

Board of Trustees

Regular Session

July 30, 2024



Agenda

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
 - Attendance by Other Means/Virtual – Roll Call Vote
- Pledge of Allegiance and Mission Statement
 - Connect Transit provides safe, reliable transportation and access to opportunity to strengthen and enrich individual lives, our community, the economy, and the environment.
- Public Comments

Consent Agenda

- Approval of Regular Session Minutes for June 25, 2024
- ~~Approval of Financial Information for May 2024~~ – *delayed due to year end closing*
- Approval of Statistical Reports for June 2024
- Cardinal Infrastructure Federal Report
- Cornerstone – Illinois Weekly Update

- Roll Call Vote

Committee Reports

Finance Committee:

Trustee Singer
Vice Chair Hile

Operations & Planning

Committee:

Trustee Foster
Trustee Rao

Marketing & Communications

Committee:

Trustee Buchanan

New Business

- McLean County Regional Planning Commission Future Housing Development and Transit Presentation

Regional Housing Recovery Plan



Connect Transit Board of Trustees

7/30/2024

Presentation by:

Raymond Lai & Mark Adams



What is the Regional Housing Recovery Plan?

- MCRPC was awarded the Research in Illinois to Spur Economic Recovery (RISE) Grant from IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).
- Plan adopted late March, after 7-month planning process.
- Purpose of the Plan:

Research and analysis as well as recommendations and implementation strategies for recovery of the housing sector from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in McLean County.

Planning Process (with Consultant)

Regional Housing Recovery Plan for McLean County, IL Project Schedule								Responsible Parties		
Project Tasks/Descriptions		Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	MCRPC	TPMA
1	Launch								●	●
2	Discovery				12/07/24				●	●
2.1	Doc Review									●
2.2	Data Collection								●	●
3	Initial Analysis					12/21/24				●
3.1	Summary of documents									●
3.2	Economy/Housing Stock									●
3.3	Demographics/Affordability									●
4	Engagement					1/08/24				●
4.1	Stakeholder Survey								●	
4.2	Stakeholder Interviews									●
4.3	Stakeholder Workshops					01/09/24				●
	Public Forum					01/09/24			●	
5	Analysis & Assessments						2/12/24			●
5.1	Gaps and Needs Analysis									●
5.2	Strategies/Analysis Draft									●
6	Final Deliverable							3/25/24		●
6.1	Final Report									●
6.2	Final Pres.									●
MCRPC Monthly Meetings		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
TPMA Bi-Weekly Progress Meetings		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		

Community Engagement

- **Housing Needs Survey (Trilingual):** 1,181 household responses.
- **Interviews:** Nine individual or small group interviews.
- **Stakeholder Workshops:** Two in January 2024, engaging 26 participants.
- **Public Forum (Hybrid):** January 2024, more than 120 residents participated total.
- **Public Comment Period:** A draft plan was released.
- Assistance from TPMA consultants & MCRPC Staff.



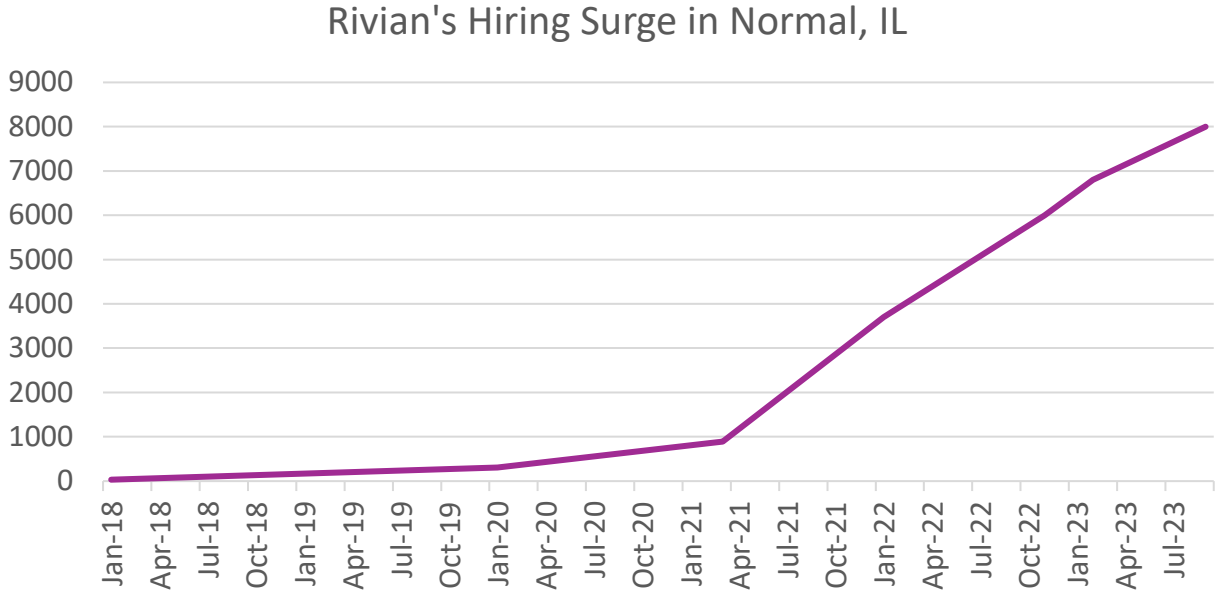
Public Forum on Housing Needs 1/9/2024



Key Findings (from community engagement)

- **Limited affordability:** Lack of affordable housing options, especially for specific demographics like young professionals and seniors.
- **Limited housing diversity:** Heavily favors single-family homes, limiting options for those seeking different housing types.
- **Barriers to access:** High upfront costs, predatory rental practices, and lack of support services create challenges for vulnerable populations in securing stable housing.
- **Competitive market:** Low vacancy rates and rising prices make it difficult for potential buyers and renters to find suitable housing.
- **Public concerns:** Limited public transportation, NIMBYism attitudes, and the need for diverse representation in future planning efforts.

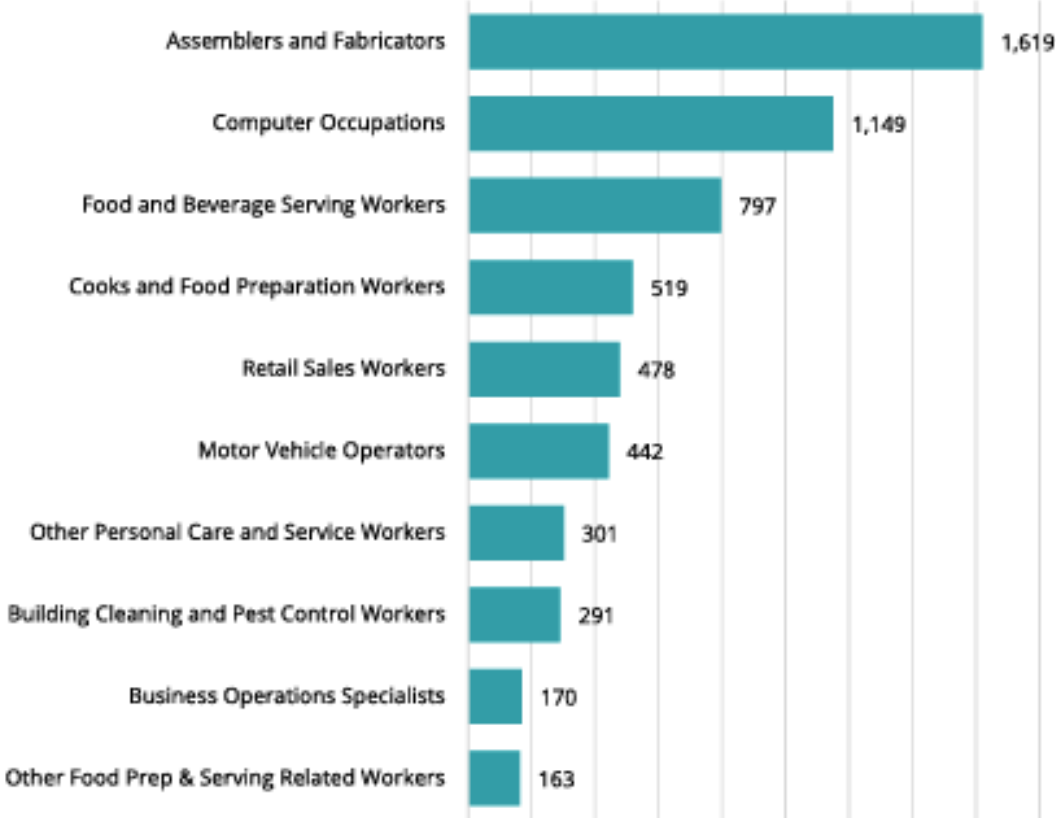
Workforce Housing Shortage



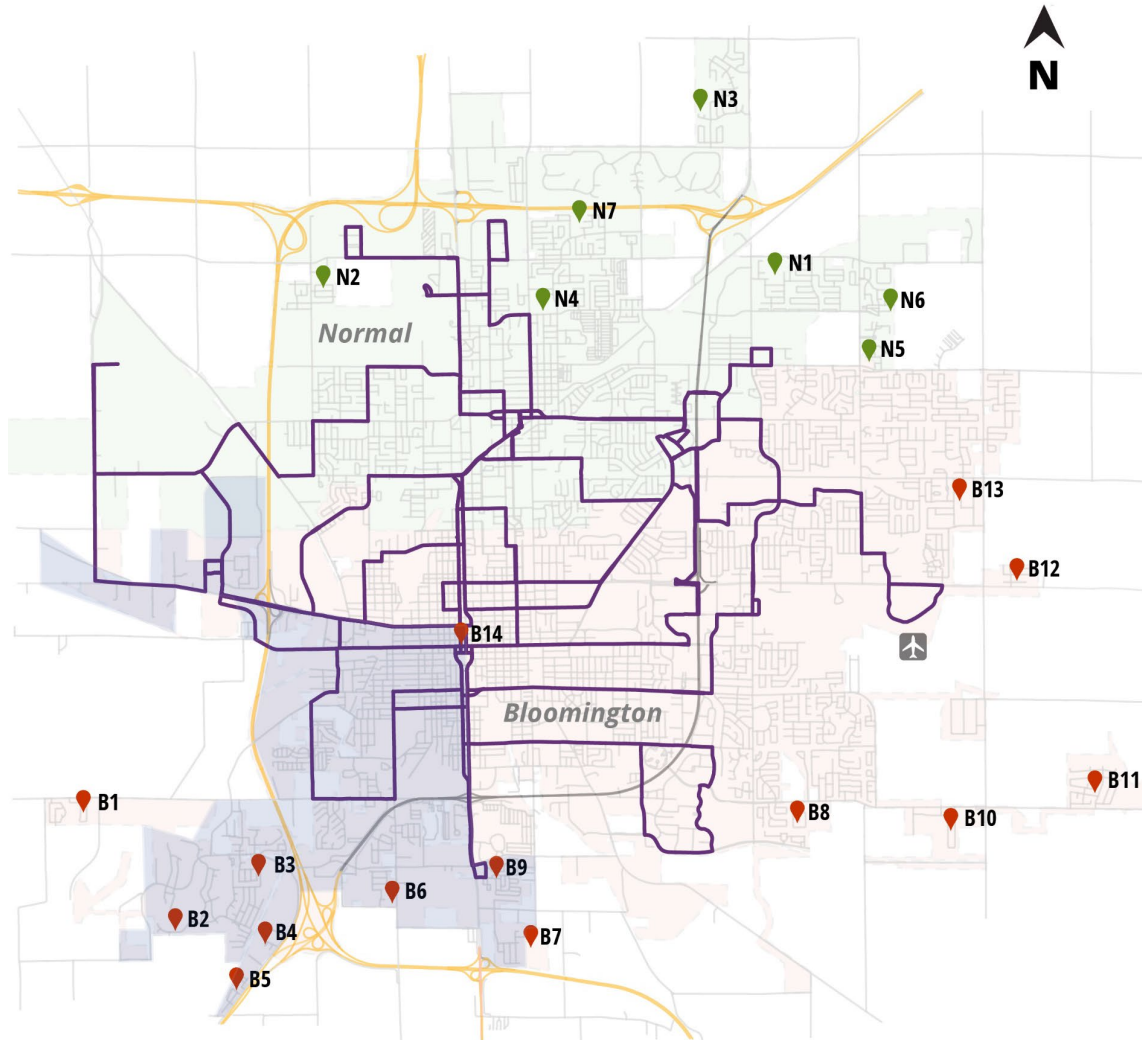
Source: WGLT, BNEDC, Rivian

Recent estimates show that 50-80% of Rivian's workforce commute 45 minutes or more one-way.

FIGURE 21: NET COMMUTERS BY OCCUPATION. SOURCE: LIGHTCAST, 2023



Approved Housing Developments in Bloomington-Normal & Connect Transit Service



Legend

- Approved Housing Development - Bloomington
- Approved Housing Development - Normal
- Connect Transit - Fixed Bus Route
- Connect Transit - Connect FLEX Service Area

0 mi 1.26 mi

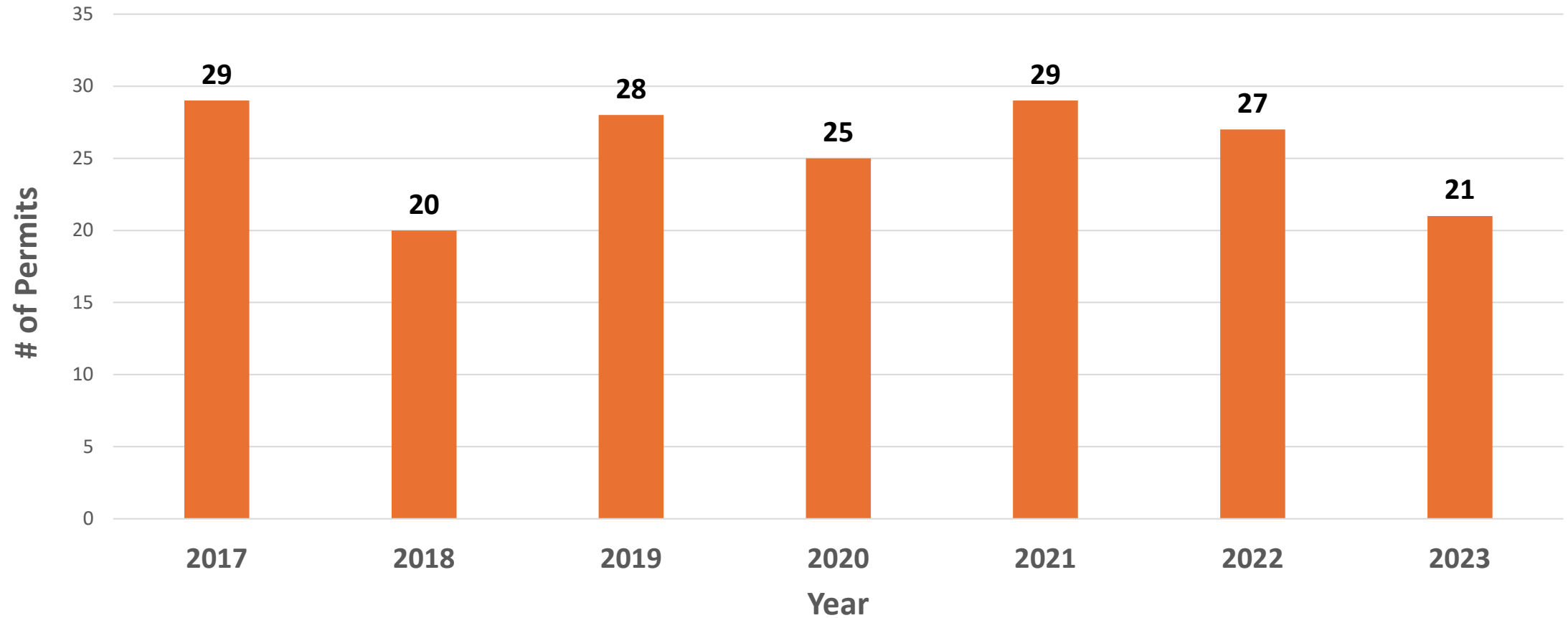
List of Approved Housing Developments (As of December 31, 2023) – Town of Normal

Map Identifier	Project Name	Number of Single-Family Detached Units	Number of Single-Family Attached Units	Number of Multi-Family Units	Total
N1	Blackstone	69	0	0	69
N2	Greystone	30	0	0	30
N3	Heather Ridge	44	0	0	44
N4	Shelbourne PUD	0	0	100	100
N5	Trails on Sunset Lake	17	20	0	37
N6	Vineyards	23	0	0	23
N7	Weldon Reserve	43	4	0	47
Total		226	24	100	350

List of Approved Housing Developments (As of December 31, 2023) – City of Bloomington

Map Identifier	Project Name	Number of Single-Family Detached Units	Number of Single-Family Attached Units	Number of Multi-Family Units	Total
B1	Heartland Hills	8	0	0	8
B2	Fox Creek Country Club	0	0	14	14
B3	Fox Lake (2509 Savanna Rd)	18	0	0	18
B4	Bill's Place	9	0	0	9
B5	Prairie Place	10	0	0	10
B6	Wittenberg Woods	0	0	96	96
B7	Cedar Ridge	42	0	0	42
B8	Brookridge Estates	24	0	0	24
B9	Villas at Prairie Vista	0	0	24	24
B10	Dunraven	0	12	0	12
B11	Grove at Kickapoo Creek	93	0	0	93
B12	Harvest Pointe	47	0	0	47
B13	Hawthorne Commercial	0	0	71	71
B14	208-210 N. Center Street	0	0	5	5
Total		251	12	210	473 ¹⁵

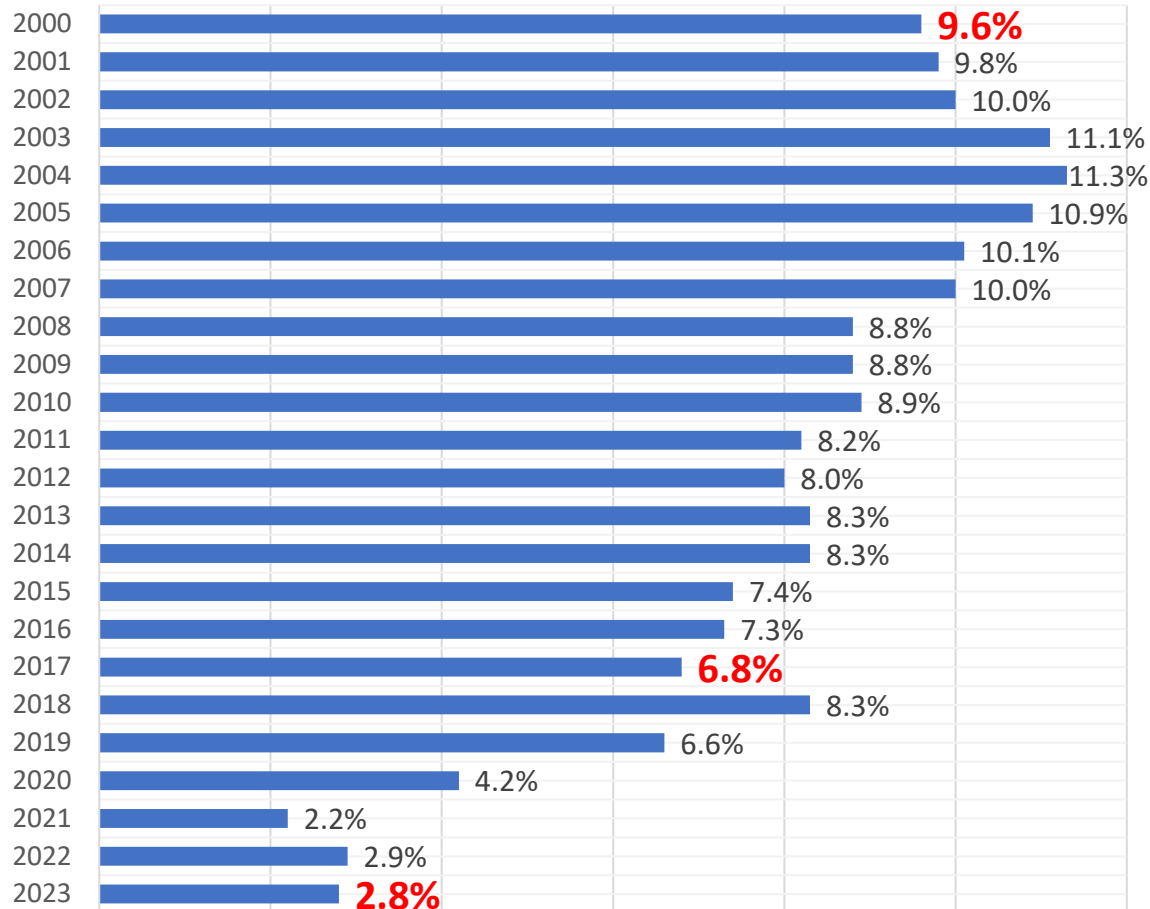
New Residential Construction Permits – Unincorporated McLean County



Source: McLean County Department of Building & Zoning, Monthly Permit Reports

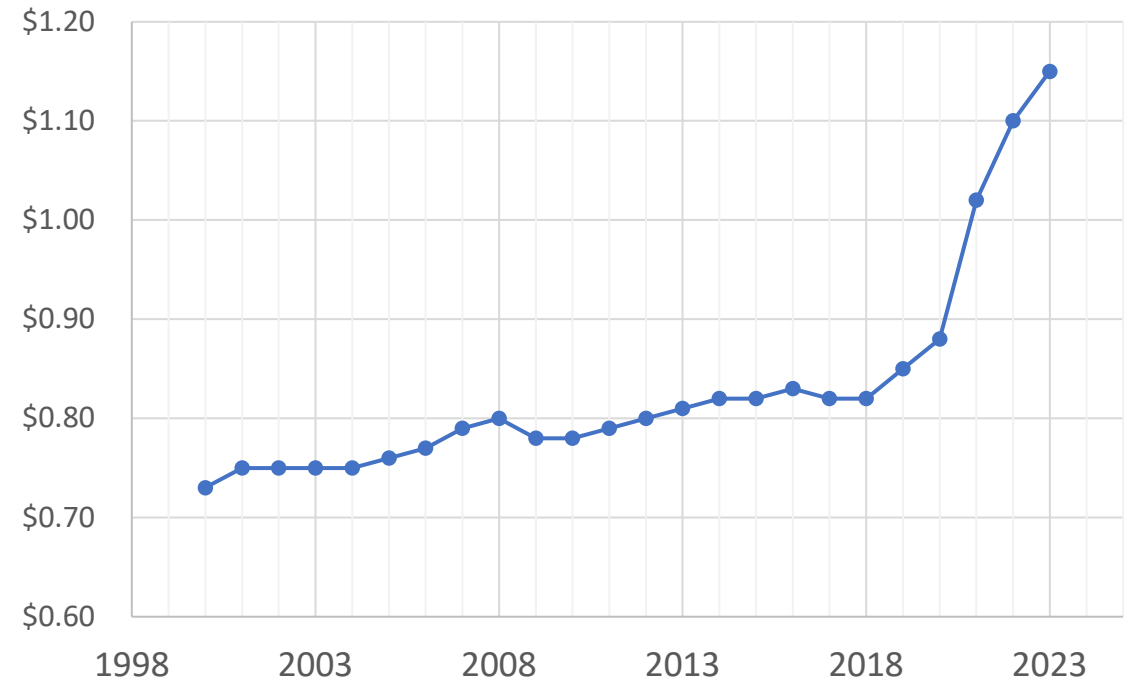
Vacancy Rates & Rental Costs (2000-2023)

Multi-Family Vacancy Rate in McLean County



Source: CoStar, 2023

Effective Rent per Square Foot in McLean County

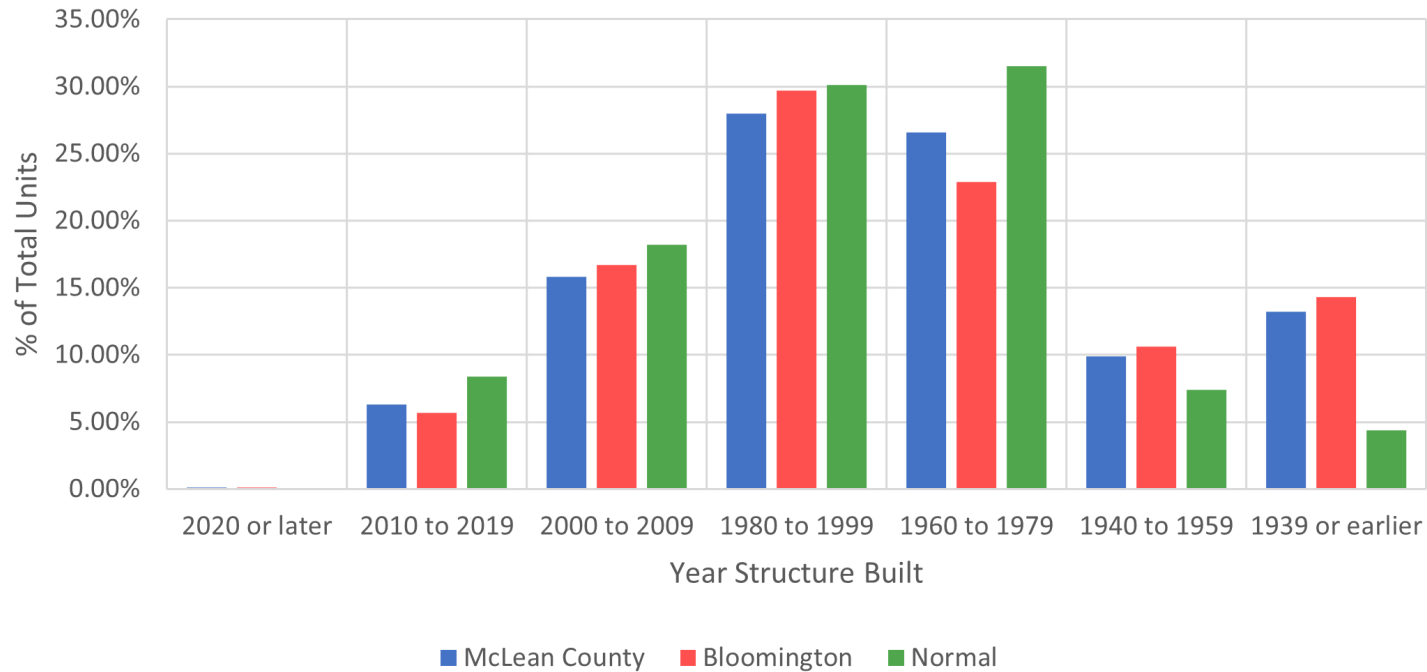


Source: CoStar, 2023

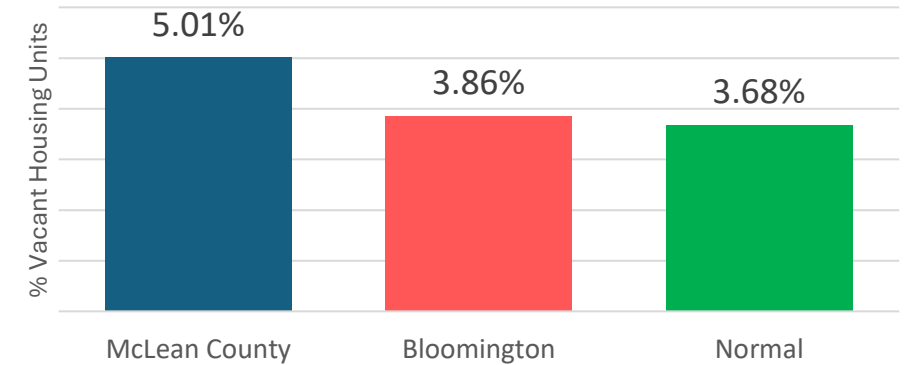
Aging Housing

SF Vacancy Rates

Housing by Year Built



Single-Family Home Vacancy Rates



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Strategic Recommendations

Goal #1: Coordinate on Regional Resources

1. Establish Intergovernmental Housing Recovery Implementation Committee
2. Define specific goals & metrics
3. Establish performance tracking & reporting
4. Partnership with regional planning organizations

Goal #2: Housing Coordinator

1. Hire/Assign Housing Coordinator
2. Create resource guide
3. Facilitate collaboration between stakeholders
4. Use inventory for informed decision-making and resource allocation



Strategic Recommendations

Goal #3: Increase Access to Information & Resources

1. Develop Centralized Housing Information Hub
2. Launch Housing Education Campaign
3. Extend Housing Stability Navigator Program

Goal #4: Expand Housing Development Opportunities

1. Conduct Review of Housing Ordinances
2. Establish Overlay Districts
3. Develop Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance
4. Expand Housing Mix Options



Strategic Recommendations

Goal #5: Maximize Funding & Partnerships

1. Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund
2. Advocate for State Level Economic Development Policies
3. Support Local Land Banks & Community Land Trusts
4. Partnership Opportunities for Preservation & Maintenance

Goal #6: Support Vulnerable Populations

1. Coordinate IHDA Listening Sessions & Advocacy
2. Secure County Behavioral Health Council Funding
3. Facilitate Public Endorsement/Match for LIHTC Applicants with PSH units



Strategic Recommendations

Goal #7: Increase Access to Information & Resources

1. Collaborate with Employers to Support Housing
2. Initiative Landlord Risk Recovery Fund



Next Steps



Community Presentations



Formation of Implementation Committee



Research of Grant funding opportunities



Questions?



Regional Housing Recovery Plan

McLean County Regional Planning Commission

Adopted on March 27, 2024

New Business

- Recommendation to Support Library Card Sign Up Month/September 2024 – Roll Call Vote
- Recommendation for *Managed Printer & Copier Services Contract Award* – Roll Call Vote

Chairman's Report

Managing Director's Report

Strategic Plan Scorecard

	Activities	Timeline	Status	Notes
	Goal 1: Gain Public and Political Support.			
	Objective 1: Create and Define a Community Wide Communications Plan.			
X	Develop a messaging plan with themes that can be used to encourage support of transit among multiple groups of constituents.	January 2024 – March 2024	Complete	* Presented to and approved by Board, February 2024
	Develop a marketing plan with campaign target, campaign purpose, communications strategies (media, events, etc.) to be used, and campaign timeline.	March 2024 – June 2024	Partially Complete	* Presented to Board in July 2024
	Implement marketing plan.	July 2024 – June 2026	Pending	
	Objective 2: Expand the Board's Role to Advocate on Behalf of Connect Transit.			
	Establish committee structure.	January 2024 – March 2024	Complete	* Presented to and approved by Board, February 2024
	Codify strategic goals.	Mar-24	Complete	* Presented to and approved by Board, March 2024
	Develop Board Handbook to provide a central location for Board information.	Jul-24	Complete	* Draft to Board in May * 1:1 Meetings * Presented to Board in June
	Communicate “talking points” to the Board concerning Connect Transit services and issues facing Connect.	Monthly and as needed.	In process	
	Develop “speakers bureau” to speak to groups (philanthropic, neighborhood, business, non-profit) in our service area and to communicate a consistent message.	July 2024 – June 2027	Pending	
	Objective 3: Develop and Expand Community Partnerships.			
x	Identify opportunities or partnerships that benefit Connect Transit, partners, and our community.	May 2024 – June 2025	In process	* EDC One Voice trip in 2024 * Veteran's Parkway Evaluation * Next Move Illinois (State Public Transportation Plan) participation * Town of Normal Sustainability Plan participation * Salvation Army Good Cities program participation * Chamber InterCity Leadership Visit to Grand Rapids
	Conduct “summit” meetings to gather partners with similar interests together (business, education, non-profits, medical community, ADA community, transportation providers, arts community, etc.) to identify opportunities and methods to meet need, if any. Develop on-going relationship with community partners.	May 2024 – June 2025 and on-going as needed.	In process	* Convened meeting with Normal Township, Agency on Aging, VA and others to discuss need for a adult day programing with potential of using downtown lease space. * Facilitating meeting with Salvation Army, Lifelong Access and Chestnut to identify service needs in Downtown. * EV Industry Collaborative and Open House - Speaker and tour of CT
	Objective 4: Expand Opportunities for the Community to Engage			
	Continue attempts to develop “Ambassadors” and ad-hoc focus groups to provide insight into issues faced by the transit system (route changes, fares, campaigns, transit centers).	July 2024 – December 2024	Pending	
	Conduct transit center outreach.	July 2024 – December 2026	Pending	

Goal 2: Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability.			
Objective 1: Continue to Secure Federal, State, and Local Dollars.			
	Participate in structured legislative groups and trips to Washington, DC, and Springfield.	When legislatures are in session 2024 – 2027	In process *Attended IPTA "Transit Day" at the State Legislature * APTA Legislative Conference * EDC One Voice trip in 2024 *Active on IPTA Legislative Committee
	Provide elected officials with opportunities for tours, speaking engagements, ribbon cuttings, ground breakings, etc.	2024 – 2027	In process * Congressman Sorenson visit in January 2024 * Senator Durbin quote in press release 5/2024 * Planning August FLEX Celebration with Congressman Sorenson.
X	Aggressively pursue funding opportunities from federal, state, and local funding agencies, as well as non-traditional sources.	2024 – 2027	In process * RAISE Grant was unsuccessful * Bus and Bus Facilities Grant was unsuccessful * Earmark requests was included in Federal FY25 Budget * Seeking available sources for state funding for solar microgrid
X	Use federal and state funds to provide a broader benefit to more constituents.	As grants are prepared and awarded: 2024 – 2027.	In process * Actively pursuing project with Heartland CC and IDOT to extend storage and training center grants. * Earmark request was included in Federal FY25 Budget for solar battery
Objective 2: Diversify Revenue Streams.			
	Identify non-traditional methods to increase local operating revenues without adding burden to the City and Town.	FY25 – FY27	In process Developing solar microgrid plans, and other non-governmental sources of funding
Objective 3: Continuously Evaluate Cost Management Strategies.			
	Identify methods to reduce operating costs without having an impact on our ability to serve the needs of passengers and the community.	FY25 – FY27	In process Developing solar microgrid plans
Objective 4: Regularly Evaluate Fare Structure for Long-Term Sustainability.			
	Evaluate subsidy per passenger against other revenue streams.	Annually at the beginning of each fiscal year	Pending
	Consider the effect of fare and fare collection changes on ridership and revenue.	Annually at the beginning of each fiscal year	Pending

X

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Goal 3: Leverage Projects and Initiatives for a Positive Customer Experience.			
Objective 1: Complete a State-of-the-Art Downtown Bloomington Transit Center With Modern Facilities			
Select A&E with transit experience that understands the needs of transit operations and has experience with transit facilities in an urban environment.	May-24	Past	A&E contract negotiations pending City of Bloomington plans. Expected recommendation in August 2024
Establish a Downtown Transit Center Steering Committee with whom to share thoughts and ideas for feedback relating to business, social service, customer amenities, and vehicle movements.	July 2024 – June 2026	Pending	To kick off in conjunction with A&E project kick-off
Objective 2: Optimize the User Experience.			
Investigate and pursue ways to make riding easier, more convenient, and more understandable.	FY25 – FY27	In process	RFP for fare collection system prepared and distributed.
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Goal 4: Operate Efficiently Without Sacrificing Service Quality.			
Objective 1: Maintain a Positive Culture of Safety.			
Develop and implement initiatives that maintain safety at the “top of mind”.	FY24 – FY27	In process	
Objective 2: Regularly Evaluate and Utilize Technology and Data Driven Solutions for Long-Term Optimization.			
Create a technology policy and plan that documents the age of hardware and software, defines a process of documenting and resolving technology issues, and evaluating the effectiveness of the technology based on frequency of failure/downtime, vendor support, and impact on passengers and employees.	FY25 – FY27	Pending	* Consultant analysis of radio system for assistance with RFP (Durbin earmark funds)
Objective 3: Position Connect Transit to Provide Solutions for Changing Service Demands.			
Continually analyze service performance, City and Town growth plans, large employer locations and work shifts, and changing demographics to identify appropriate methods to meet various needs, as necessary and practical.	FY24 – FY27	In Process	* Communications with Rivian employees concerning service and shift times. * Proposal to modify FLEX service to reduce short trips.

Community

- **Outreach:**

- CornBelters
- Trade & Labor Fest
- Town of Normal Appreciation Event
- Employee Night @ CornBelters
- Kite Fest
- Via Summit
- B/N by the Numbers

- **Employee Morale:**

- July employee birthdays & work anniversary celebrations



Professional Development

- Via Summit (free course in Chicago):
 - Attended by Aubrey Staton and Carrie Bailey.
 - Grants & Funding Sources
 - Several grant opportunities and unique ways to use the dollars that we already have were shared by other agencies.
 - Via is also developing new features that will allow agencies to identify riders as student/employer specific to allow for potential access agreements with businesses to pay for employee rides.
 - Paratransit Considerations
 - Several agencies are moving to Via's platform for paratransit operations and seeing decreases in the cost per trip by increasing their efficiency and productivity.
 - Zone Creation
 - Most systems avoid overlapping zones to aid in the efficient use of fixed route services.
 - Utilized most efficiently by providing short trips rather than long trips. Avoiding highways to potentially increase number of passengers picked up.
 - The utilization of Remix to provide data of areas to help in planning process.
 - Data indicates that Walmart is the top destination for passengers' travels.
 - Program designed for individuals aged 65 and older to travel directly from their starting point to their destination without needing to disembark to use fixed route services or switch Microtransit vehicles.



Professional Development

- HVAC Diagnostic Course:
 - Attended by Chris Sharkey, Maintenance Foreman
 - This three-day advanced furthered his knowledge of HVAC systems, as well as develop a training presentation/class to bring back and use for training our own Mechanics.
- Chamber Intercity Leadership Trip to Grand Rapids, MI:
 - Attended by David Braun, Managing Director
 - Three-day trip to learn about Grand Rapids business and downtown environment
 - Met with multiple agencies working in coordination to solve many of the same issues we are facing
 - Downtown redevelopment and housing
 - Population migration
 - Business/workforce attraction and retention
 - Leader development
 - Goal: Have Connect be part of the development and retention conversation, rather than an afterthought.
 - Attended by local leaders
 - Chamber
 - City and Town
 - Universities
 - Small Business
 - Developers

Recruiting

- Positions Open
 - AP/AR Clerk (1)
 - Bus Operator (8)
 - Dispatcher (2)
 - Maintenance Supervisor (1)
 - Marketing Manager (1)
 - Marketing & Social Media Coordinator (1)
 - Marketing Intern (1)
 - Mechanic (1)
 - Operations Supervisor (1)
 - Scheduler (1)
 - Service Technician (2)
 - Technology Support Specialist (1)
 - Transit Planner (1)
 - Travel Support Specialist (1)



Recruiting

- Positions Filled
 - Procurement Manager (1)



Welcome, Ashley Strupek!

WELCOME
ABOARD

Reminders

- Updated/New Board Photos
 - Please set up an appointment with Board Clerk



Agenda

- Trustee Comments
- Executive Session – N/A

Agenda

- Adjournment
 - Roll Call Vote
- Next Meeting: August 27, 2024
 - Will include a post-meeting Board Orientation Workshop – Media Communication Protocols