ordinance to meet increased energy performance requirements (Potential model: LEED v3 NC EA Credit 1, at a minimum of the 2 point level).

EBE/EG 4.5 Support the use of cross-disciplinary teams during the design phase of high-performance buildings to ensure that design, construction, and operation reflect best practices and commissioning.

EBE/EG 4.5 Implement a measurement and verification system to confirm that high-performance buildings and infrastructure are operating within anticipated parameters. Use such a “commissioning” process to continuously improve energy performance in these properties.

EBE/EG 4.6 Create additional incentives for net zero and/or "passive" buildings.

EBE/EG 4.7 Develop a municipal green building program (initially voluntary participation, possibly require participation w/in 5-10 years ) that provides resources and assistance for both commercial and residential projects.

**Food Systems**

The Town of Normal is surrounded by some of the richest farmland in the world, yet like all of Illinois, the Town imports more than 90% of its food from across the country and around the world, according to the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Report. For many reasons it is important for communities like Normal to start asking “where will our food come from in the future?” given the growing population, an increasing interest in food security, and the prospect of global climate change. A thriving and sustainable system of fresh, local food can be part of the answer.
A sustainable food system does not expend more calories than it supplies. Furthermore, a sustainable food system is profitable for the producer and affordable for the consumer. As such, a sustainable, community-based food system is characterized by five features:

1. **Economic vibrancy**: creates urban, suburban, and rural development and jobs by encouraging Illinois farmers to raise more farm and food products for Illinois customers and encouraging Illinois customers to purchase more food and other products grown by Illinois farmers.

2. **Fairness and justice**: fosters long-term economic and social equity among Illinois families, farmers, businesses, communities, and governments.

3. **Accessibility**: makes Illinois farm and food products available in every rural, suburban, and urban community at reasonable prices.

4. **Health**: supports production and distribution of healthy, flavorful food and products that enhance community well-being.

5. **Responsibility**: promotes respect for Illinois individuals and cultures, and encourages wise stewardship of natural resources for present and future generations.

**FS 1. Identify strengths and weaknesses in the current food system, and conduct a comprehensive evaluation and analysis to provide baseline data to evaluate future progress.**

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s Food & Society Initiative provides the following background: “Community food assessment (CFA) is a community-based strategic planning process used to address local food security and food system needs. CFA examines a community's food, nutrition and agriculture assets, determines needs and opportunities for coordinated responses and guides participants in linking food sector activities from sustainable agriculture to anti-hunger programs.” CFA should ideally be completed in partnership with other local organizations and governments. The USDA has an assessment toolkit available online: [http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EFAN02013/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EFAN02013/); links to other tools and resources are available here: [http://www.accesstohealthyfoods.org/index.php?page_id=261](http://www.accesstohealthyfoods.org/index.php?page_id=261)

**FS 2. Build on the strengths identified in the assessment, and create action steps to address gaps and weaknesses identified in the current local food system.**

There are currently large gaps in the food system (i.e. insufficient number of farmers producing food for local consumption, lack of local food processing/packaging facilities, conflicting local/county/state/federal regulations) that must be addressed in order to meet the current and growing market demands for local sustainable food products.

As the State of Illinois executes on the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act, the Town of Normal will benefit from positioning itself to capture resources available to “accomplish the goal of constructing an Illinois local farm and food economy,” participate in efforts to “eliminate unnecessary and contradictory local, municipal, state, and federal regulatory barriers to production, processing, and marketing of local farm and food products in Illinois,” or other opportunities that may become available at the federal or state level.

**FS 2.1 Assemble an ongoing task force with representatives from each of the stakeholder groups to evaluate the current state of the local food system infrastructure and make recommendations for filling the gaps.**

**FS 2.2:** Consider ways to offer economic incentives to businesses/institutions when they buy regionally produced, sustainably grown food in order to create a level playing field.
FS 3. Provide information about and assistance with local, state and federal legislation (i.e. Farm Bill, Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Act, etc.), programs and funding sources as they relate to the development of local food system components.

Often those in the best positions to enact change are unaware of resources available from local, state, federal and private sources. By increasing awareness and utilization of existing resources we can minimize barriers (e.g., time, funding, knowledge, regulatory requirements, etc.) to developing our local food system.

FS 3.1: Host a workshop and/or provide a permanent resource center to provide area producers, retailers, institutions, and government representatives with information about and assistance with local, state and federal legislation, programs and funding as they relate to the development of a local food system.

FS 3.2: Work with the McLean County Health Department to simplify and streamline regulations as they relate to local food production, processing, packaging, and distribution, and provide assistance to businesses as they navigate the local, regional, state and federal food regulation system.

FS 3.3: Engage in meaningful dialogue with local, state, and federal regulators to advocate for reasonable regulations that make healthy local foods readily accessible to all members of the community.

FS 3.4 Adopt and include lifestyle-based health curricula in K-12 schools, emphasizing nutrition, exercise, wellness, stress management as well as the importance of our local food system.

FS 3.5 Improve the quality of food availability in our schools.

FS 4. Develop a local food innovation center (Central IL Food Innovation Center) to provide the missing link between raw farm products and slightly processed (washed, peeled, cut, and/or bagged) farm product ready to use by schools and other local institutions. Planning for the center should consider capacity for food processing and preparation, storage, transportation, distribution and education facilities.

Local food washing, preparation, processing, and distribution is crucial in order to provide local foods to schools, day-care centers, businesses, and hospitals (and other institutions) that need large quantities of consistent quality food.

We have created the demand, but not the support infrastructure to fill the buy-local supply chain. Because of on-going education regarding the value of buying/eating healthy local foods, demand is increasing. However, many new customers want local food products to be washed, processed in a particular way (i.e., peeled, sliced, or shredded), and packaged. Currently our area has little/no infrastructure in place to support such processing. Nor do we have a facility to store products at the proper temperature/humidity until they are ready for distribution.

In addition to making it possible for local food systems to meet growing consumer demand, local food handling centers are crucial to encouraging more farmers to grow local food at larger scales. A local food center will allow more farmers to enter local food production and to ratchet up current production, knowing processing facilities exist locally for their products (potatoes washed, carrots peeled, apples sliced, etc) for use in hospitals, schools, and corporations. Local
institutions would be more likely to contract with local farmers, knowing that they could count on the crop being delivered to their specifications.

FS 4.1: Help organize stakeholders and others with interest in developing a local food innovation center to work with the EDC.

Assess existing resources and opportunities within the community, complete an initial feasibility study, and determine how findings in the needs assessment could be applied to support the needs of local food entrepreneurs, including food processing, storage, and distribution needs.

FS 4.2: Conduct research on regional “food hubs” and community processing centers around the country to identify models for our area, and create business plan for Central IL Food Innovation Center.

FS 4.3: Conduct assessment of existing facilities that might be used and/or identify vacant or new facilities that could serve as processing/distribution centers.

FS 4.4: Repurpose and/or create a series of smart, nimble, inter-related food and agriculture processing plants across central Illinois that are inspected and approved by the relevant agencies, meet farmer need, and end-user needs.

FS 5. Make local, sustainably produced foods available to all members of the Town of Normal, and provide education opportunities for the Town’s citizens on food costs, health impacts, and preparation skills as related to locally produced foods.

With Type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease and cancer rates and other health-related diseases on the rise in all segments of society, including children, there is a need to help individuals and families in the Town of Normal make healthier lifestyle choices, beginning with food and nutrition.

While we know increased consumption of local foods results in numerous benefits to the environment, our local economy, and community health, it is difficult to realize the benefit of local foods unless we ensure all segments of the community have access to fresh, healthy, affordable food where they live, work, and attend school. Community members also need the knowledge, skills, and facilities to turn raw product into healthy meals for their families.

According to FoodShare (a nonprofit focused on hunger and food systems), municipalities need to recognize “community building as integral to community food security and to health. Food secure communities are ones in which all community residents obtain a healthy, safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.”

FS 5.1: Adopt a Farm-to-School program which includes nutrition education for students and integrates local sustainably produced food products into food service programs.

FS 5.2: Advocate for a hands-on K-12 food and nutrition curriculum in local schools, emphasizing knowledge, skills, and abilities for eating healthfully as well as the importance of our local food system.

FS 5.3: Connect the stakeholders in education and local food production.

FS 5.4: Implement SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) at Normal Trailside Farmers’ Market.
FS 5.5: Make Normal Trailside Farmers’ Market a producer-only market.

FS 5.6: Provide public service announcements and/or local marketing (posters, flyers, etc) encouraging people to buy from local farmers and local stores and promoting the idea that whole fruits, vegetables, meats and eggs from local farms are better for you, for our local economy, and for the earth.

FS 6. Expand the number of community gardens available in food-insecure neighborhoods.

**Government Planning and Public Safety and Services**

The implications of this Sustainability Plan for the Town of Normal’s governance, processes, and services are considerable. Work Group recommendations with implications for Town government have been so substantial that we convened the Government Planning Work Group for a special meeting to review and respond to them. What is clear is that the Town’s sustainability work will build upon the foundations laid up to now and that it will most often involve collaboration with stakeholders who have helped bring the recommendations about in the first place.

We understand that the Town’s long-standing orientation toward sustainable governance actually pre-empts the plan we offer here. And we recognize that the methodology in our project has caused us to behave sustainably ourselves, as have others called to service in the steady progression of Town projects noted at the beginning of our report. It’s worth noting that the Community-Wide Sustainability Plan Task Force, made up of 28 representatives of the community supported by more than one hundred Work Group participants, stands as the widest demographic cross section of citizens seen on a Town project to date.

In addition to the issues raised in other topic areas, the Government Planning and Public Safety and Services Work Group adds the following recommendations as a means of enriching the Town through a government that works with, and because of, its citizenry.

**Gov 1. Publicize the UNITY Community Center’s existence, successes, and needs. . .**

UNITY Community Center is an after-school center on Orlando Avenue that provides a safe place for children to learn and study. It is supported by the Town, University of Illinois Extension-McLean County, and in-kind donations from several local businesses and individuals.

Gov 1.1: Conduct a study to determine what effect the creation of the UNITY Center has had on things such as 9-1-1 calls to the area, arrests, truancy, graduation rates, and other indicators. The general goal of the report should be to quantify what effect the Center has had on its neighborhood and students.

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Our committee members came from many varied backgrounds and employments and worked together diligently to produce this report. This report demonstrates democracy in its best form as the members listened to the views of their fellow committee members and worked to produce a document that shows consensus. The committee is a good sample of the whole community as it has shown how we in Normal can have differing viewpoints, but we work together to have a healthy, progressive community.

— Mary Caisley, ToN Sustainability Task Force Member and Transportation & Mobility Work Group Lead
Gov 1.2: Work with Unit 5 and other local businesses to grow the UNITY Center, perhaps by expanding the current Center or by replicating it in other high-need areas of Normal.

Gov 2. Explore opportunities to reduce waste and expand recycling efforts.

Gov 2.1: Facilitate more intergovernmental cooperation with the City of Bloomington to explore cost-sharing and potential areas for developing economies of scale.

Gov 2.2: Support Illinois State University, State Farm, and other interested parties in composting their food waste.

Gov 2.3: Hold an advisory referendum in a future election to ask citizens if they want curbside recycling (with an accurate cost estimate in the referendum so citizens would know what they would have to pay to add it).

Gov 2.4: Explore opportunities to reduce waste and expand recycling efforts with the adoption of mandatory totes and a restriction of the number of totes per family but unlimited recycling bins.

Gov 3: Organize to make the most of the Town’s volunteerism.

Gov 3.1: Support the United Way McLean County online volunteer center, which provides an updated database of volunteer opportunities.

Gov 3.2: Work with ISU to help facilitate student engagement with the community via volunteerism.

Gov 3.3: Investigate service hour requirements in Unit 5 high schools.

Gov 3.4: Help train non-profit and Town organizations on how to connect with, recruit, and use volunteers.

Gov 4. Promote strong Town of Normal-Unit 5 relations.

Gov 4.1: Continue Town Council and School Board meetings to increase cooperation and communication between the two governing bodies.

Gov 4.2: Work with Unit 5 administrators in future physical placements of schools.

Gov 5. Formalize the Town of Normal’s support for culture and the arts.

Gov 5.1: Create a partnership between the Town of Normal, City of Bloomington and two universities to establish an Arts Commission to foster, market, and promote the arts in the community.

Gov 5.2: Integrate the arts more fully into the fabric of the Town, including Town government, by:

- Appointing representatives from the arts and culture community to various boards, commissions, and ad hoc committees
- Supporting initiatives that contribute to the integration and collaboration of arts and culture in and around Normal. Example: Normal Arts and Culture Website.
- Working with artists to identify and document resources generated and value added to the community by local artists in the Economic Development Council and Chamber of Commerce’s various media.

Gov 6. Support continued promotion of alternative transportation and innovation across modes of transportation.

Gov 6.1: Develop a comprehensive website that includes all available public transit options to increase use of the full range of alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.

Gov 6.2: Explore cooperation between the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System (B-NPTS) and school districts in the busing of students to maximize use and efficiency of community bus systems.

Gov 6.3: Encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle use in the Twin Cities and build appropriate infrastructure (e.g., overpass walkways, underground tunnels) to overcome the barrier presented to pedestrians and bicyclists by Veterans Parkway.

Health and Wellness

HW 1. Develop and coordinate health and wellness efforts with local stakeholders with the goal of providing programs and services for all members of our community

In order to foster health and wellness in our community we need to develop, catalog and coordinate resources and professionals to improve awareness, access, and utilization.

We believe that creating awareness of existing health and wellness resources will engage our community more actively in their health and wellness.

HW 1.1: Strengthen and support the role of the Public Health Department as a center of health and wellness, which includes the IPLAN initiative and the funding of a Health and Wellness Czar position, who would be responsible for working with local health and wellness agencies, universities, facilities and service providers.

Some of the tasks envisioned for the role include:
- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the McLean County IPLAN Community Health Plan 2007-2012 and seek membership on the Community Health Advisory Committee, creating partnering opportunities where possible
- Establish key criteria for measuring community health and wellness (built upon existing criteria and data compiled through the IPLAN Community Health Plan 2007-2012: http://www.mcleancountyil.gov/health/hdcm.aspx?divid=6) and link it to the business case for health maintenance. Examples of criteria include obesity rates, percentage of people who have biked/walked to work this year, and number of lost work/school days per capita. Begin to measure key criteria not currently assessed and compile data over time
• Identify high level opportunities for community health improvement
• Identify the communities within our community (keep in mind we want to promote vibrant aging, and include all socio-economic levels)
• Develop specific programs to address our largest areas of need identified through assessment
• Connect health and wellness professionals and resources
• Add “alternative” health care options to the menu of services available at the Community Health Care Clinic for the working poor (e.g. acupuncture, chiropractic, utilization of mid-wives and doulas, water births)
• Assess the need and funding options for a community recreation center (e.g. indoor pool, cardiovascular and strength training equipment, meeting/classrooms, education programs, etc.) which afford lifetime fitness options at minimal cost to community members.

HW 2. Educate our community about developing and sustaining health and wellness

The education of our community members about the meaning, methods, responsibility and consequences of physical, mental and social well-being is key to creating a common vision of health and wellness. But more than that, education can serve to spark interest, help overcome real and perceived barriers and thereby improve likelihood of individual action. Education at all levels of need is necessary to serve all members of our community and thereby support a healthier whole.

HW 2.1: Create an ongoing advisory board (Wellness Coalition) comprised of the Town of Normal government, county Health and Wellness Czar, and local health and wellness agencies, county agencies, school officials, facilities owners and service providers.

Some of the tasks envisioned for the advisory board include:

• Advocate for increased wellness education in our schools, leveraging the relationship of the time children are in school
• Identify the various communities within our community (e.g. working, uninsured, under-insured, lower socioeconomic status, youth and seniors, minorities, etc.). Also, identify the various resources and communication channels our various communities use to get information and obtain services.
• Assess the needs of our various communities through focus group work and by leveraging existing data assembled by the McLean County Health department in their IPLAN
• Create education and intervention programs to address our highest areas of need and deliver them to our various communities in preferred communication channels

HW 2.2: Adopt and include lifestyle-based curriculum in K-12 schools: nutrition, exercise, wellness, stress management, etc.
Human Services & Spirituality

As mentioned at the beginning of the Sustainability Plan, the structuring and provision of human services in the Town of Normal and its environs is a sustainability area in critical need.

It is striking to note that our Task Force’s blending of the initially separate Human Services and Spirituality Work Groups perhaps reflects a mindset which sees the provision of human support services as more to do with the good works of our faith communities than with rights and responsibilities of citizenship. On the other hand, spiritual and secular leaders through the ages have called upon us to care for those in need both as a moral imperative and as a means of ensuring the immediate and sustained assurance of communal vitality.

HSS 1. Replicate and extend Town initiatives that provide targeted support for at-risk populations.

HSS 1.1: Continue to assess the unique strengths of and threats to neighborhoods in need, and partner with them to improve quality of life.

A successful example of this type of partnership is evident in the Orlando Avenue neighborhood, where the Town of Normal opened a police substation in 2002. Shortly thereafter, the Town partially funded the opening of the nearby UNITY Center in 2003. Both facilities target the special needs of the neighborhood, with the police officers improving their communication with area residents and the UNITY Center providing educational programming for children and adults. A 2009 expansion of the UNITY Center speaks to the program’s success.

HSS 1.2: In collaboration with Bloomington Police and the County Sheriff, continue to create programs that mitigate risk related to emergency-response interactions with developmentally, cognitively, and mentally disabled people.

The flagship program in this regard is the recently launched First Notification Program. Through this program, people and their families can file the name of persons with cognitive, developmental, and physical impairments with local authorities so that an ambulance or police alert in which the individual is involved will trigger a “heads up” from the dispatcher to the first responder. First Notification is the most comprehensive initiative of its type in the country.

HSS 1.3: Continue evolving local authorities’ use of non-violent means to resolve crises.

The Town’s positioning of police and firefighters as human service providers who often arrive first on scene sets a crucial expectation that they diffuse potentially explosive situations and call for appropriate backup. The Police Department’s recent Crisis Intervention Training for all officers has provided specialized training for these crisis moments. This type of training falls squarely within the Police Department’s commitment to “community policing,” a philosophy that relies on strategic thinking, community partnerships, and innovative problem solving. Examples include the department’s support for Neighborhood Watch, the School Resource Officer program, and the citizen volunteer bike patrol Constitution Trail.
HSS 2. Educate the community about how it can (and why it must) go beyond charitable giving, providing time and service to those with mental health needs.

The Town’s citizens are very generous with their charitable contributions in response to known hardship. The Government Work Group has previously called for coordination of community volunteers, who turn out with frequency and focus. It may be that simply alerting a wider audience to the needs of citizens with mental health disabilities will enhance our hand-to-hand outreach.

HSS 2.1: Prioritize mental health as an area of critical concern in the CLCB 1.1’s Community Education Clearinghouse.

HSS 2.2: Establish a Faith and Social Services Forum to update faith communities about the community’s pressing social service issues and to dialogue about the mitigating role faith communities can play. Include strategies for engaging the Town’s youth in service projects which help the needy.

HSS 2.3: Engage the McLean County Chamber of Commerce and other business and civic organizations in serious discussion about how to replicate or replace and extend programs like Opportunity COUNTRY, which offers specialized employment opportunities to people with cognitive disabilities.

HSS 2.4: Replicate programs like FriendsFirst (Second Presbyterian Church/marcfirst), Special Touch Ministries (Grace Church), and Best Buddies International (ISU) to offer friendship and understanding to citizens with cognitive and developmental disabilities.

HSS 2.5: Continue the Town’s sponsorship of Special Olympics Illinois, an extremely successful program serving more than 20,000 intellectually-disabled participants.

HSS 3. Advocate for improved funding of human services.

In the current paradigm, human service agencies are perpetually at risk of losing funding and other resources. A 2006 University of Illinois study concluded that community-based agencies serving people with mental illness and cognitive disabilities receive reimbursement for 74-79% of their costs of providing services. These funding patterns demonstrate that human services professionals need help garnering State resources necessary to effectively support their constituency.

HS 3.1: Include metrics related to the effectiveness of the provision and consumption of human services in the Town’s Quality of Life indicator.

HS 3.2: Seek out and publish data that demonstrate the return on investment from human services provided in the Town.

HS 3.3: Encourage well-informed, proactive advocates for mental health care to serve on Boards of Directors at human service facilities.

HS 3.4: Name one Town Council member to the County Mental Health Center Board of Directors.
HS 3.5: Create a coalition of local governments and civic, educational, and religious organizations to advocate for State funding for McLean County human services, especially agencies that provide support for cognitive, developmental, and mental disabilities.

**HSS 4. Prepare to provide a safety net when State funding falls critically short, as with PATH’S 211 Help Line.**

Assess for services that are critical in nature, and, with the coalition invoked in HS 3.5, create stop-gap emergency response options for when conventional funding sources fail.

**HSS 5. Stabilize and improve conventional health care services available to the un- and under-insured**

At this time it is difficult to know how recent national health care legislation will impact the provision of various health care services. However, it is clear that national health care reform includes an increased emphasis on preventative care and overall wellness.

This recommendation endorses HW 1.1’s call for more effective support of the Public Health Department as a center of health and wellness, its housing of a Health and Wellness Czar, and the numerous community health initiatives it encompasses.

**Resource & Carbon Management: Air**

Air 1. **Partner with the City of Bloomington, McLean County, Illinois State University, and State Farm Insurance to establish an intergovernmental carbon reduction plan whose target is achievement of an air quality index at or above the national average.**

An integrated carbon reduction plan will improve air quality by managing current practices and framing those associated with growth in the areas of agriculture, construction (green building), land use, and transportation.

Because vehicular traffic in general—single occupant vehicle miles, specifically—is the biggest contributor to the local carbon footprint, transportation policies that promote efficient public transportation and pedestrian traffic are essential.

Air 1.1: **Reduce carbon emissions in the transportation corridor through graduated redevelopment of strategic, higher density, mixed use “nodes” serviced by a non-vehicular as well as vehicular traffic, including vigorous public transportation.**

Air 1.2 **Implement a Main Street Redevelopment Plan.**

Air 2. **Require a larger commitment to mixed-use infill to increase population density within existing areas such as Uptown Normal and other commercial areas such as the Shoppes at College Hills. Require the same with new development in emerging growth nodes.**

Urban sprawl exacerbates dependence on automobile transportation. Policies that concentrate populations and activities, increase core densities, and shrink the distances between day-time and night-time populations and activities help to offset this problem by decreasing trip demands within the community.
Air 2.1: Promote zoning policies that cluster commercial uses as opposed to promoting strip commercial development.

Air 2.2: Increase urban vegetation, setting more aggressive planting requirements for new developments and endorsing the planting of preferred species to enhance canopy preservation.

**Resource & Carbon Management: Land**

The Town of Normal is to be credited for its strong Zoning and Planning ordinances, collaboration with Illinois State University in land use practices, and serious implementation of a variety of strategic plans for segments of the community (i.e., Uptown, Main Street, Bicycle/Ped). Looking ahead, there are several key realities that will continue to impact future land use planning:

- I-55 and I-74 have created a “ring” around Normal and Bloomington, influencing patterns of growth and development in every respect.
- For several decades residential development has followed a pattern whereby many residences are at some distance from workplaces. This pattern of “urban sprawl” can be attributed in part to:
  - Local development norms
  - Location of new Unit 5 schools
  - Difficulty in assessing the true costs associated with sprawl development patterns, including: consumption of farmland and conversion of such land to non-farming purposes, higher infrastructure costs associated with lower population densities, the loss of wetlands and open space, stream and river pollution caused by runoff, and significantly higher levels of energy consumption and air pollution.

It would also appear that attention paid to in-filling—taking advantage of opportunities to build on vacant land already in the midst of developed tracts of land—has been minimal. Finally, low-income housing has clustered into neighborhoods which merit the attention of the Town.

**Land 1. Improve the physical framework and facilities in the Town.**

The Town's land use policies should protect fertile farmland and promote a sense of community within neighborhoods.

Land 1.1: Adopt policies to slow the loss of farmland and reduce sprawl. Preserve farmland to the maximum extent possible as the Town continues to grow.

Land 1.2: Incentivize in-filling within Town borders.

Land 1.3: Promote efforts to strengthen established neighborhoods.

**Land 2. Take all steps necessary and appropriate to reduce sprawl and to promote incentives for in-filling.**
The Town should seek to maximize efficient use of resources. The infrastructure necessary to support in-filling is already mainly in place, which represents a major cost savings compared to continuing to spread out geographically.

Land 2.1: Expand requirements related to the construction of LEED-certified buildings to the in-filling process.

Land 2.2: Establish a system of development “impact fees” which imposes higher developer costs on growth on and toward the fringes of the Town and low cost in areas with existing development closer to the Town center, thereby incentivizing in-fill development.

**Land 3. Strengthen efforts to foster community-wide environmental stewardship.**

The Town should involve citizens in protecting land resources.

Land 3.1: Incentivize and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in responsible waste management, including neighborhoods, schools, and civic recycling and composting.

Land 3.2: Incentivize non-toxic approaches to pest management.

**Land 4. Promote green and recreational space and the creation of wildlife habitat zones, especially near high-density residential areas.**

The Town should ensure that residents have access to green spaces and wildlife has access to habitat within Town limits. A healthy community is one in which both the human and natural environments are respected. Green spaces provide citizens with opportunities for recreation and serve as safe places for native plants and wild animals.

Land 4.1: Adopt land-use policies that ensure the maintenance of green spaces within Town limits, emphasizing access near high-density residential areas.

**Land 5. Promote soil and yard preservation and sustainable lawn care, maintenance and landscaping.**

The Town should promote responsible use of land resources within residential areas. Much of the land within Town limits is private residential property. Land use decisions by homeowners and rental property owners have a significant impact on the natural environment.

Land 5.1: Develop and encourage programs for leaves being raked into neighborhood-based “mulch areas,” and for less frequent lawn mowing (for the health of the grass and related vegetation).
Land 5.2: Revise current practice so that the Town trucks leaves to a site in the Town rather than to Lexington. This recommended change would have both environmental and financial advantages.

Land 6. Improve transportation networks in the community.

The Town should promote effective in-Town transportation to limit sprawl and its effects on land use, including the expansion of road infrastructure. Many land use decisions are driven by transportation. An effective, easy-to-use public transportation system for the Town of Normal can serve as an attractive alternative to sprawl, with its ever-expanding infrastructure costs and ever-lengthening commute times.

Land 7. The Town should include issues of land use in a survey of citizens which ascertains their opinions and preferences regarding the challenges and opportunities identified in the Sustainability Plan.

Resource & Carbon Management: Water

The Town of Normal’s water supply is a strength which is perhaps underappreciated by its citizenry, given the threats of water shortages and “water wars” already underway elsewhere in the country.

The Town’s water source is the Mahomet Aquifer, accessed by 15 deep wells. This offers residents a clean and ancient water source with a design flow that is estimated to sustain current growth and use patterns within the “draw area” of the community until 2035. The aquifer is complemented by the area’s annual precipitation of +/- 36 inches per year with a relatively reliable seasonal distribution that consistently meets local production agriculture needs. Thus, irrigation does not compete with water resources serving the urban area.

To its credit, the Town of Normal, City of Bloomington, and McLean County have been working in collaboration on water issues related to the Mahomet Aquifer for about 20 years. We enjoy the advantage of not being in “crisis mode” with water supplies and should continue to explore strategies to maintain this enviable position as population and land use demands shift in the future.

Water 1. Maintain a sustainable supply of high quality public water.

A regional approach to water is an early sign of the Town’s orientation to effective sustainable practices. Collaboration on the Mahomet Aquifer needs to continue, and our community’s abundant precipitation should be explored for supply along with increased recycling of used water. Finally, water conservation is an important piece of sustaining our supply of fresh water amidst a growing community.

Water 1.1: The Town should continue current efforts working across jurisdictions to find regional water solutions to supply.

- Designate a Town representative to meet and work with the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC). ([http://www.mahometaquiferconsortium.org/members.html](http://www.mahometaquiferconsortium.org/members.html))
- Strengthen the intra-party agreement established following the study of the western portion of the Mohamet Aquifer, including identification of next steps in research and development.


- Work with the State and other entities now, while there is no pressure of scarcity, to clarify rights and responsibilities related to planning and allocation of surface water and Mahomet Aquifer resources. Work with the Water Resources Planning Group of the Illinois State Water Survey to sort out water control among the complex web of legal and quasi-legal water authorities, districts, commissions, and municipalities who claim some control over the aquifer. Draft a model law clarifying water rights laws for the legislature to consider in the future.

**Water 1.2:** Consider strategies for recycling used water, including the potential to reclaim water downstream of BNWRD Sugar Creek and to use gray water in commercial and residential applications.

**Water 1.3:** Promote public education on the quality of Town water and success in meeting EPA standards for contaminants while continuing to strive to maintain high quality water (pollution-free) for delivery.

- Provide public assurance on the quality of local tap water (and dispel myths of bottled water benefits), adapting social marketing strategies used in other communities, such as “Only Tap Water Delivers”, “Take Back the Tap” or “Think Outside the Bottle.” ([www.drinktap.org](http://www.drinktap.org), [www.takebackthetap.org](http://www.takebackthetap.org), [www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org](http://www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org).)

- Continue to network with key representatives of local media on a regular basis (newspaper, radio, etc) to keep them informed of local water issues, since they provide an ongoing and essential means for reaching the public.

- Explore a ban or restriction on bottled water (as has been done in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle), especially when purchased with public money. Benefits include a reduction in waste generated from plastic water bottles (86% of these bottles nationwide are not recycled) and a reduction of pollution from transport of bottles across the nation.

- If a bottled water ban is implemented, survey accessibility and maintenance of public drinking water fountains. Consider adding goosenecks to water fountains for self-filling of reusable water containers.

- Use incentives such as giveaway reusable water containers.

- Continue to protect water from potentially harmful pollutants, whether or not these contaminants are regulated by government standards. Consistent with previous years, the 2009 Water Quality Report indicates municipal water did not violate EPA standards for water contaminant levels in 2008 for any of the 94 listed contaminants (see [http://www.normal.org/Files/WaterQuality2009.pdf](http://www.normal.org/Files/WaterQuality2009.pdf)).
contaminants that were detected in treated water, none violated EPA standards. It is important to note, however, that standards are continually being evaluated and adjusted and don’t always take into consideration effects on vulnerable groups, like young children and individuals who are immuno-compromised, or newly discovered effects such as endocrine disruption. Additionally, concern has been raised nationwide about substances (such as pharmaceuticals, radon) which have been found contaminating nationwide water sources, but are not tested for, and may not be removed by standard treatment systems.

Water 2. Prioritize water conservation efforts, with a goal of reducing water usage per capita by 25% by 2030.

Conservation efforts are vital to ensuring a sustainable water supply with a growing population. In-home and commercial water-saving devices offer promise in reducing demands for water (studies suggest a 35% reduction can be achieved). Other communities can serve as models for conservation efforts, including Corvallis, OR, which aimed for reducing water use by 50% per capita by 2050 (see http://www.sustainablecorvallis.org/) and Denver, CO, with its “use only what you need” campaign (see www.denverwater.org or www.useonlywhatyouneed.org). Additionally, local studies suggest that the largest growth in demand for water supplies is with irrigation of landscaping, occurring largely during the summer months. Thus, it should be a priority for the Town to put in place strategies to minimize the need for irrigation, including incentive programs, education and appropriate legislation for landscaping with use of native plants and/or xeriscaping (landscaping designed to require very little water).

Water 2.1: Provide incentives for in-home and commercial water saving devices.

- Increase water rates and use the increased revenue to offer financial incentives to homeowners and businesses to update or retrofit water fixtures and appliances.
- Survey homeowners and businesses for current practices related to use of water-saving devices to establish a baseline needs assessment and inform strategies for educational and incentive programs. This could be done in collaboration with local universities.
- Combine incentives with education and outreach through multiple outlets, including schools, businesses, government and the Ecology Action Center. Strategies can be adapted from Denver’s model program “use only what you need” www.denverwater.org, and programs through the American Water Works Association www.drinktap.org and US EPA Water Sense www.watersense.org.
- Create a demonstration sight for water-saving devices
- Require developers to offset new water demand by implementing water conservation mechanisms in existing developments. Santa Fe, NM offers an example of a model program requiring developers to comply with “demand offset” regulations for new development.
- Provide incentives for ecologically sustainable landscaping using native plants, rain gardens and rain barrels.
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- Update zoning codes to include incentives for xeriscaping, landscaping that requires less water and eliminates most runoff. Develop and promote Town-owned properties as demonstration sites for the community.

- Require both soil and air monitors on all irrigation systems to control use when soil moistures are adequate and precipitation is not falling.

- Promote the EAC’s Yard Smart program, including establishment of a demonstration area at the Underwood house.

Water 2.2: Detect and repair leaks in the water supply system.

Plumbing leaks are estimated to account for 14% of water consumption ([http://www.normal.org/Files/WaterQuality2009.pdf](http://www.normal.org/Files/WaterQuality2009.pdf)). Promote prospective consumer savings associated with the repair of leaky faucets, toilets, or other as an incentive to conserve.

- Hold a demonstration project to show leakage and potential savings, perhaps through the EAC, local businesses, or in collaboration with the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union. Consider planning this around “Fix a Leak Week” as was done in Phoenix, AZ to show how much water was leaked in one week from leaky fixtures ([http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/phoenix.html](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/phoenix.html)).

- Use funds from increased water rates to update and repair the Town’s leaking underground systems. The City of Monticello, IL determined that about 15% of treated water pumped from the Mahomet Aquifer was being lost between the treatment plant and end-users. They detected and repaired 12 significant leaks, resulting in a 20% reduction in water usage the following year.

Water 3: Enhance water treatment and storm water management to prevent and manage water pollution.

It is our responsibility to properly treat and handle used fresh water in addition to all runoff sources. Steps must be taken to improve stream inflow and outflow from our community in order to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations and to control costs related to expansion of treatment capacity and the Town’s carbon footprint for energy intensive treatment processes.

Water 3.1: Establish a Town program to keep “precipitation-generated” water and “wastewater sewer flows” separate.

- Coordinate with BNWRD to conduct ongoing diagnostic monitoring of sewer flow volumes with the goal of corrective repair of wastewater sewers showing groundwater intrusion and disconnection of illegal sump pumps and drainage tiles.

Water 3.2: Enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the Town of Normal Stream Buffer Ordinance.

The Town of Normal Stream Buffer Ordinance is predicated on accomplishment of a series of environmental protection and resource management benefit goals. However, there is no plan in place to determine if the regulations are actually effective in accomplishing these goals. A plan is needed to measure, monitor and
assess all of the parameters listed in Municipal Code Sec. 28.2-1 in order to have data sufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of the stream buffer regulations.

- Partner with BNWRD to expand the capability and coverage of the current stream monitoring program so as to generate evaluative data.
- Hire a qualified environmental consultant to do a baseline assessment for the Town and establish a measuring, monitoring and assessment system that addresses all parameters.

Water 3.3: Reduce/eliminate the use of road salt.

Increased chloride concentrations in streams from runoff of road salt are causing salinization of surface water and groundwater, both in the northeastern U.S. and in the Midwest. This has negative effects on stream organisms and potable water supply.

- Monitor the chloride content of our streams to determine the magnitude of the problem locally, building on the research and monitoring locally by Dr. Stephen Van der Hoven at Illinois State University. This could be done by BNWRD.
- Explore methods to minimize the use of road salt, including the use of alternatives such as sand, potassium acetate, and calcium magnesium. Learn from ISU’s experience with reducing road salt use in keeping with its goal of a 50% reduction in use by 2012.

Water 3.4: Adopt an ordinance to reduce/eliminate non-agricultural use of phosphate fertilizers, as ISU did in 2008.

In order to meet EPA water quality standards, Evergreen Lake needs to reduce its phosphorus loading by 85% and Lake Bloomington needs to reduce its phosphorous loading by 66%. Both lakes, and other streams in the county as well, have inflow streams carrying fertilizers applied to lawns and other urban landscaping from the Town of Normal.

- Adopt an ordinance prohibiting the non-agricultural use of phosphorous fertilizers in urban landscaping. A number of Midwest governmental entities have passed such a ban. A model ordinance used by Antioch, IL can be found at (http://illinois.sierraclub.org/w&w/Sprawl/docs/Antioch_07-10-25-PFertOrd.doc).
- Combine ban with consumer education promoting ecologically sustainable yards (e.g., Yard Smart).

Water 3.5: Continue to reduce non-agricultural use of pesticides, and consider adopting an ordinance to ban non-agricultural use of pesticides.

Acknowledging growing concerns about human health and ecological risks associated with pesticide usage, the Town should continue to promote sustainable alternatives to cosmetic
pesticide usage (with government, homeowners, and businesses) when possible, modeling after communities as recommended in the 2030 Report. The 2030 Progress Report notes that the Town has greatly reduced the use of pesticides (and fertilizers) in public spaces, including eliminating use in some locations like playgrounds and along the Constitution Trail. However, the public is generally not aware of these efforts since they are “invisible.”

- Post public education signage (e.g., Yard Smart signs) on public areas where yard chemicals have been eliminated or reduced.
- Promote demonstration areas for landscaping as noted elsewhere in report for ecological landscaping, including use of low-maintenance native plants and alternatives to turf grass.

Water 3.6: Highlight the win/win nature of economic livelihood combined with ecological livelihood by promoting the financial opportunities created from efforts to conserve water, improve the quality of storm water runoff, and protect water resources. Examples include:

- Long-term maintenance cost savings garnered as a result of installing native plantings, which reduce mowing and irrigation.
- Increased sale and installation of water saving fixtures and appliances.
- Installation and monitoring of irrigation sensor equipment.
- Design and construction of “zero” runoff new construction whether residential or commercial.

Water 3.7: Provide homeowners with means of properly disposing of hazardous waste. Fortunately, the community now has several drop-off spots for unused pharmaceuticals. However, homeowners are not provided with adequate sources for disposal of many other hazardous wastes.

- Promote education on the existing drop points for unused pharmaceuticals in collaboration with pharmacies, health facilities, universities and other groups.
- Offer a fee-based quarterly hazardous waste disposal outlet limited to area residents. Investigate effective strategies used in other communities.

Water 3.8: Require all new development to include design elements that reduce or eliminate runoff, including porous pavement and green roofs to absorb rain water.

Water 3.9: Network with local agricultural groups to encourage practices that protect local waterways, such as by encouraging conservation practices that minimize erosion and runoff of agricultural chemicals, fertilizer and pesticides.

Water 4. Establish a framework to build sustainability efforts upon lessons learned, including creation of a public archive for valuable resource documents that are accessible to the public and professionals.

Transportation
Until recently the transportation system in central Illinois has generally focused on single occupant vehicles and attendant traffic issues. That focus is starting to change for a variety of reasons. The population is aging, and elderly residents who lose driving privileges need another way to get around town. Obesity rates are rising, particularly among children, and the desirability of spending time in a car rather than on a bike or on foot is coming into question. Local and state governments are facing the dual problem of decreased revenues and increased expenses in roadway and infrastructure maintenance, making it difficult to simply build our way out of today’s traffic problems. The federal government has established new requirements for designing “Complete Streets” that take into account all modes of transit, whether bike, foot, car, bus rapid transit, or light rail. And when gas went over $4.00/gallon in 2008, people started to re-evaluate their personal transportation choices.

Fortunately, the Town of Normal is well-positioned to accommodate diverse transportation options based on our ever-expanding trail system, well-maintained roadways, and increasing bus options. In particular, the Multimodal Center will serve as a new epicenter of transportation alternatives, linking bikes, local and regional buses, passenger rail service, and taxis within the pedestrian-oriented Uptown.

TRANS 1. Strengthen pedestrian and bicycle transportation.

In order to reduce vehicle use, lower carbon emissions, and improve individual physical fitness, the Town should play an influential role in establishing and formalizing incentives, programs, and practices to more quickly shift a growing number of university students, adult residents, and K-12 children toward sustainable transportation habits. The Town can lead the community—including both public and private organizations—in establishing intrinsic and extrinsic incentives to produce measurable change in the transportation system. Much of the groundwork along with solid goals and objectives related to pedestrian and bicycle transportation in our community has been established by previous reporting and planning groups. See, for instance, *Town of Normal Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*, July 2009; *Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan*, February 2006; McLean County Regional Planning Commission’s *Bloomington-Normal Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan*, November 1997.

TRANS 1.1: Encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle use in the Twin Cities by continued implementation of the *Town of Normal Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*. Key components include the following:

- Implement bike lane and shared lane designations on appropriate Town streets, particularly in areas that could bridge gaps in the Constitution Trail system. Specific recommendations may be found in the McLean County Regional Planning Commission’s *Bloomington-Normal Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan* and the *Town of Normal Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*.

- Investigate bike boulevards as part of Town’s street system. The shared system requires motorists and cyclists to follow each other in single file, but it allows drivers to pass bike riders when there is no oncoming traffic. Signage – including street name signs—indicates that the roadway is a “bike boulevard,” alerting motorists to increased bike traffic. Traffic circles replace four-way stops. Calming devices slow vehicles on bike boulevards.

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• Coordinate an effort to achieve League of American Bicyclists “Bicycle Friendly Town” status for the Town of Normal.

• Extend the 2008 Bicycle/Pedestrian Focus Group to a standing advisory committee comprised of citizens, representatives of large employers, schools/colleges, health care providers, planning officials, and law enforcement to partner with and advise Town Council and staff on bicycle and pedestrian issues. Reference the Town of Normal Bicycle and Pedestrian Focus Group Report, February 2008, page 2.

• Work with Unit 5 to promote the Walking School Bus concept among the parents and students of Unit 5 schools (see http://www.walkingschoolbus.org/). Launch this concept through a Walk to School Week (WOW) at the beginning of the academic year. See http://www.walktoschool.org.uk/; for excellent ideas on how to promote this effort, consult the Parents’ Guide and Teachers’ Guide found through the “Parents” button on the left hand column of this website. See also a local example of walking group chart used by parents to coordinate their children’s transport to and from Chiddix Junior High School in the Appendix of the Transportation & Mobility Work Group Report.

• Assume a leadership role with area employers, schools, colleges, and universities as well as partner with local media and businesses to establish an annual Town sanctioned/sponsored Bike to Work/School Day and Bike to Work/School Week. Metropolitan Washington (D.C.) Council of Government Bike to Work survey results indicate 14 percent of those participating rode more after the event; and 10 percent who were not biking previously began doing so. A survey conducted by the National Center for Transit Research at the University of South Florida for Bay Area Commuters shows previous commuters increasing their bike commuting by almost 20 percent and that 27 percent of people who biked to work for the first time on a Bike to Work event continued biking to work.

• Build appropriate infrastructure (e.g. overpass walkways, underground tunnels) to overcome the barrier presented to pedestrians and bicyclists by Veterans Parkway.

TRANS 1.2: Increase access to the Constitution Trail.

• Accelerate development of Constitution Trail, to include re-evaluation and prioritization of primary and connector routes identified in Chapter 4 of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission’s Bloomington-Normal Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan.

• Include Constitution Trail as a Priority 4 street (or create a 5th priority) so this pedestrian and bicycle commuter corridor is targeted for eventual snow removal. Work to coordinate efforts with City of Bloomington. See http://www.normal.org/gov/PublicWorks/SnowAndIceRemoval.asp#Policy.

• Investigate the feasibility of, cost of, and adjacent property owner reaction to adding overhead or pathway lighting on the Constitution Trail, where necessary, to extend commuter hours.
TRANS 2: Offer high-quality, high-impact alternatives to intra-community travel that offset personal car use and, ideally, integrate school busing as part of regular operations.

The Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System (B-NPTS) is a financially stable transit system that is currently working on a strategic plan to offer a high-quality, high-impact alternative to in-community travel by personal car. Currently, B-NPTS is adopting a vision statement “to be a transit-reliant community.” B-NPTS is building new facilities to provide room for an expanded transit fleet and to provide administrative facilities that will enable the system to implement the newest technological assists for the users of the transit system. The Town should maximize the opportunity to influence the future direction of transportation to ensure B-NPTS uses its publicly funded dollars in ways that make it greener and a more obvious alternative option for families and employees across the economic spectrum.

More must be done to encourage people to leave their cars at home and remove any misconceptions about mass transit. Too few people understand bus routes and schedules in a way that permits them to either use the bus as their primary transportation or rely on the bus to reach destinations that are outside their typical routine. Furthermore, too many people allow class-consciousness or misperceptions about safety or convenience to deter them from using mass transit. Expansion of the present bus system and education of the community are the keys to successfully increase B-NPTS ridership and decrease personal vehicle use and corresponding fossil fuel emissions.

TRANS 2.1: Expand public bus services.

- Conduct a study of current community travel. Such a study should include all of McLean County and should be a collaborative effort of the Town of Normal, the City of Bloomington, and McLean County. Smaller communities such as Hudson might also wish to be included.

- In order to expand the service to outlying communities, B-NPTS should explore expanding its revenue sources, including the potential to establish itself as a transit district with taxing authority. Because it currently has no taxing authority, B-NPTS revenue is limited primarily to funding from the Town and City, which restricts service to only the areas within those municipalities.

TRANS 2.2: Encourage increased usage of bus system.

- Create a more user-friendly bus transit system, potentially by incorporating interactive Internet maps and a real-time bus arrival GPS system that sends updates via phone, text, and tickers in bus stops. Additional sheltered bus stops and Sunday service may also be in order.

- Work with large employers in the community to develop their own programs to support and subsidize public transit rides, and encourage their workforce or clientele to ride the bus. Such programs are underway at Illinois State University and State Farm Insurance.

TRANS 2.4: Increase use and knowledge of the full-range of alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.
- Develop a comprehensive website that includes all available public transit options, with a community map. Users need an easy and comprehensive website that can help them determine transportation options and inter-linkages, including bike routes, car sharing, ride share, bus service, Redbird Ride Bus Service, regional bus services, and train services. An excellent example of an established website can be seen at http://www.gotriangle.org/. In addition to providing options, such a website would teach prospective users the routes that will be of most immediate use, as well as educate them on new routes that could link them to more/different destinations than they had anticipated.

- Expand car sharing programs in the Normal-Bloomington community, building off the experience of Illinois State University’s car sharing program. The program should also consider expanding to include energy-efficient personal-use vehicles, such as electric or hybrid cars.

  Continue to build effective and efficient public transportation options for college students, including high speed rail.

TRANS 2.5: Maximize occupancy efficiency of community bus systems in use.

- Explore cooperation between the B-NPTS and school districts in the busing of students, thus reducing the need for vehicles and diminishing the consumption of fuel by avoiding duplicate trips. Superintendent Gary Niehaus has indicated that the school district and the transit system could study the duplication of bus routes via the school district’s computer program, VersaTrans. Intergovernmental agreements could be established between the transit system and the school district. The transit system should investigate the methods that Champaign-Urbana uses to avoid a conflict in funding when students are being transported on transit buses. This suggested exploration would identify the benefits, savings, and costs to the community of such a proposed cooperation.

TRANS 3: Promote availability of regional transit options to people who would otherwise use personal cars for business/personal travel in and out of Normal and nearby communities.

Government, public, and private entities should work to reduce the daily ebb and flow of personal vehicular traffic to and from McLean County.

Over 21,000 people commute either into or out of McLean County every day. This number is equivalent to 25 percent of the McLean County workforce. Because of this situation, Normal's commuter transportation plan should hook onto transportation plans in adjacent or other nearby counties. The Town of Normal should develop, with other similar-sized communities, the Route 74 Corridor Project. The Town of Normal could help influence transit schedules, coordinate with privately run transportation services, such as Peoria Charter, and suggest transit routes to service a wider range of university students and adult residents.

TRANS 3.1: Promote car- and van-pooling, as well as a Carpool Day (like Dump the Pump Day or in correlation with it). Within that promotion, encourage reliance on energy-efficient personal-use vehicles.
TRANS 3.2: Offer incentives, such as choice parking locations or provision of some cushion around start/end times of work shifts and schedules to accommodate employee use of carpooling and mass transit

TRANS 4: Maximize rail for movement of goods.

Normal’s proximity to an important rail corridor positions it well to sell this community as sustainable and business-friendly. With Uptown Normal ranked as the fourth-busiest Amtrak terminal in the Midwest and in the process of building a state-of-the-art Multimodal Transportation Center, the attention to Normal’s rail infrastructure means additional opportunities to welcome increased freight rail traffic, as well.

Rail transportation is widely known to be a more fuel-efficient method for transporting goods than over-the-road trucks. It is also an effective way to reduce highway congestion. Both of these outcomes would improve the quality of life for Normal residents.

TRANS 4.1: Investigate the possibility of investing in rail infrastructure to facilitate intermodal connectivity, similar to Rochelle, Illinois.

TRANS 4.2: Act as an advocate for rail in both the state and federal arenas, particularly on the issue of capacity maximization.

TRANS 5: View trucking as support to rail for movement of goods.

The intersecting interstate highways in this area are a reminder that trucking will continue as a mode of goods transportation. As a result, Normal will enjoy the economic benefits, as well as face the environmental challenges, that are associated with this industry. In order to reinforce its commitment to sustainable resource management and business practices, the Town needs to position trucking to be a support mechanism for rail.

The Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan refers to Normal’s attributes as including a “strategic location; outstanding highway, rail and air transportation … and a favorable business climate”. Further, it acknowledges a future challenge will be balancing growth “while sustaining the community’s high quality of life”. Moving as many goods by rail as capacity allows will retain Normal’s quality of life and its special standing as a strategic location. More rail freight means fewer trucks, less air and noise pollution, as well as less fuel consumption. The only way Normal can actually help decrease the net number of trucks on the road is to join in the national effort to encourage intermodal transportation opportunities – particularly via rail.

TRANS 5.1: Locate new transportation businesses where they may rely on rail as the primary and trucking as the secondary mode of delivery and distribution.

TRANS 5.2: Investigate the feasibility of developing a rail-focused, government-owned industrial park near the intersection of I-39, I-55, and I-74.

TRANS 6: Request sustainability plans from prospective transportation-oriented businesses.

Normal needs to use the latitude it has in setting standards and criteria for sustainability with prospective new transportation-oriented businesses. Doing so will ensure that new warehouse distribution centers or other transportation businesses fit themselves into the kind of community Normal is and wants to be. Requesting sustainability plans from new
transportation-oriented companies will send a message that Normal as a community places a high priority on sustainability. Many companies still do not have sustainability plans, and this request would further movement in that direction within the transportation industry.

TRANS 6.1: Request sustainability plans as part of the annexation process when new land is proposed to be developed for warehouse distribution centers.

TRANS 6.2: Encourage the sharing of sustainability plans when new businesses locate within the existing Enterprise Zone.

TRANS 6.3: Offer expertise, either through Town staff or community partners, to assist new transportation companies with the development of sustainability plans.

TRANS 7: Gather more data and information about the role transportation businesses can/will have in the Town of Normal’s economy.

The Town of Normal needs more information about the environmental and economic impact that sustainability requirements will have on prospective transportation-oriented companies and should continue to work with an interdisciplinary group of community stakeholders to gather and assess that information.

In particular, more specifics need to be considered before committing to particular environmental and economic standards for new development of transportation businesses, including these:

1. Trends in the goods-movement industry;
2. Policies that impact the industry;
3. How the goods-movement industry impacts our local economy;
4. How land-use planning will be affected by what is learned about a-c and what is drafted in the sustainability plan.

When the Town of Normal developed its Comprehensive Plan, it anticipated that 5,200 acres of land would be needed to accommodate the growth anticipated during the life of the plan, which includes land needed for commercial and industrial organizations. Normal will need to have a proactive approach with developers and operators, some of whom may need incentives and support to be as sustainable as Normal expects. Normal must approach the topic of sustainability and private sector development carefully so as not to stymie new development due to over-regulation, but at the same time should ensure that the wishes of the community in terms of environmental sustainability are met.

TRANS 7.1 Gather local and regional leaders in government, business, and sustainability for further study of goods movement through central Illinois.

TRANS 7.2: Learn from other cities that have attempted either to incentivize or require LEED certification for private commercial construction and renovation. Using data from these cities, craft a strategy that both satisfies the need for environmental sustainability and economic growth. Two cities worth investigating are Aventura, Florida, and San Mateo, California.

TRANS 7.3: Recommend that new construction of transportation businesses align with LEED principles.

TRANS 7.4: Determine the appropriate incentives for constructing to LEED standards, again with the joint efforts of local government and business leaders.
QUICK STARTS
“Quick Starts” are a convention first used by the 2030 Visioning Committee to underscore the need for immediate action and prevent planning documents from gathering dust on the shelf. The Sustainability project has evolved Quick Starts from 2030 to focus more on likely long-term return on the Town’s investment than on short term time and cost required. Our Quick Starts include actions which have the potential to make the most of momentum already underway, resources currently available which may be less available in future, and some which undertaken together could catalyze faster, better results for longer.

The Quick Starts have been organized into the three main components of sustainability identified by the Task Force – Environment, Economy, and Society. Within each category, a short list of ranking factors is set forth. Quick Starts are then ranked based on how many of the factors are in play, as noted in parentheses after each. It is interesting to consider how strongly these Quick Starts could be supported by a Sustainability Coordinator.

Environment
Ranking factors:  High Level of Impact (H), Current Threat (T), and Momentum (M)

1. Employ a comprehensive community awareness and efficiency campaign to promote energy conservation and performance programs like Energy Star, green building rating systems and energy provider incentive programs. (H, M, T)
2. Encourage distributed energy generation (i.e. solar, wind) in both residential and commercial applications by approving the necessary municipal ordinances and establishing incentive programs. (H, M, T)
3. Stimulate, promote, and otherwise encourage more options for and use of public and low-carbon transportation with a particular focus on implementing the recommendations of the Town’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. (H, M, T)
4. Convert the Underwood House into a high performance (LEED Platinum and/or Living Building Challenge) Green Model Home and Education Center in order to provide examples of applied energy efficient design, information on incentive programs, and conservation/generation technologies, as well as providing workforce training opportunities. (H, M, T)
5. Encourage water conservation through regulations and incentives, including increased water rates with additional funds used to establish a water conservation grant fund and a new requirement that all irrigation systems be retrofitted with soil moisture monitoring devices. (H, M, T)
6. Build upon long-term planning efforts to secure a regional water supply by designating a Town representative to meet and work with the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium, continuing to seek out opportunities to collaborate with nearby governmental entities, and working with media outlets to educate the public about water issues. (H, M, T)
7. Demonstrate water conservation initiatives on public property by utilizing landscaping design that minimizes water demand. (H, M, T)
8. Begin to gather baseline data on municipal energy use in order to plan aggressive energy use and greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies and to implement a strategy for communicating this information to the community. (H, M, T)
9. Utilize the State of Illinois procurement policy as a guide for the increased purchase of renewable energy by the Town. (H, M, T)
10. Explore cooperation between the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System (B-NPTS) and school districts in the busing of students to maximize use and efficiency of community bus systems. (H, M, T)
11. Minimize impact of polluted stormwater runoff by implementing programs and legislation to minimize/eliminate road salt, ban phosphorus in non-agricultural fertilizers, and better manage hazardous waste and safe pharmaceutical disposal in order to protect storm water and local waterways streams. (H, M, T)

12. Convene a discussion to compare sustainability statements, identify common commitments, and consider creating a unified, encompassing statement for all stakeholders at the table. (H, M, T)

13. Send a delegation to the “Green Town: The Future Community” conference in Chicago on October 13-14, 2010 to explore the possibility of hosting a similar event in Normal. (H, M, T)

14. Establish an energy and green purchasing audit program partnering students from ISU and Heartland Community College with major institutions and commercial enterprises in order to create a real world experience for the students and tangible benefits for the audited entities, including the creation of an implementation plan, assignment of tasks, and accountability measures. (H, M)

15. Arrange a pilot for small business recycling based on previous EAC efforts, including realistic goals, careful measurement of alternate approaches, and advertising of results to the small business community. (H, M)

16. Work with an established organization such as the American Farmland Trust to begin planning for meaningful farmland preservation. (H, T)

17. Create or increase incentives for infill development, building reuse, pedestrian-focused design, Traditional Neighborhood Design, LEED ND certification, and net zero or “passive” building design, all with the goal of more efficient land use. (H, M)

18. Continue LEED certification for new municipal buildings and buildings in Uptown and create incentives to encourage LEED certification for new development currently not required to build to LEED, particularly large transportation-oriented businesses. Where LEED certification is not required, require commercial buildings to meet increased energy performance standards. Expand the Town’s municipal LEED commitment to include the construction of a net zero building within 5 years. (H, M)

19. Publicize the “greening” of the Normal area. (H, M) Monitor the enforcement and impact of the stream buffer ordinance using experienced consultants and/or representatives from BNWRD. (H, T)

20. Require all new development and redevelopment to use “zero runoff” pavement. (H, T)

21. Initiate a Ride/Walk-to-Work Week in the Twin Cities and expand the walking school bus concept among the parents of school-aged children, thereby improving physical health, reducing traffic congestion, and decreasing fuel consumption and air pollution. (H, T)

22. Provide car-share options, including hybrid and electric vehicles, to be located and operated through the current Amtrak Station and future Multi-Modal Transportation Center. (H, M)

23. Work with large employers, institutions, and business associations to incentivize car pooling, the use of mass transit, and reliance on hybrid or other fuel-efficient/electric vehicles when using personal vehicles for travel. (H, M)

24. Publicize the Normal area’s “greening” efforts currently underway or already accomplished. (H, M)

25. Create a “green map” of Normal to be published on the Town and EAC websites with the goal of highlighting green events, green educational opportunities, and all of the green initiatives happening locally (sites, activities, promotion of green jobs). (H)

26. Create a “sustainability blog” at the EAC’s website where citizens can raise questions and make suggestions, and get responses from the Center’s experts and other citizens. (H)

27. Identify local facilities/homes that have successfully implemented sustainable elements and showcase them as “real life” examples. (H)

28. In cooperation with the EAC, ISU, and Unit 5, create neighborhood-based and school-based composting programs for both food waste and yard waste. (H)
29. Establish wildlife habitat zones in residential areas. (T)
30. Build appropriate infrastructure (e.g., overpass walkways, underground tunnels) to overcome the barrier presented to pedestrians and bicyclists by Veterans Parkway. (H)
31. Create an awards or recognition program for businesses/agencies/institutions that reduce their carbon footprints; similarly recognize community members for reducing carbon footprints on a personal scale. (H)

Economy

Ranking factors: High Level of Impact (H), Current Threat (T), and Momentum (M)

1. Establish a Sustainable Business Council (SBC) and task the council with creating Green Business directories, surveying local companies for current sustainability needs, partnering with ISU to develop opportunities for businesses to learn from current research, and educate the business population on opportunities and local initiatives. (H, M, T)
2. Urge and support the EDC to conduct an assessment for a local “Food Innovation Center” incubator. (H, M, T)
3. Create a coalition of local governments, civic, educational, and religious organizations to advocate for State funding for McLean County human services, especially agencies that provide support for cognitive, developmental, and mental disabilities. (H, M, T)
4. Plan networking events that combine the creative abilities of local residents with green/sustainable ideas and practices using the momentum of “green drinks” and the concept of “NINe.” (H, M)
5. The EDC, in cooperation with the Town and/or ISU, HCC, and IWU, should sponsor a workshop(s) on the green retrofit of existing businesses and starting green/sustainable businesses by utilizing local experts and existing business case studies. A key component would be to explain how the Sustainable Loan Fund (SLF) works and to connect the program to potential borrowers. (H, M)
6. Expand the Mayor’s Unit5/Local Government Committee, established in 2006, to include representatives from the other educational institutions, and leverage the combined interests of the consortium to negotiate collectively on sustainability-related contracts. (H, M)
7. Identifying and document resources generated and value added to the community by local artists in the Economic Development Council and Chamber of Commerce’s various media. (H)

Society

Ranking factors: High Level of Impact (H), Threat if No Action (T), Cross-Generational (G), and Momentum (M)

1. Assess to learn which human services are critical in nature, and create stop-gap emergency response options for when conventional funding sources fail. (H, T, G, M)
2. Educate the community about how it can (and why it must) go beyond charitable giving, providing time and service to those with mental health needs. (H, T, G, M)
3. Advocate for a hands-on, K-12 food and nutrition curriculum in local schools emphasizing knowledge, skills, and abilities for eating healthfully as well as the importance of our local food system. (H, G, T, M)
4. Extend federal and state “Percent for Art” programs to the Town level in order to incorporate local art permanently into major public (i.e. Multi-Modal Transportation Center, Children’s Museum) or quasi-public (i.e. Advocate BroMenn expansion) spaces. (H, T, G, M)
5. Establish a Community Education Clearinghouse that addresses ongoing community-building and learning needs, utilizing resources from ISU, IWU, Heartland Community College, Lincoln College, Unit 5, the Task Force’s Economic Development Committee, the EAC, and other entities as appropriate. (H, G, M)
6. Partner with area educational institutions to recruit primary/junior high/high school and postsecondary students into community service-oriented, collaborative experiences which lend themselves especially well to youth leadership. (H, G, M)

7. Improve the quality of food available in our schools. (H, G, T)

8. Advocate for a lifestyle-based health and wellness curriculum in K-12 schools, including nutrition, exercise, wellness, stress management, etc. (H, G, T)

9. Fund and implement Bike/Pedestrian plan and trail development projects, particularly those that fill Constitution Trail gaps. (H, G, M)

10. Create a community bike share program that provides free or inexpensive point-to-point bicycles for use by all community members (reference “Reggie Ride” program currently underway on ISU campus). (H, G, M)

11. Translate sustainability materials, particularly those located on the EAC website, into non-English languages with the aid of the Hispanic Families Work Group, La Palabra, and/or IWU/ISU Hispanic Studies departments. (H, G, M)

12. Continue to seek out teaching materials produced by other sustainable programs in the U.S. and elsewhere. Identify local experts to teach the topic and offer them for free/low cost at Heartland Community College, the public libraries, ISU, Lincoln College, the EAC, the McLean County Arts Center, and other venues as appropriate. Also, partner with the Children’s Discovery Museum, as requested, on sustainability-related displays and programs. (H, G, M)

13. Help train non-profit and Town organizations on how to connect with, recruit, and use volunteers. (H, G)


15. Add healthy food options to community-sponsored events. (H, G)

16. Collaborate with the local arts community to integrate the arts into the Town’s day-to-day by linking arts and culture information through the Town’s website. (H, G)

17. Conduct a strategic arts and culture promotional campaign, such as an “Arts and Culture/Here and Now” punch card with benefits for attending a variety of events or local attractions. (H, G)

18. Integrate the arts more fully into the fabric of the Town, including Town government, by appointing representatives from the arts and culture community to various public boards and work groups. (H, G)

19. Hold an advisory referendum in a future election to ask citizens if they want curbside recycling (with an accurate estimation of the cost of curbside in the referendum so citizens would know what they would have to pay to add it). (H)

20. Conduct a study to determine what effect the creation of UNITY Community Center has had on things such as 9-1-1 calls to the area, arrests, truancy, graduation rates, and other indicators. The general goal of the report should be to quantify what effect the Center has had on its neighborhood and students. (G)

21. Improve the accessibility and interest of the website version of the Town of Normal 2030 Report and 2030 Update by creating a clickable Table of Contents linked to each section and enticing newspaper-headline style of titles to increase readability and ease of locating information. Employ a similar treatment for the 2010 Community-Wide Sustainability Plan. (G)
Appendix A: Sustainability Plan/2030 Report Values Matrix
Appendix B: Sustainability Plan/2030 Report Opportunities Matrix